



2019
- ANNUAL REPORT

# LIGHTHOUSE STAFF AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**ACCESSIBILITY** 

Lighthouse welcomes all people who want to learn more about writing, no matter their age, experience, or education. It's important to our vision and mission that we keep our offerings affordable and our facilities convenient for all community members.



**COMMUNITY** 

Lighthouse provides space and spirit for fellowship among working and aspiring writers. We offer readers unique ways to discover the writer's way. We invite everyone who values arts and culture to explore the written word. And we support the vibrancy and diversity of the Colorado artistic culture.



**COLLABORATION** 

Writing is often seen as a solitary art; however, all writers need the inspiration and support of others. Our workshops engage students, teachers, and peers in deeply collaborative relationships. We seek opportunities to explore other arts and media with regional and national partners.



DISCOVERY

We believe that writing empowers greater understanding of self and others and thereby encourages compassion and empathy in our society.



**CREATIVITY** 

Lighthouse believes in the innate creativity of all people by fostering experimentation and innovation.



**EXCELLENCE** 

Lighthouse is dedicated to supporting the highest potential of each writer, whatever his or her goals and talents. We are committed to increasing awareness of local and national authors producing high quality work.



# FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



For the Sake of Strangers

—Dorianne Laux

No matter what the grief, its weight, we are obliged to carry it.

We rise and gather momentum, the dull strength

that pushes us through crowds.

And then the young boy gives me directions

so avidly. A woman holds the glass door open,

waiting patiently for my empty body to pass through.

All day it continues, each kindness reaching toward another—a stranger singing to no one as I pass on the path, trees offering their blossoms, a child who lifts his almond eyes and smiles.

Somehow they always find me, seem even to be waiting, determined to keep me from myself, from the thing that calls to me as it must have once called to them—this temptation to step off the edge and fall weightless, away from the world.

#### Dear Lighthouse supporter,

Somehow, for 23 years now, people have found Lighthouse. Even now it's a surprise to Andrea Dupree and I; when we started this whole endeavor we had no idea that such a community would coalesce around an idea: that literature is not only a most essential form of entertainment, it's a force for joy and connection.

What a wonderful cadre of humans Lighthouse is—from the brilliant and attentive staff and board, to the hardworking faculty, to the advanced and total beginners, to those who are writing their way out of trauma and sadness, to young kids writing down whatever their imaginations can conjure. The world out there can sometimes be cold, snarky, and uncaring, and time brings us new challenges no matter how we might try to avoid them. Writing brings us back to the world of kindness and understanding, and Lighthouse will evermore strive to be a safe harbor for us all.

In 2019, the beacon continued to shine ever brighter. It was a banner year for the organization: we became an SCFD Tier II organization, finally placing the literary arts alongside a select number of distinguished arts institutions; the budget crossed the \$2 million threshold, a fact that never ceases to stupefy this poet (I've been trained to count stresses and syllables, not money). In total, we served approximately 40,000 individuals.

We wrote a new strategic plan to take us into the new decade with some ambitious ideas (we're creative writers, after all) and grand plans. Along the way, we identified several action statements to guide us:

- Lighthouse celebrates our common humanity via the written word.
- We work tirelessly to amplify the role that creative writing and literature play in our society.
- With a comprehensive, flexible, and rigorous curriculum, Lighthouse embraces all levels of artists, from the advanced

- writer to the person just beginning to explore their creativity.
- We celebrate marginalized or underrepresented voices in order to foster an inclusive and equitable society. Because we hear and appreciate everyone, we are a home for all writers.
- Lighthouse is sustainable financially for the long term; the organization will settle into a new location that is comfortable, accessible, and welcoming to all.

