

2021
2022

Writers' Exchange Annual Report

WE TURNED 10!



Apple and Mango

By Ayla, age 8, and Aya, age 7

Once upon a time there was an apple and a mango and they became best friends. They went to the playground and played on the monkey bars and watched the sunset. Then they went home and changed into their pajamas, brushed their teeth and went to bed.

Mission

The Writers' Exchange is a community that supports under-resourced kids and youth to build their confidence and get excited about reading, writing and their own potential!

Vision

All kids will grow up with the power to make their own choices, achieve anything and be happy.



All of our programs take place on the traditional and stolen territories of the x̣ṃməθḳ'əỵəm, Ṣḳẉx̣ẉú7mesh and Ṣəḷíḷẉəṭa? Nations. We recognize that we all work within ongoing systems of oppression and colonization, and we commit to being a decolonial ally by building long-term relationships and by listening to, learning from, and amplifying the voices of our Indigenous friends.

Program Highlights



146 kids and youth
12 programs
6 sites

After-School

Fun literacy activities in even more communities! This year, we started a new program with Thunderbird Elementary, expanded programs for kids and youth from ɥuuqinak'uuh Elementary and started our very first weekend program in Strathcona.

84%

of kids and youth say they feel better after spending time at the Writers' Exchange.

77%

of kids and youth say they know they can finish the activities at the Writers' Exchange when they work hard.

61 youth
5 programs
4 sites

High School

Now there are even more opportunities for youth to access a low-pressure space full of positive support. We doubled programs at Vancouver Technical Secondary, started a new program for youth from Britannia Secondary and continued to prepare and enjoy tasty meals at our dinner club in Strathcona.

Family Events

We invited kids, youth and their families to share ideas for new ways that they could be a part of the Writers' Exchange. They told us this: *siblings and caregivers want to join in on the fun, too.*

We were thrilled to reconnect for 9 safe and physically distanced family events, including ice cream socials, a pajama party, Lunar New Year and Eid celebrations...

...plus a family field trip to the bowling lanes! Together, we took transit downtown, laced up our shoes, had a blast and ate 25 pizzas! On and off the lanes, staff and volunteers connected with 90 kids, youth, siblings and caregivers.

Thanks to all of the families for giving us your input on how we can make our programs even better, and for being part of so many fun celebrations where *everyone* was welcome. Each event has felt like the party of the decade.



126 kids and youth
17 programs
5 sites

Summer

Yes, summer-long literacy assistance can take place at sunny parks, cat cafés and even on roller coasters! With support from 43 volunteers, kids and youth were able to stay connected and creative over the break.

SINCE SEPTEMBER 2021 TO AUGUST 2022

250 unique kids and youth

2 (huge!) chapbooks published

79 program volunteers

As We've Grown Up, So Have the Kids!

3 program alumni stepped into our new youth volunteer role. They know the ropes and can always offer a helping hand.

8 program alumni joined our staff as youth leaders to help make each program fun, welcoming and barrier-free.

"If I were to say something to a kid, I'd say... just be yourself and do *whatever*. This is the place to express yourself and explore what you want to do. If you don't want to do an activity, then don't do it. Try out everything you want to try out. If you have an idea—*share that idea*. If you want to ask for help—*ask for help*."

—Stephanie, Youth Leader

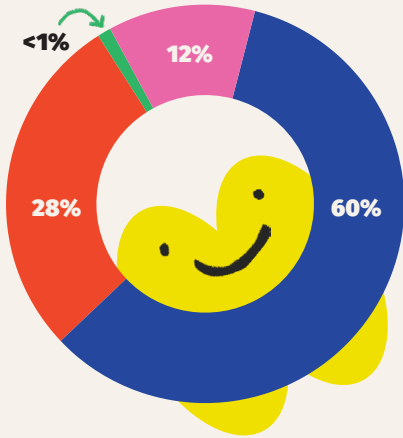
(and a part of the Writers' Exchange since 2014!)

100%

of volunteers say they feel they belong at the Writers' Exchange.

What does *belonging* mean to our volunteers? "Being welcomed and supported through the session in whatever way I need," said one. Another said, "It feels like it matters that I am here and that I am appreciated."

Financials



Revenues

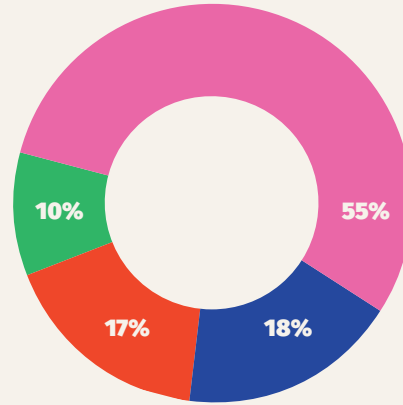
\$81,173
Government Grants

\$412,050
Foundation and Corporate Grants

\$188,881
Individual Donors

\$195
Other Revenue

Total = \$682,299



Expenses

\$391,942
After-School Programs

\$128,505
High School Programs

\$122,080
Summer Programs

\$71,725
Admin

Total = \$714,252

Plus \$158,104 of in-kind support, including book printing, program space, food, and materials, and 3490 hours of volunteer time.

*We operated in a deficit for the 2021-2022 fiscal year to spend down an excess of operating revenue from the previous fiscal year due to unexpected staffing changes.

Big Goals for 2022-2023

Our Strategic Plan Directives

Deepen our impact. We want to create the best organization possible *with* our community. Writers' Exchange programs have always been 100% kid-directed F-U-N. Now we're creating more ways for kids, youth and their caregivers to help design *how* we do our work, behind the scenes and on every level.

Invest in spaces outside of schools. During the pandemic, our landlord provided us with a temporary rent-free building in Grandview-Woodlands so our programs could run uninterrupted. Now we want to secure a space for good, so we can always provide continuous support for kids, youth and their families.

Build a diverse team of staff and volunteers. We're recruiting and training in a new way, and we've created a new staff and volunteer plan to ensure that every kid and youth in our programs has access to a caring adult who shares and reflects their experience.

Celebrate and share the kids' successes. Big book launch parties are back! (With COVID health and safety rules in place.) We are so excited to celebrate kids with their caregivers again, and to share their creativity with the people who are contributing to their success. People like you!

Build trusting, long-term relationships with partners and donors. We're putting our JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) values at the centre of every decision we make—from who we choose to partner with right down to what we serve the kids for their snack.

We officially turned 10 in our 2021–2022 year, making this our 11th year of programs!

Here's how far we've come since we first opened our doors:

3000+
kids and youth reached

115
chapbooks

3755
published stories

1145
volunteers

44,660
volunteer hours

“At the time I was really excited and eager to write and share. And I think back after nine years...and it's like—*wow*. This program was really formative and helped me find my voice, as an artist and as a person of colour. And that was one of the first times when things started to click: *I can use writing and art to share my stories and my culture with my community.*”

—S.T., literacy volunteer and 2013 program alumnus

We want to give a huge thank-you to our entire Writers' Exchange community for all the support you've shown the kids. If we can do all of this in our first 10 years, imagine what we can accomplish together in the next decade and beyond.

Illustrations by Philip, high school program participant



Read kid-created stories, follow our JEDI goals and learn how to make your own secret handshake!

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