



EVENT PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Inaugural Youth Poet Laureate Celebration on April 10, 2024

SANTA CRUZ, California — Santa Cruz Public Libraries and the Santa Cruz County Poet Laureate (SCCPL), in partnership with Urban Word, are excited to celebrate the inaugural cohort of five finalists for Santa Cruz County Youth Poet Laureate (2024-2025). This free celebration will take place at the Kuumbwa Jazz Center at 320-2 Cedar Street on Wednesday, April 10 at 6:00 pm. All are welcome and encouraged to reserve their seat by visiting santacruzpl.libcal.com/event/12112434. As previously announced, the five finalists are Madeline Aliah, Simon Ellefson, Sylvi Kayser, Dina Lusztig Noyes, and Gregory Souza.

The program, hosted by current SCCPL Farnaz Fatemi, will include five minute readings from each of the finalists plus appearances by special guests Joseph Jason Santiago LaCour, poet, delivering a poem for the cohort of writers, and Valentina Russell, Aptos High School senior and SC County Poetry Out Loud winner, reciting her winning entry.

The event will conclude with an announcement of Santa Cruz County's first Youth Poet Laureate (YPL), who will serve a one-year term. The YPL will be presented with a \$500 cash prize, and each of the finalists will receive \$100 in honor of their achievements in poetry and community engagement, along with prizes donated by Two Birds Books in Capitola. The Youth Poet Laureate acts as an advocate and county ambassador for poetry, social action and civic engagement. They will champion their own poetic practice while encouraging their peers through readings, workshops and appearances at events throughout the county. As part of the Youth Poet Laureate program, the cohort of finalists will all receive support in various areas including reading appearances, potential publishing opportunities, and community outreach.

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ABOUT THE SANTA CRUZ PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM:

Santa Cruz Public Libraries (SCPL) brings people, information, and resources together to enrich lives and strengthen the community. SCPL gives every Santa Cruz community member the opportunity to learn through educational resources, classes, and staff support. The Library develops programs for the broad community as well as for specific groups like students, seniors, and those who are most vulnerable, including the unhoused and incarcerated. SCPL also curates specialty collections, like genealogy and local history. Learn more about SCPL at [SantaCruzPL.org](https://www.santacruzpl.org) or on social media. To access the SCPL Press Kit visit <https://www.santacruzpl.org/press-kit/>.