

# Midori Creativity

## Westport Writes Together



### **Project Narrative**

Westport Writes Together welcomes the town of Westport into a participatory writing project focused on the beauty of the natural world. Our coastal, agricultural town and its landscapes serve as a frame while anyone who lives or works in Westport can submit writing in response to three seasonal writing prompts. The project will reach a diverse group of participants and audience members and build bonds between writers, budding writers, and readers. Designed to appeal to any age, the Westport Community Schools students will participate at grade level. Periodic stories and updates will encourage audience participation while the Westport library will hold seasonal gatherings and readings to share the work.

### **What is a participatory writing project?**

A participatory writing project brings a community together through writing. It's open for anyone to engage with as they tell their stories and share with others. Through writing, we reflect, tell stories to make meaning, understand ourselves and our surroundings, play with words. Community-based projects like Westport Writes Together use experiential learning to strengthen networks and connections while promoting creative expression.

## Why do this?

One of the wonderful things about Westport is how beautiful it is; no matter our differences in background or politics, we all share a love for the ocean, rivers, trees, and landscapes that grace our town. We hold those stories in common and by writing and sharing our reflections about the seasons in Westport, we strengthen our ties, all while supporting creativity, connection, and literacy.

## Are there resources where I can learn more?

The Coalition for Community Writing supports writing forged in community partnerships to promote socially, economically, and environmentally just and resilient communities. *“We are reimagining how writing is used as a tool for public awareness and expression, for dialogue across difference, and for community building.”*

### The National Writing Project

*“We work together to create lasting change.” — explore the website to read more about the stories of challenges met, lives changed, and ambitious goals accomplished.*

## Who will participate?

The project is designed to be a town-wide effort. Therefore, information will be shared town-wide via social media, local media such as Westport Shorelines, South Coast Insider, and South Coast Almanac, local websites such as everythingwestport.com, lawn signs in prominent places and outreach to a variety of businesses and town gathering spots. The school social media director will communicate information to families about the project while every middle-schooler will take part for three seasons. High school students will choose to participate based on their interest. Businesses will be posting about the project on social media and local organizations will be encouraging participation among their members.

## What does it mean to support this project?

Groups are committing to have many of their members participate in the writing project. They are encouraged to discuss *Westport Writes Together* with friends and acquaintances and asked to support it on social media. Templates for social media postings will be provided along with a calendar of suggested times to post but individuals can also share about the project in their own way. Groups will also be given their own set of prompt cards to distribute if they wish.

Businesses that have signed up to be key locations for the project are agreeing to host a “box” of writing prompts somewhere easily located on their premises. They, too, are asked to do what the above paragraph discusses in terms of employee participation and social media promotion.

Key leaders are recognized leaders in the community who agree to share their writing at some point in the process as well as to promote the project and encourage participation.

At any time, if someone is interested in doing a short video promo about their participation, please let us know!