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Poet laureates coming to Mississauga for spoken word and readings



Poet laureate

File photo

Mississauga's poet laureate Anna Yin is one year into a two-year term and feels a love of poetry is growing in the city.

Mississauga News

By Chris Clay

Anna Yin has been on the job as Mississauga's poet laureate for just over a year and her passion for poetry burns as brightly as ever.

Yin, who stepped into the two-year role in the summer of 2015, has used her time in the position to work towards achieving the four key objectives set out for her – serving as a literary ambassador, advocating for poetry and literary arts in Mississauga, raising the profile of local writers and also creating an artistic legacy through public readings and other events.

While she's penned several new poems and has helped stage a series of poetry events in the city, one of the projects she's particularly pleased with is a series of haiku walking tours she has held and continues to organize. The participants go for a tour of parts of Mississauga with her and are encouraged to write about what they see and experience.

"The walking tours open up people's minds and they write from the heart (inspired) by the peace and beauty of nature," said Yin, author of several books of poetry and a two-time MARTY award winner. "Haiku is a craft and it's not simple. We hope to get more people to respect it."

Yin said she's been working with Haiku Canada to see if the organization will hold its 40th anniversary celebrations next year here in Mississauga.

Meanwhile, queried as to what poetry can add to the lives of everyday Mississaugans, Yin said it's simple.

“I’ve found the poetry is a perfect tool to enlarge your view of the world and your own (emotions),” she said. “It helps you become more human and poetry can touch your heart.”

On Sept. 14, Yin is bringing in a number of other poet laureates to Mississauga for an event that will feature spoken word performances and poetry readings centred around the themes of music, sports, film and life. The evening begins with the spoken word performances led by Mississauga youth poet laureate Rebecca Zseder followed by readings from poet laureates Marty Gervais (Windsor), John B. Lee (Brantford), George Elliott Clarke (parliamentary) and Yin.

University of Toronto Mississauga professor and Governor General Award winner for poetry Richard Greene will chair the event that happens in the Central Library’s Noel Ryan Auditorium.

Meanwhile, Yin, who has also gone to several Mississauga schools to inspire youth with the power of poetry, is posing the question to residents – does poetry really matter? She’s hoping to hear back from the public and can be reached by emailing anna.yin@gmail.com.

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