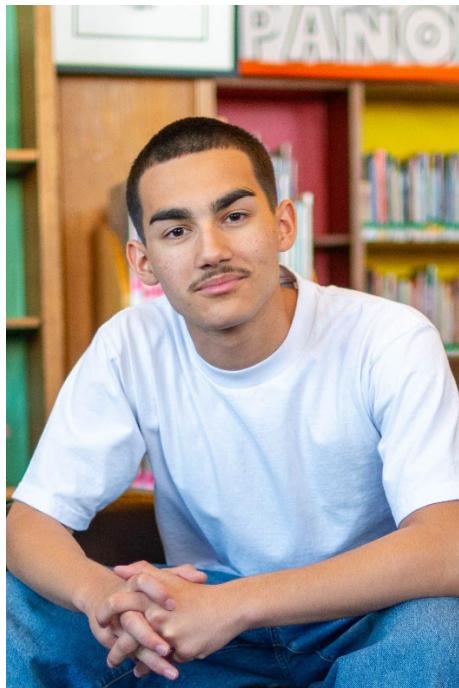


Cael Dueñas-Lara, Oakland Youth Poet Laureate

Source: <https://oaklandlibrary.org/oakland-youth-poet-laureate/meet-the-oypl-poets/>



Ninth grader, Cael Dueñas-Lara, is a second-generation Mexican-American, born, raised and currently residing in the vibrant and diverse community of East Oakland.

Cael, a 2024 and 2025 OYPL Finalist, feels that writing has allowed him to strengthen his voice and take back preconceived ideas of himself and others who may share parts of his identity. He strives to educate and inspire both his elders and peers through writing and to debunk the dominant narrative of black and brown young men living in Oakland whose narrative has often been set forth by societal perceptions.

His writing is inspired by his lived experiences in Oakland. He knows that his people and his city are often viewed through the lens of deficit and lawlessness. Within his writing he allows himself to speak on breaking out of preconceived stereotypes and bring awareness to those who want to maintain a system of oppression.

It is his goal to move the societal conversation to what the experiences of young males of color who have been damaged by marginalization, racial profiling, and over-surveillance look like, as well as inspiring them to break free from this system.