



write where you are.



REPORT TO THE
COMMUNITY

2019

The background of the page is a photograph of the exterior of the Muse Writers Center building. A large, illuminated sign in white letters reads "the muse" in a lowercase, rounded font, with "writers center" in a smaller, lowercase font below it. The sign is mounted on a dark, possibly black, background. The building's facade is visible, showing windows and architectural details. The overall color scheme is dark, with the white sign providing a strong contrast.

the muse

writers center

The Muse Writers Center

**Where
Writers
Belong**

This is the place in Hampton Roads where writers belong. Connect. Share. Make meaning from thoughts. It's more than a place, it's an experience.

There is a deep longing inside writers that compels us to use words as tools to communicate our thoughts, feelings, and insights. Using only the 26 symbols of the alphabet, we are able to transfer—however briefly and imperfectly—our own humanity into the mind of another through stories, essays, poems, songs, and scripts. We listen and practice to more precisely convey our awareness of life and its significance.

Through the hundreds of classes, we learn the craft of writing. Our events bring us together to share ideas, dreams, and friendship.

Thousands of writers of all ages and backgrounds have found this to be a unique place where we find others who speak our language and encourage us on our writing paths.

While The Muse experience is felt and lived, it is also an organization that requires practical and tangible resources to enable it.

Sustaining the place we have come to love takes a great investment of time, talent and money from the staff, board, volunteers, and the community.

Without the vision and dedication of our leaders and the gifts of thousands, we could not support our offerings or continue our remarkable growth since our nascent beginning in 2004.

We have been the fortunate recipient of state, federal, and community grants and individual contributions that allow us to pay staff and teachers, provide classrooms, and meet our operational needs.

We are grateful for every contribution that has made our literary center the special place it is. We would not exist without your verve and generosity, and we thank you.



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*Greg Lee (drums) and
Synnika Lofton participate
in Muse events.*



From the Chairwoman

There is no question that The Muse Writers Center is home to a dynamic and growing literary arts community in Hampton Roads, Virginia. From its beginning days of offering a handful of classes in borrowed space, to present time where thousands are touched each year by its myriad writing programs and other literary events, we have grown to become one of the top literary centers in the country.

The secret to its success can be found in the magic mixture of talent, passion, and enthusiasm demonstrated by our staff, teachers, students, board members, and community partners in welcoming, encouraging, and providing a place where writers of all ages and in any stage of development can come together to practice their craft. It's personally gratifying to know that we've been able to do all of this and never had to turn away someone who lacked the funds for tuition.

Our donors, sponsors, members, and community partners make that possible. We are grateful for your support, and for sharing our vision of The Muse Writers Center as the hub of Hampton Roads' vibrant literary arts community long into the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Corrigan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Karen Corrigan
CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS



From the Executive Director

When I was 13, I wanted to write a book. That summer, hopped up on caffeine from hot tea, I typed every night into my new computer the story of five friends who were saving the world. In all, I wrote about 120 pages. But after that, I had no one to turn to for guidance on what to do next. How I wish there had been a Muse back then for me to come to and use as a resource – as a place for education, encouragement, and inspiration.

In the past decade and a half, we've built an amazing center that in 2019 brought the literary arts to 12,000 people, including more than 1,400 adult and youth students, nearly 300 of whom were awarded tuition assistance. Plus, we took programs to nearly 2,000 people in senior living communities, to schools and youth programs, and to military and veterans groups, enabling more people in our area to participate.

Thank you for your continued support of our dream to create and sustain one of the nation's most vibrant literary communities. Your backing has helped us continue our mission while we strive every day to reach more people who wish to express themselves with—or be enriched by—the amazing power of the written word.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Michael Khandelwal
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CO-FOUNDER

Aaron Lawhon, Sheila Sheppard, Celina Santana, Jane Wertz, and Stephanie Catherines at the Book Lovers Bash

Programs and Events

The Muse is more than a place to take writing classes—it is a gathering place where people who love the literary arts can find “their tribe.” Our events and programs offer nearly 400 opportunities per year to gather together to meet the community’s need on multiple levels.

EDUCATIONAL

We provide high quality instruction in writing and related fields through classes, workshops, seminars, and camps.

CULTURAL

We deliver community events that promote the literary arts, including readings, open mics, visiting authors, write-ins, book launches, and community functions with partner organizations. Our location in Ghent is a resource center and library.

