



CIVIC ARTS COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

April 5, 2021
Item 5

TITLE: REVIEW AND DISCUSS TEEN POET LAUREATE APPLICATION

SUMMARY

The Teen Poet Laureate for the City of Pleasanton aims to promote an appreciation of poetry and literary arts in the community throughout the school year. The Teen Poet Laureate pursues meaningful endeavors in the community in collaboration with the City's Library and Civic Arts divisions.

RECOMMENDATION

Review and discuss the Teen Poet Laureate application for the 2021/2022 term.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The City Poet Laureate receives no remuneration. Expenses related to the Teen Poet Laureate program such as supplies for workshops and poetry readings, in the amount not to exceed \$2000, are allocated in the Civic Arts Administration supplies account #00150400-433154.

BACKGROUND

On November 17, 1998, Pleasanton City Council approved the Civic Arts Commission's recommendation to create the position of a Pleasanton Poet Laureate. The primary role of the Poet Laureate was designed to provide poetry at civic events and promote the appreciation of the literary arts in the community. These individuals established a wonderful tradition of poetry readings, while using their unique styles to develop new programs for the community. Some of the notable programs created by the Poet Laureate included television broadcasts and the establishment of the Poetry, Prose and Arts Festival.

As an extension of the Poet Laureate tradition, the City began a supplementary process to recruit and officially appoint a Teen Poet Laureate in August of 2012. In January 2013, two students, one from Amador Valley High School and one from Foothill High School, were appointed to serve as the City's first Teen Poet Laureates for the duration of the 2012/2013 school year. Projects and initiatives championed by the Teen Poet Laureate have included poetry readings on school campuses, open mic nights, readings at civic events, afterschool library poetry sessions and creative poems set to music in collaboration with the Firehouse Art Center's High School Music Collaborative

Past Teen Poet Laureates in the City of Pleasanton include:

- Arany Uthayakumar (2012-2013)
- Diana Fu (2012-2013) & (2013-2014)
- Nive Raghavan (2013-2014)
- Nicole Tsuno (2014-2015)
- Maya Lyubomirsky (2014-2015)
- Frances Tang (2015-2016)
- Kyler Juarez (2015-2016 and 2016-2017)
- Kyle Mular (2016-2017)
- Irene Sha (2016-2017 and 2017-2018)
- Nithya Swaminathan (2016-2017 and 2017-2018)
- Yasmin Ghaemmaghani (2017-2018)
- Varsha Vaidyanath (2017-2018)
- Sandra Chen (2018-2019)
- Kanchan Naik (2019-2020)

In March 2020, the Teen Poet Laureate recruitment process for the 2020/21 school year was paused due the COVID-19 pandemic. In February 2021, the Civic Arts Commission expressed interest in resuming the Teen Poet Laureate program.

DISCUSSION

City staff have evaluated the Teen Poet Laureate program for a virtual environment and are recruiting for the position in April 2021, with interviews scheduled for May 2021. Incoming high school juniors and seniors who enjoy writing, inspiring others and are interested in contributing to their community are being strongly encouraged to apply. As part of the process, the City is establishing a Teen Poet Laureate selection subcommittee comprised of Civic Arts and Library Commissioners, along with community members and staff, to review applications, interview candidates, and recommend candidates for the Teen Poet Laureate position.

City staff are marketing the recruitment through social media and print media and connecting with Pleasanton Unified School District to reach potential applicants. Once the Teen Poet Laureate has been selected, they will be invited to the joint Library and Civic Arts Commission meeting on Monday, May 24.

With the recommendation of the Civic Arts Commission and the Library Commission, the Teen Poet Laureate will read an inaugural poem at a City Council Meeting in June 2021 and will serve a term from October 2021 through May 2022.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION

Any other action as determined by the Civic Arts Commission.

Submitted by:



Tamara Whitney
Recreation Manager, Civic Arts & Community Programs

Attachments:

1. 2021-22 Teen Poet Laureate Application