

ALL CITY Teen Poetry Slam Festival Registration Packet 2009

WordPlay Teen Writing Project at the Big Buddy Program builds literary culture and community among diverse teens through poetry workshops, spoken word events, publications and educator resources. We teach the craft of poetry and self-expression to teens and create spaces where artistic and civic voices can be amplified.



WordPlay is made possible by generous support of JPMorgan Chase Foundation, The Louisiana State Arts Council through the Louisiana Division of the Arts through the National Endowment of the Arts, New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation, the United Way, and many other individuals and organizations that support the ongoing work of the Big Buddy Program.

Dear Educators and Youth Advocates:

WordPlay at Big Buddy Program invites you to register now for the 3rd annual ALL CITY: The WordPlay Teen Poetry Slam Festival! The festival will run from April 9th, 23rd-26th locations TBA. This promises to be an epic event, centering on the powerful poetic expression of the youth in our community.

WHAT IS A POETRY SLAM FESTIVAL? A poetry slam is a fun and friendly poetry competition, in which judges hold up scores after each performance. Individual and group performances are scored and counted as the teams overall score. It is a powerful way to engage youth in writing, performance and positive self-expression. It is also, like a sporting event, a great way to bring together communities in safe spaces to celebrate youth voices. The ALL CITY poetry slam festival will feature an opening ceremony for participants, writing workshops, preliminary slam bouts, the grand slam finals, an alternates' open-mic, and featured performances by some of the best spoken word artists in the world!

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE? Any group of 4-6 poets who are between 13-19 years old can create a team. The team must have an adult mentor and represent some kind of entity, such as a school, church, library, or community organization.

WHAT IF I DON'T KNOW HOW TO COACH A SLAM TEAM? WordPlay is here to support you. We will hold workshops to train adult mentors and help team members with their performances. Our staff is on hand to consult with you about how to pull a team together and prepare them for the festival.

HOW DOES THE COMPETITION WORK? "The points are not the point. The poetry is the point." WordPlay de-emphasizes competitiveness, using the slam format to develop a healthy, engaged youth community. Each team will compete in two separate preliminary bouts (4-team slams) in hopes of advancing to finals. The top team will be

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crowned All CITY '09 champs and the top scoring 6 individuals will represent Baton Rouge in July, 2009 at the Brave New Voices International Poetry Slam Festival in Chicago, IL. Attached are the slam schedule, registration form and rules and guidelines. Registration deadline: January 30, 2009. Please call if you need any further assistance.

Sincerely,

WordPlay Teen Writing Project
at Big Buddy Program
wordplaybr@gmail.com
225.388.9737

GUIDE TO GETTING A TEAM TO ALL CITY SLAM FESTIVAL

Step 1. Recruitment

Round up 4 to 6 young people interested in poetry and/or performance. You can simply invite interested youth to sign up, hand-pick them yourself or have a poetry slam at your school/organization and crown the top 6 as your team. Our staff is more than happy to talk you through this process via phone or email.

Step 2. Registration

Mail in or drop off your registration form and fee to Big Buddy Program's WordPlay Teen Writing Project. **We can only take 12 teams this year, so hurry! January 16, 2009 is the deadline.** By filling in this form, you are taking responsibility as the adult sponsor/point of contact for the team.

Step 3. Notification

We will let you know within a week or two if your registration was one of the first 16. If it was not, you will be put on an alternate list and your team will still be able to participate in some capacity. So, regardless, you should get busy practicing.

Step 4. Rehearse, Rehearse, Rehearse!!!

Schedule rehearsals. We suggest you meet once or twice a week to hone writing skills, watch video footage of seasoned youth and adult poets, and later to hone performance skills. Note: There is no such thing as too many rehearsals. Make them fun and they will come. (Hint: Food is great bait!) We also suggest talking seriously with youth about the commitment they are making when they join the team and putting in some consequences for not honoring the commitment. It never hurts to have a few alternates in the wings, too.

Create a timeline for the team that includes the following deadlines: first draft of poems written, feedback given on all poems, poems revised, poems memorized, performance rehearsals.

Step 5. Learn and Teach

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Attend the Coaches Meeting and Training (this is mandatory) on Feb 2 from 10-Noon (location TBA). We will also offer two optional slam clinics for teams on February 28 and March 21 (times and locations TBA).

Crack open the packet that we will send you and carefully read over all festival information, rules, and *The Spirit of the Slam*. Familiarize yourself with all the materials and then share them with the team. (Clarification on all festival info is always only a phone call or mouse click away.)

Step 6. Communicate

Regularly check your email for rule changes, event announcements, and team/coach workshops. If you don't hear from us, CALL US at 225.388.9737 ext. 207.

Step 8. Permissions and Waivers

Make sure you get every member of your team signs codes of conduct contracts and gets permission forms signed by a parent/guardian. All forms are due by opening ceremonies on March 15th, 2008.