SOCIAL

We provide opportunities for writers to network and find support, such as writers’ coffee breaks, happy hours, neighborhood jams, support groups, mentoring, and online networking.

Cory Bland and Kristin Mehaffey connect at a writers reading.



THE MUSE NEIGHBORHOOD JAM

AUTHOR READINGS AND SIGNINGS

SUNDAY AFTERNOON TEACHER READINGS

FIRST FRIDAY WRITERS COFFEE BREAK AT CAFÉ STELLA

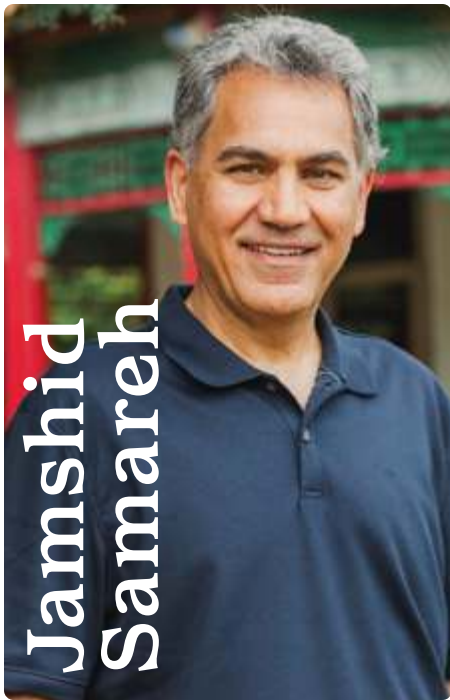
WEDNESDAY NIGHT WRITERS HAPPY HOUR

SUMMER CAMPS FOR ADULTS AND YOUTH

TEEN OPEN MIC

JUST WRITE SATURDAY

BOOK LOVERS BASH



Through writing, I learn what I think.

As a NASA engineer and researcher, **Jamshid Samareh, Ph.D.**, has written many technical papers and reports. But it wasn't until his wife died of cancer in 2016 that he felt a need to write creatively.

"I had lots of stuff in my head," says Jamshid, who lives in Norfolk. He didn't want to burden his children with his grief, so he began taking classes at the center to learn to express his feelings through writing memoir essays.

"It has been very therapeutic," he says.

"Through writing, I learn what I think."

Jamshid, who immigrated to the U.S. from Iran and speaks English as a second language, says writing creatively "puts everything into perspective."

As an engineer Jamshid was used to writing professionally in a rigid format. "I've learned to write from my emotions and to show rather than to tell. I write very differently now."


WRITER'S STORY

“ *The Muse offers so much to so many, without judgment and with open hearts and arms. What a gift you have given to this community. Thank you for being dedicated in giving such a beautiful gift in this, oftentimes weary world.* ”

”



I owe The Muse so much more than it has given me.

Tina Carey says it is no exaggeration to say that The Muse saved her life.

In 2018 her brother died of a heroin overdose, and five days later another brother committed suicide.

"I found myself writing through my grief. Then I came upon an online post from The Muse," says Tina, 46, of Chesapeake. "They were offering a class called Writing Through Trauma and Grief. I was willing to do anything constructive to let out my pain."

Since then she has taken many classes to continue the healing and to be around a "community of people who have been nothing but positive, encouraging and kind."

A personal chef, Tina has been published in a number of journals and is working on getting her chapbook published. She is also writing a novelette.


WRITER'S STORY

Classes

We embrace people of every age and background, as well as persons from underserved and financially disadvantaged populations. We are the only writing center in the nation to offer tuition assistance to anyone who wants to take a class but cannot afford to pay. Beginning writers are also welcome, and they find that our introductory courses are a great place to start.

Independent from a college or university, we serve the community by exposing youth and adults to the literary arts, supporting them to reach their highest level of craft and fullest potential.

The Muse is a respected, well-supported, financially strong organization with skilled and creative staff, high-quality instructors, and a welcoming environment.



Poet Tim Seibles reads his work in class to Celina Santana, Diane Zinna, Carol Howard, and David Cascio.

“

The Muse does a great job for the community by providing first-class instruction and encouragement to aspiring writers and a great platform for accomplished writers.

