







# Annual Report 2015-2016







# A Letter from the Executive Director

#### Dear Writer, Reader, Lighthouse Member,

I'm sitting in the Denver Art Museum right now, and I'm supposed to be freewriting, based on a specific prompt: I'm supposed to be writing persuasively about something. I'm supposed to be arguing for something.

To be more specific, I'm in the "Audacious" exhibit, which is a wonderful curation of socially relevant art with something to say about the current human, political, and social condition. Behind me there's a discolored American flag, with red and black stripes, and black stars on a field of sickly green. In front of me, there's a Philip Guston painting, with two hooded KKK figures, a pointing disembodied hand, and buildings that look strangely like pieces of cut meat, all awash in pinkish hues, like watered-down blood.

Obviously, this is a rather grim corner. Many of the other paintings are funny and ironic, gorgeous in their color and texture. But that is perhaps not the point. The exhibit asks the question: what is the role of visual art in the process of social change?

Most everyone who's been to Lighthouse in the past two years knows that we've been asking ourselves a similar question: what is the societal and cultural role of a nonprofit literary arts center? What role does such a center serve in fighting our current cultural and societal challenges?

About 10 years ago, the Lighthouse board and staff met with a consultant who asked us a provocative question: do you want Lighthouse to merely be a collection of workshops and writers, or do you want it to be something more?

We said, "More!" Because why not? That was our earnest (and naïve) answer. Which then led to another question: what do you want to be, then?

This has been a fascinating—and occasionally difficult—question to tackle.

At times I feel like we've only begun to answer that question. We've added more outreach programs for young

writers and for adults as well. And we've begun to consider the historic role of literature: to inform, to move, to build a sense of connectedness, and to allow us to embrace



the human condition in a vicarious, and therefore safe, way. We gain wisdom through another's experience.

Anyone who reads can feel this power on some level. Every week there seems to be a news article making the social media rounds that talks about this effect. So, even though my uncle never murdered my father and married my mother, I can gain a vicarious sense of how deeply awful loss and confusion can hurt, and I can find a sense of solace when I have to make an arduous decision, when I have to decide how to act, what to do or say, what bridges to burn and which ones to keep intact. All from the safety from my couch, as I read *Hamlet*. (Sorry to go right back to the grim.)

At Lighthouse, we know that the simple act of writing can save people. I believe that it saved me. (A topic for another day.) I see it in the community we've built. I see it at the readings we host and the free workshops we run—at Lighthouse, at local schools, at Fort Lyon Residential Community, and the Denver Public Library. None of these programs existed before we asked, and then tried to answer, that question: what do you want to be? So many of us feel marginalized; writing our truth places our voices in the larger conversation.

It's good for Lighthouse to be in this finding-an-answer process, because there is so much work to be done. We're not going to be the panacea for all that ails us, but we are going to make a positive difference. And if that's an audacious promise, so be it.

Regards,

Michael Henry Executive Director Co-Founder

# 2015-2016 Overview

#### Here's a summary of the new projects we've embarked upon:

- Fort Lyon: Lighthouse faculty member John Cotter recently finished his fellowship at Fort Lyon, and had a lot to say about it on the Lighthouse blog: http://lighthousewriters.org/blog/ fort-lyon/. This fall, Chauna Craig will start her fellowship: http://chaunacraig.com/.
- Hard Times Writing Workshops: We launched a weekly free
  writing workshop at the main branch of the Denver Public
  Library for people experiencing homelessness or extreme
  poverty. These workshops have averaged 15 to 20 participants
  each week.
- Write Age: In partnership with Denver Parks and Rec and the Denver Office on Aging, Lighthouse volunteers are leading free writing workshops for seniors.
- Bounceback: We're continuing to run workshops for at-risk youth at several programs, including Excelsior Youth Center and Tennyson Center.
- Write Denver: Write Denver is ramping up, and there are
  a bunch of events planned for the year ahead. Also, we're
  working on getting the writings we've collected made into
  artwork—which will then by displayed around town. (See the
  traffic signs in front of Lighthouse for a sampling.)
- Poetry Out Loud: We successfully completed the Colorado 2016 POL program in April. Poetry Out Loud is a national poetry recitation competition run by the NEA, and Lighthouse has been chosen to run it in Colorado. High school students perform published poems and are judged on their performance. We received full funding from the NEA and Colorado Creative Industries, which allowed us to hire a dedicated POL program coordinator.

