



NEWS RELEASE
North Olympic Library System
2210 South Peabody Street
Port Angeles, WA 98362

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: March 8, 2023
Contact: Clair Dunlap, Youth Services Librarian
360.417.8500 x7734 or CDunlap@nols.org
Mark Ozias, Clallam County Commissioner
Mark.Ozias@ClallamCountyWA.gov
Re: Meet Jaiden Dokken, the first Clallam County Poet Laureate
Attached: *JaidenDokken.jpg*

The North Olympic Library System (NOLS), in partnership with Clallam County, is excited to announce that **Jaiden Dokken** has been named the **first Clallam County Poet Laureate**. To celebrate, community members are invited to the **inauguration event on Tuesday, April 18 at 6pm in the Port Angeles Main Library**, 2210 South Peabody St. Dokken will read a selection of their poems after opening remarks by Clallam County Commissioner Mark Ozias and NOLS librarian Clair Dunlap. The event will also be livestreamed on Zoom.

Jaiden Dokken, who uses the pronouns they/them, is a local writer, printmaker, ceramicist, cidermaker, and self-described highly persistent penpal. Dokken's work has been published in Fiction International, Algorithm, Muses and Vices, SpeakEasy, Superfroot Magazine, and Pile Press. They are an editor and reader for Perennial Press.

Experiences unique to the North Olympic Peninsula resonate in poems by Dokken, who grew up in Sequim and returned to live there as an adult. As Poet Laureate, they will bring poetry to residents across Clallam County by participating in events, leading workshops, and championing the community power of the written and spoken word. "This is the place I learned how to read and write, and where I found my voice through poetry," said Dokken.

A major goal of the Clallam County Poet Laureate program is to use poetry to bring a variety of voices and perspectives to culturally diverse audiences throughout the county, and to bring communities together through poetry. “I’m most eager to draw in the people who are absolutely convinced they do not like poetry,” said Dokken. “I know many folks that haven’t ever been exposed to a branch of poetry that resonates with them. But just like other art forms such as painting, pottery, or playing the guitar, poetry is not bound by a singular style. So if sonnets aren’t your thing, no worries! And for those of you who are already in love or at least in-like with poetry, I truly look forward to growing this community together.”

A committee of community arts leaders, practitioners, and enthusiasts from across the county selected Dokken from a pool of talented poets who submitted applications last fall. The inaugural position is a two-year term from April 2023 through March 2025, and comes with an annual stipend of \$5,000 funded by Clallam County in recognition of the appointed poet’s time and energy in participating in or hosting events, and to support the poet’s craft and practice.

For more information about this program, visit nols.org/poet, email PoetLaureate@nols.org, or call 360.417.8500.



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