

P O E T R Y



F O U N D A T I O N

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**Poetry Foundation and Chicago International Children's Film Festival
Launch "Reel Poetry" Initiative**

CHICAGO — The Poetry Foundation and the Chicago International Children's Film Festival at Facets Multi-Media are proud to announce a partnership to produce a unique three-part pilot initiative that engages children as audiences, aesthetes, and appreciators of both poetry and film.

"Film is a highly concentrated, image-based art form that has a great deal in common with poetry," states Josh Flanders, program manager of Facets. "We're very excited about this collaboration because it gives us a chance to recognize excellence and artistry in poetry-inspired films and encourage the creation of great films for children based on poetry."

"Both organizations share the belief that poetry is one of the most magical and compelling art forms," says Anne Halsey, media coordinator for the Poetry Foundation. "This is a very natural collaboration and a terrific way to help children discover great poets and poetry as part of a medium they already know and love."

During the 2007 Festival, which runs October 18 through November 8, and through the end of the year, the CICFF and the Poetry Foundation will launch two programs, *Reel Poetry* and the *Dream Screen Animated Poetry Workshop*, as well as announce the creation of a Poetry Foundation Film Prize in 2008.

Reel Poetry is a dynamic program of short films that both celebrate the art of poetry and make its complex beauty and artistry relatable to a young audience. Supported by a special curriculum for teachers and facilitated by trained media educators, the program is designed for upper-level elementary and middle school students and has already caught the attention of public school teachers.

"Children actually memorize poems before coming to the *Reel Poetry* screening, and the teachers love it!" says Flanders. The organizers believe that memorization helps children build a connection to poetry and stimulates their curiosity.

"We've been thrilled by the response of teachers to the *Reel Poetry* program. It was one of the first programs to sell out, and it's running several times in post-festival screenings. I think we're getting Chicago Public Schools to focus on poetry in an entirely new way," said Lauren Whalen, media education coordinator for CICFF. "The funniest comment I heard was from a teacher whose students asked, 'So ... we need to memorize poems to go to the movies?'"

The *Dream Screen Animated Poetry Workshop* integrates a new emphasis on poetry into the foundation of the CICFF's acclaimed animation workshop. The program kicks off on October 18, when 20 children at Prescott Elementary School start participating in a "poetry immersion" program that will lead to the production of their own short animated films based on a cherished poem.

At the 2007 Closing Night Award Gala, John Barr, president of the Poetry Foundation, will announce the 2008 Poetry Foundation Film Prize, celebrating the best film based on poetry. With a cash prize of \$10,000, this prestigious award will go directly to the filmmaker whose use of verse in film opens new artistic vistas and inspires children to appreciate poetry.

About Facets Multi-Media and the Chicago International Children's Film Festival

Founded in 1975, Facets Multi-Media is the nation's leading conservator of great film and one of America's foremost cinematheques, screening 300 films a year and hosting tributes, retrospectives and premieres of films created by artists across the globe. Called "a temple of great cinema," by critic Roger Ebert, Facets' mission is to present and preserve high quality, multi-cultural cinema for diverse audiences and to offer seminars, classes, and a broad spectrum of educational and cultural programs for adults and children. The most important of these programs is the Chicago International Children's Film Festival (CICFF), the largest festival of films for children in North America and the first juried, competitive festival of children's film in the United States. The CICFF is the only children's film event to be recognized by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences as an "Academy qualifying" festival.

About the Poetry Foundation

The Poetry Foundation, publisher of *Poetry* magazine and one of the largest literary organizations in the world, exists to discover and celebrate the best poetry and to place it before the largest possible audience. The Poetry Foundation seeks to be a leader in shaping a receptive climate for poetry by developing new audiences, creating new avenues for delivery, and encouraging new kinds of poetry through innovative literary prizes and programs. For more information, please visit www.poetryfoundation.org.