ADIRONDACK CENTER FOR WRITING

IMPACT REPORT

2019-20
CREATED BY BAYLEE ANNIS

@ADKCTR4WRITING
MISSION
To bring people and words together.

VISION
To cultivate the art of writing and the joy of reading; to celebrate the power of language to invite discovery, and create an understanding of people, a sense of place, and to build a community.

GOALS
1. Build and maintain a community of writers, readers, and listeners across disciplines, traditions, ages, and geographies.

2. Honor the rich literary, cultural, and natural history of the Adirondacks.

3. Partner with diverse individuals, organizations, and schools to promote the craft of writing and the practice of reading in our communities.
ACW BELIEVES

Every voice deserves to be heard and heralded, especially the voices that have faced violence, prejudice, and economic disparity now and throughout history. ACW knows that standing up is the only way forward. ACW will continue our legacy of longstanding work toward highlighting powerful voices throughout the Adirondack region today and every day to ensure all of us are better neighbors, allies, and humans.

There is a video collection of some of the stories ACW has had the honor of bringing to local audiences. You are invited to take the time to listen and watch at adirondackcenterforwriting.org.

Powerful Voices of ACW
Playlist includes professional local and nationally renowned performers and authors speaking on experiences with their own identities.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY MARK KURTZ
EVENTS AND at a glance

01 Anne LaBastille Writers Residency, Reading with Residents
02 The Author's Table at Saranac Lake ArtWalks
03 Beat & Verse Open Mic, Beat & Verse Writing Workshops
04 PSC Firsts: The Black Experience with Lauren Whitehead
05 Murder Mystery: A Fundraising Party
06 High School Writing Retreat with Roya Marsh, Jon Sands, Arhm Choi Wild

IMPACT

READERS, LISTENERS
★ WRITERS, STORYTELLERS
△ TEACHERS
■ STUDENTS
○ COMMUNITY
▼ REBUILT IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19
07  Marketing for Introverts with Chris Tebbetts
08  Poetry Jam with Roya Marsh, Jon Sands, Arhm Choi Wild
09  Book Hangouts
10  Online Writing Classes:
    To Stock and Barter Joy: A Poetry Workshop
    Building Your Story: Constructing Effective Scenes
11  ACW Bookmobile
12  PoemVillage
13  Howl Story Slam (Virtual and In-Person)
14  Spontaneous Stories with Nathalie
Writing When It Matters Most

Prison Writing Program

For 18 years, ACW has offered year-round classes in various genres for the student writers at Ray Brook Federal Correctional Institute. At the longest-running federal prison writing program in the country, these students learn invaluable creative and technical writing skills.

With the challenges of the pandemic, classes switched from classrooms to mailed correspondences. More than ever, these students are facing immense challenges and these classes offer an essential outlet for education and reflection.

“I feel I’ve learned an assortment of lessons about writing in this class. It has taken me a bit longer to finish due to circumstances beyond my control but I have remained eager to write.

I benefitted greatly by the emotional release of these exercises and though I took the long, curvy, topsy-turvy road, I have arrived at my destination. Thank you for that.”

Student Writer | Ray Brook Federal Correctional Institute

Adirondack Center for Writing Impact Report 2019-20
Teaching beyond the confines of a pandemic

The correspondence classes are an opportunity for students to express themselves at a time when opportunities to do so are limited, a consequence of the pandemic. Some write about their fear of the virus, while others appreciate the emotional release of writing. Still others flex the muscles of their voice to make sense of their experiences, to rethink their lives, and, in response to the unrest in the country, to be part of something. There is a sense of relief and power in being recognized.

JACKIE KEREN | TEACHER WITH ACW’S PRISON WRITING PROGRAM

Classes this year included grammar workshops, writing short fiction, and writing memoir and had record-high student registrations. Read about the program in the "Stories of Release: Inmates Become Writers" article in the Adirondack Explorer at bit.ly/acwprisonprogram.

To support this program and others like it, visit adirondackcenterforwriting.org.

"THIS IS THE ONLY PLACE WHERE I'M NOT JUST AN INMATE. HERE, I'M THAT GUY WHO IS A PRETTY GOOD POET."

- WRITING CLASS STUDENT, RAY BROOK FEDERAL CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTE
IN THIS TOGETHER

THIS TIME IS NOT LOST, BUT INSTEAD A CHANCE TO DIVE INTO YOUR IMAGINATION.

Weekly Writing Prompts & Featured Writing

Days after we were forced into quarantine, as we were all learning to navigate the isolation and processing what the future could possibly hold, ACW made the quick decision to launch a simple program to keep the community of readers and writers connected: weekly writing prompts.

ACW reached out to the incredible and talented family of authors and teachers, and they stepped up to share their expertise. Prompts have been created and provided by Julia Alvarez, Mahogany L. Browne, Joseph Bruchac, Betsy Folwell, Sue Halpern, Bill McKibben, Jon Sands, Steve Stern, Chase Twichell, and Lauren Whitehead, to name a few.

“...

