



THE PORCH

FY 2025

ANNUAL REPORT

a letter from our executive directors

Dear Friends,

The past year at the Porch, I've leaned into the joy of gratitude and the value of stillness and reflection. When every year feels like a period of growth amidst great tumult, it can be hard to find a place of peace from which to appreciate the good work done. But in our weekly newsletters, adding a "From the Archives" photo allowed me to scroll through my camera roll and recollect: Here I found visits from nationally known writers; breathtaking public events featuring emerging writers and musical artists; and a bounty of big-hearted people—those who were part of past chapters in Porch-building as well as those guiding our future. I'm deeply thankful for them all.

As we embark on a new strategic plan, I want also to be still. To look around and listen. To praise the people who have shaped this homegrown arts org's decade-plus of mission-driven work in Nashville's arts sector, be they class-takers, teaching artists, arts administrators, or our mighty Porch team. I love scanning the names on our Visiting Writers Series page: Such incredible talent has contributed to our story. I love thumbing through the first four issues of SWING, dreaming of all the ways in which this still-new program has yet to grow. And I love reading the names in this report, each of them a sturdy plank in the Porch floor, if you will.

With hometown heroes Margaret Renkl & Mary Laura Philpott headlining our annual fundraiser, our list of local partnerships longer than ever, and our first bequest in the bank, FY25 marks, for me, a moment when we can see how deep our taproot sinks into the Nashville community—while our branches reach far beyond.

When you build something from nothing, you keep your head down and work with a generous spirit born of blessed naivete. When that something finally feels built, you also know it will continue to change. A thriving community is like that: full of history and reverence, equally open to new energy and contribution. I write now, and forever more, with so much gratitude for everyone who is active within, and has helped shape, this Porch community.



Susannah Felts
Cofounder and codirector

a letter from our executive directors

Dear Friends,

I've been thinking lately about discovery—the thrill of an unlikely trail to a surprising vista, the unearthing of common clay between strangers, the inhabiting of characters unlike ourselves in the books we read.

Discovery—It's also why we write. In George Saunders' May 15 Substack newsletter, he says, "That's how writing feels to me: discovery, discovery, yielding to discovery, going for in search of more discovery." Flannery O'Connor famously said, "I write to discover what I know." Writing is digging, unearthing, discovering buried treasure. It happens in every Porch classroom and happening, these dopamine dings zinging within every aha, fresh insight, bold connection.

Recently, I've taken a deep dive into the emerging and compelling science around writing and wellness. For those of us who write, we perhaps sense this intuitively. But not everyone writes, especially the ones who might benefit most. In this annual report, we highlight the growth of Writing for Good, a program that delivers the gift of writing, of discovery, to people who sorely need it. When a Porch facilitator enters a room of women in addiction recovery, we offer not only the blank page, thoughtfully considered prompts, and a safe space to share, but ultimately a clarifying lens on their inner lives. Some discover a new art form; some, a healthy habit. For almost all, they discover something about themselves.

Witnessing The Porch's evolution these past eleven years has also been a journey of discovery, each year unveiling opportunities, friends and partners, programs, layers of maturation. Imagine... all the moments and minds across Nashville and beyond percolating in the transformative, redemptive power of writing.

So, friends, write on, and thank you for being a part of our story.



