



City of
OAKLAND
California

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Tenth Oakland Youth Poet Laureate Announced

Myra Estrada, 16, rising junior at Oakland High School

Oakland, CA – Myra Estrada has been named the 2021 Oakland Youth Poet Laureate, winning a \$5,000 college scholarship after competing with [six other Finalists](#). The award was announced by Mayor Libby Schaaf on Friday evening following performances by the Finalists on [Facebook Live](#).



Ms. Estrada, going into her junior year at Oakland High School, will represent the Oakland community through poetry, media, and public appearances. She is on the Latino Honor Roll, and participates in many school clubs and college prep programs. She is a shy person and believes her poetry is a form of self-expression. She has been writing poetry since sixth grade when she won her first poetry contest and felt strong reading her poem. She felt as if what she was saying mattered and resonated with people.

Ms. Estrada says, “Being named Oakland Youth Poet Laureate gives me hope for my future and my generation. With my title I’ll strive to advocate for amplified youth voices and youth demands/wishes for the betterment of Oakland.”

[2021 OYPL Myra Estrada in conversation with 2018 and 2019 OYPL Finalist Monique Jonath](#)

This year, for the first time, two Vice Youth Poets Laureate were named. Oakland’s 2021 Vice Youth Poets Laureate are **Kaylan Black** and **Nadia Elbgal**.



Ms. Black is 15 years old and going into her junior year at Envision Academy of Art and Technology. She has been on the African American Honor Roll and Achievement, Honor Roll, a MLK Oratorical Festival participant since elementary school and a Junior Community Organizer with ACCE (**Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment**). She says, “What is astounding about poetry is everyone has a unique style. People can build bonds through this art. Poetry is what you make it.”

[2021 Vice OYPL Kaylan Black in conversation with 2019 Vice OYPL Eleanor Wikstrom](#)

News from:
Oakland Public Library

Oakland Youth Poet Laureate
Announced June 5

June 7, 2020
Page Two



Ms. Elbgal is 17 and going into her senior year at Berkeley High School. She is an actress, a playwright, and a singer as well as a poet. She mentors Yemeni students in OUSD elementary school and is an activist for the Yemeni community and the Muslim community. Her safe space is within her writing and when she says that poetry is how she sees the world, she means that she tries to find the flow in everything.

[2021 Vice OYPL Nadia Elbgal in conversation with 2019 OYPL Finalist Hayden Renato](#)

J. K. Fowler, 2021 OYPL Judge, founder and executive director of Nomadic Press and member of the City of Oakland's Cultural Affairs Commission says, "The 2021 Oakland Youth Poet Laureate Program's cohort of nominees and Finalists is what happens when pens are given to celestial hearts, brandished as love-painted claws to carve out truths of living in the Town and this world. The OYPL program continues to craft platforms for the voices of Oakland's youth, a youth who have always cast future out of the splintered rebar left behind by the previous generations and spun gold with our wise ancestral weavers. The future is bright in the hands of poets like Myra Estrada (OYPL), Kaylan Black, and Nadia Elbgal (Vice OYPLs)."

The Oakland Youth Poet Laureate program, in its tenth year, is run by Oakland Public Library Teen Services and is an unprecedented citywide effort to celebrate literacy through poetry and connect young writers to far-reaching opportunities. Each year, OPL accepts submissions from talented Oakland writers (ages 13-18) to be considered for the honor.

The Oakland Youth Poet Laureate, the Vice Youth Poets Laureate, and all Finalists are available for performances, talks, and workshops. Submit your booking requests at oaklandlibrary.org/yplbooking. For more information please visit oaklandlibrary.org/youthpoets or contact Sharon McKellar, Supervising Librarian for Teen Services, at 510-238-7613 or smckellar@oaklandlibrary.org.

Stay up to date on events and appearances with the Oakland Youth Poet Laureate on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) (@youthpoetlaureate) or at oaklandlibrary.org/youthpoets. The Oakland Youth Poet Laureate program is supported by a broad coalition of partner agencies across the Bay Area: Chapter 510, Write-to-Read and the Alameda County Library

About OPL

The Oakland Public Library is a part of the City of Oakland in California and has been in existence since 1878. Locations include 16 neighborhood branches, a Main Library, a Second Start Adult Literacy Program, the Oakland Tool Lending Library, and the African American Museum and Library at Oakland (AAMLO). The Oakland Public Library empowers all people to explore, connect, and grow.

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