



IMPACT REPORT - FISCAL YEAR 2023  
July 2022 - June 2023

## “OLDER SISTER TO YOUNGER BROTHER”

BY JULES VÁZQUEZ

2023 STATEWIDE WRITING CONTEST GRAND PRIZE WINNER

Recently my younger brother smells unfamiliar  
He leaves with little to no warning  
And returns with the lingering scent of grass stains, sweat,  
And someone else’s living room on his sweater  
He walks out quickly and clean  
Returning with a mature, teenage kind of mud on his knees  
In the beds of his fingernails rests paint and dirt

I can feel him tearing away from our mother  
Ready to take on the vastness of his future  
Without me or our cozy loft beds to return to  
I wish I had missed him this much when he was small and moldable  
As foolish as it sounds maybe he’d want to stay  
Where blood was stronger than any friendship  
And our whole world was our messy bedroom floor



**Jules Vázquez** wrote “Older Sister to Younger Brother” as a sophomore at Baxter Academy for Technology and Science to showcase sibling bonds. They are a ballerina with Maine State Ballet, and an active environmentalist, having co-founded a municipal initiative to plant fruit trees in their community addressing two prevalent issues; food insecurity and climate change. They are a descendant of the Taino; the people of first contact with European settlers as they made their way across the Atlantic.

Left: Jules Vázquez reads their award-winning poem in *From the Edge of the World* on the stage of Deering Oaks Park at Big Night 2023. Photo by Philip Tran.

Front Cover: Participants in an afterschool workshop at the Desert of Maine dig into writing about animals using the Telling Room chapbook *Unordinary Creatures* as a mentor text. Photo by Rylan Hynes.

Back Cover: Community members gather for an evening of poetry read aloud under the stars at an event held in partnership with The Telling Room and Portland Trails, featuring Telling Room poet Hailey Talbert. Photo by Rylan Hynes.

My alien buddy has stars speckled all over him.  
He always has a taste in his mouth, the taste of lemonade on a hot day.  
He has friends speckled across the galaxy like the stars on his back.

— Excerpt from “My Little Alien Buddy” by Ramona Chamberlain-Kennedy,  
Written in SWARM!, Published in SWARM! Volume IV

## FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Our last year at The Telling Room has been filled with stories of our partnerships, the stars that are part of our community and shine brightly, shaping our own galaxy.

Returning partners uplifted Telling Room authors and books statewide, while community members joined us everywhere that Telling Room students were writing. New partners came together to make beautiful books—like the chapbook *Trinkets & Knick-Knacks*, written by students at Oak Hill High School, accompanied by photos by artist Tanja Hollander—or essential programming, like our LGBTQ+ writing group, OUTSpoken, which took place at Cumberland’s Prince Memorial Library.

By collaborating with all of you, we’ve been able to nimbly respond to the needs of Maine’s youth, whether they’re seeking a safe space to write in or a mentor to help them on their creative journey.

As we continue to prioritize partnerships alongside our strategic plan in the years ahead, we are grateful to you for joining us in supporting youth throughout the state, and hope you’ll help to continue to make these vital programs and publications possible.

*Kristina M.J. Powell*

**Kristina M.J. Powell**  
she/her/hers  
Executive Director

## FROM OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Greetings—and gratitude. To all of you. For all you do to help us do what we do, since 2004 to where we are now: nearing our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, 200 books published and counting—and forever thankful for the gift of working with our incredible youth.

You are an integral part of this process. By seeing and envisioning our youth as experts, and artists, and the changemakers they are. By reading their writings, listening to their voices. Asking them to take part in crucial conversations.

Conversations about their, and our, stories.

All of which allows us to continue in our vital mission of uplifting and sharing youth voices with the world. To help our young people learn to value what they have to say, feel confident in saying it, and know that someone is listening.

Thank you.

For being there for our community; for *being* our community.

For honoring what we all bring to the story.