Katie McDougall
Cofounder and codirector

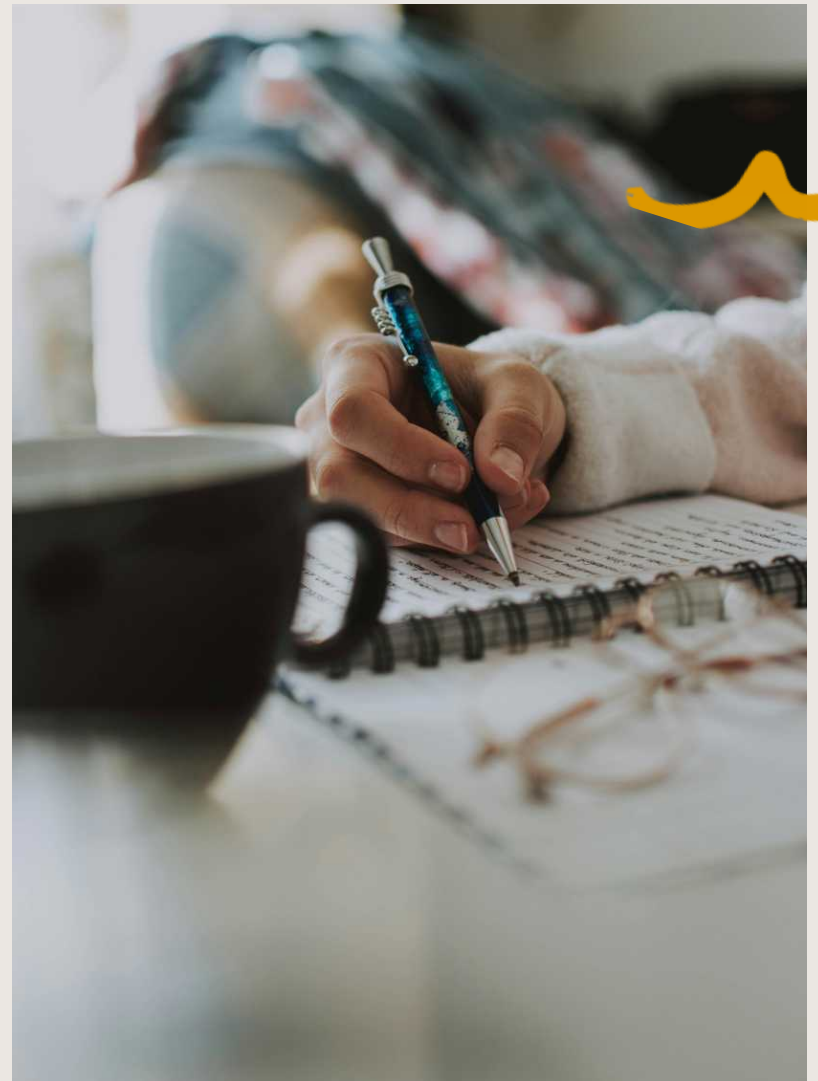
mission & vision

our mission

The Porch inspires, educates, and connects writers and readers of all ages and stages through classes and literary events.

our vision

The Porch puts Nashville on the map as one of the nation's top cities for supporting the artistic and professional development of its writers, and contributes to Nashville's wide-ranging and vibrant literary landscape.





annual event
featuring margaret renkl and mary laura philpott

program impact

This year, The Porch deepened its roots and expanded its reach across Middle Tennessee and beyond, serving more writers than ever before. Through a growing slate of programs, we connected over 5,000 individuals to the transformative power of storytelling, from seasoned authors to first-time writers.



5,050

adults &
youth served



100

free programs
provided



205

artists
contracted

program impact



1700

adults in recovery were served through our free Writing for Good program

80

writers and poets were published in The Porch's award-winning literary magazine, SWING

150

immigrants and refugees engaged in our free Immigrants Write program

240

workshops were facilitated for adults and youth

\$4,000

worth of scholarship and tuition assistance was distributed

340

copies of SWING magazine were distributed

program highlights



stories that create change

The Porch saw remarkable growth in our Writing in the Community initiative, our suite of programs that harness the power of expressive writing to foster healing, empowerment, and connection within some of Nashville's most vulnerable and underrepresented communities.