For more info contact: Donney Rose, ALL CITY Teams Coordinator, 1415 Main Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, wordplaybr@gmail.com work# 225.388.9737 ext. 207

ALL CITY 2009
The WordPlay Teen Poetry Slam Festival
FESTIVAL RULES AND GUIDELINES

How the *WordPlay Slam* Works:

- The 2009 ALL CITY Teen Poetry Slam Festival will take place on April 9, 23, 24, 25 & 26th. Locations TBA. See the schedule for more information.
- Each team has 4-6 members, aged 13-19.
- Each team competes in two preliminary bouts.
- Preliminary bouts and the finals bout will have four rounds in which four teams will compete.
- At the beginning of a bout, each team will send up a member to draw letters for order.
 - 1st round: ABCD
 - 2nd round: BCDA
 - 3rd round: CDAB
 - 4th round: DABC

Note: A team E will be inserted after D if five teams are slamming in one bout.

- A poet will perform in an attempt to warm-up the judges before the first round begins. We call this poet the "sacrificial goat," because the judges' first scores are usually lower than they should be. This poet is not competing in the slam, just helping it get started.
- The four top-ranking teams will compete in the grand slam finals.
- The six top ranking individuals whose teams did not qualify for finals will also advance to finals and perform as individuals between the four rounds.
- Slam is a game. A mixed panel of artists, educators, youth and audience members judges each bout. Judges are in no way affiliated with the teams who participate. Judges are given loose criteria for judging poems according to the strength of the performance and the strength of the written text. (Warning: Judges will probably not be swayed by good performances alone. Great writing is the essential foundation of every great performance, so perfect that page before you step on that stage!)

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- Judges are not experts and we do not control them in any way. They will score according to their own gut. A slam is an arbitrary game. Sometimes great performances do not score highly, and that is just the nature of the game (and life).
- At finals night, the six highest-scoring poets (pulled from both the teams and individuals) will be invited to form an ALL STARS team that will travel to Brave New Voices, National Teen Poetry Festival in Chicago, IL from July, 2009. The highest-scoring team will be hailed as the 2009 ALL CITY Championship Team and take home the championship trophy.
- WordPlay staff will coach the ALL STARS team for BNV. If adult mentors or other youth would like to attend, they will need to make separate arrangements to attend that festival. Baton Rouge may only send one team to compete, however.

WordPlay Slam Rules:

- There must be at least one team member, coach or mentor present at the coaches' meeting on February 7, 2009 from 10-Noon. Location TBA. Mark your calendars now!
- All teams must participate in CYPHER NIGHT on April 9, 2009 from 6:30-8:30 PM. Mark your calendars now!
- Participants must be between 13-19 years old.
- Participants must be sponsored by a school or organization and have an adult mentor.
- Poems cannot be repeated until the finals bout. This means that each team must have at least 8 poems in their repertoire.
- No poet can perform twice in an individual slot during ANY one bout, but can any poet can perform in group pieces at any time.
- It is the team's choice whether they send up an individual or a group piece at any given point in the bout.
- A group poem MUST be written collaboratively by all of the performers presenting the piece on stage.
- No profanity. Scores will be penalized for profanity. This rule is at the discretion of slam organizers, who will make every effort to be fair and protect the integrity of the festival. If you are unsure if what you will be doing is or isn't profanity, ask ahead of time to err on the side of caution.
- Content matter may not exceed a PG-13 rating (no excessive violence, sexually explicit content and /or language degrading to any group of people). Failure to heed the PG-13 rating will result in disqualification. Again, this rule is at the discretion of slam organizers, who will make every effort to be fair and protect the integrity of the festival. If you are unsure if what you will be doing is or isn't PG-13, ask ahead of time.
- No poem may exceed 3 minutes, 10 seconds in length. Time penalties will be applied. After 3 min., 10 seconds, ½ of a point will be subtracted for every 10 seconds the poem goes over. (3:10-3:20 = 0.5 deduction, 3:20-3:30 = 1.0 deduction, 3:30-3:40 = 1.5 deduction, etc.) There will be a timekeeper in each bout. Only the timekeeper's stopwatch will be recognized by the bout manager.
- Each participant must perform original writing. Participants that plagiarize will have the score for said poem disqualified.
- Individual poets cannot do more than one individual poem within any one bout. Though a poet may go up multiple times within group pieces within a bout. There may be between 2-4 performers in a group piece.

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- Props, costumes, and/or musical accompaniment (except that made by the body) may not be used in the slam. Be careful about this rule. Your score for that piece will be thrown out if you break it this rule. A prop or costume is anything that other poets in the competition don't have access to, including things the poet is wearing or paper they are holding. Do not use these in any way in your poem (Don't tear your paper, don't use it as a veil, point to your hat, tug on your collar, wave your napkin, etc.) You may use the stage, the mic, or whatever is already onstage when you get there.
- Only one team per school/youth organization (for example, one high school may not send four teams to slam). Poets in the slam should be chosen to represent the organization or school, which means they must be an enrolled participant.
- Every participant must be physically present and checked in at least 30 minutes before all of their bouts begin.
- All teams are required to attend festival workshops. Failure to do so is grounds for disqualification, which is at the discretion of festival organizers.
- No fighting, drugs, or alcohol in any way. Participants violating this rule will be disqualified automatically.

