



Tuesday, May 16, 2023

Contact: Donato DiRenzo

Communications Coordinator

(585) 336-7202 or ddirenzo@senecazoo.org

Seneca Park Zoo Announces *Poetry Takes Wing*: A Nature Poetry Contest Celebrating the Beauty of the Natural World in Partnership with Writers & Books

Rochester, N.Y. – Seneca Park Zoo is excited to announce "Poetry Takes Wing," a nature poetry contest that invites poets of all ages and backgrounds to share their creativity and appreciation for the wonders of the natural world. Submissions will be accepted from May 13 to August 15.

Poetry Takes Wing aims to foster a deeper connection between participants and nature through the art of poetry. By engaging with the beauty and diversity of the animal kingdom and the natural environment, poets will have the opportunity to express their thoughts, emotions, and observations in verse, creating a captivating tapestry of words that celebrates the wonders of our world.

"Putting pen to paper to write about a bird, or nature, requires connecting with that bird, or its movement, or how it makes you feel," said Seneca Park Zoo Society President and CEO Pamela Reed Sanchez. "Our intent with *Poetry Takes Wing* is for people of all ages and backgrounds to connect with nature and find their voice to express their connection. It is only when we fall in love with the living world that we will feel moved to protect it."

The contest is co-sponsored by and in partnership with Writers & Books.

Writers & Books' executive director Alison Meyers says, "Our team is thrilled to co-sponsor '*Poetry Takes Wing*,' an exciting opportunity for Rochester residents of all ages and

backgrounds to activate their inner poet and deeply explore our place as humans in the natural world. Seneca Park Zoo's embrace of the nexus between creative writing and nature shines a light on an 'artful lives' principle articulated by National Endowment for the Arts Chair Maria Rosario Jackson: 'The arts are most impactful when they exist not in a bubble, in isolation, but in connection to other dimensions of our lives, our communities, towns, and cities—at the intersections of... health, education, community and economic development, transportation, the environment, and more.'"

Key Details of the *Poetry Takes Wing* Contest:

Taking inspiration from 30th anniversary of World Migratory Bird Day, submissions should reference a bird or birds in some way and be grounded in an ethos of conservation.

Submissions in both English and Spanish are welcome. There is no fee to enter, but all entries must be submitted by midnight on August 15, 2023. Winners will be notified in September.

Several poetry writing workshops will be offered over the next months at various Monroe County libraries, Writers & Books, and at Seneca Park Zoo.

Age Categories

Youth: Open to poets aged 12 and under.

Teen: Open to poets aged 13 to 17.

Emerging Adult Writer: Unpublished poets, ages 19 and above

Published Adult Writer: Poets published in print and/or online, ages 19 and above

Submission Guidelines

Only poem per poet may be submitted, and the poem must be the submitter's original work, unpublished in print or online, with a maximum length of 500 words. Poems must reference a bird or birds in some way, though the word "bird" or the name of a species of bird is not required. Full submission guidelines, including the link to upload your poem, can be found at senecaparkzoo.org/poetrytakeswing.

Judging and Prizes

Panelists are experienced literary arts practitioners, including poets, authors, educators, librarians, arts administrators, and other relevant professionals.

Up to three Honorable Mentions in each category will receive recognition and various other opportunities. One Winner in each category receives all Honorable Mention benefits stipulated, plus:



- A selection of age-appropriate books of poetry, provided by Writers & Books
- An invitation to read on the Main Stage of Writers & Books' Rochester Reads Festival on October 28, 2023
- A professionally produced broadside of their winning poem to frame and display

Please see website for full details and contest rules: senecaparkzoo.org/poetrytakeswing

Internationally, and in our own backyard, Seneca Park Zoo plays a key role in species survival. Chartered as an educational institution in 1957 by New York State, the Seneca Park Zoo Society plays an integral role in supporting Monroe County, the owners and operators of the Zoo. Together, we are working to bring animals back from the brink of extinction.

Writers & Books, 740 University Avenue, Rochester, NY, promotes reading and writing as lifelong activities for people of all ages and backgrounds to enrich their lives and the intellectual, social, and cultural vibrancy of their communities. Incorporated as a 501(c)3 nonprofit in 1981, the organization engages youth and adults with the literary arts through writing workshops, readings, presentations, and intersectional activities. Writers & Books owns and operates Ampersand Books, an in-house independent bookstore, and Gell: A Finger Lakes Creative Retreat, sited on 24 acres in Naples, NY.