Using these action statements as guideposts, we outlined four major initiatives that address critical issues:

- Focus on the Whole Writer: Provide a superior, inclusive learning experience for writers, fully supporting their development as artists and human beings.
- Deepen Our Community Impact: We are inclusive, authentic, and resilient in our pursuit of this objective, reaching an ever-expanding audience. We support and encourage everyone to see writing and literature as a highly effective form of connection and self-expression.
- 3. **Be an Arts Cornerstone:** Be an energized and innovative leader in the artistic and philanthropic communities.
- Build a Sustainable and Enduring
   Organization: Ensure that the impact and
   importance of Lighthouse is secure now
   and into the future.

Thank you for a wonderful year. Thank you to our board of directors, to our staff and tireless faculty, to our funders, and to you, our community. You are Lighthouse, and I am deeply grateful for your presence in my life.

Michael Henry
Executive Director
Co-Founder



## Dear Lighthouse community,

As we approached the end of 2019, the year before the world changed forever, it felt like a good time to take stock, as Joyce Carol Oates might say, of where we were going and where we'd been.

The year helped us remember why something like a literary center can matter to a city and the people who live there. Our in-house adult programming—specifically Lit Fest, Grand Lake, Writer's Studio, Book Project, Poetry Collective, and visiting author series—that's the terrain I've had the pleasure of working in, along with a brilliant program team including Genna Kohlhardt, Rachel Weaver, Torin Jensen, Abigail Lahnert, and Helen Armstrong. Not only did we have fruitful "stranger comes to town" stop-overs from Kevin Young, Esmé Weijun Wang, Michelle Tea, and dozens of others, but we saw in tangible ways how the community here is "going on a journey," traversing a global literary landscape and finding genuine, creative ways to define Lighthouse's part in it.

Here are some highlights:

• Our faculty and members continued to inspire all of us with their good work. In the 2019 Colorado Book Award Literary Fiction category, for example, three of the four finalists and the eventual winner, Nick Arvin, were our instructors. Tiffany Quay Tyson, who teaches in our adult and young writers programs, won the Willie Morris Award for Southern Fiction, the Mississippi Arts & Letters Award for Fiction, and many others for her novel

The Past is Never. Instructor Diana Khoi Nguyen, who was a finalist for the 2018 National Book Award, won the 2019 Colorado Book Award in poetry. At least a dozen faculty and members had books come out, and hundreds had stories, essays, poems, and hybrid work published in terrific venues. One member, Jessica Austgen, saw her wonderful play run for a month at the Arvada Center.

- Our 14th annual Lit Fest was our largest, most robust ever. Overall, thousands of people came from all over the country and overseas to attend 16 advanced workshops, joining thousands of others who came to partake in the two-week festival. At least five writers met their agents, and two participants in our Lit Fest advanced workshops announced book deals with Big Five publishers by the end of the year (one of them met her agent at Lit Fest). We were rich with talent, hosting emerging writer fellowship winners and veteran writers from Canada, Washington, Fort Collins, Illinois, New Mexico, New York, and Denver.
- Visiting authors Rachel Cusk, Alexander Chee, Helen Macdonald, Melissa Febos, Gabe Habash, Amitava Kumar, Erika L. Sánchez, Mary Ruefle, Ross Gay, Curtis Sittenfeld, Sheila Heti, Sloane Crosley, Julie Buntin, and others swooped into Lighthouse, gave incredible readings, craft talks, and advanced workshops, and formed a bond that has come to define Lit Fest. Writers became new best friends, snuck out to movies, and toasted the whole shebang at the Satire Lounge. We've heard that new friendships are still flourishing, and that no matter where a writer is from, Lit Fest is the place to come home to every June. That sounds good to us.
- We hosted Julia Alvarez for an energetic on-stage event and craft seminar as part of our NEA Big Read program. Over 600 people came out to the Newman Center at DU to hear Julia Alvarez in conversation

with Kali Fajardo-Anstine about our Big Read pick In The Time of the Butterflies. Julia led a memorable class in which a roomful of people composed six-word memoirs. None of us would have ever guessed we could hear such compelling memoirs, and so many of them, in just under ten minutes.

