



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 forevermore 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 opening to a surprising vista, the unearthing of common clay between strangers, the inhabiting of characters unlike ourselves in the books we read.

Discovery is 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 off 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.

RWitnessing 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

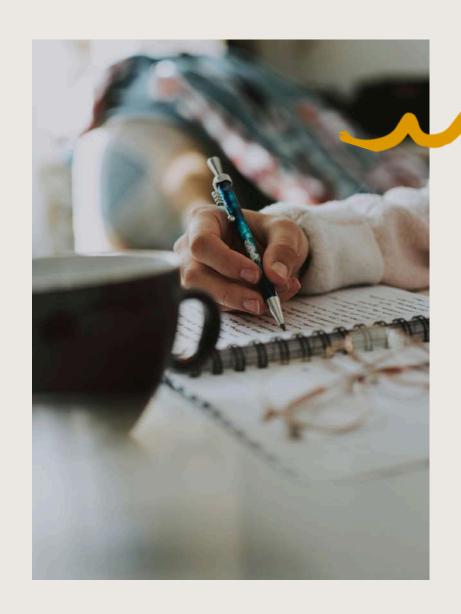
mission & vision

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 served through our free Writing for Good program 80

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

150

immigrants and refugees engaged in our free Immigrants
Write program

240

workshops facilitated for adults and youth

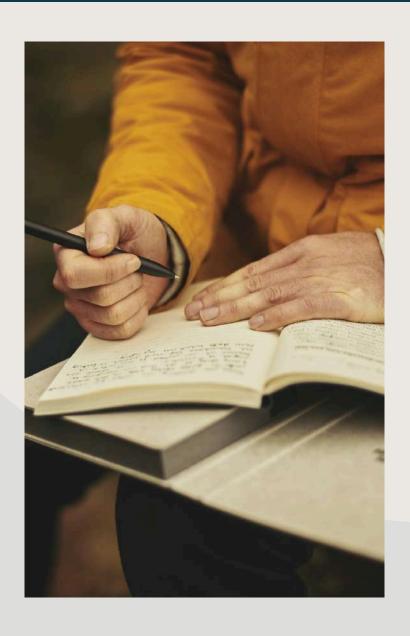
\$4,000

in scholarships and tuition assistance distributed

340

copies of SWING magazine 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



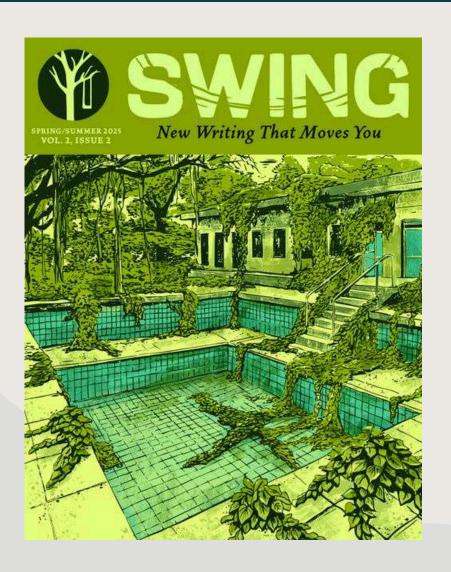
a milestone event: rooted

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.



nashville AAPI writers event & lunar new year photo credit: kurt heinecke

financials

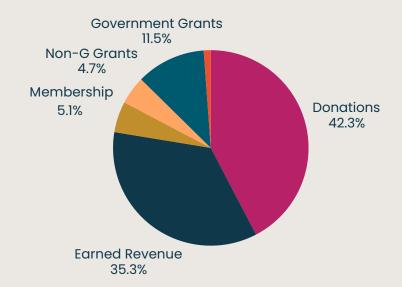
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Donations	\$286,294
Family Foundations	\$8,000
Membership	\$34,573
Annual Event	\$53,319
Non-Government Grants	\$31,500
Government Grants	\$77,574
Earned Revenue	\$237, 784
Other Income	\$25,015
Total Revenue	\$754,059

