

# Prepare to be 'poemed'

By **Natalie North - Victoria News**

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## Random Acts of Poetry at a school near you

For the seventh consecutive year, poets from across Canada will randomly stop in on the lives of strangers this week, read them a poem and leave them with a book of poetry.

Random Acts of Poetry, supported by the Victoria READ Society, is a vehicle for poets to make the genre more accessible to all and to reach out to youth at risk.

During the Canada Council for the Arts-sponsored event, Victoria's first poet laureate, Carla Funk, poet and teacher Susan Stenson and Random Acts of Poetry founder, poet and author Wendy Morton will read their work to vulnerable youth across Greater Victoria.

Morton, who first staged the event in the Maritimes, will read to students at the LÁU,WELNEW Tribal School in Saanich. Acknowledging the difficulty in defining vulnerable youth, she characterizes the target audience as any young people with barriers to language. And in a country where 30 to 40 per cent of the population has literacy issues, there's a more than ample target audience.

"I do a lot of work with First Nations students and I love it because they have poems inside of them," Morton said. "When they see what a poem can be, how simple and how clear then they find the poems in their own lives to write about."



Poets Susan Stenson, left, and Wendy Morton are participating in 'Random Acts of Poetry' week. *Photo by Gunnar Freyr Steinsson*

Both Stenson and Funk are returning poets to the event, which was sparked by Morton's similar work reading poems to WestJet passengers as Poet of the Skies.

After "100-per-cent positive" feedback on her first Random Acts event, Funk didn't hesitate to participate this year, especially given the focus. She will read at Pacific Christian School, where her daughter is a student.

"Any youth has the potential to be at risk for something," Funk said. "I love the idea of taking this into classrooms and looking for those students who maybe look like they could be a little isolated, or have learning challenges. Those are the students I want to read poems to."

All three poets have recently published new works of poetry which they will read from and give away at schools and learning centres today through Oct. 9. Find out more about the event and the READ Society at [www.readsociety.bc.ca](http://www.readsociety.bc.ca).

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