



City of
OAKLAND
California

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News from: **Oakland Public Library**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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2014 Oakland Youth Poet Laureate Announced!

Oakland, CA – The Oakland Public Library is very excited to announce that 17-year-old **Sophie Elkin** has been selected as the City of Oakland’s 2014 Youth Poet Laureate. Ms. Elkin was raised in Oakland, California and attended Oakland School for the Arts. She is a key member of Youth Speak’s advisory board SPOKES and a mentor to new, young writers.

Current California Poet Laureate, Juan Felipe Herrera, who participated as a judge in this year’s competition, calls Sophie “... a word master, a performance magician with an eye and heart on the unity and healing of the streets, city and all people.”

Ms. Elkin emerged as the best of nine talented finalists from schools across the Bay Area. Students from Bentley, Head-Royce, Met West and Oakland School for the Arts participated in a highly competitive process juried by accomplished authors, educators and community leaders. Ms. Elkin will receive a \$5,000 scholarship and the opportunity to officially represent the Oakland community through poetry, media, and public appearances.

Executive Director of the Peralta Colleges Foundation, Romeo Garcia, another of this year’s judges says, “Sophie is a powerful voice of the Oakland streets, challenging the belief that age trumps experience. She speaks truths that some will find hard to hear, truths that give a clear voice to youth that live uncertain lives. Listen closely and you’ll feel her pain, see what she sees, and hear the joy and freedom she gets from poetic expression.”

Now in its third year, the Youth Poet Laureate Program is a partnership between Oakland Public Library, Youth Speaks, ProArts Gallery and more than a dozen community partners.

For more information, please contact Lana Adlawan, Teen Services Coordinator, at 510-238-7613 or ladlawan@oaklandlibrary.org.

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