Whether you're an avid writer, a published author, a reader, or just an arts-interested person, I hope you feel good about the work we're doing. And I hope you support us in this work of building a literary arts center that's a cornerstone of the Colorado cultural scene in any way that feels right for you, even if it's just to tell people about the work we're doing.









# 2015-2016 Program Update

In 2015 and 2016, Lighthouse programs continued to grow, and we hosted some of our biggest events yet. Booker Prize-winning writers Kazuo Ishiguro (March 2015) and Michael Ondaatje (March 2016) gave record-breaking public talks, and we offered classes, workshops, and receptions with a wide array of talent, including Major Jackson, Li-Young Lee, Ben Lerner, Jenny Offill, Christina Henriquez, Jericho Brown, Kim Addonizio, Mat Johnson, Meghan Daum, Heidi Julavits, Ben Marcus, Jess Walter, Dana Spiotta, and many others.



Enrollment in The Book Project held steady, as we filled 24 new spots each year for the two-year program in which mentors work year-round with 48 writers of fiction and nonfiction/hybrid forms. So far, dozens of Book Project writers have been recognized with publications, prizes, agent signings, and other encouraging news. What follows is a snapshot of some member accomplishments in

2015-2016:

- Lighthouse instructors had pieces featured in publications including One Story, Ploughshares, Prairie Schooner, Crab Orchard Review, Freeman's, Boulevard, American Scholar, and elsewhere.
- Members were published and featured in *Best American Poetry*, *Shenandoah*, *Narrative Magazine*, *Guernica*, and more.
- Longtime member Teow Lim Goh's debut poetry collection, Islanders, received wide critical acclaim and was written up by PBS Newshour and the New Yorker.
- In 2015 and 2016, 10 members and instructors had Pushcart Prize nominations from literary journals, meaning they wrote one of the four pieces the journal was most proud of publishing in the calendar year.
- Members from our writing workshops were accepted into some of the best MFA programs in the country, including the fully funded programs at Syracuse University, University of California–Irvine, and University of Houston.
- Members landed at least five book deals for novels, short story collections, and memoirs.
- And last but not least, thousands of people enjoyed reading and writing in a community of literary types and felt nourished by being together.







Regards,

Andrea Dupree Program Director

Co-Founder

# 2015-2016 Highlights

In 2015 and 2016, we awarded Writership financial assistance to more than 500 people, so they could attend workshops, classes, and events.



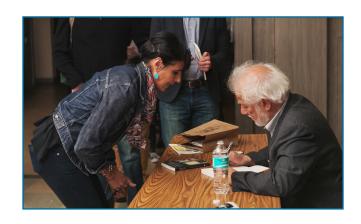
In 2016, our Write Denver program won Colorado's Art Tank competition, receiving \$36,000 in grant money.



More than 500 people came to our Writer's Studio with English Patient author Michael Ondaatje, our biggest author talk to date.



Lit Fest 2015 and 2016 each drew more than 3,700 attendees over two weeks of workshops, parties, and salons.



In 2015, nearly 200 volunteers donated 2,019 hours of their time. In 2016, they providing 1,783 hours of help.



In 2016, we signed a five-year lease for the Milheim House, our location at 1515 Race St.

# 2015-2016 Young Writers Program Update

In 2015 and 2016, we served 2,604 and 3,977 students, respectively, at Lighthouse and in schools, outreach centers, and other sites throughout the Denver metro area.

- We offered dozens of in-house and community workshops, including our regular third Saturday and school closure day workshops.
- We offered workshops in partnership with the Denver Museum of Nature and Science like "A Story is Afoot" and "What Would a Dragon Declare?"
- We offered free college essay workshops in Denver, Broomfield, and Douglas County; hosted our
  weekly Young Authors Collective; and ran several youth summer camps, including our first ever elementary
  summer camp for third and fourth graders.
- We launched new age divisions for our in-house workshops: classes for 3rd through 5th graders, classes for 6th through 8th graders, and classes for 9th through 12th graders. 2015 was the first year we welcomed 3rd and 4th graders into our Young Writers Program.
- Outreach coordinator Roxanne Banks Malia joined the staff in spring 2015.
- We worked with 22 unique schools and outreach centers, including Denver School of the Arts, a
  comprehensive secondary arts magnet school; Cole Arts

and Sciences Academy, a Title 1 school with 91 percent of students on free or reduced lunch; The Manor, an off-campus alternative high school program in Aurora for students with special learning, behavioral, and emotional needs; and Tennyson Center for Children, a K-12 school and treatment center for emotionally and crisis-affected children and young adults, most of whom suffer from abuse and neglect.