This growth included:

- 385 hours of programming: 38% increase
- 255 sessions delivered: 72% increase
- 1,700 individuals served: 40% increase

program highlights



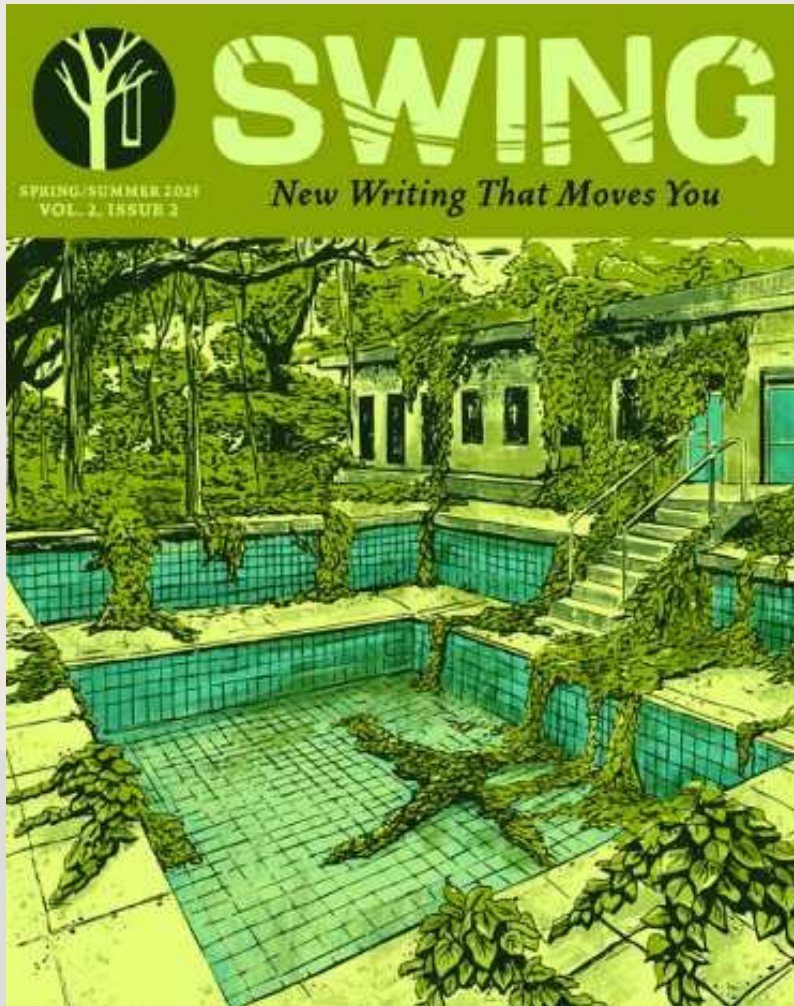
a milestone event: rooted

This year, we celebrated Rooted, our largest and most successful annual event to date.

Held at Juniper Green and featuring acclaimed authors Margaret Renkl and Mary Laura Philpott, Rooted welcomed 200 guests for an unforgettable evening of storytelling, community, and connection.

The energy, enthusiasm, and generosity on display reflected not just a night of success, but a growing movement of support behind The Porch's work.

program highlights



fueling a magazine by writers, for writers

Thanks to the growing success of our SWING Shift donor campaign, The Porch now funds a significant portion of SWING, our biannual literary magazine, through community support.

What began as a grassroots effort has evolved into a vital engine behind a publication that's run by writers, for writers, amplifying emerging and established voices from Nashville and beyond.

“

My class was amazing and empowering. The teacher created a safe, structured, and well-guided experience, and our collection of writers bonded into a beautiful community. Thank you for offering this wonderful opportunity.