I am so glad I found your site, not only for myself but also for members of a memoir class I teach. They have joined me in submitting work. You are providing a great platform for all sorts of voices to be heard."

— Paul Lamar | Teacher, Writer

PICTURED WITH HUSBAND MARK
Building confidence week by week

I had such low self-esteem and confidence that I knew to avoid any writing classes because of the criticism that would be part of their content. I struggled on my own, yet I ignored most writing prompts because I had so little time to write.

But all that has changed now. This summer I have time, your posting of responses is an (almost) immediate reward. I find the exercises delightful and look forward to the prompts every Monday. As soon as I wake up, I begin looking! This is all to say "Thank you" and I appreciate your efforts. I’m so delighted with the results that I’m considering putting them all in their own chapbook.

DUANE L. HERRMANN | POET, AUTHOR

For writers, readers, and teachers, these prompts have become survival techniques—sparking creativity for folks near and far. In just a few months, ACW has published 172 essays, stories, and poems in the new featured writing section of the website, and provided thousands of monthly website visitors with something new to read every week.

Find all the featured writing and weekly writing prompts at adirondackcenterforwriting.org.
Spontaneous Stories

ACW Executive Director Nathalie Thill provided some much-needed comic relief during the early days of quarantine. Two live virtual events offered online audiences an opportunity to comment with a prompt for Nathalie to tell unrehearsed, true stories using the prompt in real time. She was inspired by her earlier years when she was an archaeologist and she used to entertain her crew when there was no entertainment but her tales.

"What a great idea. Thanks for bringing some levity to the current crisis situation!"
- Ginger Henry Kuenzel | Community member

"Great job! We thoroughly enjoyed laughing with you tonight! Thanks so much!"
- Kelly Wight | Community member
The Howl Story Slam is, at its core, an invitation. It's an invitation for people to examine their lives through a new lens every time a new theme is announced. It's an invitation to find meaning in the lows and highs of everyday life. It's an invitation for people to sit down on a cold winter evening and listen, laugh, and learn.

Halfway through the season, the Howl Story Slam team had to forego in-person events for a virtual event.

Nathalie Thill ACW Executive Director spoke with NCPR Station Manager Mitch Teich on his show "First Person" about why it was so important to hold space for stories in a time when we can't physically be together.

Nathalie Thill: "When you're isolated and feeling lonely, what keeps you company more than when you are hearing and sharing stories? I think that's the crux of human interaction and human connection and to have an opportunity to hear and share goes a long way in feeling connected and having a sense of community and family. I think the Howl has become a home for a lot of people, so even though we're not all together, that belonging is still present."

Listen to their conversation and find more about the Howl Story Slam at adirondackcenterforwriting.org
High School Writing Retreat

Since 2005, the Adirondack Center for Writing has hosted its annual High School Writing Retreat, and each year brings in more talented local teen writers.

Three renowned performance poets and educators led the retreat and this year’s leaders were Roya Marsh, Jon Sands, and Arhm Choi Wild. During this two-day event, students enjoyed poetry performances and learned how to make their writing sing during workshops alongside peers from other schools in the region.

Q: What was your favorite part of the High School Writing Retreat?

A: “Meeting people from other schools and meeting the poets was awesome. The poets were able to make me express how I am really feeling and Roya’s confidence and amazing personality made today awesome.”

- Tupper Lake High School student
It’s always magical to watch students perform their poems at the end of the day. However, this year it was especially poignant because a young woman who really struggles with anxiety performed—her anxiety has stifled her so much in the past that she has had alternative educational settings provided for her at times. It was incredible to watch her step out of her comfort zone! Talk about creating a safe space for students!

CARRIE DOUGLAS | SARANAC LAKE HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

This event is provided by our incredible sponsors Adirondack Foundation–Bengt Ohman Fund, Adirondack Foundation–Evergreen Fund, Saranac Lake Public School Education Fund, Cloudsplitter Foundation, and Stewart’s Holiday Match.

To support programs like this one, visit adirondackcenterforwriting.org.
LIFTING VOICES

Marketing for Introverts

With a focus on remaining true to themselves, this workshop provided tips and guidance for folks facing imposter syndrome and anxiety as they navigate the publishing industry.

Originally planned as in-person event, the presentation by author Chris Tebbetts was converted to an online format, totally free for anyone to attend.

In a year when healing, reflection, and support meant more, ACW added extra online writing classes to inspire students and support teachers with job opportunities.

Poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction writing courses gave students a chance to write new work and revisit characters and plot lines in progress with feedback from teachers.

Online Writing Classes

To learn more about the online writing classes and other offerings for writers, visit adirondackcenterforwriting.org.
DURING COVID-19

PoemVillage

“I like being able to read the poems at leisure and ponder a bit. I LOVE the new online format of PoemVillage.”
- Stacey A. | Local business owner, Saranac Lake

“I’ve been meaning to tell you since the first batch of PoemVillage how much I enjoy the poems, delivered right to my phone. What a treat to read them in stolen moments, nice job!”
- Cathy W. | Adirondack Health Nurse, Saranac Lake

PoemVillage is an annual celebration of poetry, and we’d love to see poems from you and your peers. Submit anytime, year-round. For photos, sponsorship opportunities, and more info about PoemVillage, visit adirondackcenterforwriting.org.

