



City of
OAKLAND
California

Media Contacts:

Amy Sonnie
Teen Outreach Librarian
Oakland Public Library
510-238-7233
asonnie@oaklandlibrary.org

Sharon McKellar
Community Relations Director
510-238-3271
smckellar@oaklandlibrary.org

News from: **Oakland Public Library**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 27, 2013

Oakland Public Library Announces 2nd Annual Youth Poet Laureate Competition

Oakland, CA – The Oakland Public Library, in partnership with Youth Speaks (the country's leading nonprofit presenter of spoken word performance, education and youth development programs), is revving up to name another citywide Youth Poet Laureate. In 2012, the City of Oakland crowned its first ever youth poet laureate, launching an annual event. This year's contest will get underway March 1st and conclude in August when the city crowns its second Youth Poet Laureate. In addition to the honor of serving as Youth Poet Laureate, the contest winner will win a \$5,000 scholarship and gain invaluable experience and exposure through public speaking engagements and publishing and media opportunities.

Applications will be accepted from Friday, March 1 until the deadline at 5 pm on Friday, April 19. Applicants must be between the ages of 13 and 18 and reside or attend school in Oakland. Youth, parents, and teachers can learn more and **apply** online at: <http://youthspeaks.org/poetlaureate>, or contact Amy Sonnie, Teen Outreach Librarian, at 510-238-7233 or oaklandpoets@gmail.com.

Finalists will be announced in early June, and the winners will be announced in August. The competition will be judged by local leaders and celebrity authors.

The competition is supported by a broad coalition of partner agencies across the Bay Area: Oakland Public Library, Youth Speaks, Oakland Unified School District, Oakland School of the Arts, ProArts Gallery, California Poets in the Schools, Youth Radio, Write-to-Read and Alameda County Library, Mills College Community Teaching Project, and *Generations* Literary Journal. Funding is provided by private donations from The Friends of Oakland Public Library and the Youth Speaks John DiTargiani Fund.

Last year's winner, Stephanie Yun of Montclair, has made more than a dozen public appearances in her first six months as laureate, including performances at Oakland City Hall, Alameda County Juvenile Hall, the America's Children Holiday Parade, and the African American Museum and Library at Oakland, where she took the stage just before Governor Jerry Brown. In September, Stephanie was invited to perform alongside California's State Poet Laureate Juan Felipe Herrera at Brava Theatre in San Francisco. She is currently working to develop a community service project as part of her tenure. Updates about her work can be found at www.facebook.com/StephanieYunPoet.

#