WordPlay Slam Recommendations:

- Poets are NOT penalized for reading their poems off paper during competition. However, we strongly encourage you to memorize the poems you will compete with. Audiences generally respond well to eye contact.
- Having six team members is encouraged, in case anyone drops out. You have to have 4 members to have a team.
- Performances will be judged on both written and performance qualities. Keep this in mind when preparing.
- Rehearse! Be certain that each team member is audible and understandable. Practice with a microphone and mic stand, if possible. Rehearsals should be as productive, supportive, and stress-free as possible. (50% hard work and 50% FUN!)
- A group poem is any single piece that is written AND performed by more than one team member. Duets are group pieces that also pack a mean punch and are usually easier to coordinate and quicker to prepare. They can often take shape simply by one poet inserting his/her stanzas into the body of another poet's solo poem.
- Be respectful of yourself and the youth writing community and the group you represent.
- We will follow the rules we have established, please do not expect them to be flexible.
- We encourage you to not take the competition so seriously that you do not listen and learn from the other poets. A Spirit of the Slam award will be given to the team who demonstrates the most support for other teams. That team will be given an opportunity to perform a poem on the finals stage.
- If you have registered and find out later that you will not be able to attend, please notify organizers ASAP so an alternate team can have the chance to participate in the slam.

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Big Buddy Program presents
ALL CITY 2009:
The WordPlay Teen Poetry Slam Festival
TEAM REGISTRATION FORM - DUE JANUARY 30, 2009

Name of School/Organization _____

Name of Adult Sponsor/Point of Contact _____

Mailing
Address: _____

_____ (zip)

Telephone numbers of sponsor:

_____ (1) _____ (2)

Email of Sponsor _____

Check here if email is not a good way to reach you _____

Comments, needs, suggestions: _____

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LIST TEAM MEMBERS' NAMES: (YOU MAY CHANGE NAMES OUT AS NEEDED)

1. _____ Age _____
2. _____ Age _____
3. _____ Age _____
4. _____ Age _____
5. _____ Age _____
6. _____ Age _____

**A team must have a minimum of four members and can have a maximum of six.
We recommend six in case some members drop out.**

Submit this form with a \$50 registration fee (payable to Big Buddy Program) to:

WordPlay at Big Buddy Program, 1415 Main Street, Baton Rouge, La. 70802

Contact us if you have any questions or need to request the fee be waived for your group.

FAX: 225.346.8441 PHONE: 225.388.9737 ext. 207

WEB: www.wordplaybr.com

EMAIL: wordplaybr@gmail.com

All City Teen Poetry Slam Festival 2009
Dates to Mark on Your Calendar

Friday, January 16th – Registration Forms and Fees Due to Big Buddy Program office.

Saturday, February 7th – (10-Noon) MANDATORY Coaches Meeting & Training at Belfair “Free Dreams” Teen Center, 4390 Fairfields Avenue. A selected representative from each team must attend.

Saturday, Feb 28th – (1:00 PM - 4:00 PM) All City Clinic #1 for Teams (This is chance to sharpen your writing and performance skills under the tutelage of some of the most successful slam artists of all time!) at Belfair “Free Dreams” Teen Center, 4390 Fairfields Avenue.

Saturday, March 21st – (9:00 AM - Noon) All City Clinic #2 for Teams (Another chance to sharpen your writing and performance skills under the tutelage of some of the most successful slam artists of all time!) at Belfair “Free Dreams” Teen Center, 4390 Fairfields Avenue.

Thursday, April 9th – (6:30 – 8:30 PM) All City Cypher Night MANDATORY for Teams, location TBA. This evening is the opening ceremonies of the festival, complete with community-building and fun.

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Thursday, April 23th – (6:30 – 8:30 PM) All City Preliminary Bout #1, location TBA. The teams to compete in each bout will be announced at the coaches' meeting on 2/7/09.

Friday, April 24th

Morning- exact times and location TBA- All City Preliminary Bouts #2 & #3.. NOTE- This is on a school-day, please plan to bring your teams and we'd also love you to bring a field trip from your school!

Afternoon- exact times and location TBA- All City Workshops and/or Panel Discussion. This is for team only and is mandatory for all teams participating in the festival.

Evening- exact times and location TBA All City Preliminary Bouts #4 & #5..

(This is a long day, but we will build in some breaks!)

Saturday, April 25th

Morning- exact times and location TBA- All City Preliminary Bout #6..

Afternoon- exact times and location TBA- All City Workshops and/or Panel Discussion. (This is for team only and is mandatory for all teams participating in the festival.) followed by the 2nd Annual ALL CITY Block Party- exact time and location TBA

Sunday, April 26th

ALL CITY GRAND SLAM FINALS (evening, exact time and location TBA)