”

A sampling of classes, workshops, and seminars at The Muse Writers Center.
For complete class listings, visit the-muse.org

INTRODUCTORY, INTERMEDIATE, AND ADVANCED

Comic Book and Graphic Novel
Fiction
Nonfiction and Memoir
Poetry
Screenwriting and Playwriting

OTHER GENRES

Children's Picture Books
Food Writing
Journaling
Romance
Songwriting
Storytelling
Visual Journaling
Writing Through Trauma
and Grief
Classes for Military/Family
and Caregivers
Classes for Teens and
Younger Writers

WRITERS CRAFT, RESEARCH, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Agents and Publishing
Author Platforms and Social Media
Creativity
Dialogue, Characters, and Story
Editing and Revision
Languages
Police Work and Other Professions
World Building



Sylvia
Liu

© K. Woodard Photography

The Muse has been a constant source of learning and community.

Sylvia Liu of Virginia Beach left her job of 10 years as an environmental attorney to pursue success in a literary career, and she found it.

When her girls were young, she decided to try children's illustration and that led to writing a picture book. She wanted to write middle grade novels, so she began taking classes at our center.

"It's through The Muse that I learned the craft of novel-writing from the instructors and my fellow talented writers.

Now I have a couple of book deals with large, traditional publishers."

Her book, *Manatee's Best Friend*, will be published by Scholastic in 2021, and *Hana Hsu and the Ghost Crab Nation*, will come out from Razorbill/Penguin Random House in 2022.

She says The Muse experience changed her life by giving her the tools to become a published author. "The Muse has been a constant source of learning and community."



WRITER'S STORY

Outreach

SENIOR OUTREACH PROGRAMS

We created the **Senior Outreach Program** when a Muse student living in a senior living facility asked us to host a poetry reading where she lived because many of the residents were unable to travel.

We now provide Muse teachers and volunteers to many different senior facilities, hosting classes in memoir and other genres, memoir writing clubs and reading sessions.

TEEN WRITERS FELLOWSHIP

The Muse Teen Writers Fellowship provides teen writers the opportunity to further their skills in classes and workshops. The first of its kind in Hampton Roads, it provides an opportunity for eight high school sophomores or juniors to develop their craft, gain professional skills, and experience literary community. These fellows receive one-on-one mentorship from a professional writer.

The Teen Writers Fellowship is tuition-free and is valued at \$2,350 per student for the instruction, classes, feedback, mentorship, administration, and supplies.

OUTREACH FOR YOUTH

Nearly a thousand young people in our regular creative writing classes and camps for pre-teens, teens, and young people have explored their creativity in multiple literary genres far beyond the limitations of school classes. We give them the opportunity to perform or hear their peers share their work in spoken word programs, open mics, and readings attended by their families, local teens, and others within The Muse community. **The Teen Writers Fellowship** is an expansion of this part of our program.

We also go into local schools and youth organizations for monthly outreach classes and creative writing activities, including literary arts programs in places where teens currently receive services such as after school programs, community centers, and residential facilities.

We believe in the benefits of creative writing and expression as we witness young people struggling with myriad challenges blossom into writers growing up telling their stories.

Teen writer Cho-Cho Williams reads her work.





David
Cascio

It's a place where I can be myself.

Retired Navy Seal **David Cascio** of Virginia Beach decided in 2014 that he had a story to tell, and he now draws on his career to inform his writing.

In the past six years Cascio has racked up nearly 60 classes, and he is amazed at the improvement in his writing. While he had done technical writing in the military, he hadn't written creatively until finding us.

"The Muse has given me the confidence to put myself out there for critique and evaluation in a friendly and knowledgeable atmosphere,"

he says. "In short, it's a place where I can be myself."

While his primary interest is writing military science fiction, his first two novels, *FrogFlyer* and *Alienode*, are science fiction. He hopes to publish his books and has received several encouraging nibbles.

⚡
WRITER'S STORY



I am very grateful for all The Muse contributes to our community. It is an oasis of sanity in an increasingly crazy world.



Alicia
Dekker

The Muse has made me a more confident writer.

Alicia Dekker of Norfolk has been a writer all her life, but it was only 12 years ago that she thought she might try writing as a profession.

"The Muse has made me a more confident writer," she says. "It moved me into writing with intention." She attributes our center with giving her the confidence to begin and earn a MFA at Queens University in Charlotte, NC.

