ADIRONDACK CENTER FOR WRITING

ADIRONDACK CENTER for WRITING

ANNUAL REPORT

2018-19

CREATED BY BAYLEE ANNIS

@ADKCTR4WRITING
EVENTS AND at a glance

01 Anne LaBastille Writers Residency & Reading with Residents
02 The Author's Table at Saranac Lake Art Walks
03 Examining Social Class in the Adirondacks led by Dialogue Arts Project
04 An Evening with Bill McKibben
05 Murder Mystery, a fundraising party
06 High School Writing Retreat with Mahogany L. Browne, José Olivarez, and Jive Poetic

IMPACT
- READERS, LISTENERS
- WRITERS, STORYTELLERS
- TEACHERS
- STUDENTS
- COMMUNITY
07 Poetry @ Paul Smith’s College with Omar Holman, Jon Sands, and Roya Marsh
08 Anne LaBastille Women’s Writing Weekend
09 Online writing classes: (re) Making Memory: Writing Poetry Writing Tiny but Mighty Prose Epic Editing: Crafting Query Letters & First Pages
10 ACW Bookmobile
11 PoemVillage
12 Howl Story Slam
THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

557
WRITERS PRESENTED
We engage with new and experienced voices on stage, as presenters, and in our displays.

28
COMMUNITIES SERVED
Reaching across social and geographic boundaries is a big part of what we do.

33%
TACKLING SOCIAL ISSUES
One-third of our programming this year helped to address social issues we’re facing in our region.

17
YEARS
We run the longest running federal prison writing program in the country.

43
EVENTS THIS YEAR
Single and multi-day events help us create a wide range of opportunities for everyone.

430
STUDENTS ENGAGED
We provide performances and workshops specifically catered to inspire and educate students.
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.
20th Anniversary Gala

This year marked the huge milestone of 20 years. Surrounded by longtime friends and supporters, we celebrated our legacy started by the original steering committee including Cali Brooks, Betsy Folwell, Jim Gould, Gary Lee, Kathleen Masterson (of NYSCA), Sharon Reynolds, Ellen Rocco, and Isabel Worthen.

"It’s a physical manifestation of all the love," said Executive Director Nathalie Thill on the night of the gala. "It feels good after 20 years to take a minute and celebrate with our supporters all that we do."

Equal parts celebration and fundraiser, event sponsors of the 20th Anniversary Gala blew us away after doubling our financial goals. Incredible volunteers Erin Cass, Joe Thill, Mary Sanders Shartle, and Beverly Bridger helped staff and board members run the silent auction and betting games including crowd-pleasers like the Run-on Sentences, which invited participants to race through a course with a stack of books on their heads for a cash prize. Cheers from audience members echoed through the Great Hall of the Hotel Saranac and into the warm May evening.

To see the big hats and Kentucky derby outfits, visit adirondackcenterforwriting.org.
Open door to a supportive community

"Twenty years seems like an eye blink but when I tally all that Adirondack Center for Writing has accomplished in that time the list is long, very long. Readings by acclaimed authors like Terry Tempest Williams, Barry Lopez, Mark Kurlansky and Andrea Barrett; amazing poetry workshops for students with Jon Sands, Mahogany Brown, José Olivarez, Lauren Whitehead; conferences that put authors, editors and publishers together that have led to real book contracts; online courses taught by nonfiction and fiction experts; the Anne LaBastille residencies—these are things that pop to mind. For regional readers and writers ACW is a water cooler, trailhead, lifeline and the open door to a supportive community.

What's next for this organization? The possibilities are legion, thanks to the creative thinking and boundless energy of Director Nathalie Thill and Assistant to Director Baylee Annis. As reading and writing evolve in the 21st century, ACW will be there with programs and projects that expand our universe."

- Betsy Folwell, Editor at Adirondack Life, Previous Board Member
HERE'S WHY I LOVE THE ADIRONDACK CENTER FOR WRITING:

It is an authentically inclusive and community-oriented organization that aims to bring people together, which is particularly important during our especially divided times.

Whether the staff are running an event for students, organizing community members for an evening of enjoyable stories, or offering unique opportunities for current and prospective writers, the goal is always to have as many voices spoken and heard as possible.

The atmosphere of respect created at each of its events is impressive, important, and something we should all experience in our lives as often as possible.

The Adirondack Center for Writing has been an especially invaluable resource for me as an educator. Its programs, events, and courses offer powerful and inspirational insights into what it means to be a writer and reader in the Adirondack region.

