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"We’re in the perfect spot for focusing on what we do best: supporting writers and those who want to write.”
Involving transitions both simple and complex, the past year has been challenging at The Writer’s Center. However, we have come through with a renewed commitment to serving and enhancing our vibrant, literary community by focusing on what we do best: encouraging writers and those who want to write.

Thanks to generous support from the State, County, and private donors, we completed a much-needed building renovation, which brought us into ADA compliance and reconfigured as well as refreshed our space. By hosting hundreds for a lively open house, we reopened our doors to the public in November, 2018.

Complementing our sleek new look, we developed an updated website to match. The site now streamlines access for students and permits workshop leaders to track registrations.

But notable changes didn’t stop there. E. Ethelbert Miller and Jody Bolz, long-time editors of *Poet Lore*, the oldest such journal in the country, handed the reigns to new editors, who will bring in a fresh look alongside *Poet Lore*’s longstanding commitment to diverse voices. We also redesigned our *Workshop and Events Guide*, adding more color and literary content.

Throughout these changes, The Board of Directors was closely involved with County, State, and local officials, as well as donors, through each stage of development. Moreover, with input from staff, the Board undertook and approved a strategic plan that has guided us in our recent initiatives.

But even the finest building, refreshed publications, a more functional website, and a good strategic plan need something more: a dedicated staff and Executive Director. In that capacity, Margaret Meleney forged a cohesive team having new ideas and fresh energy. She has an open-door policy and a keen interest in hearing from our constituents and the broader, literary community. To expand our audience, Margaret and her staff have put together a full menu of workshops, readings, theater productions and special events, while also focusing on increasing TWC’s diversity and inclusiveness.

We are moving well in our new fiscal year, excited about what The Center can offer to each of us. We hope you can join us; indeed, we look forward to greeting you at The Writer’s Center.

JOHN M. HILL
Chair,
Board of Directors, 2017-2019
The Writer’s Center

ABOUT US: OUR VISION AND VALUES

The Story of The Writer’s Center

The Writer’s Center is a literary arts nonprofit, offering hundreds of creative writing workshops across all genres, readings and panel discussions that are free and open to the public, a black box theater, publication of the oldest poetry journal in the country and more. Serving thousands of community members, TWC is a bustling local hub for the literary arts.

OUR MISSION

The Writer’s Center empowers writers and those who aspire to write through workshops, events, and creative collaboration. We also support and celebrate those who publish.

VALUES

• TWC sparks creativity, fosters creative collaboration and builds communities of writers.

• Everything TWC does, and will do, aligns with and supports its mission statement.

• TWC is committed to inclusion, accessibility and diversity.
The Writer’s Center empowers writers and those who aspire to write through workshops, events, and creative collaboration. We also support and celebrate those who publish.
Programs

Workshops

Our creative writing workshops, targeting both aspiring and accomplished writers in a wide range of genres, are at our mission’s core.

Our classes ranged from one-day workshops to our popular Novel Year, an intensive workshop aimed at helping writers complete a draft of a manuscript.

Because our main facility, in Bethesda, Maryland, was closed for renovation for six months, TWC had to find alternate locations for our workshops. TWC held classes online, on Capitol Hill and in Glen Echo Park, as well as at the Bethesda Regional Services Center. Now back in full swing, TWC laid the groundwork for crossing the river to Virginia in FY20.

Readings/Events

TWC believes in supporting our vibrant local literary community. Last year, despite the renovations, TWC held dozens of author-readings, panels, open mics and a holiday book fair, where local writers sold their books and journals.

TWC believes in the power of having difficult conversations and strives to create a safe space for discussing important trends in the literary world.

To that end, we held a groundbreaking symposium, Autism Through a Literary Lens, comprised of creative writing workshops and a panel discussion on the language around autism, featuring autistic and neurotypical writers. The program was lauded by members of the Maryland State Legislature. We also convened a panel of LGBTQ authors, discussing their work in particular and sexuality in literature in general.

TWC believes in celebrating our community. Our new series, Writer’s Center Live! is a chance for the people to come together and relax at a high quality, low stakes event. These evenings feature a diverse slate of talented writers sharing their work alongside live music and literary jokes.

TWC believes in partnerships. Working with F. Scott Fitzgerald Festival, we hosted a tribute to Pulitzer-Prize Winning Author Richard Russo, last fall. In the spring, TWC paired up with The DC Asian Pacific American Film Festival for a discussion with Adele Lim, screenwriter for Crazy Rich Asians. Throughout the year, TWC hosted Café Muse’s monthly readings and open mics, drawing both local and national poets.
Autism through a Literary Lens, panel discussion | June 2019
As consumption of digital media increases, numerous paper publications are turning to online-only presences, or shuttering altogether: Poet Lore, the oldest literary journal in the country, just celebrated its 130 birthday. This past year also marked the end of long-time editors E. Ethelbert Miller and Jody Bolz’s work on the publication. With both new managing and executive editors in place, TWC is poised to refresh the journal’s look, while maintaining its commitment to amplifying diverse voices.