 Mike Henry and Kathy Imel's "Pairings Project" at the Thornton Senior Center supported ekphrastic writing workshops in both York International School and Thornton High School.

- We partnered with Colorado Creative Industries, the NEA, and the Poetry Foundation to host Poetry Out Loud, the national high school poetry recitation competition.
- We began programming at George Washington High School in the form of biweekly 50-minute self-identity and expression workshops in seven sections of 9th grade advisory classes, reaching 175 students.
- Weekly outreach programs at Urban Peak Shelter for teens experiencing homelessness began in July 2016.
- In 2016, through a partnership with Youth One Book One Denver (YOBOD), we offered writing workshops at summer programs, many for low-income or Title 1 students, including Heart and Hand Center, Mi Casa, Wyatt Academy, Boys and Girls Club at Cole, and Denver Parks and Rec at Swansea.
- Our 2015-16 collaboration with Cleo Parker Robinson Dance culminated in November 2016 with a performance for 400 middle and high school students at Girls Athletic Leadership School.







# Stories from the Young Writers Program



"One afternoon, I asked the kids at Cole to 'tell any story you want to tell.' I set out a huge stack of notebook paper and told the group that the paper supply was limitless. They wrote non-stop for the next hour. Every time I asked if they wanted to stop, I was met with 'No, no, no!' I overheard one girl say to her friend, 'I don't think you've ever written that much in your life.' I later asked her, 'Why do you think you wrote so much today?' She answered, 'I guess I've never been able to write what I wanted. Now I can't stop.'"

—Alison Preston, Cole Arts and Sciences Academy, 2015-16



"When our comedy writer of Young Authors Collective, Ellen, reads, everyone listens. Ellen never fails to bring the group to tears with laughter. During one of our November meetings, she was the last reader of the day. When Ellen finished reading, she confessed that she actually had many more pages written, all along the same topic. It was time to go, but the group begged her to read more. Ellen obliged—bringing down the house—until her mother walked into the dining room and said, 'I hate to break up the fun, but we've got somewhere to be.' The other YAC members responded with a collective 'No, not yet!' but respectfully, if reluctantly, said their goodbyes. We found out in late 2016 that Ellen has been accepted into the University of Iowa's creative writing program for fall 2017."

—Jesaka Long, Young Authors Collective, 2015-16



"During fall 2015, we offered special feedback to a female high school student who has been in the Tennyson Center writing program for several years. She experienced early physical abuse and neglect and, as a result, struggles emotionally and behaviorally. Both of her parents have given up their parental rights, and she is a ward of the state. Roxanne took a piece of this student's writing to Lighthouse. Mike and other faculty and staff members read her piece and sent her some feedback. The last time she went to court (she has to go periodically regarding guardian issues), she told the judge that the writers at Lighthouse have been reading her work and they think she is very good. She told the judge she was going to be a writer when she grows up."

—Jane Thatcher, Tennyson Center for Children

# 2015-2016 Financial Report

# **Combined Statement of Activities**

	2016	2015
Support, Revenue, and Gains		
Earned income	\$1,002,506	\$1,004,647
Memberships	60,790	55,334
Donations	468,784	484,774
In-kind donations	9,628	2,620
Investment income	1,110	
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE	\$1,542,818	\$1,547,375
Expenses		
Program services	\$1,350,488	\$1,210,065
General & administrative	97,712	83,487
Fundraising	123,103	100,443
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,571,303	\$1,393,995
Changes in net assets	(28,485)	153,380
Net assets, beginning of year	213,553	60,173
NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR	\$185,068	\$213,553