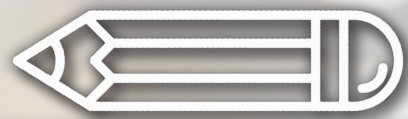
*Tanuja Desai Hidier*

**Tanuja Desai Hidier**  
she/her/hers  
Board President

# COMMUNITY IMPACT

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE, VISIT OUR WEBSITE:

[tellingroom.org/annual-report](http://tellingroom.org/annual-report)



75

PROGRAMS



1,792

PROGRAM HOURS



2,419

STUDENTS SERVED



12

PUBLICATIONS



321

PUBLISHED AUTHORS



138

COMMUNITIES SERVED

**“I BELIEVE I HAVE A UNIQUE VOICE.” “MY VOICE IS WORTH SHARING.”**

PARTICIPANT-REPORTED DATA COLLECTED BEFORE AND AFTER WORKING INTENSIVELY WITH THE TELLING ROOM DEMONSTRATED AN INCREASE OF 25% FOR THESE TWO KEY IMPACT INDICATORS ACROSS ALL OUR PROGRAMS.

*Photo: Young Writers & Leaders student Elkanah Okoruwa collaborates on writing his personal narrative with co-teacher Sonya Tomlinson and writing coach Chris Turner. Photo by Rylan Hynes.*



# IN-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

## SCHOOLS SERVED IN FISCAL YEAR 2022 - 2023

Biddeford Intermediate School  
 Brunswick Junior High  
 Camden-Rockport Middle School  
 Casco Bay High School  
 Dayton Consolidated School  
 Deering High School  
 Dexter High School  
 Freeport High School  
 Georgetown Central School  
 Great Falls Elementary School  
 Greely High School  
 King Middle School

Lake Region Middle School  
 Lewiston Middle School  
 Lincolnville Central School  
 Long Creek Youth Development Center  
 Maranacook High School  
 Marcia Buker Elementary School  
 Mast Landing School  
 MSAD 52  
 Mt. Ararat Middle School  
 Oak Hill High School  
 Oceanside Middle School  
 Portland Public Schools

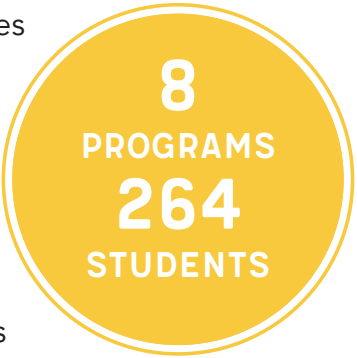
Shapleigh School  
 Talbot Elementary School  
 University of Southern Maine  
 Wells Junior High  
 York High School



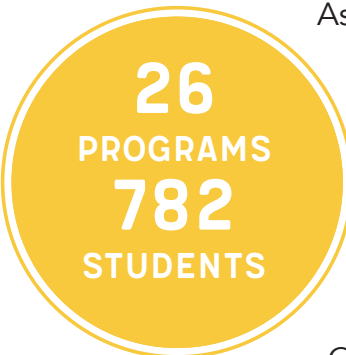
### PUBLISHED IN:

## RESIDENCIES

Even though we're often new faces in the classroom, sometimes we know it takes an additional outside voice to make a residency experience all that more special. Enter Tanja Hollander and her brilliant Ephemera Project. Our Oak Hill High School creative nonfiction students quickly embraced the idea of collecting miscellaneous objects from their backpacks and rooms to write about. As often happens, in exploring their different unique experiences, they discovered just how much they have in common. The pieces in their book, *Trinkets & Knick-knacks*, are as varied as they are, ranging from serious to funny and everything in between. Their book launch, where they shared what they had learned about connecting with people, was one of the highlights of the year.



## WORKSHOPS



As part of our goal to increase access across our programs, we took a look at who we weren't reaching with our college essay workshops. After gathering feedback, we formed a partnership with Make it Happen!, a program through Portland Public Schools that supports college readiness for multilingual students. Because nearly all of the students in Make it Happen! and their families are newer to the United States, they may not know how to navigate all the intricacies of our complicated college admissions system. We designed college essay workshops just for Make it Happen! students from the three Portland high schools and met with them both at The Telling Room and at their schools—whatever worked for their schedules. Our volunteers put in extra time in person and in online consultation to ensure every student got what they needed to have a strong college essay to share with schools.

## FIELD TRIPS

This spring we were thrilled to welcome field trips into our writing studios on Commercial Street for the first time since 2020. Groups bussed in from Freeport, Biddeford, and Lincolnville, filling our space with creativity and excitement. For some, this was their first visit ever to Downtown Portland. After years of remote learning and social distancing, students bravely came out of their shells to interview folks on the street in Vox Pop-style interviews, finding inspiration in the stories they heard and getting to know our wider community a little better through storytelling.



