NATIONAL STUDENT POETS PROGRAM

Fall 2015

Poets in Motion

Newsletter for Friends and Family of the National Student Poets Program

The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers partner to present the National Student Poets Program (NSPP), the country's highest honor for young poets presenting original work.

Introducing the Class of 2015 National Student Poets!



First Lady Michelle Obama hosts a poetry reading in honor of the 2015 National Student Poets (from left: Anna Lance, David Xiang, De'John Hardges, Chasity Hale, and Eileen Huang) in the Blue Room of the White House, October 8, 2015. (Photo by Patrick G. Ryan for the National Student Poets Program.)

De'John Hardges

Midwest Region, Cleveland, OH

"I really can't wait to share my work with our country. I'm hoping to gain recognition from writers I look up to so I can get the chance to learn from them and grow from their teachings. I think the most important facet of this program is to grow as a writer, so I'm most looking forward to doing that."

David Xiang

Southwest Region, Little Rock, AR

"For me, the part that I'm looking forward to as a National Student Poet is just getting out there, getting to meet and share and discuss with so many other great poets, young or old, reserved or outgoing. This gives me the chance to experience, to explore, to learn, to understand more about the science and art of poetry but also more about me—about my writing quirks, my ideas, my passions."

Anna Lance

West Region, Eagle River, AK

"The places and projects the program has mapped out for us over the course of our appointment are making the wait for our travels a nearly impossible one. I also can't wait to meet my fellow National Student Poets when our country-spanning paths converge; they're kind, uplifting, and passionate people, and I know the year of service we're going to spend together will be very, very good."

Chasity Hale

Southeast Region, Miami Beach, FL

"I think I'm most anticipating a chance to further my community's knowledge and love of the arts through my service project. I also hope to expand my passion for my platform. I have so much to learn from the other Student Poets, the coordinators and partners of NSPP, and whomever else we might encounter on this journey.

Eileen Huang

Northeast Region, Holmdel, NJ

"I am truly excited about meeting fantastic poets and writers whom I look up to, attending events that I would have never imagined I would attend, and improving my work in general. I'm ready to be surrounded by talented people who share my passion for writing, and to encourage others to write poetry as well."





Alumni Community Service Project Highlights

Weston Clark, Class of 2014, recently completed a week-long creative arts program with Native youth at the Turtle Mountain Community School in North Dakota for his community service project. He presented a praise poetry workshop and the student activities culminated in an open mic night after multiple writing and art workshops.

Of the experience, Weston writes, "As we sat in a circle and celebrated, I looked out over the faces of my smiling friends and across the town to the vanishing mountains. In that moment, I could see everything that made me, lined up like a path rambling into the distance." West is extending his community service project beyond his year of service, collecting the student pieces from his previous workshops into a chapbook and hosting further workshops at the Indianapolis Jewish Community Center, the Muslim Alliance of Indiana, and the Indiana School for the Blind.

Julia Falkner, Class of 2014, partnered with two LGBT+ centers in her area, Rainbow Alley and Out Bolder. Julia writes, "The core of my community service project was born from a thirst I've harbored for many years. So often, LGBT+ teenagers are forced to search for themselves, their art, and their history. Representation is vague, erased, and subtextual. Young LGBT+ poets deserve to read poetry that sees, recognizes, and represents them specifically." Though she started the year intimidated by the prospect of implementing this personally meaningful project, she finished the year hosting six workshops with kids of all ages and experience levels.

"At times," Julia concludes, "the project seemed impossible, but…[o]nly the work, and those you do it for, will fill you up—and that's how poetry begins to change our lives." ■

Madeleine LeCesne on MSNBC

If you missed **Madeleine LeCesne** on "The Rachel Maddow Show" alongside "Straight Outta Compton" star and fellow New Orleanian, Jason Mitchell, don't worry! The moving segment, in which Madeleine and Jason discuss "growing up in New Orleans before and after Katrina and how the experience changed them," is available on MSNBC online: **on.msnbc.com/1hK9X1W** ■

Inaugural Alumni Reunion October 10th in NYC!



Lylla Younes (2012), Ashley Gong (2014) and Kimber Craine (PCAH)

This October, we hosted the inaugural National Student Poets Program Alumni Reunion. From the past three years of the Program—the Classes of 2012 through 2014—twelve out of fifteen former National Student Poets traveled to NYC to meet with the current Class of 2015 for a night of reminiscing and looking to the Program's future. The poets, past and present, discussed fostering a sense of community, staying connected, and creating youth poetry networks together. Learn more about the Reunion in the next issue of Poets in Motion! ■

President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities
Institute of Museum and Library Services
Scholastic Art & Writing Awards
Poetry Foundation
Bernstein Family Foundation
Google
National Endowment for the Humanities Fifty Years
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