”



financials

Revenue

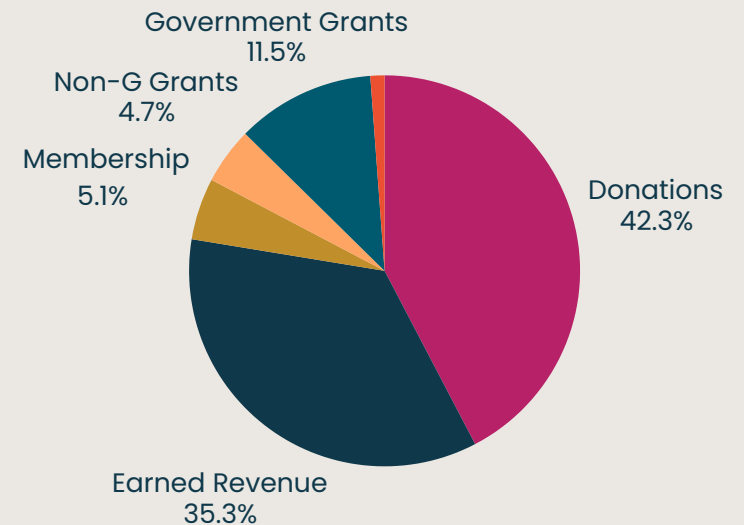
Donations	\$286,294
Family Foundations	\$8,000
Membership	\$34,573
Annual Event	\$53,319
Non-Government Grants	\$31,500
Government Grants	\$77,574
Earned Revenue	\$237,784
Other Income	\$25,015
<hr/>	
Total Revenue	\$754,059

Expenses

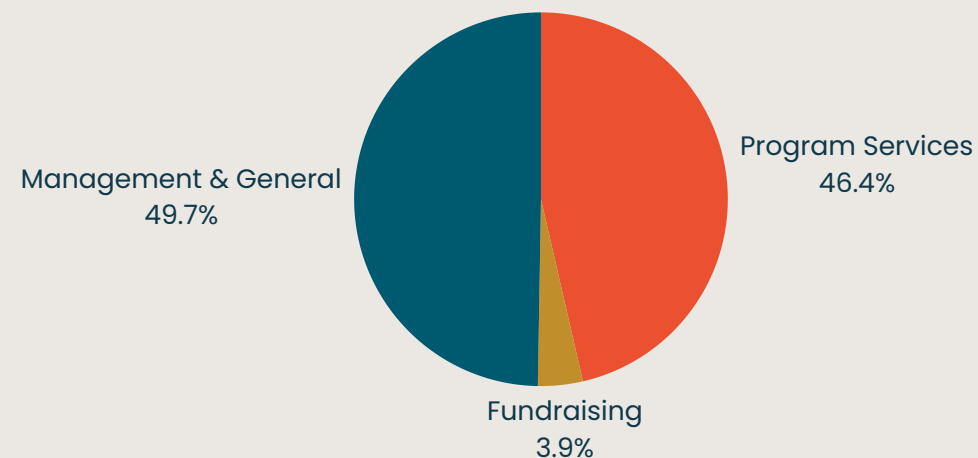
Program Services	\$270,003
Fundraising	\$22,589
Management & General	\$289,406
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Total Expenses	\$581,998