"I can't thank you enough for spending so much quality time with my classes today. You were generous with your knowledge and insights, and my students enjoyed meeting you and working through the writing exercise with you. Many of them plan to keep working on their story, and I anticipate at least a couple of them will reach out to you to share their writing. Many are eager to try more of the writing exercises. You sparked something great!"

— ORONO HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH TEACHER ERIKA DIXON, FOLLOWING A CLASSROOM VISIT FROM TELLING ROOM AUTHOR LEXI BARSTOW

# OUTSPOKEN

In the fall of 2022, The Telling Room began a highly successful collaboration with the Prince Memorial Library in Cumberland to launch OUTSpoken, a poetry workshop for LGBTQ+ youth. Participants read pieces by Telling Room authors as well as adult writers, explored writing through playful games, and worked towards the goal of sharing their work aloud at the mic. At the final reading, every student performed an original work. We brought this popular program back in spring of 2023, and OUTSpoken has continued into our current year of programming.

Writers from OUTSpoken have gone on to make their voices heard beyond the walls of the library; including at school board meetings advocating for inclusive policies for both students and library books. According to PEN America, of the 1,477 books banned in America during the 2023 school year, 30% were about race and 26% included LGBTQ+ content. The most commonly banned book was *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe, which was also challenged in the Cumberland school district.

At the Maine Library Association conference in May of 2023, two OUTSpoken alums co-presented alongside librarian Jennifer Benham and Telling Room Program Director Nick Whiston to share how other libraries across the state can bring essential programming like this to their youth spaces.

We are grateful to our partners—libraries, educators, students, and families—who advocate for inclusive spaces and books for Maine's diverse readers and writers.

*Photo: Librarian Jennifer Benham welcomes attendees to the fall 2022 reading of OUTSpoken at the Prince Memorial Library. Photo by Rylan Hynes.*





# WRITERS BLOCK

A FUN AND SUPPORTIVE PLACE FOR RELUCTANT WRITERS AND PASSIONATE STORYTELLERS TO EXPLORE THEIR WRITING AMONG A GROUP OF PEERS.

One of our most popular programs continues to be a strong access point for writers exploring their craft and The Telling Room. We welcomed returning writers to the three sections of Writers Block (Word Play, Story Sleuths, and Works in Progress) as well as youth new to our programs. This year, we took Writers Block on the road, holding program sessions at Waterfall Arts in Belfast and the Desert of Maine in Freeport. After tackling questions of craft in these programs segmented by age, Writers Block students have gone on to Second Story, Publishing Workshop, and this year, Young Emerging Authors. At the end of each semester, we celebrated students' work through a gallery walk, reading, and games shared with friends and family. We hope to see these students return to The Telling Room again and again—whether to Writers Block, or another program—as they continue to dig deeper into their writing.

**8**  
PROGRAMS  
**85**  
STUDENTS

"I loved just having a safe, comfortable space that I knew I could write in amongst other writers."

– WORKS IN PROGRESS PARTICIPANT

"I really loved the hands on activities."

– STORY SLEUTHS PARTICIPANT

"I LOVE the Word Play."

– WORD PLAY PARTICIPANT



# STUDENT WRITERS & READERS MEET!

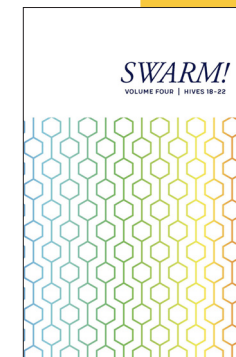
A VIRTUAL NETWORK OF YOUTH WRITING GROUPS ACROSS THE STATE OF MAINE.

SWARM! continues to be a vital virtual space where young writers across Maine can connect with other youth who share their passion for stories and poetry. Many students started this year's programming with their cameras off and hesitant to share their work. Through nurturing a supportive environment and encouraging writers to share—one word, one sentence, one paragraph at a time—their confidence grew. One writer who began the program too shy to read a single word shared their full draft with their peers by the end. At the reading, this author was ready to have their words spoken aloud with the audience of friends, family, and community members.