- We saw a new group of writers enter the Book Project and the Poetry Collective, our 2- and 1-year programs for writers with the drive to draft and revise their own books with their own cohort and mentors, as well as the rest of the Lighthouse programming. Each year, we hear good news of publications, creative breakthroughs, signings with agents, and people becoming the writer they've always wanted to be.
- Finally, we were humbled to hear from so many of you that a community dedicated to reading, writing, books, poetry, and plays, and all the things that come with those things, has made a difference in your life. As Leslie Jamison so artfully put it in a message she sent after stopping here for her 2019 book tour, "It was so lovely to see you all and to plunge back into the immersive, encompassing, dynamic community of Lighthouse. It really blows my mind, the world you all have made. The warmth and creative energy are so utterly palpable. I can't wait for the next return."

I hope this gives you a snapshot of what 2019 looked like from the program perch I'm most involved in. Thanks to those who teach for Lighthouse, those who write with us, and those who enjoy hearing and telling stories. We're a richer community because of you.

Thank you,

Andrea Dupree **Program Director** Co-Founder

Jadreal Duguese

# YOUNG WRITERS PROGRAM UPDATE -

One student in particular struggled at the beginning of the workshop. He would often choose to leave the room to speak with his therapist instead of participating in the group. However, with Roxanne's lessons and encouraging demeanor, later in the workshop, this same student chose to stay in the classroom and write amazing poems, which he then shared out loud with his peers. I saw significant growth in all areas—confidence, engagement, and willingness to write or try new things—for almost all, if not all, of my students.

–Lisa Avram, Children's Hospital MedicalDay Treatment Center

In 2019, in-house programs engaged 411 students in programs like the Young Authors Collective, Saturday workshops, half-day summer camps, and afterschool workshops. Our annual full-day summer camp for middle and high school students completed its tenth year.

Teen Studio, a brand new offering this year, allowed 13 additional teens to attend afterschool drop-in studio time at Lighthouse, and our new summer Teen Writing Marathons engaged 40 teens. Summer camps continued to grow, serving 196 students throughout the summer months.

Our annual youth anthology, And We Created Words, included 70 students this year from a variety of in-house and outreach workshops.

On average, 91% of students who took our workshops in 2019 reported that our workshops improved their writing skills; 82% gained confidence in their writing; 87% felt they could better express themselves; and 81% felt like part of a

**Poetry Out Loud** continued with 2,700 students participating across the state.

writing community after their workshop.

Jesca Gilbert from Valor Christian High School was the 2019 state champion.

Our youth outreach program workshops continued to grow and thrive, serving 3,611 at 40 partnering sites across the Denver metro area, including at Rainbow Alley, a safe space supporting LGBTQ youth and their allies ages 11 to 21; the Third Way Center for high risk, mentally ill, disadvantaged and often homeless adolescents and their families; and many, many other schools, libraries, museums, neighborhood youth centers, and medical and residential treatment centers.

#### Here's the full list of sites:

#### **Libraries and Museums**

Anythink Wright Farms (Thornton)
Boulder Public Library
Broomfield Public Library
Denver Public Library, Sam Gary Branch
Denver Art Museum

#### Medical and Residential Treatment Centers

Children's Hospital Medical Day Treatment (Aurora)
Third Way Center (Denver)

#### **Neighborhood Youth Centers**

College Track Aurora
Columbine Bridge Project (Denver)
Heart & Hand Center (Denver)
Jeffco Prosperity Partners (Arvada)
Lincoln Park Bridge Project (Denver)
Prodigy Coffee House (Denver)
Rainbow Alley (Denver)
Westwood Bridge Project (Denver)

#### **School Enrichment**

Adams County Career Expo
Blessed Sacrament School (Denver)
Bradford K-8 (Littleton)
Broomfield High School (Broomfield)
C3 (Creativity, Challenge, Community)
(Denver)
Denver School of the Arts
East High School (Denver)
Hulstrom K-8 (Northglenn) (Denver)
Isabella Bird Community School

Merrill Middle School Parker Performing Arts School Southmoor Elementary (Denver)

