STRATFORD'S YOUTH POET LAUREATE PROGRAM CONTINUES WITH A NEW APPOINTMENT

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(STRATFORD, ON) In support of the City of Stratford's Municipal Cultural Plan, Destination Stratford and the Stratford Public Library continue their partnership in the second year of the three-year Stratford Poet Laureate pilot program, proudly announcing a newly appointed Youth Poet Laureate.

The program partners are pleased to welcome Arlo Dunnem as the newly appointed Youth Poet Laureate for a one-year term. David Stones continues in his three-year term as Stratford's Poet Laureate.

"*A sincere thank you to the outgoing Youth Poet Laureate Quinn Mayer for their significant accomplishments during the inaugural year of this important community role*," said Zac Gribble, Executive Director, Destination Stratford. "*And sincere congratulations to Arlo Dunnem for stepping into the role with such enthusiasm and positivity. I look forward to witnessing Arlo's contribution to further developing the Youth Poet Laureate program, especially in creating additional opportunities for Stratford's youth to engage with the literary arts*."

Stratford's Poet Laureate Program will celebrate the contributions of literary and spoken word artists to Stratford's cultural life and will provide new opportunities for

our diverse and evolving community to gather and share Stratford stories with unique perspectives that reflect our past, represent our present, and help shape our future.

The poet laureate writes poetry about the area, composes poems for special events, participates in public performances, works with local poets and writers, and acts as a literary ambassador for the city and the region.

"*Having lived in Stratford my whole life, I've learned a great deal about Shakespeare. One thing that has always stayed with me is that he created nearly 1,700 words in his lifetime*," shares Arlo Dunnem, Stratford Youth Poet Laureate. "I*t's a shame that, out of all those words, he never invented one capable of capturing exactly how I feel about taking on this new role, because excited, grateful, happy, and eager simply do not do it justice*."

"*The Youth Poet Laureate role serves as a key pipeline to our community's young poets and storytellers*," says David Stones, Stratford's Poet Laureate. "*The ongoing enhancement of youth literacy and providing encouragement and inspiration to our young writers is key to the position. I loved working with and being a mentor to Quinn Mayer over the past year. Arlo's great for this role and I look forward to partnering with him during his tenure.*"

The Youth Poet Laureate will provide a strong youth voice and will reach out to other youth to inspire interest in poetry and the arts – particularly the literary arts. As an ambassador in this area, the Youth Poet Laureate will be invited to attend events to share works and increase youth engagement.

"As Youth Poet Laureate, I've had chances to share my love for the literary arts (and music!) through performances and workshops. And I could not be more thankful for the mentorship and support of David Stones, Stratford's inaugural Poet Laureate," says Quinn Mayer, outgoing Youth Poet Laureate. **"***I have learned so much over the past year… about poetry, about myself, and about the Stratford community. It's been a pleasure to serve as Youth Poet Laureate, and I'm so excited to see where this program goes in the future.*"

This initial Stratford Poet Laureate program is a three-year pilot project (January 2025 to December 2027) by Destination Stratford and Stratford Public Library, and is formally recognized by City of Stratford Council via the Community Services

department.

More details can be found online: visitstratford.ca/stratford-poet-laureate

For more information, please email hello@visitstratford.ca