**6**  
PROGRAMS  
**41**  
STUDENTS

**PUBLISHED IN:**  
SWARM! VOLUME IV  
'22 - '23 AUTHOR  
**READINGS & EVENTS:**  
● SWARM! SPRING

POETRY HIVE  
25 ONLINE  
READING  
● SWARM!  
VOLUME IV  
BOOK LAUNCH  
SWARM! ●  
FALL FICTION  
HIVE 23  
READING



Having grown up as a fairy princess  
One day I decided I wanted to change  
That outlook.

so i pounded flower petals  
to a pulp put away my ballet slippers for good  
mixed dish soap and glitter and food coloring into  
Witch's Brew

– EXCERPT FROM "WITCH" BY LILY JESSEN  
PUBLISHED IN SWARM! VOLUME IV



# YOUNG EMERGING AUTHORS

A YEAR-LONG AFTERSCHOOL WRITING AND PUBLISHING PROGRAM WHERE FOUR MAINE AUTHORS WRITE, REVISE, AND PUBLISH THEIR OWN BOOKS.

Celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> year, Young Emerging Authors kicked off in the fall with a group of four ambitious writers ready to transform their manuscripts from rough drafts into polished publications. This year's works included a collection of poetry, a young adult novel, speculative fiction, and a novella told in poetic vignettes.

Two authors explored personal experiences foundational to their own growth, including family relationships, the experience of living in Maine as a Sudanese-American, mental health and healing, and coming to embrace their own queer and trans identities. The other two authors used fiction to explore important issues, including using a story of cryptids to interrogate the increased oppression and marginalization of the LGBTQ+ community. The writers this year exemplified how writing holds an important place in social change and transformation as they gave voice to their own experiences.

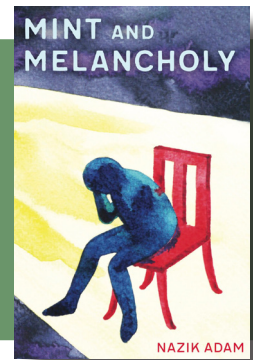
1  
PROGRAM  
4  
STUDENTS

'22 - '23 AUTHOR READINGS & EVENTS  
 MAINE LITERARY FESTIVAL BOOK FAIR ● PORTLAND TRAILS  
 POETRY READING ● HYBRID OPEN HOUSE VIA ZOOM ● BAXTER  
 MEMORIAL LIBRARY READING ● MERRILL MEMORIAL LIBRARY  
 READING ● PORTLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY READING ● PORTLAND  
 COMMUNITY SQUASH READING ● ASTUR UNVEILED VIRTUAL  
 LAUNCH ● RESURGAM ● BOOK LAUNCH AT SPACE GALLERY



"Not only were you supported by the staff as you went through the writing process, but you had a group of people that were going through the exact same thing. When you're working alone, you can think 'this is a personal failing,' but it turns out that writing a book is hard, actually."  
 — YOUNG EMERGING AUTHORS FELLOW MO DRAMMEH

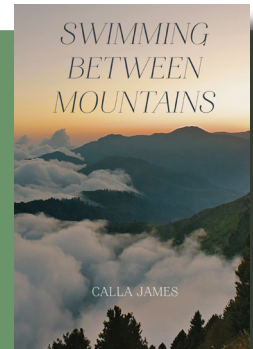
"Tonight, the stars, moon, and wind caught my attention. Long after I was done cleaning, I stood in the middle of the kitchen just watching the stars."  
**MINT AND MELANCHOLY**  
 BY NAZIK ADAM



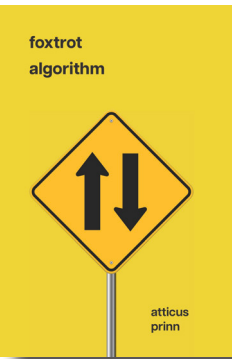
"Opportunity. What they'd chased for so long. Cassie led the way back to the car. It was time to change the world."  
**WHERE THE CRYPTIDS FLED**  
 BY MO DRAMMEH



"I danced to the sound of the rain on my skin, kept dancing when it was too quiet to hear."  
**SWIMMING BETWEEN MOUNTAINS**  
 BY CALLA JAMES



"...the two police officers exiting the house were a blur in my vision. Our escape—although a little shaky—had been a success."  
**FOXTROT ALGORITHM**  
 BY ATTICUS PRINN



MAYO STREET ARTS

# YOUNG WRITERS & LEADERS

A LITERARY ARTS EDUCATION PROGRAM EXCLUSIVELY FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH INTERNATIONAL AND MULTICULTURAL BACKGROUNDS.