Now she is focused on completing a novel that she started as her thesis and is beginning a second one while teaching classes. She has taught the intermediate-level fiction workshop

for adults and several seminars, and next would like to teach an introductory workshop.

"The Muse is the center of so much to me—my social life and professional life," she says.

"I'm very grateful for the friendships, the fun, the activities, the encouragement, and the growth."

⚡
WRITER'S STORY



MILITARY AND VETERAN OUTREACH PROGRAMS

Hampton Roads is unique in the nation as the home to both the world's largest military bases and also one of the largest populations of veterans.

In the past, we have collaborated with the **Wounded Warrior Project** and **HerStory**, and we have seen the power of writing for people dealing with the challenges of military life and retirement. Today we partner with the **Armed Services Arts Partnership (ASAP)** to offer creative writing classes for military service members, veterans, their families, and caregivers.

We also created a program that offers special classes and events on military bases to eliminate barriers to participation, classes and events at The Muse, and outreach and marketing activities to ensure that military personnel, their families, and caregivers are included in our area's larger writing community.

LIBRARY

Our **library** contains thousands of books, featuring great works of fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, screenwriting, plays, writers' resource books, books on craft, reference books, and more.

The Brame Family International Poetry Library also contains poetry from more than 100 countries, providing an international resource to the Hampton Roads area.

ART GALLERY

The Art Gallery provides local artists exhibition space. Preference is given to artists with a connection to The Muse.

WRITERS RESERVOIR

The Writers Reservoir is an open Facebook group for writers where they can share articles, essays, and personal experiences about being a writer in the world and information about places to submit, contests, conferences, and more. In this online community, writers can share, learn, connect, and find that often elusive creative spark.



I have learned to take pride in my passion for creative writing.

As a middle school student, soon-to-graduate college senior **Derek Spohn** used to get off the bus and head to his bedroom, shut the door, and write stories in secret, because he was ashamed of his desire to write.

"I'd heard it said too much that writing isn't practical for a career," says the 24-year-old Chesapeake resident. He has since stopped hiding his writing interest. "I have learned to take pride in my passion for creative writing."

Derek is grateful to The Muse for helping him turn his dream of becoming a published writer to reality. It is also a place where Derek, who is on the autism spectrum, has found his tribe. "I have struggled to make friends throughout my life, but The Muse has helped me get to a point where I can stand tall and say I have friends."



WRITER'S STORY



The Muse is an amazing place and the fact that it is available even when I can't afford to pay speaks to the true support of writing and all creativity. It is a quality place and I am learning so much. Thank you!



The Muse gave me confidence that my stories were worth telling.

Lauren Hope, 35, of Suffolk helps people in drug addiction recovery by day, but by night she is a writer and a fan of The Muse.

Lauren, who started writing 10 years ago, found us when she wanted help writing and publishing a memoir. "The Muse gave me confidence that my stories were worth telling," she says. Her stories and blogs have been published on various mental health websites.

Our community has enhanced her life in many ways. "There were so many seasons of life when I wanted to take classes, but did not have the funds,"

she says. "The Muse always had a scholarship available"

Lauren is so positive about her experience that she tells other aspiring writer to attend classes there. "The Muse helped me discover myself as a writer, and speaker," she says. "It is THE community writing center in Hampton Roads."



WRITER'S STORY

history of the muse



First poetry class
begins with six
students.

Rents space from
SOFA in Ghent
Market Shops.

Incorporation
and nonprofit
status approved.

Signs lease for own
space with two
classrooms in the
Chelsea area of
Norfolk, many new
classes, programs and
partnerships begin.

Surpasses
500 student
registrations.

2004

2006

2008

2010

2005

2007

2009

2011

Classes begin with
two teachers and
20 students.

Moves location
to Drawn to Art in
Ghent Market Shops.

Tuition assistance
program begins.

Awards three
\$500-college
scholarships.

Files for nonprofit
status and
incorporation.

Offers first classes to
young writers; stand-up
comedy, songwriting,
food writing, and many
other classes begin.





Grand re-opening held at current location.

First Book Lovers Bash held at the Slover Library with hundreds in attendance.

Begins association with veterans' groups.

Establishes first endowment through the Hampton Roads Foundation.

