

2022  
2023

# Writers' Exchange Annual Report



## Yogurt

By Jaden, age 10

There was a yogurt who walked into a shop and got put on display. A girl named Emily bought the yogurt and took it home. The yogurt was scared and confused. Emily grabbed a spoon and the yogurt said, "No, no, no! Please don't eat me!"

"You talk?" said Emily.

"Yes! Please don't eat me!" said the yogurt.

"Well, too bad. I'm hungry," said Emily, and ate the yogurt anyway.

"Ooh, that's delicious," she said.

**Kid 1:** Why is it called The Writers' Exchange?

**Kid 2:** I know! Because you write here. And you can exchange books!

**Kid 3:** And everyone here is a writer!

## 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 x<sup>m</sup>məθk<sup>ə</sup>yəm, Skwxwú7mesh and Səlílwəta? 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



**142 kids**  
**12 programs**  
**5 sites**

## After-School

Throughout the school-year, kids participated in play-based literacy activities and created all kinds of awesomeness—and we are happy to tell you: they shared their work with their community in a big way. We had 7 elementary book launch parties celebrating the kids' successes with families, volunteers and staff. Yes, 7!

**81%**

of kids and youth feel a strong sense of belonging when they are at the Writers' Exchange.

**83%**

of kids and youth feel proud of themselves when they complete activities at the Writers' Exchange.

**12 kids**  
**1 program**

## In-School

In the fall, we worked with elementary school kids right in their own classroom at Grandview Zuuqinak'uuh Elementary to write the mysterious, funny and spine-chilling stories and legends in *The Critter Kid Next Door & Other Uncertain Tales*. Read it on [issuu.com/writers\\_exchange](http://issuu.com/writers_exchange) if you dare.

**48 youth**  
**4 programs**  
**3 sites**

## High School

Fun weekly activities, weekend field trips and school outreach visits gave youth access to positive social connections and resources for mental health, food supports and more—helping to make their high-school experience a positive one.

**76 grade 6 and 7 kids**  
**pilot program**

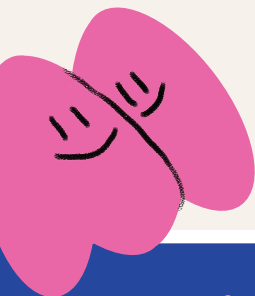
## High School Transition

For our amazing grade 6 and 7 kids, high school is just around the corner. But they're not alone! They're backed by the support of older peers and staff who have been guiding them through this exciting transition. A sweet bonus was hanging out and enjoying ice cream together during spring break!

**91 kids and youth**  
**9 programs**  
**4 sites**

## Summer

Would you rather ... *eat only grapes or yell your words for the rest of the day?* These are the big questions kids and youth grappled with over the break. How about: would you rather ... *ride a rollercoaster or a waterslide?* Luckily, they didn't have to choose—thanks to summer heroes (like you!) who helped provide access to fun field trips, literacy support and safe spaces while school was out.



## Family Events

We held 13 events over the year with 643 total attendees! One of these events was our first-ever Writers' Exchange Sharing Space for the caregivers and families that our programs impact. We invited everyone to share their ideas and feedback, and this is what we learned:

1. Families want to know more about organizational goals and all the programs we run, beyond the one their kid attends.
2. Barrier-free reading and writing time, outside of school, is super valuable—and they want even more.
3. Kids need support and continuity as they get ready to enter high school and as they make the tough transition to grade 8.

**“The schools tell me how important it is for my kids to practice reading and writing every day, but I have many kids and my home is very busy. It's hard for me to be able to do this with each of them. At the Writers' Exchange I know they are getting to read and write with someone one-on-one who can help them improve.” — Caregiver**

**Families, we're putting your input into action. Thank you for sharing your voices and helping us make the Writers' Exchange better for everyone.**

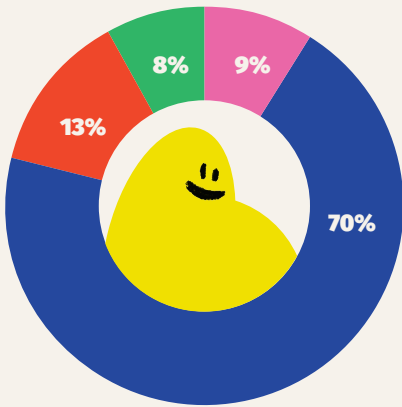


# 100%

of volunteers feel they've built a connection with a kid.

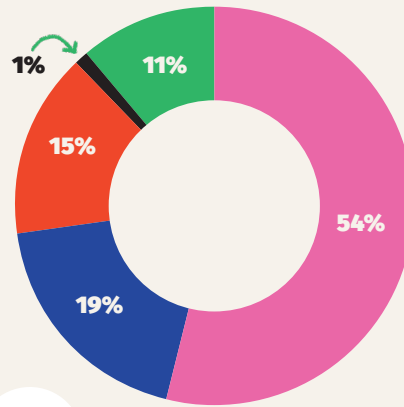
What does *connection* feel like? "Having a shared interest and relating over it," said one volunteer. Another said, "When a kid or youth chooses to initiate interactions and they are comfortable taking the lead with conversations."