As we teamed up with King Middle School for a second vacation camp, brought our annual poetry reading to the stage of Mayo Street Arts alongside students from Second Story, and returned to in-person coaching, we saw our community truly come together to support these writers.

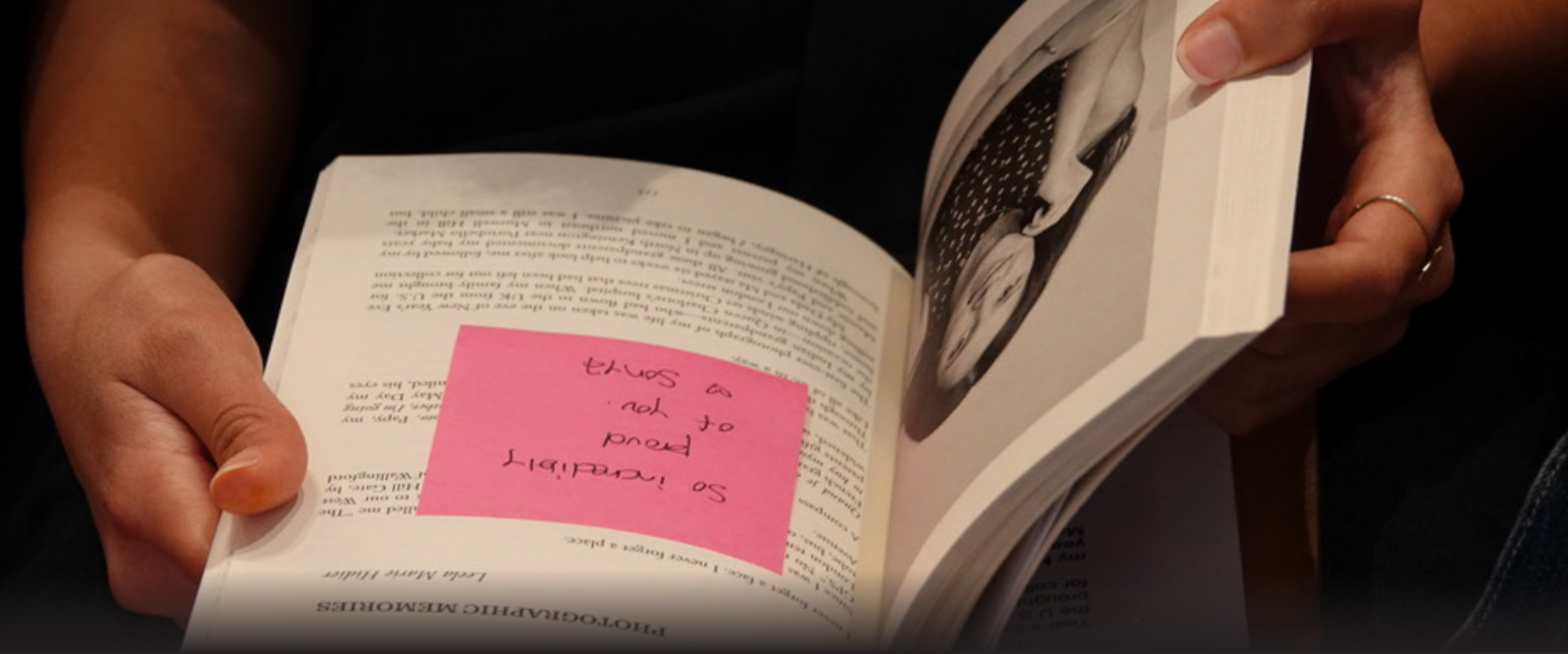
One such writer was Ferlande Landu, who first participated in Young Writers & Leaders as a summer camper in 2021, having just arrived in Maine from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. After completing a masked and mostly outdoors summer camp, she returned that fall to apply for the year-long program, was not admitted, then applied again and was accepted in the fall of 2022.