Annual registration approaches **1,000 students.**

Receipt of first grant, \$1,000 from The Millers Foundation.

Summer writing camps for kids begin.

2012

2013

Board of directors expands from two to 13 members.

2014

2015

Offers 178 classes for 906 students.

Signs lease for new 2,700-square-foot facility in Ghent.

2016

2017

More than 1,200 register for classes.

Outreach programs for senior citizens begin.

2018

2019

New website launches.

Membership program begins.



GRANTS RECEIVED

- Anonymous Foundation
- Norfolk Commission on the Art and Humanities
- The Business Consortium for Arts Support
- The Sedona Foundation
- The Thistle Foundation
- Virginia Commission for the Arts

*Gretchen Gillen, Kate Copeland, and Cindy Carlson
attend an event at the Association of Writers and
Writing Programs (AWP).*



Thank You Partnerships

We collaborate with many community organizations and programs to help us offer classes, programs, and events throughout the area. Thank you to these organizations for their contributions of time, space, talent, and resources.

- Chesapeake Bay Writers
- Christopher Newport University Writers Conference
- Friends of the Norfolk Public Library
- Horizons Youth Services
- Mentally Healthy Norfolk Coalition
- Nauticus
- Norfolk Academy
- Norfolk Collegiate
- Old Dominion University Literary Festival
- Old Dominion University Writers in Community (WINC)
- Prince Books
- Push Comedy Theater
- Sierra Club Norfolk Chapter
- Teens with a Purpose
- The Armed Services Arts Partnership
- The Book Exchange
- The Chesapeake Public Library
- The Chrysler Museum
- The Hampton Public Library
- The Newport News Public Library
- The Norfolk Public Library
- The Poquoson Public Library
- The Slover Library and The Slover Foundation
- Tidewater Arts Outreach (T.A.O.)
- Virginia Beach SPCA
- Zeiders American Dream Theater
- Zeta Phi Beta

Affiliations

We are grateful for our many partnerships, affiliations, and friendships with other organizations. We believe that any thriving creative community relies on friendships with other organizations.

- The Muse is a proud member of:
- Association of Writers and Writing Programs
 - AWP's Writers Conferences and Centers
 - Hampton Roads Business Outreach
 - Hampton Roads Writers (HRW)
 - Hope House Foundation
 - LitNet
 - The Downtown Norfolk Council
 - The Ghent Business Association
 - The Ghent Neighborhood League
 - The Poetry Society of Virginia (Lifetime Member)
 - The Virginia Writers Club (Lifetime Member)
 - The West Ghent Civic League

Staff



Michael Khandelwal
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Michael holds a BA and MPW from the University of Southern California. He is an award-winning writer and teacher. He writes poetry, fiction, editorials, profiles, and feature articles, which have appeared in *Rattle*, *Coastal Virginia Magazine*, *Alt Daily*, and elsewhere. Michael teaches poetry and fiction workshops for The Muse, and is secretary of the Norfolk Electoral Board and a member of the Norfolk Commission on the Arts and Humanities.



Shawn Girvan
PROGRAM MANAGER

Shawn Girvan received his MFA in Creative Writing from Goddard College. He has produced a critically acclaimed documentary film, has owned a wedding videography business, and worked, studied, and performed at the Second City and IO Theaters in Chicago. Aside from working at The Muse, he finds time to teach English at Old Dominion University and write in all genres. He is currently seeking publication for his memoir.



Anna Fitzgerald
PROGRAM ASSOCIATE

Anna holds a degree in art education and has taught K-12 in multiple settings, including at the international school in Costa Rica. She holds a master's degree in radio/TV/film from the University of Texas at Austin, TX. Her published research includes the history of concert posters and music subcultures.

Volunteers, Interns, and Hosts

Our interns, volunteers, and hosts assist the staff to provide valuable services that help our office operations run smoothly and much more. We appreciate the donation of their time and talent.

