



Dear SYA teacher,

The National Steinbeck Center thanks you warmly for your support of the Steinbeck Young Authors program, now in its 15th year. To greet and watch all the young writers during the two Days of Writing is an incredible experience—and in 2018 we hope to film highlights to share with the teachers who make those days possible for over 200 middle school students—our goal for 2018.

We encourage each of you to sign up early for the 2017 – 2018 program. Registration is available online at Steinbeck.org. Teachers who sign up **before September 29** will be given a free Steinbeck book that ties into the 2018 Steinbeck Festival, “The Women of Steinbeck’s World.” This small gift helps convey the NSC’s appreciation for your continuing support.

In 2017-18, as in the past two years, there is **no charge for school participation**.

What are the aims of the Steinbeck Young Authors’ program? The Steinbeck Young Authors (SYA) Middle School Program motivates student writers and improves the writing skills of middle school students using a multi-level study of a single work by John Steinbeck, *The Red Pony*. This program:

- Introduces students to the work of a Nobel Prize winning author John Steinbeck, a Salinas native.
- Demonstrates the importance of place-based fiction. Students love a story set in the area they know well.
- Shows that reading and writing are richly rewarding experiences.
- Meets the California Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and ELD.
- Emphasizes the importance of strong writing skills throughout school and life.
- Connects students with community leaders and university students who value the written word—on the Days of Writing.
- Recognizes improved writing skills among non-native English language students as well as proficient writers.
- Promotes a strong vocabulary and close reading skills for all students.

How does the program benefit teachers and schools?

- Provides exciting opportunities for professional development for teachers. In 2017-18 the NSC staff will be available for site visits. **On Thursday, October 12 from 4:30-6:30 P.M.**, we are offering a reception/light dinner and teacher workshop for new and experienced teachers at the NSC. The discussion/workshop will focus on new directions with the SYA Curriculum and best practices. The NSC will offer Continuing Education credit for this workshop.
- Offers free admission for a school field trip to the National Steinbeck Center as well as discounts on books in our Museum Store. Discounts are also available to teachers and students for all NSC programs, including the annual Steinbeck Festival, to be held in 2018 on the first weekend in May.
- Gives each school a copy of the *Gabilan Journal*, published by the National Steinbeck Center, which contains **ALL** of the essays written by student finalists of the 2017-2018 Steinbeck Young Authors Days of Writing, as well as pictures of every student participant with his or her writing coach.
- Schools that enroll in the program will receive a password, which will give teachers access to all of the Steinbeck Young Authors curriculum materials.

IMPORTANT DATES:

- **October 12, 2017** **SYA Teacher Curriculum Workshop: New Directions 4:30 – 6:30 P.M. at NSC, includes dinner**
- **October 20, 2017** **Registration Deadline (Submit Teacher Participant Names)**
- **February 16, 2018** **Student Nominations Due (Final Deadline)**
- **September 18, 2017 -April 27, 2018** **Field Trips to the NSC (*must reserve 2 weeks ahead*)**
- **March 5 and March 7, 2018** **The *Day of Writing* for each school to be determined by NSC based on number of registered teachers. Students will attend EITHER Monday or Wednesday.**
- **April 28, 2018** **Awards Ceremony**

To register for this exciting middle school program, please complete the enclosed Teacher Participation form. Please return via fax at (831) 796-3828 **by October 20, 2017 OR use the online submission form included in the details with the Teacher Participation form.** If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached at (831)-775-4724 or at susan@steinbeck.org.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



Susan Shillinglaw, Ph.D.
Director
National Steinbeck Center