In fact, I attribute some of my greatest successes in the classroom to sparks ignited by the ACW. Its High School Writing Retreat inspired some of my best writers to choose to study writing and become English majors in college.
What I learned at its Write to Recover workshop, gave me the confidence to implement meaningful journal practices in my classroom which, in turn, helped me connect with students at a much more personal level.

After attending its Howl Story Slams, I developed a similar event with my 10th graders that remains one of the most memorable and enjoyable lessons I teach. The Adirondack Center for Writing is a tremendously positive force in this community and we are incredibly lucky to have ACW. Quite simply put, I have never been disappointed by the work that the staff does. In fact, I have often found myself tangibly improved as a writer, educator, and community member as a direct result of its influence.

- ZACK ARTHUR, ENGLISH TEACHER, SUPPORTER SINCE 2016

AN AUTHENTICALLY INCLUSIVE AND COMMUNITY-ORIENTED ORGANIZATION

High School Writing Retreat

For over 14 years, more than 100 students have attended the High School Writing Retreat annually to listen and learn from the best performance poets in the country.

To support the High School Writing Retreat and programs like it, visit adirondackcenterforwriting.org.
BRINGING LOCALS TO THE STAGE

Ask any artist, performer, or writer what the most important part of their process is, and you'll surely hear about a community that provides them with support, feedback, and camaraderie. Here are a few highlights from our year that allowed us to put locals front and center in the spotlight.

Beat & Verse Open Mic

Folks like Melissa walk through the doors of our partner location Bliss & Vinegar in Lake Placid month after month ready to listen to the work of peers and share new writing of their own. These events reveal deep-rooted connections to the land, identity struggles, and acceptance—all the experiences that connect us to one another.

"I've been looking for something like this since I moved to the Adirondacks. The community at these events is so supportive. I've already been more motivated to write because this outlet exists. I'm always looking forward to the next one."

- MELISSA O., TEACHER AT NORTH COUNTRY SCHOOL

Story Studio at Otis Mountain Get Down

This annual music festival at Otis Mountain in Elizabethtown brings thousands of music fans together for three nights. This year attendees were able to take a writing and storytelling workshop led by our own Baylee Annis. Later that evening, over a hundred festival goers stopped by to listen to and tell stories around the bonfire.
The hum of the crowd turns to a raucous roar. Twelve strangers gather behind a thick velvet curtain, mentally rehearsing lines and checking to see if their loved ones have found seats yet. Tonight is the night they have been anticipating for months.

Here, a group of storytellers who won in venues from far-flung towns are gathered for the Howl Story Grand Slam. Some chat anxiously, some are silent with nerves. One after one, they draw in a deep breath, look forward, and take to the stage with a true story of being a “Fish Out of Water.”

Tales of solo travels gone awry, mistaken identities, international fame as a bull fighter, finding confidence in a wetsuit, and learning to be a better person at space camp are all featured this evening.

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.

"It's very important as a community to tell each other our stories and allow ourselves to be vulnerable with each other. Stories teach me about myself, strengthen bonds with the audience, and even give permission to other people to believe in themselves and to tell their stories too.”

- DAN K., TUPPER LAKE RESIDENT, GRAND SLAM STORYTELLER

Learn more about how we are bringing people and words together at adirondackcenterforwriting.org
Adirondack Writers Conference

Elaine F. walked into the Adirondack Writers Conference hoping to learn more about next steps for her writing. She didn’t expect to meet another woman of color, similar in age, with familiar writing and publishing goals living just miles away. A new confidence led her to build a brand new press, Beverwyck Press, for writers like her.

Larry Loebell didn’t know that his next novel release, “Tough Girl in the Jam” would be championed by a new group of advocates he’d met at the conference.

Tony Holtzman didn’t know that he would win the 2019 People’s Choice Award for his latest novel, “The Bethune Murals.”

Natalli Amato didn’t know that she would find her new publisher, Ra Press, during the panel sessions and release her first collection of poetry, “On a Windless Night,” just months later.

ACW knows that being in the room with the right peers and professionals is the key to reaching that next goal. We are proud to be creating spaces like this for writers across the North Country.

Nadia G. didn’t know that she would find a group of people ready and excited to join the writers group she’d been hoping to create for years.

To learn more about what we do with and for regional writers, visit adirondackcenterforwriting.org.
VOICES

PoemVillage

I was drawn to participate in PoemVillage because it gave me the opportunity to share my writing. Having a way to share my work in a place that I love is very important. PoemVillage is unique because it is community curated.

ACW creates this living exhibit of locally written poetry each year that invites dialogue between friends and visitors to Saranac Lake.

