



Wednesday 25 January 2017

Spread the Word funded £171,000 for Young People's Laureate Tour of outer London boroughs

It has just been announced that Spread the Word has been awarded £171,245 for The Young People's Laureate Tour 2017-18 by Arts Council England's Strategic Touring Fund. Working with library services in ten outer London boroughs and those with least engagement in the arts, it aims to inspire young people with poetry through the issues that most affect them.

The project will take place over two years, and will provide opportunities for young people to participate in poetry and arts production workshops, as well as offering poetry events in ten outer London boroughs featuring talented young poets alongside leading London poets. The project will be spearheaded in its first year by the Young People's Laureate for London, Caleb Femi.

Caleb Femi, Young People's Laureate for London, said:

"I am really excited to be part of Spread the Word's Young People's Laureate Tour in 2017. The project will be a great opportunity to bring together lots of young people from across the city through poetry, and I can't wait to meet them and work with them."

Rishi Dastidar, Chair of Spread the Word, said:

"I'm thrilled and delighted that Arts Council England are supporting Spread the Word's Young People's Laureate Tour. It's vital to us that as many young people as possible who might not have seen any poetry live before get to experience its power. And I'm also pleased as it means more young people get to see and enjoy Caleb Femi's unique talents. He is the right messenger for the transformative excitement that poetry provides."

Joyce Wilson, London Area Director, Arts Council England, said:

"This important project will reach young Londoners in the least engaged areas of our city by speaking their language. I'm pleased we've been able to support

Spread the Word for this tour, and look forward to seeing the Poet Laureates of the future it will certainly inspire.”

Anthony Hopkins, President, Association of London Chief Librarians, said:

“This successful bid to Arts Council England for the Young People’s Laureate Tour is another fine example of the Association of Chief Librarians (ALCL) and Spread The Word working in partnership. This project will enable high calibre events to take place in outer London borough libraries and will engage with new audiences.”

Project partners include the Association of London Chief Librarians, The Reading Agency, The Audience Agency, The Poetry Takeaway, A New Direction and Words of Colour.

Taking place over two years, the Young People’s Laureate for London tour will see activity take place in Bexley, Newham, Barking and Dagenham, Merton and Croydon in 2017, and in Brent, Redbridge, Bromley, Sutton and Hounslow in 2018.



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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. **Spread the Word** is London’s writer development organisation, helping London’s writers make their mark on the page, the screen and in the world. We kick start the careers of London’s best new writers, and energetically campaign to ensure mainstream publishing truly reflects the diversity of the city. We do this by supporting the creative and professional development of talent, by engaging those already interested in literature and those who will be, and by advocating on

behalf of both. www.spreadtheword.org.uk

2. The **Young People's Laureate for London**, currently funded by the Foundation for Future London, is an annual programme led and managed by Spread the Word that aims to give London's young people a voice through poetry. The Young People's Laureate Tour marks the expansion of the programme's youth outreach and a broadening of opportunities for young people across London, aiming to make a difference to the young people and the young poets of London.

3. Arts Council England's **Strategic Touring Programme** aims to give people better access to quality work in a range of venues to reach more people across the country, targeting places with low levels of art engagement and those that rely on touring for arts and culture. It welcomes applications for a wide range of arts on tour including, in particular, mid-scale theatre, inbound international work, and more work by and for people from diverse backgrounds.

4. The **Association of London Chief Librarians** (ALCL) is the regional network of the Society of Chief Librarians (SCL). SCL takes a leading role in the development of public libraries, through sharing best practice, advocating for continuous improvement on behalf of local people, and leading the debate on the future of the public library service. <http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/our-key-themes/culture-sport-and-tourism/arts-and-culture/networks/association-london-chief>

5. **Sue Wilkinson, Chief Executive, The Reading Agency**, said:
"We are delighted to be a partner in the Spread the Word Young Poet Laureate Tour, which will seek out and nurture new talent, creating cutting-edge poetry events and poetry hacks co-created and co-produced with young people. The Tour is a perfect fit with The Reading Agency's Reading Hack programme, led by young people aged 13 to 24 who do reading activities and volunteering, called hacks, to gain skills and experience."

The Reading Agency is the leading charity inspiring people of all ages and all backgrounds to read for pleasure and empowerment. Working with our partners, our aim is to make reading accessible to everyone. The Reading Agency is funded by the Arts Council. www.readingagency.org.uk

6. **Joy Francis, Executive Director, Words of Colour Productions**, said:
"Words of Colour Productions is excited to be part of this dynamic and inclusive Young People's Laureate Tour. After working on the Young People's Laureate's launch in 2016, this expansive programme enables laureate Caleb Femi to widen its creative impact across London. More importantly, the tour offers a great opportunity for young people to access poetry through and engage with their local libraries."

Words of Colour Productions is a social enterprise that has created original programmes for budding and established writers of colour - of all genres.

<http://www.wordsofcolour.co.uk>

7. **Steve Moffitt, Chief Executive of A New Direction**, said:

"The Young People's Laureate Tour is a really exciting programme, and one that A New Direction are proud to support, having worked with Spread the Word on the Young Poet Laureate for London programme since 2013. The tour will give a voice to young people in those areas of outer London where it can be hard to be heard, hard to engage and connect to arts and culture, and working with Libraries as local centres of cultural education is a fantastic opportunity. We look forward to working with all of the partners involved to support this amazing opportunity for young Londoners."

A New Direction is London's flagship cultural education agency, helping London create, think and learn. <https://www.anewdirection.org.uk>

8. **The Poetry Takeaway** is the world's first, purpose-built mobile poetry emporium.

<http://thepoetrytakeaway.com>