

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 5, 2023

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, CA - High school students inspired the crowd with their powerfully written, original poetry and performances at the Santa Barbara County Education Office Poetry Slam on Thursday, May 4, 2023. Judges scored the performances based on performance elements such as enthusiasm, delivery, and facial expressions.

The 2023 Poetry Slam winner is:

Samantha McDonald, 10th grade, Ernest Righetti High School

Classic poem: "Hanging Fire" by Audre Lorde (see video clip [HERE](#))

Original poem: "Generational Burden"

Congratulations are also in order to Litzy Matematico, 10th grader at Ernest Righetti High School and Natalie Lancor, 11th grader at Ernest Righetti High School, who tied for second place.

The SBCEO Poetry Slam, which combines performance, writing, competition, and audience participation, is a program of the Santa Barbara County Education Office. SBCEO partnered with the team at the [Get Lit - Words Ignite](#), a Los Angeles-based nonprofit, to support teachers and students in learning about spoken word poetry and to provide the support and coaching to claim and create literary works while exploring meaningful topics that impact their world.

Ellen Barger, Associate Superintendent of SBCEO Curriculum & Instruction, said of the event: "Spoken word poetry provides students a stage to be unapologetic truth-tellers and to use the power of language and authentic performance to transcend human struggle and create beauty. It is art for collective healing."

"The students transformed written poems to a new level of brave artistry and creative expression," said County Superintendent of Schools Susan Salcido. "Congratulations and thank you to all the participants for sharing your poetry with our community."