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The Word On The Street Toronto Showcases Youth Literary Talent

July 10, 2015 [Toronto, Ontario] --- The Word On The Street Toronto Book and Magazine Festival will be providing more opportunities than ever for teens to share and grow their literary passion and creativity at The Word On The Street's **Youth Launchpad**, a new stage debuting at the festival's **Harbourfront Centre** location on September 27th, 2015.

Hosted for its first year in 2014 at the Toronto International Book Fair, the **Inspire Teen Reads book pitch competition** will find a new home at The Word On The Street. Organized entirely by teenagers themselves, Inspire Teen Reads challenges 13 to 18-year-old competitors to convince a panel of publishing industry expert judges and the audience to pick up the books they will champion through 5-minute prose, poetry, or spoken word pitches.

"Inspire Teen Reads breaks the stereotype of the quiet bookworm and gives students like me a chance to voice our passion for books," says 2014 first place winner Ioana Burtea. "From reciting Seussian rhymes in front of my favourite childhood authors, to spending hours talking with my fellow competitors about contemporary fiction, I loved every moment!"

Video or written submissions are welcome from August 15th to September 17th. More information can be found at www.inspireteenreads.com.

The Youth Launchpad will also showcase the **Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Student Nonfiction Writing Contest**. Drawing from the prestigious \$60,000 Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Nonfiction guidelines, the student contest aims to inspire talented young writers to pursue their craft. The grand prize is \$2,500 and a trip to Toronto to attend the annual nonfiction prize gala, as well as \$1,000 for the winner's school. The Writers' Trust receives 400 submissions annually from grade 9 – 12 students across Canada. 2014 winner **Ashley Ash** will read from her powerful essay "[No One's Girl](#)," about her experience growing up in foster care.

"We are excited to celebrate our talented student contest winner on The Word On The Street youth stage. As she shares her winning work, we hope other young writers find themselves inspired to pursue their craft," says Mary Osborne, Writers' Trust of Canada Executive Director. Visit writerstrust.com/students for full contest details.

Visitors to The Word On The Street's Youth Launchpad can also see returning festival favourites **BAM! Youth Poetry Slam** led by the award winning spoken word artist **Patrick de Belen**. Local teen talent will also be invited to jump on stage and share their spoken word in the **Youth Spoken Word Showcase** for poets between the ages of 12 to 19. Those interested in participating can visit the festival's [website](#) for more information, or email programming@thewordonthestreet.ca.

The Youth Launchpad at The Word On The Street is supported by funding from the [Celebrate Ontario](#) program.

About The Word On The Street:

Each September, in the cities of Toronto, Halifax, Lethbridge, Saskatoon and Kitchener, The Word On The Street unites the country in a national celebration of literacy and the written word. Annually attracting more than

200,000 visitors, [The Word On The Street Toronto](#) is the largest book and magazine festival in Canada. This year's event takes place on Sunday, September 27th, at **Harbourfront Centre**, in association with International Festival of Authors (IFOA).

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