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Using Poetry to Inspire ESL Students

Merna Hecht, nationally known storyteller, social justice educator, poet and essayist, will be appearing at Chatwin Books booth (#2351) on Sunday, Jan. 27, from 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Hecht co-founded the Stories of Arrival Refugee & Immigrant Youth Poetry Project, which works with immigrant and refugee high school students in Seattle's Tukwila School District. The Stories of Arrival Project encourages these English Language Learner (ELL) students to reach for a deeper relationship with English by putting their wrenching experiences of migration into words.

Each year the students create an anthology of their poetry, which is also read throughout the month of April on local radio station KNKX. Chatwin is proud to have published *Our Table of Memories: Food & Poetry of Spirit, Homeland & Tradition* (2016) and *Holding the Earth Together: Youth Voices Speak for Our World* (2018). Hecht is the editor for both books.

Our Table of Memories invites readers to consider the spicy, delicious connections between food, poetry, homeland, and stories. In *Holding the Earth Together*, the students' poetry and artwork centers around the themes of caring for the Earth and speaking both for oneself and for loved ones.

These anthologies are ideal resources for teachers, writers, food system advocates, counselors, and others who support young people and cross-cultural understandings.

Meet Hecht and learn more about the empowering, inspiring work created by students in the Stories of Arrival Project at Chatwin's booth (#2351) from 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 27.