



Montgomery County Poet Laureate Program

The mission of MCPL is to recognize and promote excellence in poetry and a sense of accomplishment and pride among students, artists and individuals who participate in the program.

The program benefits the county by building a long-term infrastructure for literary advancements in our schools, our community and our homes.

MCPL Poet Laureate Competition, Celebrity Judge Poetry Workshop and Poetry Reading:

MCPL organizes and oversees an annual poet laureate competition to encourage creativity in our community and enrich the lives of all who participate. The competition is open to all residents eighteen years of age and older. Entrants must provide ten original poems in any style, form and length, published or unpublished. The submissions are judged anonymously by three recognized poets, two of which reside in the Delaware Valley, and a nationally (and in some cases, internationally) known poet, as Celebrity Judge.

The Award presentation, workshop and poetry reading are hosted as part of the LitLife event at Rosemont College in Bryn Mawr. The Poetry Workshop is conducted by the Celebrity Judge of the competition. College students, poets and writers attend to participate in poetry readings, learn about and discuss the craft of poetry writing. Attendees have the opportunity to receive feedback from an established, published poet. Participants are also invited to attend the formal awards presentation. Go to www.montcopoet.org for guidelines and entry form.

The objectives of the Montgomery County Poet Laureate Competition are:

1. To recognize and promote excellence in poetry in Montgomery County
2. To provide residents with a venue to submit their poetry and have it adjudicated by a respected panel of experts
3. To encourage creativity and, in so doing, expand literary advancements in the community

PoetryWITS (Writers in the Schools): Founded by 2008 Montgomery County Poet Laureate Elizabeth Rivers, the PoetryWITS Program has been established to showcase student writing and encourage poetry teaching. PoetryWITS offers various lesson plans for teachers, publishes student poetry online, and hosts a K-12 Youth Poetry Contest for Montgomery County (PA) residents in addition to the workshops.

The workshops are conducted by 3 poet laureates with approximately 60 students in attendance. Each one is based on a specific poem that is read and discussed with the class. Students then write, revise and illustrate their own poem with the encouragement and assistance of a published poet to guide them through the creative process. Students share their finished works at the conclusion of the workshop during a poetry reading and celebration. With parental permission, the student poems may be “published” online at www.PoetryWITS.com, which also includes lesson plans for teachers, parents and writers.

Forgotten Voices Poetry Group/Workshop: Led by Joanne Leva, founder of the MCPL Program, for over 25 years, the Forgotten Voices group is an opportunity for writers and poetry fans to share their favorite work. Many members write poetry, although writing is not a requirement to attend. We welcome all ages, abilities and interests and enjoy listening to what each member shares. Please come and read a poem by a poet you like or a poem you have written, or just come to listen! The only requirement is a love of poetry; please join us!

The Montgomery County Poet Laureate

Program (MCPL) is part of The Indian Valley Arts Foundation, a 501(c)3 organization, dedicated to providing the community with an opportunity to experience the arts, including poetry, prose, dance, drama, music and painting.

MCPL provides a diverse selection of programming for all ages to promote excellence in poetry and a sense of accomplishment and pride among students, artists and individuals who participate in the program.

MCPL believes that poetry knows no limits.

It appeals to every one of all ages, all cultures and all professions. Poetry crosses the barriers of handicapping conditions and unites all who experience the power of the words.

With the reduction of funding, schools have reduced or eliminated many of the arts programs that were once a standard part of the curriculum. MCPL provides students and teachers with a poetry supplement to the current curriculum with the PoetryWITS (Writers in the Schools) Program and the Forgotten Voices Poetry Group/Workshop.

These offered programs further assist students with learning about poetry, language and literacy development and provide teachers with lesson plans in support of learning based programs. MCPL is staffed entirely by volunteers and relies solely on the support of the philanthropic community for program funding.

The Forgotten Voices Poetry Group meets the first Saturday of each month from 1-3 pm in the Reading Room at the Indian Valley Public Library in Telford, PA. This event is free and open to the public.

Margins Panel: 2017 Poet Laureate, Chad Frame, hosts Margins, a traveling panel celebrating marginalized voices in the arts. The membership changes venue to venue, but the goal is the same-- to amplify those voices and consider how location relative to the mainstream informs their work. Personal accounts of race, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status, mental health, and many other factors facilitate a frank and necessary conversation. Each panelist gives a short presentation combining personal anecdotes and narrative with a reading or performance, giving perspective to their unique sound and style. At venues such as schools, youth centers, retirement homes, and many others, where the audience can most identify with these stories, Margins also offers time for Q&A and ongoing one-on-one mentorship.

Montco Poets' Wordshop: A workshop-style gathering for serious writers to share and discuss their work in a cooperative setting among peers. Participants have some prior workshop experience and are prepared to critically evaluate the work of others and accept critical evaluation from others. This group includes published, award-winning writers from the Bux-Mont area. The gatherings take place on the first Tuesday of every month at Main Street Pizza & Grille in Lansdale, PA. Participation is free, but patronage of the venue is encouraged. Public poetry readings are also scheduled. To be considered for the Montco Poets' Wordshop contact 2010 Montgomery County Poet Laureate, Grant Clauser with a brief bio through our website.

Online Poetry Professor with Dr. Christopher Bursk: This poetry writing workshop is held at Bucks County Community College, led by Dr. Christopher Bursk, recipient of NEA, Guggenheim, and Pew Fellowships, and the author of nine books. Go on the journey with us. Just turn to the workshop lesson plans under the LECTURE tab and follow along. Readings and prompts for poems are suggested.

Our mission is to make a venue for the exploration of poetry easily available and to create an on-line community of poets eager to challenge themselves and grow as writers.

The Traveling Poets Project: Led by the 2014 Montgomery County Poet Laureate, Kristina Moriconi, the Traveling Poets Project will provide ekphrastic (art-inspired) poetry writing workshops for kids at the middle school to high school level (ages 11 to 18). We will go to libraries, schools, museums, and community events to teach these workshops.

Poetry and Percussion: Performances by poet, Joanne Leva, and percussionist, John Mosemann, combine voice and drum, two of the oldest instruments of human expression, in new and provocative ways. Poetry & Percussion attempts to mix words and sounds to touch the heart, conjure images in the mind's eye, and stir feeling in the soul. Use of the listener's imagination is not only encouraged, but necessary to fully appreciate the performance. In this way, a meditative mood is created in which all participants embark on a collective journey inward.

Poetry Noir: Explore the universal moments presented or "spoken" in black-and-white films with poetry writing. A film clip is featured and the participant is challenged to observe the film and to capture the poetry evoked by the cinematic moments with words. For more information visit the website, www.PoetryNoir.com.

Student Poetry Noir: Developed as a resource for students to take part in the Poetry Noir challenges. The film clips that are selected universally speak to all age groups (obviously some in different ways than others). For more information visit the website at www.StudentPoetryNoir.com.



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