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Contact:

Bruce Isaacson

(702) 205-7100

events@poetrypromise.org



Applications Open for the 2026 John Oliver Simon Award Celebrating Student Poets

Las Vegas, NV (May 12, 2026) – The 2026 **John Oliver Simon Award** is officially open for submissions, inviting emerging poets to share their voices and imaginations. In its latest cycle, the award continues to celebrate poetic talent in students as they navigate their transitional years.

This year's schedule will unfold in two rounds, designed to support growth and creativity through revision and performance opportunities. All submissions are judged anonymously. Notable working poet **Rodney J. Lee** will serve as judge of Round 1.

Key Dates for 2026:

- **May 12** – Round 1 submissions open.
- **September 18** – Round 1 submissions close.
- **Week of October 5** – Rodney J. Lee selects the top three finalists.
- **October 16** – Round 2 submissions due from the top three finalists.
- **October 30** – Poetry Promise Board selects award winners.
- **Saturday, November 14** – Community reading features award winners at **Winchester Cultural Center** (3130 Mcleod Dr, Las Vegas, NV 89121) from 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm.

About the Award:

Named after **John Oliver Simon**, a passionate educator and celebrated poet dedicated to bilingual literacy and youth writing, the Award aims to spotlight new voices with a strong personal vision and a love of language.

"This award isn't just about a single poem. It's about encouraging growth and recognizing the courage it takes to share your truth at a young age," says a spokesperson for the program.

Winners will earn public recognition, perform at a community event, and interact with established writers and educators. The competition also serves as a way to build a

supportive community of emerging creatives and to encourage their continued growth in literature and beyond.

Poets interested in applying should prepare to submit original work starting **May 12, 2026**. Please complete and submit the simple application available [here](#) or in the Scholarships tab at <https://poetrypromise.org>. The final reading on **Saturday, November 14th** will feature the winners alongside leading local poets, showcasing their work and honoring their journey.

For questions, email awards@poetrypromise.org with “**JOS AWARD**” in the subject line.

For media inquiries or more information about Poetry Promise, contact:

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More information about this program on our website:

<https://poetrypromise.org/scholarships/john-oliver-simon-award/>