

Courtesy of Nevada County Arts Council
Dream a Difference unites small schools
around the world using poetry as a bridge.
This year, Twin Ridges School District has
partnered with students ...



KNOW & GO

WHAT: 2018 Sierra Poetry Festival

WHEN: 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday with
a wrap party beginning at 5:30 p.m.

WHERE: Sierra College in Grass Valley
and The Stone House restaurant in Nevada City

TICKETS: Free for youth 18 and under. For all else, \$25 for featured readings only; \$45 for the
full pass, including workshops and readings.

INFO: For more information call 530-278-5155, email questions to info@nevadacountyarts.org,
or go online to <https://www.nevadacountyarts.org/festival-program>

The muse is a fickle master. It comes with a sigh or a storm, with a pen or a pistol. Often it
doesn't come at all.

Though a writer never really knows when to expect a creative visitation, few places are more
likely to summon the muse than the 2018 Sierra Poetry Festival, an event that brings together
poets and those who love poetry.

The second annual poetry festival follows in the footsteps of the inaugural event last year,
where community members both young and old gathered at Sierra College in Grass Valley to
celebrate the artistic achievements of some of California's brightest poetic lights.

According to Eliza Tudor, Executive Director of the Nevada County Arts Council, the success
of the 2017 festival helped to pave the way for 2018.

"Our aim was to create an annual event for the whole community," Tudor said. "We have a
fabulously literary community [in Nevada County] but they don't necessarily connect in an
anchored way. We wanted to bring everyone together once a year in a way that could be
aspirational and inspirational."

"Last year was incredible," she added. "Our inaugural Sierra Poetry Festival was a watershed
moment for poetry in Northern California."

On Saturday, April 28, Nevada County will again get a chance to prove it's outsized appetite for the arts. From 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., attendees will experience a full day of creativity from those who do it best.

At the fore of the artistic roster is Robin Coste Lewis: Poet Laureate of Las Angeles, winner of the National Book Award for Poetry, and the 2018 Sierra Poetry Festival keynote speaker.

Also performing this year are Kim Shuck, Poet Laureate of San Francisco, and Indigo Moor, Poet Laureate of Sacramento.

These luminaries are the vanguard to an event that hosts nearly 20 authors with dozens of published books and countless poems among them.

"The talent and diversity of these poets is extraordinary," Tudor said of the 2018 lineup. "Our programming is interdisciplinary — combining poetic cinema, video poetics, the spoken word, performance poetry, song-writing and music."

In addition to performances and readings, the festival programming also includes a number of workshops led by some of the poets themselves. Topics include "The Art of Noticing," "Video Poetics," "Igniting Your Poetic Fire," and a special workshop with Poet Laureate of Sacramento Indigo Moor, "Writing to History and Culture."

The 2018 festival is not a mere continuation of the inaugural event last year. While it advances a program similar to that of 2017 — readings, workshops, and creative mingling — the festival this year also introduces new components.

"An aspect of cultural equity is diversity and inclusion," Tudor said. "We want to encourage, educate, and inspire fledgling writers of all ages to become a part of a new and dynamic poetry scene as part of a broader effort to create age-diverse participation, particularly in youth."

While the emphasis on youth was strong last year — according to Tudor, the audience doubled in size during Poetry Out Loud, the youth recitation part of the program — this year it will be featured more prominently.

In addition to supporting and participating in Poetry Out Loud, a national program that incorporates poetry into the classroom, Nevada County Arts Council has also partnered with Twin Ridges School District to join Dream A Difference, an international poetry project that connects small schools around the globe.

This unique partnership makes Washington and Grizzly Hill schools the first and only two schools in the United States to participate in Dream A Difference. Components of the project include sharing poetry with students in Bangladesh and Uganda.

"The exposure this gives our kids is extraordinary," said Tudor. "It teaches empathy like nothing else."

The result of this partnership will be on display Saturday as a featured, albeit deliberately unannounced, capstone of the poetry festival.

"Some of the kids in Uganda have sent us a video of themselves dancing for our kids in Nevada County Schools," Tudor said. "It's so beautiful. It's all about teaching empathy awareness."

"We're growing a generation of poets," Tudor added. "We'll be seeing the outcomes of this reach fruition years from now."

The festival will conclude with a wrap party beginning at 5:30 p.m. at The Stone House in Nevada City. The party will include a chance to meet the poets and fellow festival-goers over drinks and a small bites menu.

For information about tickets, directions, and scheduling, visit <https://www.nevadacountyarts.org/festival-program>

And if you attend, be sure to take a notepad and a pencil. The muse just might strike.

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