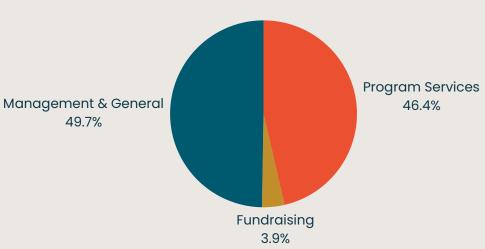
Expenses

Net Assets	\$172,061
Total Expenses	\$581,998
Management & General	\$289,406
Fundraising	\$22,589
Program Services	\$270,003

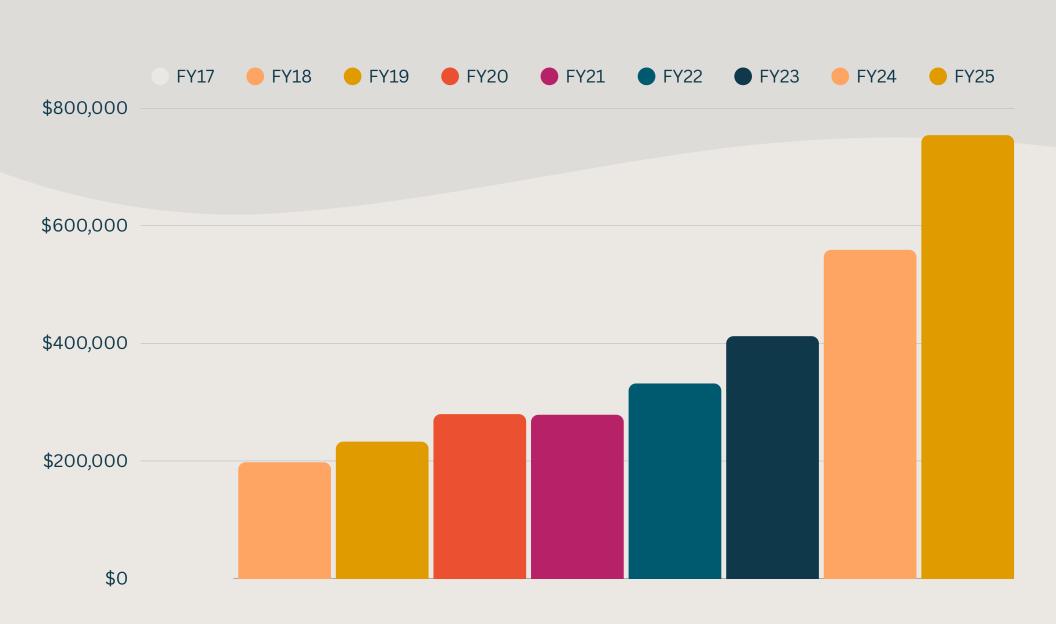
Revenue



Expenses



annual revenue summary



Community Partners

Foundation & Gov. Giving

100 Black Men of Middle Jackalope Brewing Soul'd Creative Collective Amazon Literary Partnership

Tennessee Men of Valor Tempo Cafe Bonnaroo Works Fund

American Baptist College Mending Hearts The Bookshop Claire Adair Hendrickson Foundation

API Middle Tennessee Nashville Free Poetry Library TIRRC Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee

Arts & Business Council Nashville Philharmonic Tony Corapi First Horizon Foundation

Babo Nashville Public Library Turnip Green Hays Foundation

Bongo Java Nashville Symphony University of the South Metro Arts

Center for Imagination NAZA Vanderbilt Divinity School Nancy M. and Douglas M. Yeager Family Foundation

