ADIRONDACK CENTER for WRITING

IMPACT REPORT 2025–2026

Vision

Sharing our stories is what makes us human, it's how we know others and how we are known, even to ourselves.

Bringing People & Words Together

The mission of the **Adirondack Center for Writing (ACW)** is to inspire the love of writing, reading, and storytelling. We are a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization based in the 6-million-acre Adirondack Park in New York State.

Our 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 community.

A Letter from our Director

ACW believes that every voice deserves to be heard and heralded. Sharing our stories is the most deeply human thing that we all do, it is how we get to know others and how we are known, even to ourselves. So we are proud to offer meaningful and innovative literary programs across the entire Adirondack region that help people tell their stories, in any way they want to tell them, in the most genuine voice they can. Whether it is our **Kickass Writers Festival**, **Prison Writing Classes**, our **High School Writing Retreat**, or the **Howl Story Slam**, all of our programs are carefully designed to help make us all the best possible versions of ourselves.

Nathalie

Nathalie Thill
Executive Director

Our impact.

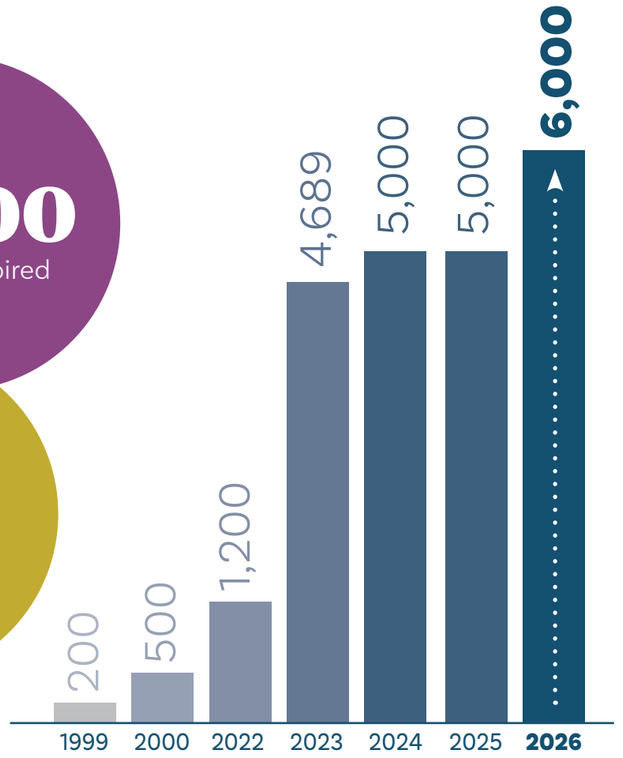
1 recordbreaking Kickass Writers Festival

over **6,000** people inspired

11 programs for youth

90 literary arts events

16 regional partnerships



Check out our growth with programs for **youth, adults, seniors, incarcerated people, LGBTQ+ community, and more!** From reaching 200 people in 1999, to 6,000 in 2026!

Why writing matters.

empathy

Writing and reading **build empathy** in all of us by helping us put ourselves in someone else's shoes.

In a world of polarization and a general lack of understanding of other view points, developing a sense of empathy is critical for our own well-being, for the health of our communities, and for our country.

> Stellar featured authors, enthusiastic attendees, helpful and attentive organizers, and honest and humorous presenters filled the kickass schedule. It offered something for everyone: those new to writing and publishing and those, like me, who sought out fellow wordsmiths in a world that appears to be moving away from human-generated craft, insight, and story.
>
> *—Kickass Writers Festival attendee*

> Let me ask you something: do you see the change in us? Can you tell just by talking to us that we are changed? Because I feel it so much, I think, damn, everyone must see this in me.
>
> *—incarcerated writing student, FCI Ray Brook*

> I learned that being vulnerable is so important in writing.
>
> *—Student at our High School Writing Retreat*

Why writing matters.

community

Literary Arts programs **create community**. In a world where loneliness, isolation, and anxiety are health epidemics, especially for our youth and our elders, ACW programs bring people from all walks of life together where we can find common ground.

> Such an amazing, kind, inclusive community! I love how writing brings people of all walks of life together.
>
> —*Parent of teen writer*

> The keynote by Robin Wall Kimmerer addressing what to do as a nature writer was more than inspiring. Deeply moving and motivating. The Town Hall filled with her fans and the lively introduction sent us back to our writing knowing we are not alone. We are part of a community that cares about the natural world and can make a difference with our craft.
>
> —*Town Hall attendee*

> I live in Plattsburgh and wanted to tell you about the joy I had from encountering PoemVillage as I walked through town yesterday....What a great and very human experience. So happy to have met, through their poetry, the many people who contributed.
>
> —*PoemVillage admirer*

Why writing matters.

empowerment

Writing and reading increase **civic engagement**, by developing core meaningful skills. Writing teaches us to **communicate**, it gives us **self-confidence**, develops **critical thinking skills**, and builds our **self-knowledge**.