# 2015-2016 Financial Report

# Statement of Financial Position

ASSETS  Cash and cash equivalents  Accounts receivable  Prepaid expenses	<b>2016</b> \$112,234 207,790 6,513	<b>2015</b> \$233,800 56,317 7,114
Total current assets	326,537	297,231
Property and equipment  Less accumulated depreciation	40,323 25,843 14,480	35,502 17,868 17,634
Other assets Rose Community endowment Website costs under developm Deposit	26,048 ent 70,189 6,250 102,487	  6,250 6,250
TOTAL ASSETS	\$443,504	\$321,115
LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS		
Liabilities  Accounts payable Payroll liabilities Deferred revenue Deferred rent Class deposits  Total current liabilities	\$19,652 13,154 221,370  4,260 258,436	\$14,515 11,687 74,588 4,897 1,875
Net Assets		
Unrestricted Board designated	8,057 7,000	4,954 
Total unrestricted Temporarily restricted Permanently restricted Total net assets	15,057 150,963 19,048 185,068	4,954 203,599 5,000 213,553
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	\$443,504	\$321,115

## 2015-2016 Donors

## Foundations and Corporate Contributors (includes employer matching funds)

Amazon Smile Foundation

**Apple Computer** 

**Bellco Credit Union** 

**Book Bar** 

Brame Family Charitable Fund

**Cherbec Advancement Foundation** 

CoBiz Cares Foundation

Colorado Creative Industries

Colorado Homegrown Tales

Community First Foundation

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Nelson Literary Agency

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Ragonetti, PC

**QEP Resources** 

**SBWA** 

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SCFD of Boulder County

SCFD of Broomfield County

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**Tattered Cover** 

The Amgen Foundation

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Fund

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dation

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Elizabeth Anderman

Ellen Anderman and James Donald-

son

Bill Aragon

Richard Argys

Karen Asbridge

Don and Jeanette Auman

Karen Aviles

**Beth Barnes** 

Michele Basche

Pamela Basev

Evelyn Becker and Larry Schwartz

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iviai ceia bii

Laura Bond Brad Brockbank

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Nancy Jarrell Daniel Nolan
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10

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Sandy Vanderstoep

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Sheila Wright Paula Younger Courtney Zenner Rebecah Ziegler Kelleen Zubick

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Laurie Wagner

(Those who have notified us they've Christopher Pickens named Lighthouse as a beneficiary) Shari Caudron Patricia Kinkel

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Mike Plymell Jordan Prochnow

#### 2016

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Genna Kohlhardt, Program Coordinator
Rachael Deagman, Poety Out Loud Coordinator
Jovan Mays, Community Outreach Coordinator

# **About Lighthouse Writers Workshop**

Lighthouse Writers Workshop, Inc. is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that complies with all federal rules and regulations in providing equal access and opportunities in both learning and employment. We do not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, gender expression, physical disability, sexual orientation, race, or religion. Our mission is to educate, support, and develop community among writers and readers in Denver and Colorado.

# **Our Mission**

The mission of Lighthouse Writers Workshop is to provide the highest caliber of artistic education, support, and community for writers and readers in the Rocky Mountain Region and beyond. We strive to ensure that literature maintains its proper prominence in the culture, and that individuals achieve their fullest potential as artists and human beings.

To achieve this mission, Lighthouse has identified seven goals:

- Lighthouse attracts literary types of all ages and from all walks of life, inviting them to connect with our programming and community, both to enrich their art and enrich their lives.
- Lighthouse provides a lifelong educational environment that fosters the artistic, intellectual, and personal growth of its community and provides continuing support as they embark on successful careers and productive lives as artists and citizens.
- Lighthouse continually elevates its educational and artistic standards, remaining open and responsive to changing conditions in the worldwide literary arts scene.
- Lighthouse attracts and retains talented and renowned faculty members in all disciplines by providing a collaborative work environment and involving them fully in the artistic and educational life of the community.
- Lighthouse upholds its commitment to a diverse community by nurturing an inclusive, supportive, and welcoming environment.
- Lighthouse takes an active role in preserving the future of the literary arts by providing exemplary arts education programs, encouraging its members and youth to serve as advocates for the literary arts in society.
- Lighthouse tirelessly promotes the belief that writing and reading create a deep understanding of ourselves and others, and thereby encourages compassion and empathy in our society.

Lighthouse Writers Workshop is proud to be an SCFD Tier III organization. Additional general support comes from government, foundation, and individual sources, and our 1,700-plus members.











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