



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW
NEVADA COUNTY POET LAUREATE
KAREN TERREY

Welcome! The Nevada County Poet Laureate Program is an initiative of Nevada County Arts Council in collaboration with Nevada County Board of Supervisors and Nevada County Libraries.

What is a Poet Laureate and what they do?

Poets are active listeners, bearing witness to our deepest truths, shaping culture, reflecting humanity, and inspiring change.

A poet laureate is someone chosen—originally by kings, now by communities—to represent a region. Poet laureates might compose poems to mark important moments, actively engage and support others to develop a love of poetry and its potential, and inspire literary initiatives of meaning to residents. *Laureate* refers to wearing a crown of *laurel leaves*, a symbol of honor in Ancient Greece for poets and heroes.

Our Nevada County Poet Laureate Program was inaugurated at [Sierra Poetry Festival](#) in 2017 in the presence of California Poet Laureate, Dana Gioia, and to mark the special designations by the state given to our California Cultural Districts. Most recently, California Poet Laureate Lee Herrick has joined us on stage and in our parks alongside Nevada County Poet Laureate, Kirsten Casey.



Laurel leaves, a symbol of honor in ancient Greece.

Kirsten Casey 2021–2025

Kirsten Casey is an active member of California Poets in the Schools and, after sixteen years, she is now regional coordinator. She has annually trained our county judges for [Poetry Out Loud](#) in the schools, and was founding coordinator for Nevada County Art Council's international children's poetry exchange, Dream a Difference, in 2017. Her first book of poetry, *Ex Vivo: Out of the Living Body*, was published by Hip Pocket Press in 2012. Her upcoming collection of poems explores historical and literary characters struggling with the use of social media in the modern world. In 2020, she co-edited Molly Fisk's "Academy of American Poet's Laureate" project, *California Fire and Water: a Climate Crisis Anthology*.

In welcoming Kirsten, we said farewell to former Poet Laureate Chris Olander. Chris spent 2020 saving the world through fresh new poems about nature, the climate, and social justice. Chris Olander's poem, *Monarch*, was sent to the Nevada County Board of Supervisors, to Governor Gavin Newsom, to local, state and national legislators, our State Parks, our Department of Fish and Wildlife, the National Park Service and an array of other national environmental groups.

Kirsten works in partnership to Nevada County Arts Council's Literary Arts Committee and Nevada County Libraries. You can learn more about Kirsten at kirstencasey.com.



Kirsten Casey



Chris Olander 2019–2021



Chris Olander (Photo: Jen Winders)

On April 27 2019 - at a passing of the laurels ceremony alongside Molly Fisk at [Sierra Poetry Festival](#) - we welcomed Chris Olander as our Nevada County Poet Laureate.

Chris is a poet and bio-educator, and has taught with California Poets in the Schools since 1984. He blends performance techniques with spoken word to create what he calls an 'Action Art Poetry - musical images phrasing to dramatize relative experiences – a poetry arising from oral and bardic traditions.' Chris Olander's debut book of poems is ***River Light***. Kirk Lumpkin says, "What has always impressed me about Chris Olander's poetry is how present, how kinetically alive the energies of nature are in it and of how the words dance in the breath and sinew of it."

"More dynamic than listening to a recording or reading, I become the poem. I use contemporary events to bring forth and reveal mythic themes and archetypes that social and religious institutions repress through duty, shame, routine and repetitive behaviors. For me, recognition of common archetypes re-establishes respect between humans and the others of nature and renews the integrity of all individual species within the community of a given place."

— CHRIS OLANDER

Welcome! The Nevada County Youth Poet Laureate Program is an initiative of Nevada County Arts Council in collaboration with Nevada County Board of Supervisors and Nevada County Libraries.

Welcoming Joey Henry

My name is Joey Henry and I am so excited to be Nevada County's first Youth Poet Laureate. I am passionate for writing as well as visual arts and I am a graduate of CSSSA 2024. I explore themes of spirituality, duality, suffering and the mundane into my work and see poetry as a sacred form of communication with others.

"I hope to use this role to encourage young people to openly share their thoughts, works, experience, and joy. I want local youth to have a place where their voices and creativity is heard and appreciated."


— JOEY HENRY





We thank the County of Nevada and Nevada County Libraries for their recognition of poetry as an essential community voice and vehicle for wellbeing.

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