Colby's Army OZ Arts WriterFest National Book Foundation

Cumberland Heights Parnassus Books Rechter Family Fund

Gilda's Club Rivendell Spiritual Center Røros Foundation

Girls' Inc. Sewanee Review Sandra Schatten Foundation

Hermitage Community Shelby Bottoms Nature Center South Arts

Center Smith Springs Community Center Tennessee Arts Commission

Humanities Tennessee Nashville Downtown Partnership Vanderbilt University

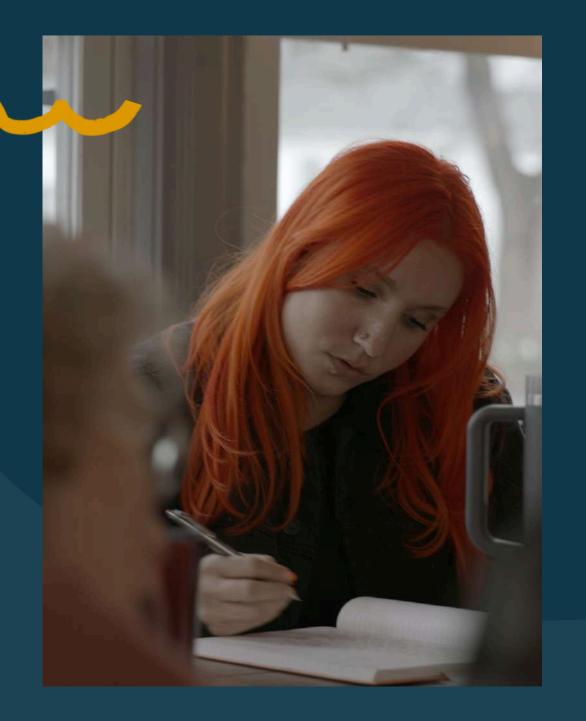
Annual Event Patron Ticket Holders

Fleet Abston Claire Gibson Charles Hudson Wylie McDougall Vicky Sparks

Jessie Bower Marie Griffin Anne Krueger Anita Modak-Truran Doug Williams

Scott Chambers Sandy Guitar Leah Lowe Shan Overton Manuel Zeitlin

Ellen Clayton Lisa Harrison Ami McConnell Abston Jessica Pearson Susan Edwards Karen Hayes Debbie McDougall Liane Preussner



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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.

Sponsors

Alayna Catacombs Art

answer

Big Machine Distillery

Big Yellow Dog Music

Billy Renkl

BookPage

Books Forward & Books Fluent

Bradley Arant Boult Cummings

Brendan O'Connell

Bridge House Over Blue Spring Creek Commission

DancEast Collective

Druid Tree Service Inc.

East Nashville Beer Works

Eclipse Music Group

First Horizon Foundation

Franklin Wine and Spirits

Grow Studios

Henrietta Red

Hays Foundation

Hip Hues, LLC

Ingram Content Group

Jamie Wright Images

Jeni's Splendid Ice Creams

Judith

Marie Griffin

Onyx Publications

Parnassus Books

Phoenix Selections

Pinnacle Financial Partners

Renaissance Therapy Group

Style House Salon

Tennessee Entertainment

The Backlot Studio

The BAM Group

The Blowout Co. of Nashville

The Bookshop

Vanderbilt University

Welcome Home

Wiles + Taylor & Co PC

Individuals

\$5.000 +

Scott Chambers

Estate of Joe Wheeler Grisham

Diana B Johnson & Dwight Wiles

Alec & Monica McDougall

Susannah Scott Barnes

\$1.000 - \$4.999

Susan Edwards

Carole Hagan

Jean Harvey & Robert Rosenstein

Midori Lockett

John & Sally McDougall

Katie McDougall

Kerry O'Neil

Ann Patchett

Ruta Sepetys

Anne Stark Locher

Martha Wayland

Manuel Zeitlin

\$500 - \$999

Kim Barrick

Paul Corbeil

Elizabeth & James Crowe

Pratik Dash

Helen Ellis

Becky Green

Sandy Guitar

William & Knowles Harper

Yi Jiang

Jennifer Johnston

Towles Kintz

Anne Krueger

Wylie & Debbie McDougall

Anita Modak-Truran

Shan Overton

Jessica Pearson

Liane Preussner Margaret Renkl

Ciona Rouse

Kristin Russell

Steven Schwartz &

Emily Hammond

\$100 - \$499 **Aaron Anderson** Charles Ashworth Gloria Ballard Sara Barrett Megan Barry Kelley Bell Adria Bernardi Morgan Bielawski **Emily Booth Masters** Jane Braddock Marshall Bright Rebecca Brogden Mollie Brookshire Stuart Brown Danny Bryant Heather Cain Tina Caldwell Pamela & Mark Carver Wesley Gallagher Jennifer Chesak R.J. & Nikki Chester **Brock Clarke** Claire Coenen Casey Cooke Anthony Corapi **Clifford Corr** Nina Coyle Anne Crook Alecia Dantico Heather Dixon