## Financials



### Revenues

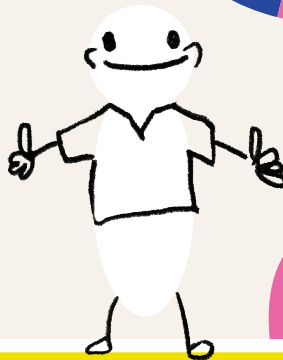
- \$61,626**  
Government Grants
- \$469,636**  
Foundation and Corporate Grants
- \$88,016**  
Individual Donors
- \$50,425**  
Other Revenue (Reserve Fund)



### Expenses

- \$359,077**  
After-School Programs
- \$126,342**  
High School Programs
- \$99,744**  
Summer Programs
- \$6,650**  
In-School Programs
- \$73,145**  
Admin

**Total = \$669,703**



**Total = \$664,958**

Plus \$162,473 of in-kind support, including book printing, program space, food, and materials, and 4071 hours of volunteer time.

**211** unique kids and youth

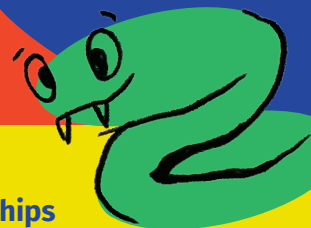
**3** chapbooks published (870 copies shared!)

**64** program volunteers

## Thank you!

We're so proud of the kids and youth and all they achieved this year with your support. Here's a BIG thank you to every single member of our Writers' Exchange community. Your passion for accessible literacy continues to inspire us all.

"Having positive relationships is so important. And having the space to have those relationships is important. That's why it's so vital to have the Writers' Exchange." —Stephanie, program alumus



# Ongoing Goals for 2023-2024

## Our Strategic Plan Directives



### Deepen our impact.

We're supporting youth all throughout their high school experience—even before they enter grade 8. We'll continue to pilot activities for grade 7s, so they're ready to kickstart the new school year with confidence. And we're making our high school programs even better for them, thanks to older youth participants and alumni who share feedback at our new Youth Sharing Space. They've been in their shoes before and know exactly what it takes to succeed!

### Use spaces that work.

Working with the Youth and Family Worker and school staff at Queen Alexandra Elementary and Grandview Ɂuuqinak'uuh Elementary helped us figure out what would work best for the kids in those schools. And thanks to the Vancouver School Board's Community Schools Team and the Principals, we were able to move 3 of our programs from temporary spaces in the neighbourhoods back into the kids' own schools.

### Build a diverse team of staff and volunteers.

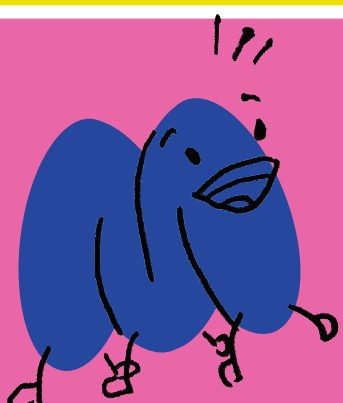
In the year ahead, we will re-design staff and volunteer roles for youth participants and alumni to step into. We've learned that this leap can be a challenge, and we want to see everyone thrive. We're committed to providing them with the resources and guidance to become incredible leaders—within the Writers' Exchange community, and beyond.

### Celebrate and share the kids' successes.

We're on a mission to give the kids and youth the spotlight they deserve and share their awesome stories with the world! We want to show everyone how important their voices are. So, we're growing our book launch events and teaming up with our community—like with the Vancouver Writers Fest, where hundreds of attendees read 22 kids' stories on posters at festival venues. Have more ideas for sharing their words? Let us know.

### Build trusting, long-term relationships with partners and donors.

We've got more ways for corporate partners to get involved (AND a chance to pass around some seriously amazing kid-created chapbooks in your office!). For example, volunteer teams from RBC and Penguin Random House helped serve tasty snacks at our book launch celebrations. And our landlord Low Tide Properties held employee-led initiatives, like a back-to-school supply drive to set kids up for success.



How many Cup Noodles were eaten this year (inspiring the title of our fall 2022 chapbook)? **700!**

How many smiley faces are on the cover of our spring 2023 chapbook? **8 billion, of course!**



**"It's so exciting when the newest chapbook arrives! We pass it around our desks and share our favourite stories with each other."**

**—Kathy Tuulos, Director of Tenant & Community Relations at Low Tide Properties**

Read *The Noodle Exchange: What to Do When Life Gives You Lemons, Eight Billion People in the World... Why Me?*, and many more at [issuu.com/writers\\_exchange!](https://issuu.com/writers_exchange)

*Illustrations by Philip, high school program participant*



*-make a wish.*

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