Saranac Lake continues to grow as an arts community, and this experience gives voice to artists of all ages and occupations. Beyond that, the Adirondack Center for Writing brings together varied voices in our community by inspiring students and lifting local artists. ACW also connects our community to language through shared experiences like Story Slams and PoemVillage. Words matter, and ACW is at the heart of sharing the words of Saranac Lakers.

- MARIA DEANGELO, HIGH SCHOOL ART TEACHER, POEMVILLAGE POET

Baylee Annis with student poets from Norwood-Norfolk School

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.
Prison Writing Program & Write to Recover

For 17 years, ACW has offered year-round classes in all genres for the student writers at Ray Brook Federal Correctional Facility. At the longest-running federal prison writing program in the country, these students learn invaluable creative and technical writing skills. For the first time ever this year, we offered a class called Write to Recover which is designed to support those in recovery from trauma and/or addiction through creative writing.

The writing for recovery class I participated in with Mrs. Foote at Ray Brook was one of the best classes I have taken. It was so therapeutic and mind opening! It helped me heal in ways I did not expect through writing in a group setting. The techniques Mrs. Foote employed made it so much fun! The class was able to interact with each other and that’s so hard to do in a place like this. I felt like I had a safe place to share things I wouldn’t normally share.

Through the class I found that we all have traumas and feelings that are similar even though we have traveled different paths. I learned that writing about our lives is the best way to learn how to heal ourselves and to see how much potential we truly have. I really wanted to thank you for taking the time to implement such a powerful class in our lives! Your belief in us and knowledge you helped us share with each other are invaluable.

By writing about our traumas we are able to see life's beauties are endless. And sharing is healing. To the Adirondack Center for Writing. Thank you.*

- STUDENT WRITER, RAY BROOK FEDERAL CORRECTIONAL FACILITY
"TO SAY THAT I ENJOYED THAT CLASS WOULD BE AN EXTREME UNDERSTATEMENT. THIS CLASS WAS THE HIGHLIGHT OF MY WEEK, EVERY WEEK.

It gave me an opportunity to explore aspects of creativity I never would have been privy to in my current environment.

My circumstances rarely allow for such openness and inventiveness. And Mrs. Foote was an excellent teacher and guide for such a venture. I would dare to call her the Pinnacle of Patience. My setting is filled with stimuli which can test a person who is incarcerated, and can be very frustrating to those who are not. And having attended more than one of her classes, I have witnessed her great character attributes in a difficult setting.

This class also afforded me the opportunity to open up to others, in a secure setting, and get to know people outside of their charges, looks, and ID numbers.

Others began to take notice of me outside of my operating image, which in turn benefited me, even to this day. I am greatly appreciative to Mrs. Foote and to your organization for providing such a fantastic outlet, and guide, to people in my situation. I'm sure I can speak for all the participants when I say, 'I am forever grateful and even in your debt.' Thank you and Mrs. Foote very, very much.

- STUDENT WRITER, RAY BROOK FEDERAL CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

KIM SCAFURO, Seven Days VT

To support programs like these, contact us at adirondackcenterforwriting.org
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Lauren Whitehead
Fran Yardley

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Nathalie Thill
Executive Director
Baylee Annis
Assistant to the Director
### ANNUAL BUDGET
**JULY 1, 2018 - JUNE 30, 2019**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>INCOME</th>
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**INCOME TOTAL**  
$166,367  

**EXPENSES TOTAL**  
$154,546  

**CHANGE IN NET ASSETS**  
$12,624  

*Preliminary, unaudited results*
# Thanks to All

## Major Funders
- Estate of Anne LaBastille
- New York State Council on the Arts

## Organization, Business, & Foundation Support
- Adirondack Accents
- Adirondack Explorer
- Adirondack Foundation, Evergreen Fund
- Adirondack Health
- Annelieses School, Inc
- Bloated Toe Publishing
- Bookstore Plus
- Cloudsplitter Foundation
- DeLeon Design Group
- Geomatics Land Surveying
- Great Camp Sagamore
- Hotel Saranac
- Literacy Volunteers of Clinton County
- LOCALadk Magazine
- Nancie Battaglia
- Photography
- News Corp Giving
- North Country Community College
- North Country Public Radio
- Old Forge Library
- Paul Smith’s College
- Planned Parenthood of the North Country, NY
- Sagamore Institute of the Adirondacks
- Spencer Boatworks
- Scriptorium Book Packers
- Stewart’s Shops
- Tell Media
- The Campbell Group
- The Greenfield Review

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