Our programs give Oregonians of all ages the opportunity to find and share their stories. By building connections through books and writing, we celebrate the power of words to create more empowered, empathetic, and inclusive communities.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

The remarkable determination, creativity, and generosity of our staff, board, and greater Literary Arts community is what will get this organization through these extremely challenging times.

You will find in this report evidence of an organization whose programs are thriving even as they have been adapted to these new circumstances and whose relevance is drawn from our deep connection to our local and national communities, our strong commitment to equity, and our service to the community as our primary focus, no matter the challenges.

In late March and early April, as we began to better understand the consequences of the current public health crisis, we set about overhauling every program. Over the course of about 30 days, the staff re-wrote curricula, mastered new technology and skills that allowed us to reach audiences sequestered in their homes, and worked diligently with our numerous partners to adapt collaborations until we knew our programs were functioning in ways that were nourishing, supportive, and empowering.

Here are just three examples from many:

• Talks, readings, and classes immediately moved online to help sustain our creative community; due to the online transition, these programs were further enriched by the participation of students and audience members from around the country; and even a few from outside the United States.

• The Booth Emergency Fund for Writers was created in a matter of weeks to give more than $200,000 to writers who lost work or were struggling as a result of the shutdown. A full 42% of this fund was granted to writers who identified in Black, Indigenous, or people of color (BIPOC), who we know have been hardest hit by COVID-19.

• Our Writers in the Schools program immediately adapted to distance learning and continued to serve public high school students in Portland and East Multnomah County through the end of the school year. This adaptation required a near complete reinvention of the way the program delivered its curriculum in just a few weeks.

On June 3, Literary Arts issued a statement of solidarity, co-signed by all our staff and board, that denounced white supremacy in all its forms, acknowledged our role in having contributed to and benefitted from white supremacist systems, and re-committed ourselves to our ongoing equity work. We will continue to make the Literary Arts community more inclusive and supportive of BIPOC writers, striving to ensure their work is more widely read and appreciated.

Despite all the challenges, this moment has deepened our commitments to readers, writers, youth, and to being more equitable, taught us to be more creative and dynamic; and ultimately it has strengthened our programs. All that we have learned in the past few months will be a part of this organization for decades to come as we continue to grow and evolve.

We are grateful for the support and flexibility we have received from our funders. The read ahead is one in which support from individual donors will be essential to our capacity to continue to serve the community. If you are able, please make a donation to Literary Arts. Your support will be crucial to sustaining the organization through this challenging time.

With appreciation,

Jodi Delahunt Hubbell
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WHO WE ARE

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FOR THE NEXT GENERATION WITH GREAT LITERATURE.

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With appreciation,

Jodi Delahunt Hubbell
“By supporting readers, writers, and books, Literary Arts is doing the difficult and crucial work of building engaged communities, and for me, this is nothing short of protecting a democratic society that recognizes that you and I are deeply united by our vision of a world that is better, truer, and freer.”

— Min Jin Lee, author of *Pachinko*, 2019/20 Portland Arts & Lectures speaker
PORTLAND BOOK FESTIVAL

In partnership with Multnomah County Library and the Library Foundation, this year’s Everybody Reads program featured Tommy Orange and his debut novel, There There. During his time in Portland, Orange met with students at Madison High School and Many Nations Academy at the Native American Youth and Family Center before his sold-out lecture.

More than 9,000 attendees.
1,795 youth attendees received free admission.

“The sessions I attended all had a deep emotional feel to them—reminding me and us of why books and words are important—how we are all human and how we all need that emotional connection and community. I enjoyed all the authors I heard and soaking up the atmosphere of all my fellow book lovers.”
— 2019 Portland Book Festival attendee

PORTLAND ARTS & LECTURES

In addition to speaking to a sold-out audience at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall, our visiting authors engaged with readers and writers of all ages in the community through forum discussions with professional writers and visits with public high school students.

2,500 annual subscribers.

“Literary Arts is exciting, inspiring, invigorating, exhilarating. The air around it crackles—this is literary engagement at its very best, proving the vitality and importance of storytelling in the community. What a delight to take part in it!”
— Susan Orlean, author of The Library Book, 2019/20 Portland Arts & Lectures speaker

The final event of the 2019/20 Portland Arts & Lectures season, An Evening with Colson Whitehead, was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and will now be held as a virtual event on September 24, 2020.

EVERYBODY READS 2020

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— 2019 Portland Book Festival attendee

THE ARCHIVE PROJECT

Now in its sixth season, The Archive Project radio show and podcast showcases a wide range of Literary Arts programming, including recordings from Portland Arts & Lectures, Portland Book Festival, Everybody Reads, Special Events, and Verselandia.

10,000 average weekly listeners on the radio and online.
230+ episodes.