Net Assets	\$172,061
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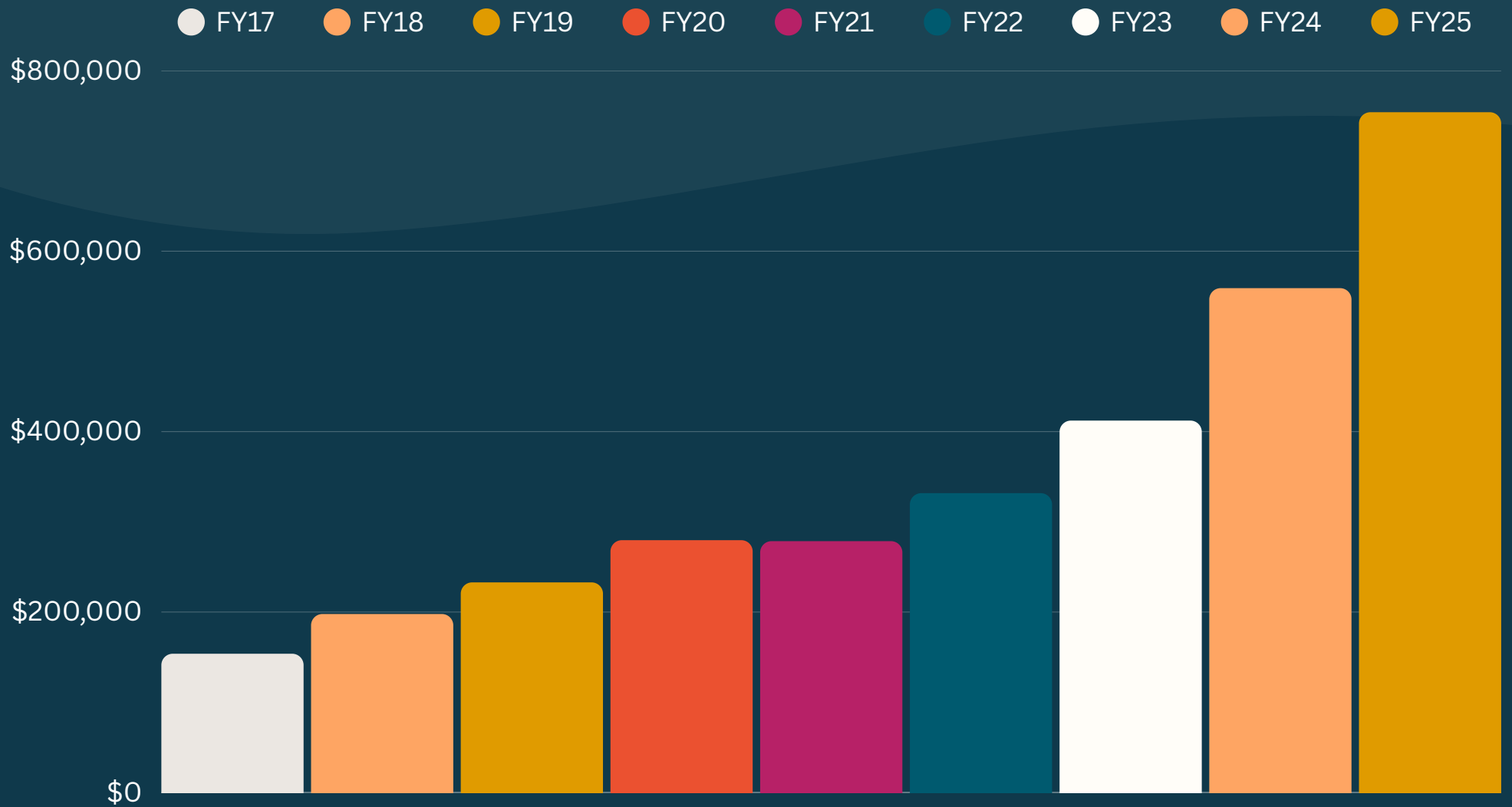
Revenue