"Why do you write?" poet and workshop leader Noah Arhm Choi asked a roomful of teenagers at our 21st annual High School Writing Retreat, which took place at Paul Smith's College at the end of October this year. **"Because when I write, I feel infinite,"** one student responded. Another shared, **"It helps me understand how I feel."** More students chimed in, **"Writing gives me a space to just be myself,"** and **"When I write, I can escape."**

> I will most remember hearing snaps when I read my poem!
>
> *—Student at our High School Writing Retreat*

> In this world where everyone is talking but so few people are actually communicating, the literary arts are the critical vehicle to mend our broken world; teaching people how to communicate effectively is at the core of every single thing we do. Without writing and reading skills, we are lost as a society.
>
> *—ACW Executive Director, Nathalie Thill*

Why writing matters.

economics

The arts are a **major economic driver**: The arts are good for communities emotionally, psychologically, and also economically. ACW is a key player in the economic growth of our Adirondack communities. Our events draw hundreds of people year round to various towns throughout the region.

Kickass Writers Festival:
about 1,400 attendees

PoemVillage:
about 400 attendees during the quiet month of April

Howl Grand Slam:
about 520 attendees in January

Fact or Fiction:
about 160 attendees in early March

> The ACW's Kickass Festival was my first immersion into a community of fellow writers outside of my own group down here in New York City. The program was set up in a way to really foster interaction with other writers and not just those leading workshops and programs. Regional authors showcase, book fair, the "drop-in"collage table were events for me that really supported the atmosphere of the festival outside of the core offerings. It also gave me a chance to familiarize myself with Saranac Lake, which is a pretty darn cool place!
>
> *—Kickass Writers Festival attendee*

> We played a game all weekend, whenever we saw anyone we would try to guess "writer or not writer." They were mostly writers.
>
> *—SL resident after the Kickass Festival attracted an estimated thousand people to town*

ACW Staff

Nathalie Thill
Executive Director

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Communications Manager

Erin Reilly
Program Director

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Annual Budget

Preliminary unaudited results
JULY 1, 2025–JUNE 30, 2026

Income

Earned: $106,953

Contributed:
Government: $49,500
Foundation: $20,100
Individual: $109,802
Investment: $7,395

Total Income: $293,750

Expenses

Programming:
Writer honoraria: $32,144
Other program costs: $33,308

Operating: $214,305

Total Expenses: $279,757

MAJOR FUNDERS

Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties *(Estate of Anne LaBastille)*
New York State Council on the Arts

ORGANIZATIONS, BUSINESSES, AND FOUNDATION SUPPORT

Adirondack Community Foundation: Adirondack Gives
Adirondack Community Foundation: Saranac Lake Public School Education Fund
Adirondack Community Foundation: Strickler Gallogly Family Fund
Adirondack Community Foundation: Small Wonders Fund
Adirondack Health
Artyladymsd.com
Adirondack Diversity Initiative
Adirondack North Country Association
Always Franklin-Franklin County
Ameriprise
Bookstore Plus
CapeAir
Charles R Wood Foundation
Cloudsplitter Foundation
Coldwell Banker Whitebeck
Eudora Watson Consulting
Heartwood Studios
Hotel Saranac
Lee and Nancy Keet *(in-kind)*
Lake Placid Education Foundation
Lifetime Arts
Mercer Advisors/ Long Run Wealth
North Country Public Radio
Paul Smith's College *(in-kind)*
PlayADK
Pendragon Theatre
RiverTrail Beerworks
Saranac Lake ArtWorks
Saranac Lake Free Library
Saranac Lake Rotary Club
Snowfort Books
Stewart's Shops
The Devlin
Traverse Lodge
Valerie and David Trudeau *(in-kind)*
The Wild Center

$5,000+

Kathleen and Douglas Colson
Ingrid and Stephen Dyott
Julie Hay
Pam Palumbo and Betsey Hall
Stephen Wolff and Laura Warden
Connie and Craig Weatherup

$2,500–$4,999

Linda Cohen and Sarah Cohen
David Kreckman and Doug Deneen
John Ernst
Dorothy and Jay Federman
Mr. Mark T. Gallogy and Ms. Elizabeth B. Strickler
John and Nancy Rosenthal

$1,000–$2,499

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Rich Frost
Dorian Gossy and Roger Mitchell
Sunita and Steve Halasz
Patrice and Bob Keet
Caroline and Serge Lussi
Marilyn McCabe
Mary Sanders
Shartle Z. Smith
Holly and David Wolff

$500–$999

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Wayne and Sue Zukin

$100–$499

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Karen Davidson Seward
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Lynn Hidy
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Bill Hutchens
Audrey and Chris Hyson
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Kathryn Joyce
Sylvia Karman
Bruce Kelley
Betsy Kepes
Doug Kroeger
Tom Langen
Jeannine Laverty
Gary Lee
Karin Lin-Greenberg
Betsy Lynch
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David Mason
Jamie McAloon
Jerry and Barbara McGovern
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Pamela Merritt
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Bengt Ohman
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Meredith Prime
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Suzan & Larry Sweeney
Jen Tissot
Elisabeth Treadwell
Rex Trobridge
Thomas & Elizabeth Vales
Tammara Van Ryn-Lincoln
Joyce Walsack
Sidney and Anne Wanzer
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Charles Watts
PJ Whitbeck
Christopher White
Renate Wildermuth
Patricia Wiley
Katherine Wyckoff
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Wendi Zimmerman

$20–$49

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Caperton Tissot
Bibi Wein
Joni Youse

Supporting ACW helps us help thousands of Adirondackers tell their story. Please **donate today!**

www.adirondackcenterforwriting.org