We introduced a new podcast series as part of The Archive Project, “Long Distance,” featuring interviews with contemporary authors about their new books, their own writing and art-making, and what they’re reading. Listen at: literary-arts.org/archive/

DELVE READERS SEMINARS

Our Delve Readers Seminars engaged a community of passionate readers and seminar guides. For the first time in 2020, Delve offered a seminar exclusively for people of color in response to requests from participants. After March 2020, seminars moved online. We offered free, 90-minute discussions every Friday, led by experienced Delve guides, to help people adjust to the online format. In addition to our Portland participants, the online seminars brought people from Seattle, Bend, Eugene, Astoria, Florida, Massachusetts, and Mexico together for discussions of contemporary and classic literature.

25 Delves, including 9 online Delves and 3 free online Delve discussions.
266 participants.

“I learned a lot about narrative styles, history, cultural identity, and tools to make me a more thoughtful and informed reader.”
— Delve participant

20,000 READERS ENGAGED

World-renowned authors engaged with our local community from the concert hall to classrooms. Our season of events featured more than 150 authors whose lectures, readings, and discussions centered on important issues ranging from America’s cultural history and its role in our current sociopolitical climate, to the necessity of the arts as a vehicle to empower marginalized communities.


STRUGGLE AND FAMILY, LOSS AND HOPE   RESTRAINED, ELEGANT, AND INSIGHTFUL,
KESHA AJOSE FISHER'S
NO GOD LIKE THE MOTHER
THE EMERGENCE OF A POWERFUL NEW VOICE IN AMERICAN FICTION

OREGON BOOK AWARDS

Over 500 books by Oregon Book Awards finalists and winners were donated from publishers for distribution to 25 libraries across the state.

213 books submitted 34 finalists recognized and celebrated.

7 books won $1,000 each for the 2020 Oregon Book Awards.

"Kesha Ajose Fisher's No God Like the Mother is a beautiful and moving short story collection about struggle and family, loss and hope. Restrained, elegant, and insightful, No God Like the Mother signals the emergence of a powerful new voice in American fiction."

— Fiction Judge Brandon Hobson, National Book Award finalist and author of Where the Dead Sit Talking

OREGON LITERARY FELLOWSHIPS

This year, Literary Arts awarded 13 fellowships of $3,500 each to Oregon writers. In addition, we established the Oregon Literary Career Fellowship, which awarded two fellowships of $10,000. One of these fellowships was specifically reserved for a writer of color. Literary Arts awarded a total of $66,500.

We received 375 applications from writers and 47 applications from publishers for the 2020 fellowships. Our state judge spent several months evaluating these applications, using literary excellence as the primary criterion. Literary Arts awarded three fellowships this year that were funded by the Oregon Arts Commission.

11 writers and 2 publishers awarded fellowships of $3,500 each.
2 writers awarded fellowships of $10,000 each.

OREGON BOOK AWARDS AUTHOR TOUR

The Oregon Book Awards Author Tour brought authors to towns across the state to share their work, lead workshops, and engage rural communities. Eight Oregon Book Awards authors participated in this year’s tour. Events included school visits, readings, and a writing workshop. The tour visited Christmas Valley, Lakeside, Silver Lake, Paisley, and Springfield.

250 people engaged in 5 towns across Oregon.

"Our 8,300 square mile county has no book stores, and is served by the Lake County Library District's Main Library in Lakeview and three small branches. Our closest library branch to the Main Library is 45 miles away, and our farthest branch is 108 miles away. Lake County is economically depressed, and our combination of rural remoteness and a higher proportion of low-income residents makes it unrealistic for many to travel far for cultural events. The Author Tour enabled us to serve library patrons across the county with a major literary event we could not have otherwise afforded. It felt like a cultural windfall!"

— Amy Hutchinson, Library Director, Lake County Library

WRITING CLASSES

Students from all levels of experience and backgrounds came to our classes this year to start their memoirs, finish their novels, revise their poems, and join a community of inspired writers. Many of our instructors are Oregon Book Award authors and Literary Fellowship recipients, and all of them are experienced teachers.

The Oregon Book Awards ceremony, previously scheduled at Portland Center Stage, was re-imagined as a special episode of "The Attic Institute." Hosted by Omar El Akkad and broadcast on OPB Radio on June 22.

When holding in-person classes became impossible due to public health concerns, we moved to an online format. In addition to our tuition-based online classes, we also offered free, weekly writing group sessions led by one of our writing teachers. Moving online allowed for students from outside of Portland to attend our classes; students logged on from Eugene, Cottage Grove, Central Point, and other Oregon towns, as well as towns in California, Idaho, Washington, New Hampshire, and Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam.

457 students participated in 50 classes, including 11 online classes.

"Our instructor was able to create an environment that mimicked an in-person writing workshop and that is impressive. I felt the joy of being in a writing class through an online platform, which is a testament to their ability to teach and connect with students and writers."