INTERNS

Jorja Connelly
Rebekah Coxwell
Samantha Coyne
Sierra Foltz
Faith Handley
Gabriela Igloria
Chloe Kasper
Remy Smidt
Santia Wilkins

VOLUNTEERS

Beth Bilderback
Kindra Green
Gail Kent
Malcom Massey
Rodney Williamson

HOSTS

David Cascio
Karrie McDaniels
Judith Moffitt
Charles Rhodes
Fran Ward



Sheila Sheppard



Chris De Matteo



Tim Seibles

Teachers

Our nearly 100 instructors have advanced degrees, are published authors, or working writers. Many have taught at universities, colleges, or for community organizations and are recipients of prestigious awards, including:

Diane Fine

Professional screenwriter of six films and "script doctor" in Hollywood for more than 20 years; co-writer of the BET movie-of-the-week, *Fire & Ice*, one of the highest-rated MOW's in BET's history, nominated for an NAACP Image Award.

John DeDakis

Winner of Reviewers Choice, Forward INDIES, and Feathered Quill book awards in 2017 for his fourth novel, *Bullet in the Chamber*.

Luisa A. Igloria

Poet Laureate of Virginia, inaugural Glasgow Distinguished Writer in Residence at Washington and Lee University in 2018, the 2018 winner of the Center for Book Arts Letterpress Poetry Chapbook award, 2015 inaugural winner of the Resurgence Poetry Prize, author of more than a dozen books.

Joe Jackson

Winner of the PEN/Jacqueline Bograd Weld Award for biography, finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Awards for Biography, author of a novel and seven nonfiction books.

Patti McCracken

Twice a Knight International Press Fellow.

Tim Seibles

Poet Laureate of Virginia in 2016, finalist for the National Book award in 2012, National Endowment for the Arts fellowship recipient.

Board Members Executive Committee



Karen Corrigan
CHAIR

Karen spent 30 years as a healthcare executive, strategy consultant, and small business entrepreneur. Over the course of her career, she published two books, authored numerous

articles and white papers, and was a sought-after speaker on industry trends and innovations. Karen serves on both the local and national boards for the FBI Citizens Academy Alumni Association and is a board member and judge for the Healthcare Internet Hall of Fame.



Stephen Burgess
FIRST VICE-CHAIR
AND PAST CHAIR

Stephen is past board chair and now serves on the executive committee, and the education and outreach Committee. He is retired from the practice of law.



Cindy Carlson
VICE CHAIR AND
GRANTS COMMITTEE CHAIR

Cindy spent a long career in youth development and now spends her retirement as a writer. She is a winner of the Hampton Roads Writers contest

for creative nonfiction, co-founder of the local chapter of Women Writers Who Submit, and her work has appeared in literary and travel journals.



Kathryn Copeland
TREASURER AND
DEVELOPMENT CHAIR

After spending 25 years in business development with both Exxon and Herman Miller, Kate started her own business assisting non-profits and co-produced an award-

winning weekly television program highlighting volunteers and philanthropists in San Francisco. She was the creator and president of A Taste of France, Ltd., offering high-end European excursions.



Holly Chacon
SECRETARY

Holly has had a diverse career, much of it spent as an award-winning graphic artist. For the past 20-plus years, she has worked with her husband as co-owner and art director of

Colley Avenue Copies & Graphics. She has trained many graphic artists over the years.



Michael Khandelwal
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Michael is a co-founder and executive director of The Muse. He is an award-winning writer and teacher.

Board Members At Large



Leslie Entsminger

Leslie worked at Mobil Oil as a geophysicist before retiring. She is a graduate of Old Dominion University's MFA program in creative writing and was nominated for a Pushcart Prize in 2016. Her work has been published in a number of literary journals.



Gretchen Gillen MARKETING CHAIR

After a career in technical writing for a large computer software company, Gretchen began volunteering in her community, working with her children's schools, the Junior Women's Club of Hilton Village and the Newport News Medical Society Alliance, for which she served as president. Her essays have been featured on NPR's Writer's Block.



Diane Fine

Diane Fine has been a professional screenwriter and "script doctor" in Hollywood for more than 20 years. Her credits include *Storm*, *Firetrap*, *Art Heist*, and *Purgatory Flats*. The BET movie-of-the-week she co-wrote, *Fire & Ice*, was one of the highest-rated MOW's in BET's history and was nominated for an NAACP Image award. A graduate of USC's School of Cinematic Arts, she teaches Screenwriting and Film Production at Old Dominion University as well as multiple sections of The Screenwriters Workshop at The Muse.



Carol Howard

Carol, a native New Yorker and a Thomas Hunter Honors Scholar, holds a Ph.D. from Old Dominion University in urban services. She is the director of Birthright, a pregnancy crisis center in Norfolk.



