

Poetry Rocks! returns to celebrate students' creativity

Tim Keller — For the Comet | Posted: Thursday, April 23, 2015 10:00 am

RATON – Celebrating the 100-year anniversary of its first show, the Shuler Theater will present five shows over four days beginning Friday evening at 6 p.m. with its 5th annual presentation of Poetry Rocks!, a free community show celebrating student creativity and expression.

Throughout two weeks of late April, National Poetry Month, Raton High School hosts three visiting “poets in the schools” that work intensively with students to develop student writing, creativity, expression, and public speaking skills. Each student gets five or more class periods to work with the poets during daily English classes. The program culminates with the all-day Poetry Marathon in the school library, where students get up to share their new poems in front of large audiences. Friday’s performances mark the school’s 9th annual Poetry Marathon.

With the addition of the Poets-in-the-Schools program, the bar was raised as many students elected to follow their Poetry Marathon performances with a show at the Shuler. The poet-educators give two performance workshops for the students planning to mount the Shuler Theater stage Friday night.

The poets themselves will emcee Friday night’s event and join the students in sharing some favorite poetry performances. This year’s poets-in-residence include Manuel Gonzalez of Albuquerque, celebrating his fifth year in the Raton program, and Esmé Rodriguez Vaandrager of Albuquerque, back for her third year. Joining them this year is Joan Logghe of Española, former Poet Laureate of Santa Fe.

Among the highlights of the Shuler Theater shows are presentations of new group poems produced when each poet works with a small group of students to create a new performance piece just for the Shuler.

Raton High School’s Poets-in-the Schools program is funded by grants from National Endowment for the Arts and New Mexico Arts, with local matching funds provided by The Whited Foundation and The



Poets in the Schools - Raton 2015

Poet-educators Joan Logghe of Española, Manuel Gonzalez of Albuquerque and Esmé Rodriguez Vaandrager of Albuquerque (from left) have spent two weeks working intensively with Raton High School students to develop their skills in writing, creativity, expression, and public speaking. The poets will join their students on the Shuler stage Friday night for a free show of favorite new poems.

Sloat-Prince Foundation.

Rachel Patty, in her third year of participating in the local program, travels to Washington, D.C., next week to represent New Mexico in the Poetry Out Loud national recitation contest sponsored by the NEA and Poetry Foundation.

Friday's Poetry Rocks! show will be followed at 8 p.m. by a reserved-seat a cappella concert by Minneapolis singing group Six Appeal, presented by Raton Arts & Humanities Council. In celebration of the centennial of its first show—"The Red Rose" on April 27, 1915—the Shuler Theater will then present a free musical variety show called "The Centennial Rose" on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, with Monday night's 7 p.m. show followed by a champagne reception on the occasion of the Shuler's 100th birthday.

The four-day celebration ends with champagne but begins with poetry in a free show Friday evening at 6 p.m. as the Shuler opens its 100th birthday party with a celebration of its youth.