

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 3, 2025



Call for Submissions: Seeking Stratford's 2026 Youth Poet Laureate

In partnership with Destination Stratford and Stratford Public Library

Stratford, November 3, 2025 — Destination Stratford and Stratford Public Library are once again partnering to select the next Youth Poet Laureate for the 2026 term.

The Stratford Poet Laureate Program celebrates the voices of literary and spoken word artists who enrich our community through poetry. Earlier this year, Quinn Mayer was appointed as Stratford's inaugural Youth Poet Laureate and is currently completing their one-year term. Reflecting on the experience, Quinn shared:

"I am so honoured to have been Stratford's first-ever Youth Poet Laureate. I am so thankful to have been involved in such a wonderful program, and to help shape it for my successors going forward."

David Stones, Stratford's inaugural Poet Laureate, continues to serve in his three-year term.

"Our destination brand states that '*the arts are what we are*' and I can't think of a better way to demonstrate this than through the Stratford Poet Laureate program," says Zac Gribble, Executive Director of Destination Stratford. "Youth have an incredibly important role to play in representing our community's unique culture, and kudos to Quinn Mayer on a fantastic job this year as the inaugural Youth Poet Laureate. It's exciting to see the Stratford Poet Laureate program prepare for its 2nd year with new opportunities for the next Youth Poet Laureate."

About the Youth Poet Laureate Position

The Youth Poet Laureate recognizes a young poet (ages 14–24) whose work reflects themes meaningful to Stratford-area youth. Serving as an ambassador for poetry, language, and the arts, this one-year position amplifies youth voices and encourages creative engagement with words and ideas.

Throughout the term, the Youth Poet Laureate will be invited to present their work at local events and help foster a deeper appreciation for poetry and the arts in Stratford and the surrounding region.

Important Dates

- November 3, 2025: Submissions Open
- November 30, 2025: Submissions Close

Eligibility Requirements

Applicants for the Youth Poet Laureate position must:

- Be nominated or submit a self-nomination.
- Meet the age requirements outlined for the position.
- Have a meaningful connection to Stratford and area.
- Be a poet, spoken word artist, or storyteller with an established or emerging body of work.
- Demonstrate a strong interest in poetry, storytelling, and the literary or performing arts.
- Be able to serve as an ambassador for literacy, poetry and the arts.
- Be willing to fulfill the responsibilities of the role.

Nomination & Application Process

All candidates must complete the **Poet Laureate Program Submission Form**, available at splibrary.ca/poetlaureate. Paper forms are available upon request.

Upcoming Event: Speaking Out – Workshop for Young Poets and Storytellers

Before concluding their term, current Youth Poet Laureate Quinn Mayer will host a final youth writing event with David Stones:

Saturday, November 15 | 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Speaking Out: Workshop for Young Poets and Storytellers

Open to youth in Grades 4–12, this workshop will explore the art of writing and performing poetry, offering young voices a chance to express themselves creatively through language.

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Media Contacts:

Krista Robinson, Stratford Public Library Chief Executive Office, 519-271-0220 x112 or krobinson@splibrary.ca

Zac Gribble, Destination Stratford Executive Director, 519-271-0220 or zac@visitstratford.ca