#### **Title I and Alternative Schools**

Arapahoe Ridge High School (Boulder)
Birch Elementary (Broomfield)
Denver Online High School
Emerald Elementary (Broomfield)
Highline Academy (Denver)
Harris Park Elementary (Westminster)
Jefferson County Open School (Lakewood)
McLain Community High School (Lakewood)
North Arvada Middle School
Options High School (Littleton)
Peak Expeditionary School (Wheat Ridge)
Profoundly Gifted Retreat at Glen Eyrie
Castle (El Paso County)
Thornton High School

Regards, Roxanne Banks Malia Young Writers Program Co-Director

Kim O'Connor Young Writers Program Co-Director



The woman, Nix, was a first-generation witch. Her grandmother was a corporate lawyer and her mother had a violently utilitarian personality that couldn't comprehend delight in the mystic and mysterious. Nix-on the other hand-saw the magic in everything. Nix saw the magic in the crisp winter air diluted by the soft smell of pine breeze, ancient glacier coated by the first light blanket of snow, the taste of bitter coffee after emerging from a tent to the freezing light of the mountain morning sun. Nix could not help but taste the magic, the mysticism, in the air which yields to the throes of longing, hoping, yearning at the scent of a girl's perfume, at the taste of cheap cherry chapstick, at the soft murmurs of lovers underneath street lamps in vacant parking lots. She mixed these small magicks into her herbs and with those herbs, she was able to create small miracles and small kindnesses for the descendants of the end of the world.

—Hunter Grogan, 12th grade, High School SummerWriting Camp

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS UPDATE:



**2019 was a year of tremendous growth** for our Community Engagement programs. Hard Times, our program dedicated to working with writers who are currently experiencing or have experienced homelessness, added an additional location in Jefferson County. Lighthouse also absorbed Unlocked Poetry, a class dedicated to working with incarcerated writers at the Colorado Department of Correction Facility located in Sterling, Colorado. We expanded our partnership with UC Health to continue offering classes for participants who have or have had cancer.

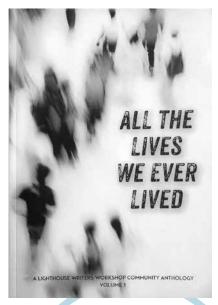
It was also a year of firsts for Lighthouse. We hosted the first Writing in Color retreat in August, the first of its kind in Colorado. Writers from across the United States traveled to Allenspark, Colorado to participate in the retreat. One participant wrote, "As a black writer in Reno, I am isolated and needed a network of like-minded people. Thank you for this re-affirming opportunity.

It felt like finding my people. "Another wrote, "My identity was for the first time not central around my race nor my sexual orientation, no one asked me to explore that further. My writing was, my emotional, physical journey was. I felt seen outside of my politicized identities. My artistry was first. "

We released our first community anthology, *All the Lives We Ever Lived*, a collection of works from our various community engagement programs, and it was chosen as a finalist for the Colorado Book Awards.

Through our community programs we aim to bring Lighthouse's programs to various underrepresented communities within the arts. In 2019 Lighthouse's adult community engagement program served **3,877** participants across a number of weekly programs and one-off collaborations.

Many thanks,
Dan Manzanares & Suzi Q. Smith
Community Engagement Coordinators





# **Thin Air**

All day we've been dazed and blinded by columbine and paintbrush, by light tumbling down hillsides. We climb to an abandoned silver mine, played out

almost a century ago, collapsed and rusting in mud and flowers. How much more life can be mined from our bodies, how soon before we're finally emptied of words?

Once above tree line, I want to linger in bare altitude, even as marmots bark unwelcome from the rocks, dark clouds move across remaining snow. In your unrest

you'd flee these skies fast as streams trickling downward under crusts of ice. I'd give you the peace of your own wild heart. I don't know how else to heal you.