Luisa A. Igloria

Luisa is the Poet Laureate of Virginia. She is one of two co-winners of the 2019 Crab Orchard Poetry Open competition. In 2015, she was the inaugural winner of the Resurgence Prize for ecopoetry and was the 2018 recipient of the Center for the Book Arts Letterpress Poetry Chapbook Prize. She is the author of four books of poetry and teaches on the faculty of the MFA Creative Writing Program at Old Dominion University.



Charles Hecht-Leavitt

A practicing neuroradiologist with special interest in MRI of multiple sclerosis and traumatic brain injury, Charles has had a lifelong interest in poetry. He has a special interest in The Muse's mission to enrich the lives of seniors and the elderly by encouraging the writing of memoir.



Richard Levin

Richard is the owner of Levin's of Norfolk, The Ghent Market Shops, and other shopping centers and retail properties. He is an active member of the Ghent Business Association.



Ann Sullivan

Ann, founder and senior managing partner of the Sullivan Collins Law Group, has been recognized as one of the best lawyers in America for employment law, management and employees. She has been voted Super Lawyer for more than 15 years. She has held many board and officer seats in local civic organizations. A lifelong learner, she enjoys her classes at The Muse.



Brad McMurrin

Brad is the founder, co-head writer, and performer in the sketch/improvisation group, The Pushers. He has acted in numerous plays, produced Off-Broadway plays, done professional stand-up comedy, and starred in a one-man show that toured America.



Jane White

After spending 20 years in the military, Jane moved to Norfolk where she began taking fiction writing at The Muse. She has been a volunteer at The Muse for several years and chaired the Book Lovers Bash. She is director of convention services for the Virginia Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau.



Lydia Netzer

Lydia is the author of two novels, *How to Tell Toledo From the Night Sky*, and *Shine, Shine, Shine*, a New York Times Notable Book for 2020 and an Amazon Spotlight Book of the Month, which was shortlisted for the Los Angeles Times Book Prize in Fiction.



Kelly Sokol

Kelly is author of the novel, *The Unprotected*. In 2018 she was awarded the National Parks Artist-in-Residence and has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Her work has been published in numerous literary journals.

Emeritus Board Members

Ellen Bryson

Stephanie Catherines

Alicia Dekker

Sean Devereaux

Patti Hinson

Tim Seibles

Financials

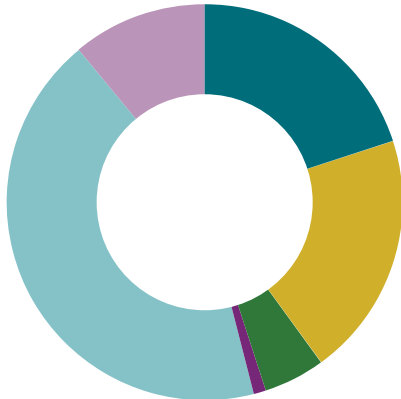
The Muse has not only grown in numbers and space, we have grown financially. Since the first year when we operated on a shoestring, we have become a financially strong nonprofit. In 2013 we operated on a budget of \$141,852. In 2019, our revenue grew to \$342,152.82. This tremendous growth has been possible through the continued support of grantors, businesses, fundraising events, individual and community donations, and student tuition.

For two years in a row, we won the award for most donations to a Hampton Roads nonprofit during the Give Local 757 fundraiser. Many donations, often in small amounts, are from grateful students. Our annual Book Lovers Bash has become a very successful fundraising event featuring a silent auction, and in 2019, a presentation by humanities scholar, author and educator Clay Jenkinson, best known for public radio's The Thomas Jefferson Hour.

The board of directors has carefully managed our funds to finance its strategic initiatives. Our funds are used to support operations, salaries, teacher stipends, scholarships, and tuition assistance for those who cannot afford to pay for classes—no one is ever turned away. We are the only center in the nation to offer this benefit to the community, and about 20 percent of our students are on tuition assistance.