A member of the Science Leadership Program at Deering High School, employed part-time, navigating her senior year and the college application process, Ferlande did not let that stop her from being as engaged as possible in the program. This year's chapbook title *Printed in My Soul* came from her piece after getting the most votes from her peers.

5  
PROGRAMS  
44  
STUDENTS



**PUBLISHED IN PRINTED IN MY SOUL**  
**'21 - '22 AUTHOR READINGS & EVENTS:**  
FALL 2022 POETRY READING AT MAYO STREET ARTS ● SPRING 2023 BOOK LAUNCH & READING AT PORTLAND MUSEUM OF ART ● SPRING AND SUMMER CAMP READINGS

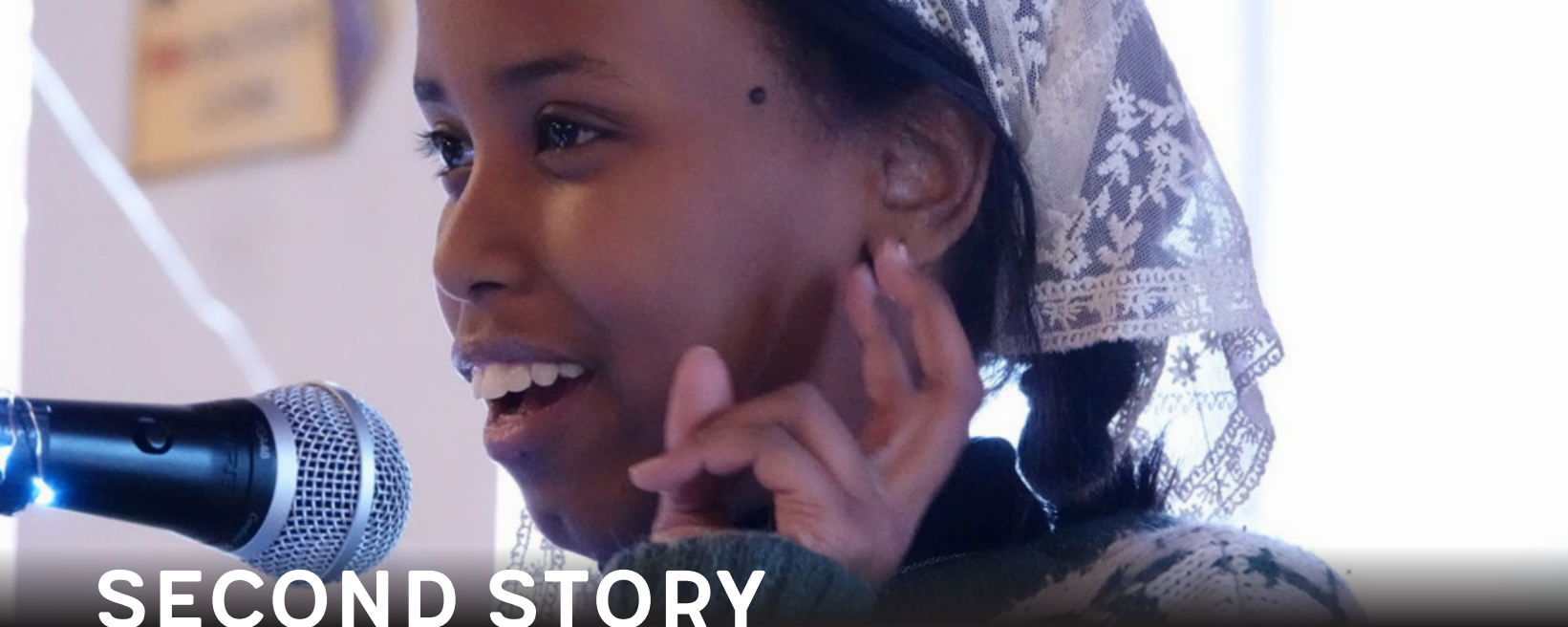


"Remembering the way the colors of the houses make me feel has made me retain memories I might not have otherwise. Referring to a place as the Green House is much easier than remembering its exact address. I know I won't always be physically at home, but those colors will keep me there."  
- RUBEN PEDRO PEÑAFLORES HUNTER  
EXCERPT FROM "THE COLORS OF THE HOUSES"  
PUBLISHED IN *PRINTED IN MY SOUL*



