

Poetry speaks at the CFJC

Youths from King County’s Children and Family Justice Center met for a virtual poetry session with Washington State Supreme Court Justice G. Helen Whitener on Nov. 18.

Justice Whitener joined the group for poetry writing facilitated by the Pongo Teen Writing program. She



*Justice G. Helen Whitener,
Washington State Supreme Court*

listened to pieces written and read by CFJC youths. She also read one of her own poems she had written to help tell the story of the challenges and struggles she has faced in life and her commitment to overcome them. Her poem, “IT,” is a powerful message of hope, inspiration

and perseverance.

The youths at the CFJC were riveted by her words and grateful for her participation in their poetry-writing exercises. She spent several hours with the young writers through CFJC’s virtual program model in partnership with Pongo Teen Writing.

Pongo also publishes the detained youths’ writing in books. The latest publication, “The Shadow Beside Me,” includes poetry written by youths from the King County Children and Family Justice Center.

I’m Trying to Change Certain Things

If God were looking at my life,
He’d wonder why I make it harder on myself.
He’d know the way things had gone for me-
they’ve gone left and right, and up and down,
across and around
He’d remember how things went when I was little-
Little dreams with low expectations.
He’d know that I was in and out of jails.
He’d know that I’m trying to change certain things
like becoming a better father, brother, and son.
He’d know how hard it is to change
Because I am poor and black and young in America.
He’d want me to understand that life is going
to keep going without me.

If God opened a new door for me,
it would lead me to better opportunities.
Then I could start over with my life.

*This poem was written by a 17 year old this past spring.
It was published recently by Pongo Teen Writing.*

More info: www.pongoteenwriting.org/Washington-State-Supreme-Court-Justice-G--Helen-Whitener-Shares-Poetry-with-Pongo.html