

Date: May 25, 2022

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager 

From: Christine Hertzelt, Interim Director of Library Services 

For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **Update on Long Beach Youth Poet Laureate Program**

On April 19, 2022, the City Council directed the Department of Library Services (Library) to partner with the Arts Council for Long Beach (ArtsLB) to prepare an update on the Youth Poet Laureate Program and return to council within 30 days. This memorandum provides the requested information regarding this program.

In Fall 2022, the Library will begin facilitating the first Long Beach Youth Poet Laureate program (YPL), with the goals to create a citywide community of young poets; to develop and cultivate the distinct voices of Long Beach youth; and, to provide platforms to amplify these voices.

The Library first planned to launch the YPL Program in Spring of 2020, but this launch was cancelled due to the COVID-19 emergency. The launch was then postponed to January 2022, but the emergence of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 and rising case rates resulted in City staff's difficult decision to further postpone the launch of the YPL program to the Fall of 2022, aligning with the start of the academic year, to better reach Long Beach teens returning to school in the Fall.

As of March 2022, the Library team has brought on a new YPL Library Assistant who is actively bringing poetry to the forefront of teen library programming and displays. Everything is in place to launch in September 2022 with a series of 12 poetry workshops based on the Urban Word curriculum. During the series, poetry workshops will be offered at Billie Jean King Main Library and will rotate through several branch libraries citywide, leading up to the Long Beach Youth Poet Laureate application period, beginning in January 2023. A culminating event will be held in April 2023 to name a Long Beach Youth Poet Laureate and up to five Poet Ambassadors, who will serve as a cohort, representing literacy, arts, youth expression, and advocacy in our community during the following year.

Library's online calendar of events and dedicated [Youth Poet Laureate web page](#) will be updated with additional program details in Fall 2022. Long Beach residents between the ages of 13 to 18 are encouraged to participate.

Update on the Long Beach Youth Poet Laureate Program

May 25, 2022

Page 2

If you have any questions, please contact me at (562) 570-5265.

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