



## NEWS RELEASE

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### Fontana Unified Elementary Teacher Inspires Students' Creativity with Release of Second Poetry Collection

**FONTANA, CA** – Wherever Cypress Elementary School second-grade teacher Elmo Kelley goes, he records mental notes of his surroundings, places them in his memory, and waits until he finds the inspiration to begin writing poetry.

Over the last two years, Kelley has compiled all his musings into two separate poetry collections, with the most recent self-published book, titled "[Traveling Through My Mind, Vol. 2](#)," released in June. It continues a journey that began 30 years ago in a UC Riverside creative writing class, where Kelley was first introduced to poetry as a writing discipline. He hasn't looked back.

"I like to write poems about love and loss, observations about work, what's on the news," Kelley said. "It's really a buffet of topics and not so much self-analytical. I like to find humor in things, and I love to write about pop culture. It's a mishmash of subjects and styles. My next book, which I've already begun, will be all poems about education."

Kelley's creativity has helped inspire his students, who are becoming budding poets in their own right. During the 2023-24 school year, Kelley's second-grade class put together its own volume of poetry, entitled "My Favorite Foods." Each student was asked to contribute a poem about their favorite food, as well as a photo or drawing. The poetry book was made available to Kelley's second-grade class and their families.

"We had a lot of fun with that book," Kelley said. "Writing poetry is a new concept for second graders, so my advice to them was just to be very descriptive and write like no one really knows what the subject is about. Some of the kids were advanced and some struggled, but everyone was represented in the book. It's a good introduction for them, and this experience will be useful to them as they get older."

Kelley came to Cypress in 1998 and has worked there for 27 years. He has been married to A.B. Miller High School principal Dr. Barbara Kelley for 25 years, and they have raised two children together. When Kelley began sharing his poetry with Dr. Kelley's sister, Jan Sherrick, she urged him to curate his best poems into an anthology. That book, "Traveling Around the World, Vol. 1," was published in 2022.

"Traveling Through My Mind Vol. 2" is divided into 10 sections, or "stops," with each stop ruminating on topics near and dear to the author: his personal life, love, old friends, heartbreak, special moments, the humor in life, life lessons, sadness, and seeing the world through the eyes of others.

Though Kelley has begun making his poetry available for purchase, he continues to share his poems with the public. He is a member and moderator of the Poet Tree Press Facebook page as well as a member of the Invisible Poets Facebook page, where he regularly posts new poems. Kelley also occasionally posts his work to a private Fontana Unified teacher's group.

Dawn Juhas, a friend and former Cypress Elementary teacher, wrote the foreword for Kelley's latest book, highlighting his warmth and sincerity, as well as his wit.

"His poetry is well thought-out, with humor and light-hearted sarcasm," Juhas wrote. "He brings an element of reality to his writing by relating it to his life experiences. His poetry closely matches his fun, charismatic personality, yet also displays a passionate side that anyone can relate to or be amused by."

But Kelley's biggest supporter continues to be his wife, Dr. Kelley, who serves as a sounding board and occasional editor for his new work.

"Elmo has so many diverse passions, all of which make him an amazing educator whom students years later seek to reconnect with," Dr. Kelley said. "He is very gifted in all things pop culture and especially '80s music. He has always loved to write poetry, and his sentiments touch those who read it. Elmo is an amazing husband, father, brother, and educator."

#### **PHOTO CAPTIONS:**

**FUSD\_POETRY1:** Cypress Elementary School teacher Elmo Kelley's, middle, released his second self-published book of poetry, titled "[Traveling Through My Mind, Vol. 2](#)" in June. His creativity helped inspire his 2023-24 class to put together its own volume of poetry, entitled "My Favorite Foods."

**FUSD\_POETRY2:** Elmo Kelley, a Cypress Elementary School teacher, greets second grader Layla Maciel with a high five. Kelley has released two self-published poetry collections over the last two years, and his love for writing has helped inspire his students.

**FUSD\_POETRY3:** Cypress Elementary School teacher Elmo Kelley's writing background has influenced his students, like Kristen Jones. He has released two self-published poetry collections and his class put together a volume of poetry last year.

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