— Writing class student

@LITERARYARTS EVENTS

Our community center in downtown Portland offers a space for local and national organizations to present literary events for free or at a low cost. Our partners this year included Caldera, Whitenoise Project, PDX Jazz, Slamlandia, Bagley Wright Lecture Series, The Attic Institute, PNCA, and Incite reading series. We also continued our popular One Page Wednesday series, and expanded it from a quarterly to a monthly series. The series provides an opportunity for local writers to share one page of work in progress.

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1,490 total audience members attended 39 events.
with 11 community partners and 254 presenting artists. Seven of these events took place online.

Literary Arts

Annual Report | 2019–2020
Our Youth Programs inspired more than 4,000 students with a variety of literary opportunities in the classroom, the concert hall, and—for the first time—online. From creative writing residencies taught by local writers to school visits with world-renowned authors, students experienced the value literature can offer firsthand.

**WRITERS IN THE SCHOOLS RESIDENCIES**

We partnered with 27 educators at 11 public high schools throughout the year. While we worked in many English and writing classes, WITS also had writers-in-residence contribute to other subjects such as anthropology, journalism, and theater. At Parkrose High School, cartoonist and WITS writer Lisa Eisenberg worked in Jennifer Newton’s Race and Gender in Film and Literature class, where they examined the graphic storytelling elements through the lens of film and wrote, drew, and inked their own comics.

- 25 professional writers hired.
- 1,122 students served.

“Getting to work with Bruce Poinsette was a lot of fun. I learned techniques in different kinds of editing and this really makes me a lot more confident in what I write. I don’t stress about writing something perfect the first time because now I can edit it well.”

— Madison High School student

**STUDENT READINGS**

Students shared their poems, prose, and comics alongside teachers and WITS writers during nine end-of-residency readings in-person and online. Eleven students performed their work on stage at the Portland Book Festival.

- 52 students shared work.
- 236 attendees.

“Not only did I write something very personal—I read it publicly to strangers. I was so scared, but when I looked up after I was done and saw the tears in so many people’s eyes, I realized what I wrote was special, raw, and that it was okay to be vulnerable. That experience changed my outlook on writing.”

— Benson High School student

**AUTHOR VISITS, EVERYBODY READS, AND STUDENTS TO THE SCHNITZ**

Hundreds of students engaged with seven award-winning authors in the concert hall and classroom throughout the year for the 2019/20 Portland Arts & Lectures season, Special Events, and Everybody Reads. Franklin High School hosted author Min Jin Lee for a special edition of Think Out Loud which was taped live for OPB from their auditorium. Students, along with journalist Dave Miller, asked many thoughtful questions.

- 387 books provided to over 1,100 students who attended lecture events and author visits.

“At Franklin, Madison, and Parkrose high schools in the fall, and Parkrose and Gresham high schools in the spring, we paired volunteer mentors with students working on their essays for college and scholarship applications.

- 184 students served by 128 volunteer mentors.

“It provided a perspective on my essay that no one else I know could have provided. It helps to work with someone with a thorough knowledge of English that me or my family doesn’t have.”

— Franklin High School student

**COLLEGE ESSAY MENTORSHIP**

At Franklin, Madison, and Parkrose high schools in the fall, and Parkrose and Gresham high schools in the spring, we paired volunteer mentors with students working on their essays for college and scholarship applications.

- 71 students were published in the 2018/2019 WITS print anthology To Break the Stillness.
- 52 students were published in the digital chapbook, The Purple to My Sunrise.

“#Virtualandia

We developed and launched #Virtualandia, a digital poetry initiative, in light of the postponement of Verselandia! and East Side Slams! Youth Poetry Slams. Five celebrated slam poets and writers created video lessons covering topics such as the history of slam, writing, recording tips, and performing poetry. 11 students at partner schools sought and received individualized feedback from the slam poets and three students submitted original work to the culminating multimedia collection.

- Our YouTube video lessons accumulated over 350 views by students, parents, and poetry fans around the world.

“I really enjoyed submitting my poem to receive feedback through #Virtualandia. They pointed out a lot of things that I didn’t see before, from word choice to how a poem should look on a page if you are wanting it to be published.”

— Jourdan Dimoff, Grant High School student

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Literary Arts
BRIAN BOOTH WRITERS’ FUND
A PERMANENT ENDOWMENT FOR THE OREGON BOOK AWARDS & FELLOWSHIPS PROGRAM

The Brian Booth Writers’ Fund is an endowment of Literary Arts and is managed by the Oregon Community Foundation. The Fund provides an ongoing, annual source of support for the Oregon Book Awards & Fellowships program, which in turn provides financial support and public recognition to some of Oregon’s most talented writers. The Fund was created in 2014 to ensure Oregon writers will have a permanent funding source. Since 1987, Literary Arts has honored more than 600 Oregon writers and publishers, and distributed just over one million dollars in fellowships and award monies through the Oregon Book Awards & Fellowships program.

