

## NEWS RELEASE

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### City of Nanaimo announces new Youth Poet Laureate, Paige Pierce

#### Summary

The City of Nanaimo is pleased to announce Paige Pierce, a talented young writer and poet, has been appointed as Nanaimo's newest Youth Poet Laureate. In this role, she will serve as a "young people's poet", raising awareness of poetry and the positive impact the literary arts can have on community life.

Paige was appointed to the position of Youth Poet Laureate for her ability to engage and inspire community, as well as her innovative ideas regarding her vision for the position, and the future engagement of Nanaimo's young literary community. As she steps into the role, Paige hopes to develop a community of aspiring and practicing poets, providing opportunities to draft, refine, and share their work. She also plans to host readings and poetry cafe events to showcase the voices of young writers in Nanaimo.

"I stir the macaroni  
holding back a sob  
or maybe just a stomach ache  
that I haven't managed to cure  
mom and I FaceTime every night  
we categorize our mourning into  
'wimpy days'  
as if our heartache was prescribed by a mood swing  
or the agonies of womanhood  
and not the shadow of your essence  
that we keep hoping to see  
peaking around sullen corners"

In this excerpt from Paige Pierce's poem, "Nan's Pasta Recipe" (2024), she articulates the challenges and anxieties of many adolescents as they transition from childhood to adulthood, accompanied by reflections on family, love and grief.

The City's Youth Poet Laureate program is a connection to Nanaimo's youth, inspiring strong youth voices within our community. Mentored by the Poet Laureate, the Youth Poet Laureate will present original work to City Council and the community through a variety of civic events. They will also be responsible for organizing community-based youth poetry projects, including collaboration with local organizations such as the Nanaimo Harbourfront Library and Literacy Central Vancouver Island. Reaching a variety of audiences and encouraging peer to peer education and inspiration, the Youth Poet Laureate paves the way for future youth to engage on a civic level using their artistic voice. The Youth Poet Laureate is an advocate for poetry, language and the arts.

More on the City's Youth Poet Laureate program can be found on the City's website at <https://www.nanaimo.ca/parks-recreation-culture/poetry/youth-poet-laureate>.

**Strategic Link:** The Poet Laureate program aligns with the goals of the City of Nanaimo's City Plan by recognizing culture as a significant contributor to the city's quality of life, recognizing and promoting the role that culture and the creative sector play in the community with respect to community identity and quality of life, as well as fostering equitable opportunities for all community members of different ages, abilities, and backgrounds to create, engage, experience, and contribute to Nanaimo's arts and culture.

## Key Points

- An accomplished young writer and poet, Paige Pierce was appointed Nanaimo's newest Youth Poet Laureate by City Council on Dec. 18, 2023 for a two year term (2024-2026).
- Paige Pierce is an author, pre-service teacher, and university student. She currently studies at Vancouver Island University, where she is pursuing a Bachelor of Education degree with a dream of one day sharing her passion for reading and writing with future generations as a teacher.
- Reaching a variety of audiences and encouraging peer to peer education and inspiration, the Youth Poet Laureate paves the way for future youth to engage on a civic level using their artistic voice. The Youth Poet Laureate is an advocate for poetry, language, and the arts.

## Quotes

"The voices of youth in our city help shape the stories we tell as a community. Our Youth Poet Laureate program will continue to highlight the contributions of our youth, offering opportunities to hear these unique and resonant perspectives. I commend Paige Pierce on her appointment to this important position. We look forward to seeing her vision for the role come to life."

Tyler Brown  
Acting Mayor/ Councillor  
City of Nanaimo

"I am so excited to step into this role, as I know first-hand the way that poetry can change the lives of young people trying to navigate the tumultuous, delicate, and formative years that make up one's adolescence. I cannot thank the City of Nanaimo enough for giving me a platform and network of resources to begin to collect, nurture, and amplify the voices of youth in and around our community."

Paige Pierce  
Youth Poet Laureate  
City of Nanaimo

## Quick Facts

- At the age of 15, Paige self-published her first book, a collection of poetry titled, "Coloured Ink". She continues to write and has published seven books of poetry, including several Amazon best-sellers. Her work features topics that resonate regardless of age or experience, such as love, growing up, death and grieving, body image, friendship, travel and feminism.

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