Laurie Doctor

Sara Donovan Jenna Dorian Jean Dowdy Jessica Dragonetti Erin Ellison Conni Ellisor Kathleen & Alec Estes Frank Ewert Cynthia Ezell Michelle Fajardo Richards Megan Feltes Stephen & Susan Felts Susannah Felts Susan Finch Mike Forster Ellen Fort **Emily Fountain** Linda Fukui Jing Geng Thomas Gildemeister Leslie Grover Lloyd Hannon Holly Hardisty Joe Hardy Georganne Harmon Steve Haruch Karen Hayes Tameron Hedge Sam Heyman

Lloyd Hannon

Holly Hardisty Joe Hardy Georganne Harmon Steve Haruch Karen Hayes Tameron Hedge Sam Heyman Courtney Hill Gulbro Pamela Hinkle Melissa Hogan Judy Holm **Bernd Hosey** Marisa Howe Charles Hudson Sylvia Hutchinson Major Jackson Jilah Kalil Jamie Kent Sarah Key Susan Knowles **Emily Konouchi** Stephen Lamb David Landon Laura Listovitch Courtney Livingstone Rebecca Lockman William Long-Innes Leah Lowe Nancy Lunsford Patrick Luther Sara Maddox

Amy Mariaskin Jayme Marigza-Yeo Kim Masters Siobhan May **Bonni Mccliss Emily McCoy** Gardner McFall Beverly McKenzie Ann Marie McNamara Elizabeth Meadows Claire Messud Stacey Miller Donna Mintz Elizabeth Moodey Vince Morelli Cathy Morgan Joe Morris Barbara Moutenot Carly Myracle Kristie Nettles James Nichols Noni Nielsen Sandy Obodzinski Cecily Parks Lisa Perry Mary Laura Philpott Samuel & Victoria Pickering Rebecca Pitt Leigh Pittenger

Susan Poston

Terry Price Mary Raffety Paul Ragan Eliana Ramage Joy ramirez Amylane Reeve Ernie Reynolds alease robertson Kristy Robinson Dena Rod Sandra Rollins Maggie Russell David Sabin Gabrielle Saliba Betsy Sandlin Acey Santos Beka Santrock Megan Sargent Paige Seals **Becky Sekeres Deke Shearon** Annette Sisson Melissa Smith Karen Smith **Bonnie Smith Whitehouse** Ella Splawn

Leah Stewart

Alice Sullivan

Bonnie St Martin

Denise Stiff Sheehan

Michael Taeckens Christi Teasley Julie Thurmond Kristin Tubb James Tucker Chase Twichell Joseph Vales Madeline Van Dyck Lillie Vandekar **MJ** Warner **Gerald Wickham** Laurie Wiley Judy Wilson Kevin Wilson **Brooke Wittenberg** Andrea Zahler

Individuals

Porch Members

Bob Allen Tiffany Alvoid Renee Alv **Aaron Anderson** Laurie Arnston Elizabeth Asher Rachel Attarian Lana Ayers **Emily Bahm** Gloria Ballard Linda Barnickel Sara Barrett Kim Barrick Megan Barry Kelley Bell Jim Bellar Tim Belter Elsa Bengu **Brad Bergling** Karen Berson Morgan Bielawski Stephanie Biggs Mina Jamillah Bilen James Chambers Jeanice Birch Sheilah Bishop Alyssa Blades Bonnie Blaylock Molly Booker Matthew Booth Allison Boyer Jeff Bradley Cooper Breeden Marshall Bright Adela Brito

