# **Encouraging Messages to Pongo Poets**

Pongo’s mission is to engage youth in writing poetry to inspire healing and growth. We have three direct service sites at juvenile detention centers and a psychiatric hospital for youth. Pongo’s volunteer mentors help facilitate poetry writing with the youth on a weekly basis at these sites. *Your anonymous encouraging message will be added to these journals, which will be donated to our youth poets for them to write in.\**

**Guidelines**

* Encourage the writer to write from the heart about who they are as a person.
* Talk about the value of honesty in poetry writing
* Recognize the courage it takes to write about difficult things
* Acknowledge the wisdom these young writers have on what it means to be a young person in today’s world
* Keep things natural, enthusiastic, and conversational
* Encourage the writer to keep writing and to share their writing with others

**Examples of Encouraging Messages**

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| Keep writing! | Writing can help you express your emotions. | Take time to write each day. |
| Your creativity is endless. | Share your writing with others! | Poetry can be anything you want it to be. |
| Writing is a form of communication. | Your writing can make a difference in the world. | Poems have the power to heal! |

**Things to Avoid**

* A teacherly, stuffy, or academic tone
* Philosophizing
* Jargon they may not understand
* Overly technical or florid language that could be read as insincere
* Personal information *(\*all messages should be anonymous, please do not sign your name)*