We know how tight things have been for the arts, and for artists; and we were moved to see how generously ACW spreads its resources to writers (of all levels of practice and experience) within the region. Writing feels like it might be among the most essential—and democratic—of the arts, and it is wonderful that you are offering all these benefits to the North Country.

CHUCK & NANCY HOTCHKISS | COMMUNITY MEMBERS
ACW BOARD MEMBERS

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Gary Smith

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Christine McDonald
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Ellen Rocco
Jon Sands
Bill Smith
Chase Twichell
Lauren Whitehead
Fran Yardley

ACW STAFF

Nathalie Thill
Executive Director

Baylee Annis
Assistant to the Director
# Annual Budget

**JULY 1, 2019 - JUNE 30, 2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Expenses</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NYSCA</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Program Income</strong></td>
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**Income Total** $130,688  
**Expenses Total** $129,892  

**Change in Net Assets** $796

*Preliminary, unaudited results

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**A Note from Nathalie Thill, Executive Director**

"You and the rest of the wide-spread community of ACW have been there for each other when we all needed it most. Reading and writing have provided a source of comfort for so many, and the ACW family has weathered all the highs and lows together.

ACW has been there for you, we're counting on you to be there for ACW. Give now with the included giving envelope or online at bit.ly/giveacw."
THANKS TO ALL

MAJOR FUNDERS

Estate of Anne LaBastille
New York State Council on the Arts

ORGANIZATION, BUSINESS, & FOUNDATION SUPPORT

Adirondack Foundation-Bengt Ohman Fund
Adirondack Foundation-Evergreen Fund
Adirondack Health
Annelieses School, Inc.
Blue Moon Cafe
Cloudsplitter Foundation
DeLeon Design Group
Eudora Watson Consulting
Geomatics Land Surveying
Lake Placid Public Education Foundation
Literacy Volunteers of Clinton County
LOCALadk Magazine
Nancy Battaglia Photography
Northern Light & Power
Old Forge Library Association
Paul Smith’s College
Saranac Lake Public School Education Fund
Spencer Boatworks
Stewart’s Holiday Match

PATRONS ($1000+)

Rick Brooks
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Richard Frost
Jim Gould
Betsey Hall and Pam Palumbo
Tony Holtzman
Nancy Lester
John and Nancy Rosenthal
Mary Sanders Shartle
Gary and Kathie Smith
Chase Twichell

BENEFACTORS ($500-999)

Russell Banks
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Bengt and Polly Ohman
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DONORS ($100-499)

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Meredith Prime
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Michelle Richards
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Caroline Seligman
Leslie Surprentant
Sally Svenson
Jennifer Swain
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Jen Tissot
Elisabeth Treadwell
Rex Trobridge
Charles Watts
Connie and Craig Weatherup
Elizabeth Whalen
Renate Wildermuth
Cathy Woodward
Kathy and Tim Wright
Katherine Wyckoff
Fran Yardley
Ellen Zunon

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. | Council on the Arts
## OUR SUPPORTERS

**JULY 1, 2019 - JUNE 30, 2020**

### FRIENDS ($50-99)
- Stacey Annis
- Margaret Bartley
- Lorna Benton
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- Jeani Silberman and Lance Weiss
- Jon Sklaroff
- Zoe and Jason Smith
- Robert Surovell
- Daniel Way
- Bibi Wein

### MEMBERS ($40)
- Scottie Adams
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- Stuart Bartow
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- Jackie Beattie
- Lisa Bellamy
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- Marjorie Burns
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- Susan Jefts
- Sylvia Karman
- Lynn Kellogg
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- Jennifer Larkin Milazzo
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- Debbie Limoli
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- Joy McCabe
- Bernice Mennis
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- Renate Schneider
- David Scoobey
- Leslie Slttner
- Thomas Snider
- Beti Spangel
- Johanna Sporo
- Dan Sullivan
- Herb Terns
- Philip Terrie
- Leslie Thrasher
- Margaret Tissot
- Joanne Truman
- Irene Uttendorfsky
- Ashley Vu
- Eudora Watson
- Linda Weal
- Lauren Whitehead
- Kelly Wight
THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

624
WRITERS PRESENTED
We engage with new and experienced voices on stage, as presenters, and in our displays.

12,837
UNIQUE WEBSITE VISITORS
Reaching across social and geographic boundaries has been a big focus this year.

29%
TACKLING SOCIAL ISSUES
One-third of our programming this year helped to address social issues we're facing in our region.

18
YEARS OF CLASSES
We run the longest running federal prison writing program in the country.

41
EVENTS THIS YEAR
In-person and online events help us create a wide range of opportunities for everyone.

286
YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGED
We provide performances and workshops specifically catered to inspire people under age 18.

www.adirondackcenterforwriting.org