Charlotte Brooks Mollie Brookshire Jackson Brown Jennifer Brown Maria Browning Danny Bryant Whitney Bryant Kristen Bulger **Brooke Bunch Sharon Burns** Carly Burt John Butler Anne Byrn Tina Caldwell Eileen Campbell-Reed **Amanda Carter** Lauren Casamassima Kim Case Alexa Catalano Shelly Cato Jenna Caviezel Aida Celebi Sabrina Chambers Susanna Chapman Lisa Cherivtch Jennifer Chesak Cynthia Chiu Caitlin Christman Madison Ciabattari Erica Ciccarone Rosalynn Cimino Julie Claussen Otis Clayton

Thomas Clouse Miller Coffey Casey Cooke Gracie Corapi Paul Corbeil Elizabeth Cornicelli Jennifer Cortez Veronica Cortez Barbara Courtney Yvette Cowden Teresa Cox Nina Coyle Sandra Crouch Elizabeth Crowe Stacey Danger Alecia Dantico **Betsy Davies** Molly Davis Thomas Davis Solomon Day Sarah Dede Sara Delheimer Sheila Delony Gretchen Demonbreun Beth DeWeese Harvir Dhindsa Ericka Dixie **HEATHER DIXON** Laurie Doctor David Dodd Tina Dominguez Leslie Donnenwirth Sara Donovan

Jenna Dorian

Amy Dotson Jean Dowdy Amy Drozdiak **Heather Dudley** John Duffy Carol Dunne Addison Durham **Heather Ebert** Charlotte Edwards Susan Edwards Elizabeth Elkins Angela Elliott Helen Ellis Helen Marie Ellis Jordan Ellis Ren Ellis Erin Ellison Conni Ellisor Ashley Elmquist Frank Ewert CYNTHIA EZELL Cristina Fernandez Susan Finch Lara Fitzgerald Elizabeth Flier Hannah Fowler Mary Franklin Sarah Frederick Linda Fukui Jeffrey Fuller Wesley Gallagher Jing Geng Jo Anne Moser Gibbons Aaron Howard

Thomas Gildemeister

Gail Goldman Veronica Golos Elaine Gordon Keith Gorman Rebecca Grando Marla Grantham Delaney Gray derek greene Emma Griffin-Derr Leslie Grover Sandy Guitar Courtney GULBRO Sarah Hagaman Carole Hagan Ibrahim Hamdy Linda Hamon Lloyd Hannon Joe Hardy Georganne Harmon **Beth Harrington** Anna Hastings Sophie Hawkins Tameron Hedge liz Hernandez Kelly Heyen Sam Heyman Pamela Hinkle Melissa Hogan Sara Holifield Kelsey Horn Natalie Hoskins Vera Hough Clyde Hubbard

Elizabeth Hudson **Ginny Hunt** Karlyn Hunt Jacqueline Huser Allison Inman Ashlyn Inman Nick Ivey Lisa Jackson Simone Jackson Peako Jenkins Ashley Jensen Lucy Jobe **Heather Johnson** Meghann Johnson Jennifer Johnston Lane Scott Jones Jennifer Justus Jilah Kalil Tiffany Kartman **Amber Keeler** Kate Keese Leslye Kemp M. Kennelly Sarah Key Jill Kilgore Anne King Angie Kinman **Towles Kintz** Cynthia Klauber Richard Klin **Emmie Kline** Roshni Krishnan Anne Krueger Sara Kruszka

Stephen Lamb Pamela Lamp David Landon Katherine Landsberg Patricia Lanigan Marissa LaRocca Sarah Larsen Louis Laub Michelle Lechlak Marla Lepore Marina Liggett Joseph Lodl Kimberly Loomis Saralina Love Leah Lowe Patrick Luther Amy Lyles Wilson Ed Madden Kelsey Mahaffey Kaylen Mallard Nick Mandernach subramani mani Falon Mansfield Amy Mariaskin Jennifer Marie Elizabeth Marlowe **Emily Masters** Marisa Maughan Siobhan May Diana McCabe Kyle McCarthy Sarah McCarthy **Bonni Mccliss** Leah McCracken

Porch Members Cont.