Poet Lore, the oldest literary journal in the country, is now in its 131st year.
Black Box Theater

Home to three troupes, Flying V, Peter’s Alley and Quotidian, TWC’s black box theater annually offers multiple low-cost theater productions, appealing to a broad array of tastes.

Other Programs

TWC has a host of other programs, both within its walls and out in the community. Now in its third year, Write Who You Are brings creative writing to low-income English language learners at the Carlos Rosario International Charter school, in Washington, DC.

We work with the Armed Services Arts Project (ASAP), offering free, beginner-level creative writing courses for veterans, service members, military families, and caregivers, culminating with public readings for family, friends, and the local community.

And TWC also administers both the merit-based McLaughlin-Esstman-Stearns Prize First Novel Prize, and the Undiscovered Voices Fellowship, a need-based writing fellowship for emerging writers, for whom workshop fees present a hardship.

Workspaces @ The Writer’s Center:

TWC’s lower level holds 18 carrels, a bright and airy space for people to write. After a free summer trial, Workspaces is now available for any member’s use.
The Writer’s Center Board of Directors

Charged with overseeing The Writer’s Center, the Board of Directors is comprised of members with deep ties to the local community. TWC is deeply grateful for their generous support. Meet the FY2019 team:

Chair
JOHN M. HILL

Vice-Chair
KENNETH D. ACKERMAN

Treasurer
MARK CYMROT

Secretary
PATRICIA A. HARRIS

Chair Emeritus
SALLY MOTT FREEMAN

MARGOT BACKAS
LINNA BARNES
TARA CAMPBELL
DEBBIE COHEN
SUSAN COLL
DR. NAOMI F. COLLINS
PATRICK A. CORVINGTON
WILLIAM DEVINNEY
LES HATLEY
JAMES MATHEWS
JIM MCANDREW
DR. JORAM PIATIGORSKY
BILL REYNOLDS
MIER WOLF
The Writer’s Center Staff

The Writer’s Center is staffed by a top-notch team of professionals, all committed to maintaining and improving the community’s experience with and at TWC. Meet the team:

Margaret Meleney
Executive Director

Amy Freeman
Development Director

Emily Holland
Managing Editor, Poet Lore

Brandon Johnson
Front Desk Team

Grace Mott
Office Manager

Sankara Olama-Yai
Front Desk Team

Zach Powers
Director of Communications

Laura Spencer
Director of Programs
Community Impact

Workshop Feedback

I would recommend this workshop to a friend 80% Strongly Agree

I would recommend this workshop leader to a friend

Event Attendees
(sample event: Autism Through a Literary Lens)

To what degree did you learn something new about the event’s topic?

10 Very High 9 High

After attending the event, how would you rate the overall quality?

14 12 10 8 6 4 2 0

None At All Very Little A Little A Lot A Whole Lot
More Surveys Results

What do you want from TWC?
(multiple answers permitted)

- 77% Improve writing skills
- 56% Build community
51% Finish work in process

50% Publish

50% Workshop discounts
Financial Highlights

Director’s Report

WC’s fiscal year 2019 ran from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019. The year was marked by short-term pain (months of tremendous disruption to our services and income) streams and long-term gain (a building accessible to all, with a refreshed look and revitalized staff).

Under the leadership of the Executive Director Margaret Meleney, staff used the time that would have been dedicated to our services as a chance to evaluate all that TWC does. To that end, TWC undertook and implemented a Strategic Plan, which serves as our guideposts for all staff and Board decisions, moving forward.

Statement of Financial Position

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<tr>
<th>Assets</th>
<th>FY2019</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current assets:</td>
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<td>Fixed assets:</td>
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<td>Other assets:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Assets</td>
<td>$2,158,167</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liabilities and Net Assets</th>
<th>FY2019</th>
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<td>Current liabilities:</td>
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<td>Long-term liabilities:</td>
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<td>Other Net Assets:</td>
<td>$1,988,822</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</td>
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### Income Statement

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<tr>
<th>Revenues</th>
<th>FY2019</th>
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<td>Grants &amp; Contributions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Earned Revenue</td>
<td>$373,516</td>
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<td>Other Revenue:</td>
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<td>Total Revenue</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenses</th>
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<td>Services</td>
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<td>Administration</td>
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<td>Fundraising</td>
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<td>Total Expenses</td>
<td>$896,148</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net Income</td>
<td>$274,639</td>
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</table>
Donor Acknowledgements

We cannot thank our funders and donors enough. We could not do what we do without your generous support. Thank you!

The Writer’s Center is supported in part by The Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County, and by a grant from the Maryland State Arts Council, an agency funded by the State of Maryland.

Other funders include:
• The Clarke-Winchcole Foundation
• Maryland Humanities
• The Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation
• The Nora Roberts Foundation

We also extend our sincere appreciation to our generous board members, past and present, and to the hundreds of Writer’s Center and community members who support our work.