BRIAN BOOTH WRITERS’ FUND CAMPAIGN HONOR ROLL

Thank you to the following donors for their generous gifts that raised $2 million to permanently fund the Oregon Book Awards & Fellowships program.

The following donors have pledged gifts of $3,000 or more to the Brian Booth Writers’ Fund as of June 1, 2020:

Anonymous
Ray & Joan Auld
Jan Baross
Gwyneth Gamble Booth
Tom Booth & Megan Holden
Nancy & Rodrick Boutin
Charles & Lyn Cameron
Jan Carillo & Roger Crooke
Rick Comandich
The Concordia Foundation
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Kristen & Nick Walrod
Wheeler Foundation
William & Helen Jo Whitsell
Dan Wieden & Priscilla Bernard Wieden
Wyss Foundation

Booth Emergency Fund For Writers

In response to the COVID-19 public health crisis, Literary Arts allocated a significant amount from our Brian Booth Writers’ Fund to create the Booth Emergency Fund for Writers. This emergency fund was designed to provide meaningful financial relief to Oregon’s writers, including cartoonists, spoken word poets, and playwrights. Applications opened in May 2020 and were evaluated by Literary Arts staff and members of the Oregon Book Awards & Fellowship Advisory Council. Literary Arts prioritized funding for writers identifying as Black, Indigenous, and people of color. 100 writers were awarded grants of $1,000 each, 45% of whom identified as BIPOC. The fund opened a second round of applications in June 2020.

“Receiving a fellowship from Literary Arts means I have the backing of a highly respected organization that is genuinely committed to nurturing my work—this feels pretty darn good. The attention that comes with winning the fellowship can lead to other opportunities to share my writing more publicly, and become part of [a] larger literary community. Having gone the writing journey mostly alone, this is an exciting chapter of things to come.”

— Olufunke Grace Bankole, 2020 Oregon Literary Fellowship recipient
THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Literary Arts Leadership Circle
Members of the Leadership Circle invest in Literary Arts by generously giving $100,000 or more.

Director’s Circle $25,000+
Joan C. Cost and Roger Croke
Rocky & Julie Strasser Dunn
Ann & Scott Fellman Family
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Arlene Schacter
Dan Wooten & Delicia Bernard Wendel

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Donald & Robin Sutherland

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Melanie Epstein
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In Memory Of
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For more information about joining the Legacy Society, or to schedule a confidential consultation, please visit literaryarts.org/legacy-gifts or contact Lyndah Delin, Director of Development: bdela@literaryarts.org.

Introducing Literary Arts’ Legacy Society
Becoming a member of the Legacy Society at Literary Arts is an excellent opportunity to make a significant impact and ensure our work can continue for generations. Your commitment to a legacy gift to Literary Arts will help us end our up-and-downs and protect our ability to develop long-term plans. Join these founding members who have made the ultimate gift of support—naming Literary Arts in their estate plans—and help secure literature as a cornerstone of the future.

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“Enjoy Literary Arts as a reader, Delve deeper into the page, Portland Arts & Lectures supporter, and board member. When I did my estate planning, I included a bequest to the organization to show my appreciation for their important work. I am happy to give a gift both now and in the future. I am proud that Literary Arts will be a mainstay in the community for years to come.”

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14
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Literary Arts
DEVELOPMENT AND FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

UNDERSTAND HOW YOUR CONTRIBUTION IMPACTS OREGON’S READERS & WRITERS

INCOME

Earned income
- Ticket sales: 25%
- Classes: 7%

Contributed income
- Individual: 25%
- Corporate: 11%
- Foundation: 15%
- In-kind: 7%
- Government: 5%

1,477 people contributed $934,213 in gifts and pledges. THANK YOU!

EXPENSES

- Programming: 68%
- Fundraising: 19%
- Administration and office overhead: 15%

20,000 individuals enjoyed Literary Arts programming.

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Sometimes, un-thinking, her tongue slips, and she speaks a single phrase in Vietnamese. The language her children cannot understand her in. What this reveals, I think, is how much she must be most of the time vigilantly keeping at bay. And what brings it on for her, this slippage, this momentary letdown, this relinquishing, in effect, of the vigilance of English, for the unconscious reemergence of the tenderer language? We are driving down a street in Portland, Oregon. Or more precisely I am driving, she is in the passenger seat; she is visiting me. We have not been talking about anything. And then. But she does not follow up or translate or catch herself. So—I can't help myself—I point it out to her. Do you realize you just spoke to me in Vietnamese? Sometimes her response to moments like these will be defensively coy: Yeah, and so what? I ask her what did she just say. Something about the leaves of the passing-by trees—the trees we are driving beneath, the leaves scattering their shadows across our laps—that they are pretty.