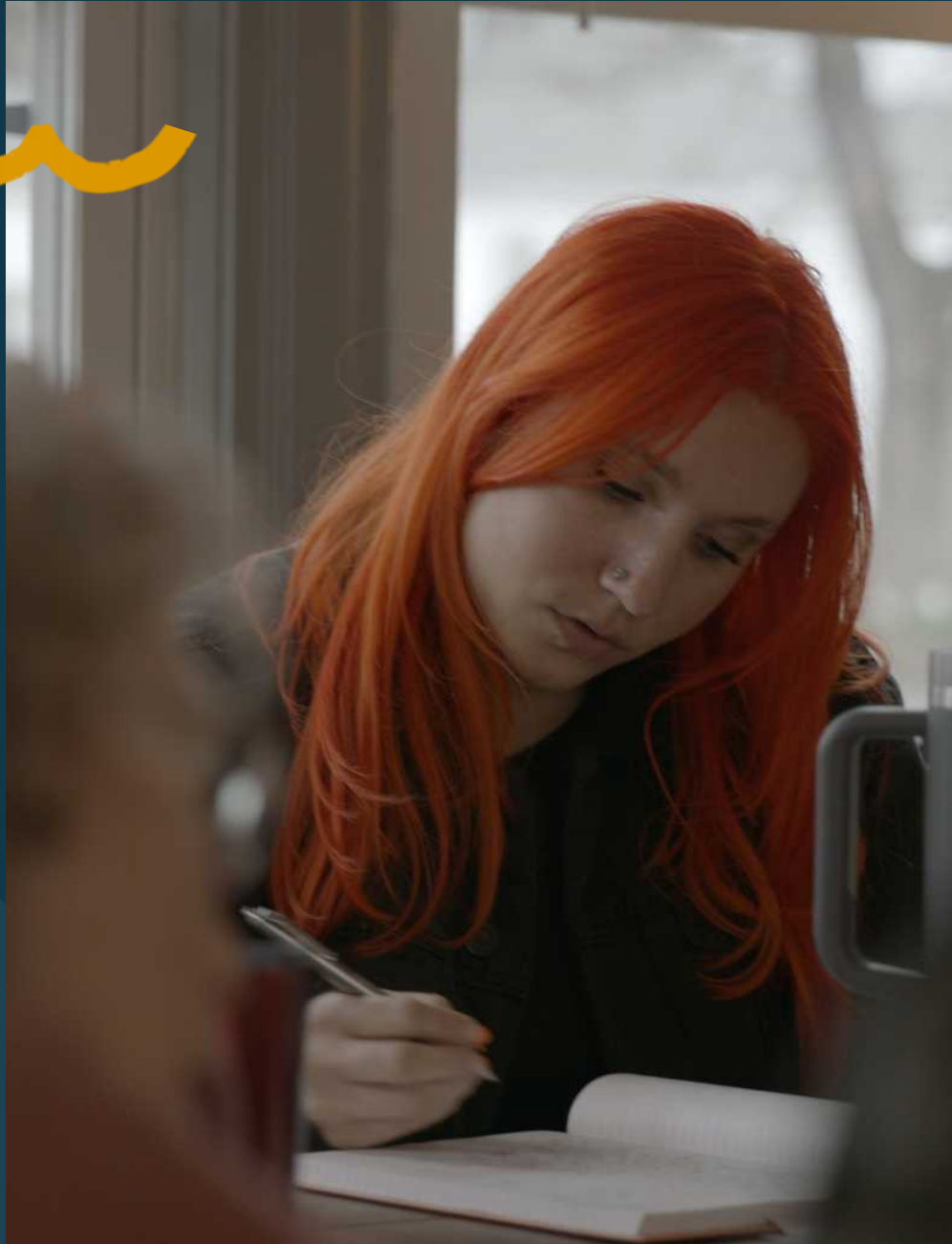


Expenses



annual revenue summary





“

This is easily the best thing I've done for myself this year, and I couldn't have asked for a better experience. Our instructor was thoughtful in his approach. He made the class approachable and fun while also leading class discussions effectively and constructively.

”

major supporters

Community Partners

100 Black Men of Middle Tennessee	Jackalope Brewing	Tempo Cafe
American Baptist College	Men of Valor	The Bookshop
API Middle Tennessee	Mending Hearts	TIRRC
Arts & Business Council	Nashville Free Poetry Library	Tony Corapi
Babo	Nashville Philharmonic	Turnip Green
Bongo Java	Nashville Public Library	University of the South
Center for Imagination	Nashville Symphony	Vanderbilt Divinity School
Colby's Army	NAZA	
Cumberland Heights	OZ Arts	
Gilda's Club	Parnassus Books	
Girls' Inc.	Rivendell Spiritual Center	
Hermitage Community Center	Sewanee Review	
Humanities Tennessee	Shelby Bottoms Nature Center	
	Smith Springs Community Center	
	Soul'd Creative Collective	

