

## For Immediate Release

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### **HEALTH LITERACY and the Art of Poetry** **Rockford Area Arts Council + the City of Rockford**

The City of Rockford's Health and Human Service's health literacy initiative, Rockford Ready, aims to build a healthier tomorrow by empowering residents to take control of their health through education, community engagement, and promoting access to the COVID-19 vaccine and booster.

**In partnership with Rockford Ready and the City of Rockford, the Rockford Area Arts Council is excited to announce a new video series of poems written and performed by the City of Rockford's 2022 Youth Poet, Giulyana Gamero. The six-part video series, directed and produced by Corbyn Tyson of Frank and Harvey Film Productions, is part of the Rockford Ready Health Literacy Poetry Series which encourages Rockford residents to speak up about their health.**

*"I have been in the position of being a translator for my parents, or trying to get them to say something, or to advocate for themselves when it feels like things are really confusing," says Gamero. "I feel like health literacy really does affect young people because in understanding it sooner we get to know more as we grow, as we develop, and as we have to make more choices for ourselves."*

Giulyana hopes that her poems help people to not be afraid to ask questions regarding their health and to advocate for the health of their families.

The role of City of Rockford Youth Poet was established in 2020, in partnership with the City of Rockford, the Rockford Public Library, and the Rockford Area Arts Council. Gamero serves as the City's second Youth Poet. The role of City of Rockford Youth Poet is also supported by generous community partners: Community Foundation of Northern Illinois and Dr. Zak's Toothfairy Castle.

You can watch the Rockford Ready Health Literacy Poetry Series at the City of Rockford's YouTube page here: <https://www.youtube.com/@cityofrockfordgovernment374/featured>.

The Rockford Ready initiative is led by the City of Rockford, in partnership with the University of Illinois Chicago College of Medicine's Office of Health Literacy, as well as CURA Strategies. For more information, please visit <https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov> and <https://rockfordready.org>.

**Mission.**

The Rockford Area Arts Council supports, promotes, and develops access to the arts for everyone.