Lew Forester, Hard Times, Denver Public Library

#### **YOUTH ENGAGEMENT**

Total number of workshops/sessions:

420

Total students served in youth community & school outreach programs 2019:

3,353

Total students served in 2018:

Total number of sites: 47

**GROWTH** 

2,578

## **ADULT ENGAGEMENT**



2019:

3,877

2018: 3,334

**GROWTH** 

### **IN-HOUSE WORKSHOPS**

Youth Program 2019:

510

Youth Program 2018:

501





Adult Workshops 2019:

2,203

Adult Workshops 2018:

1,920



**GROWTH** 





#### **INSTRUCTOR FEES PAID**



# 2018-2019 AUDITED FINANCIAL REPORTS —

# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS	2019	2018
Current Assets:		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$123,353	\$204,225
Accounts receivable, less allowance for doubtful receivables of \$3,750 (2019) and \$3,750 (2018)	99,197	46,634
Promises to give	37,647	25,000
Pledges receivable, current	96,250	-
Prepaid expenses	26,301	5,490
Total current assets	382,748	281,349
Property and equipment	189,559	182,662
Less accumulated depreciation	109,886	78,244
	79,673	104,418
Other assets:		
Intangible asset, net of accumulated amortization of \$2,640 (2019) and \$972 (2018)	2,360	4,028
Capital campaign development in process	34,672	-
Deposit	6,250	6,250
Total other assets	43,282	10,278
Noncurrent assets:		
Rose Community endowment	31,316	27,830
Pledges receivable, noncurrent	30,000	-
Total noncurrent assets	61,316	27,830
TOTAL ASSETS	\$567,019	\$423,875
LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS		
Current liabilities:		
Accounts payable	\$69,069	\$26,938
Payroll liabilities	34,102	29,858
Deferred revenue	116,268	113,649
Class deposits	1,984	6,110
Total current liabilities	221,423	176,555
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$221,423	\$176,555
Net Assets:		
Without donor restrictions:		
Unrestricted	186,847	63,420
Board designated	7,000	7,000
With donor restrictions:	193,847	70,420
Purpose restricted	127,433	14,822
Time restricted	-	141,248
Endowment Fund	24,316	20,830
	151,749	176,900
Total net assets	345,596	247,320
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	\$567,019	\$423,875

# - 2018-2019 AUDITED FINANCIAL REPORTS (CONT.) —

### STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

Support, revenue, and gains:	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Earned income	\$1,293,978	-	\$1,293,978
Memberships	74,260	-	74,260
Donations	580,011	231,875	811,886
In-kind donations	47,991	-	47,991
Investment income (expense)	-	3,783	3,783
	1,996,240	235,658	2,231,898
Satisfaction of program restrictions	260,809	(260,809)	-
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE	2,257,049	(25,151)	2,231,898
Expenses:			
Workshops	1,571,840	-	1,571,840
Other activities	129,150	-	129,150
Management and general	300,034	-	300,034
Fundraising	132,598	-	132,598
TOTAL EXPENSES	2,133,622	-	2,133,622
Change in net assets	123,427	(25,151)	98,276
Net assets, beginning of year	70,420	176,900	247,320
NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR	\$193,847	\$151,749	\$345,596

# **DONORS AND SUPPORTERS**



#### \$25,000+

Colorado Creative Industries
J. Richard Devlin and Kim Linin
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National Endowment for
the Arts
National Philanthropic Trust

Scientific, Cultural, and Facilities District

Stranahan Foundation

#### \$10,000+

Amazon Literary Partnership Cielo Foundation Community First Foundation Denver Arts & Venues Denver Office of Children's Affairs

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# About Lighthouse Writers Workshop

Lighthouse Writers Workshop is Colorado's nonprofit literary arts center whose mission is to ensure literature maintains its proper prominence in the culture and individuals achieve their fullest potential as artists and human beings. For over 20 years, Lighthouse has offered award-winning writing workshops, author events, and community engagement programs to people of all ages and backgrounds in Denver and beyond. For more information, visit lighthousewriters.org.





#### **Contact Information:**

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Lighthouse North (Louisville) 357 S. McCaslin Boulevard, #200 Louisville, CO 80027

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