January–December 2019

REVENUE SUMMARY



Foundation Grants	\$ 69,297.00
Public Support	\$69,796.16
Government Grants	\$17,570.00
Investments	\$16.71
Program Income	\$146,176.95
Special Events Income	\$39,296.00
Total Income	\$342,152.82

EXPENSES SUMMARY



Awards and Grants	\$3,350.00
Business Expenses	\$5,740.60
Contract and Teaching Services	\$105,493.22
Facilities and Equipment	\$49,690.33
Operations	\$14,957.90
Other Misc Expenses	\$38,014.77
Payroll Expenses	\$116,224.39
Travel and Meetings	\$8,628.81
Total Expenses	\$342,100.02
Net income	\$52.80

Grants and Foundations

A HISTORICAL ACCOUNTING

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Norfolk Commission on the Arts & Humanities			\$3,000	\$5,314	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$8,500
The Virginia Commission for the Arts				\$3,995	\$6,925	\$8,880	\$9,070
Business Consortium for Arts Support					\$1,250	\$2,000	\$2,000
Thistle Foundation				\$7,000		\$15,000	\$10,000
Sedona Fund	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$2,000		\$2,000
Peninsula Community Foundation of Virginia					\$6,514	\$4,514	\$5,757
Anonymous Foundation						\$50,000	\$50,000

Additional 2019 Grants

Tidewater Jewish Foundation	\$1,930
Armed Services Arts Partnership	\$850
Facebook Matching Grant from 2018 Giving Tuesday (Paid in 2019)	\$750
Network for Good	\$750
The Community Foundation (Christine Koubek Family Fund)	\$500
Private Foundation (Anthony & Bonnie Cascio)	\$250
Private Foundation (Paul Brame, Brame Family)	\$50

2019 Corporate Donors

Richard Levin	\$6,400	MMC Benefits	\$625
Colley Avenue Copies and Graphics	\$5,000	EM Properties LLC	\$500
Queen of Virginia Skill & Entertainment	\$5,000	BizConnect Hampton Roads	\$426
Art Repertory Films, Inc.	\$1,196	AmazonSmile	\$304
Book Exchange at Ward's Corner	\$1,018	Pendulum Fine Meats	\$300
Pat Casey (Casey Charitable Fund)	\$1,000	Wilbanks, Smith, & Thomas Asset Management	\$300
Koehler Books	\$1,000	Cooper Hurley Injury Lawyers	\$300
A.G. DiCarlo, LLC	\$950	Norfolk Quaker Meeting	\$250
		Priority Payment Systems	\$194

2019 Individual Donors

\$1,000 AND ABOVE

John Cameron
 Karen Corrigan
 Leslie Enslinger
 Facebook Individual Donations
 Diane Fine
 Gretchen & Bill Gillen
 Charles and Leslie Hecht-Leavitt
 Carol Howard
 Michael Khandelwal
 William McClure
 Reeves Mahoney
 Lisa Porten
 Robert Shapiro
 Kelly Sokol
 Barbara Taylor

\$500-\$999

Kim Austin-Peterman
 Robin Bernath
 Cindy Carlson and Richard Goll
 Kathryn Copeland
 Jennifer & Rob Edwards
 Robert Howard
 Tyler Leinbach
 Anne Meek
 Ann Sullivan & Steve Burgess
 Jane White

\$250-\$499

Christine Anderson
 Karen Armstrong
 Joni Baker
 Marilyn Barton
 Dan Becker
 Nancy Blumberg
 Bob Boester
 Karl Bogott
 Sandra Brandt
 Margarita Budrionis
 Tamara Burke
 Jean Carideo
 Anthony and Bonnie Cascio
 Stephanie Catherines
 Jefferson Cooper
 Stephen Cox
 Alicia Dekker

Christopher DeMatteo
 Pamela Denyes
 Gillian Durham
 Barbara Fine
 Karen Fine
 Cheryl Fletcher
 Nell Gallagher
 Vivianne Gantous
 Rebecca Greenwald
 Penny Hutson
 Tracy Jackson
 Clay Jenkinson
 Rebecca Jones
 Govind Khandalwal
 George Kelley
 Kay Larrieu
 Jennifer Martin

Sybil Mays
 Peggy Meder
 Debora Mosher
 Kim Nelson
 Lydia Netzer
 Renee Olander
 Steve Owen
 Elain Panneton
 Dana Parker
 Cary Petzinger
 Missy Schmidt
 Tim Seibles
 Luran Strait
 Whitney Weireter
 John Zuck

Thank you to our grantors



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