Foundation & Gov. Giving

Amazon Literary Partnership
Bonnaroo Works Fund
Claire Adair Hendrickson Foundation
Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee
First Horizon Foundation
Hays Foundation
Metro Arts
Nancy M. and Douglas M. Yeager Family Foundation
National Book Foundation
Rechter Family Fund
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South Arts
Tennessee Arts Commission
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Susan Edwards	Karen Hayes	Debbie McDougall	Liane Preussner	

major supporters

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Big Yellow Dog Music	Parnassus Books
Billy Renkl	Phoenix Selections
BookPage	Pinnacle Financial Partners
Books Forward & Books Fluent	Renaissance Therapy Group
Bradley Arant Boult Cummings	Style House Salon
Brendan O'Connell	Tennessee Entertainment Commission
Bridge House Over Blue Spring Creek	The Backlot Studio
DancEast Collective	The BAM Group
Druid Tree Service Inc.	The Blowout Co. of Nashville
East Nashville Beer Works	The Bookshop
Eclipse Music Group	Vanderbilt University
First Horizon Foundation	Welcome Home
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Grow Studios	
Henrietta Red	
Hays Foundation	
Hip Hues, LLC	
Ingram Content Group	
Jamie Wright Images	
Jeni's Splendid Ice Creams	

Individuals

\$5,000 +	\$500 - \$999
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Estate of Joe Wheeler Grisham	Paul Corbeil
Diana B Johnson & Dwight Wiles	Elizabeth & James Crowe
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Susannah Scott Barnes	Helen Ellis
	Becky Green
\$1,000 - \$4,999	Sandy Guitar
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Jean Harvey & Robert Rosenstein	Jennifer Johnston
Midori Lockett	Towles Kintz
John & Sally McDougall	Anne Krueger
Katie McDougall	Wylie & Debbie McDougall
Kerry O'Neil	Anita Modak-Truran
Ann Patchett	Shan Overton
Ruta Sepetys	Jessica Pearson
Anne Stark Locher	Liane Preussner
Martha Wayland	Margaret Renkl
Manuel Zeitlin	Ciona Rouse
	Kristin Russell
	Steven Schwartz &
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major supporters

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\$100 - \$499

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leadership



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Tracy Dunn, Hip Hues, LLC

Jing Geng, Tennessee Attorney General's Office

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Midori Lockett, Vanderbilt University

Jessica Pearson, Penguin Random House

Jeanette Opheim, Big Machine Distillery

Deke Shearon, Bradley Arant Boult Cummings LLP

Anne Stark Locher, Strategic Communications Consultant

Codirectors

Susannah Felts & Katie McDougall

“If I go missing...”

Nallely Ortega Prater,
member of Immigrants Write



If I go missing tell them I grew flowers and wrote poetry
a lot of it was trial and error but I tried.

If I go missing tell them I was a teacher for years,
that I loved my students as my own.

If I go missing tell them I tried to do everything right
I went to college

got a good job
stayed out of trouble
tried to give back.

If I go missing tell them I went to protests because I care about
human rights.

I protested against genocide and got booed at
I protested against anti-immigrant laws and they yelled for me to
go back

I marched for and with dreamers, and always tried to keep the
dream alive.

If I go missing tell them I was a federal employee
who treated everyone with kindness and respect.

I just couldn't stay silent in the face of injustice
I couldn't keep quiet with a smile on my face.

If I go missing talk to the people that know me:
my husband, my kids.

They'll tell you how we'd go to the creek to look for cool rocks,
how we planted apple trees because we always had hope.

If I go missing please don't let the next news story be a distraction
Instead I hope you go out there and take some action and know
that if you went missing I would have spoken up for you.

If they disappear me I hope someone like me is still out there too.

connect



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