Mary Mcguinness Claire McKeever-Burgett Libby Older Beverly McKenzie Elizabeth Meadows Alison Meason jason medley Rai Menon **Everett Merian** Hannah Messinger Jennifer Michael **Rachel Michaud** Cathie Michel Francesca Michels Shannon Miller Shannon Minninger Carl Moore Cathy Morgan Chelsea Morgan Joe Morris Deborah Mosley George Moynihan Cecilia Mynatt Carly Myracle Ruth Nelson Sarah Jane Nelson Wendy Lee Nentwig Kristie Nettles Christy Nicholson Julie Nidiffer Lisa Norman Kaiti Norton Lauren Nossett Kelley OBrien Meghan O'Brien

Mary O'Donohue AM OMalley-Miller Jeanette Opheim Natalya Ortolano Patty Outlaw Shan Overton Joe Pagetta Anne Paine Shiv Parikh **Robin Paris** Kathy Parolini Kate Parrish Anita Pascal **Robin Pearl** Lisa Perry Scott Pierce Karen Pillans Leigh Pittenger Hannah Polikowsky Rose Prendeville Victoria Preston Terry Price Jo Dee Prichard Nancy Probst Danielle Pyle Valerie Quesada Paul Ragan Eliana Ramage Joy ramirez Mari Ramler Elizabeth Ramsey Morgan Reed Anna Reid

Kim Relleva Thais Rencher Randall Reynolds Michelle Richards Whitney Rio-ross **Amy Roberts** MaryBeth Roberts alease robertson Kristy Robinson Sandra Rollins Ciona Rouse Kristin Russell Maggie Russell David Sabin Lana Sain Gabrielle Saliba Alissa Sammarco Alice Sanford **Acey Santos** Beka Santrock Carlin Sappenfield Essie Sappenfield Kate Satz Carrie Schaeffer Melissa Schmitt Kimberly Schramm Jacob Schrodt Elizabeth Schubauer Mary Scoville Paige Seals Lori Seto Sam Severn Diane Sew Cyndy Shearer

Deke Shearon Melinda Sheppeard Julia Shults Takiyah Shumpert Jan Shurtz Susan Simily Ione Singletary Annette Sisson Evelyn So **Bonnie St Martin** Martha Stamps Madison Stanley Anne Stark Locher Kate Stephenson Lora Stevenson-Obrohta Patricia Ward Denise Stiff Sheehan **Lindsey Stinnett** Kathy Stommel Cynthia Storrs Shea Stripling Alice Sullivan Julia Sullivan Catherine Tabor James Tarter Christi Teasley **Charles Thomas Richard Thomas** Rachel Thompson Brooke Thomson Melissa Thornton Anna Thorsen Julie Thurmond

Kathy Treesh

Kristin Tubb

Joshua Upperman Joseph Vales Sarong VitKory Carol Vogt Stephanie Vozza Mare Wakefield Mary Walker Whit Walker Cindy Wall Jen Wallwork Dominguez Katelyn Walter Jean Ward **MJ Warner** Martha Wayland Kory Wells **Delaine Wendling** Leah Wendt Jessica Westphal **Christopher White** Allison Whitten Eva Whittle **Gerald Wickham** Laurie Wiley Alison Wilms Etta Wilson **Judy Wilson** Lacey Winter **Brooke Wittenberg** Jamey Wood

Isis Woods

Marianne Worthington

James Tucker

Emily Tulloh

Gabriel Wright **Oueenester Wyatt** Stephanie Yera Margaret Young Yue Yuan Andrea Zahler Manuel Zeitlin Ira Zezir Rachel Zolensky



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.



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leadership



Executive Committee President: Emily Masters, LaunchTN

Secretary: Heather Dixon, TN Department of Transportation

Treasurer: Karen Hayes, Parnassus Books (retired)

Board of Directors

Paul Burch, Artist

Patrik Dash, TIRRC

Susan Edwards, Frist Art Museum (retired)

Tracy Dunn, Hip Hues, LLC

Jing Geng, Tennessee Attorney General's Office

Claire Gibson, Author

Diana Johnson, Country Music Hall of Fame (retired)

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..."

<u>Nallely Ortega Prater</u>, 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