"Do you know that feeling of when you enter a classroom but don't understand anything that the teacher is teaching, but then there is that friend that explains everything in a way that you can understand? That's what the Young Writers & Leaders experience meant to me. I was introduced to poetry and writing tools, but what The Telling Room showed me was the real world of words. At The Telling Room I met amazing people, wrote eloquently, and had a date with the writer that had been so long forgotten in the deepest part of my soul."  
- FERLANDE LANDU





# SECOND STORY

AN AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM WHERE ALUMNI OF TELLING ROOM PROGRAMS DIG DEEPER INTO THE WRITING PROCESS, DEVELOP THEIR WRITING HABITS, AND SHARE THEIR WORDS WITH THE WORLD.

Writers with a wide-range of experience levels came together to write and support each other this year in Second Story. They included alumni of Young Writers & Leaders, Young Emerging Authors, summer camps, and returning Second Story participants. Whether accomplished novelists or newcomers to Maine, these writers showed up for each other week after week, building a strong sense of community. Fall semester, these writers fearlessly took the stage at Mayo Street Arts to share their work at the mic alongside Young Writers & Leaders students.

2  
PROGRAMS  
13  
STUDENTS

I worry that my pores  
will sprout feathers.  
The plumage painful as it punctures  
my human skin arms

I can feel them now  
stuck just beneath the surface,  
curled like ferns,  
until they rupture the tension  
and break free

– EXCERPT FROM “THE WARBLING WOE OF A BIRD GIRL” BY OLIVIA CHONG



# PUBLISHING WORKSHOP

A SEMESTER-BASED PROGRAM WHERE PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE A WORKING TUTORIAL ON THE BOOK PUBLISHING INDUSTRY IN AN APPRENTICESHIP ENVIRONMENT.

Publishing Workshop participants took The Telling Room’s annual Statewide Writing Contest to the next level, garnering submissions from each of Maine’s sixteen counties, for a grand total of over 500 submission pieces of writing to consider. To honor the breadth and range of the writing submitted, a winner was selected from each county, as well as the grand prize winner. At Big Night, Publishing Workshop editors had the chance to greet these writers from far-flung corners of Maine as they celebrated their publication in the 2023 annual anthology, *From the Edge of the World*, with a cheering crowd of 200 attendees.

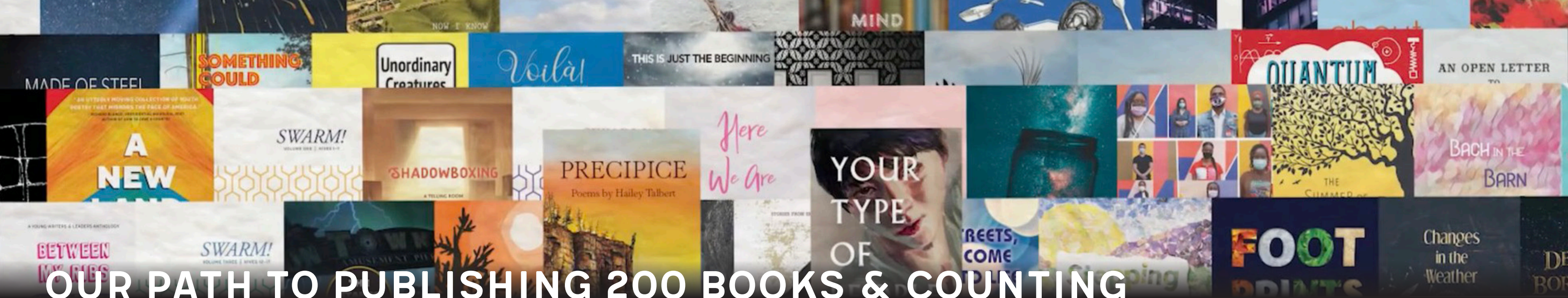
“Together, the anthology [*From the Edge of the World*] astonishes with its range, and the high quality of its prose, the seeds of our future authors being nourished at the Telling Room, and starting to grow.”

– NINA MACLAUGHLIN, *THE BOSTON GLOBE*

PUBLISHED 2023 ANTHOLOGY:  
*FROM THE EDGE OF THE WORLD*  
'22 - '23 AUTHOR READINGS & EVENTS:  
BIG NIGHT



2  
PROGRAMS  
19  
STUDENTS



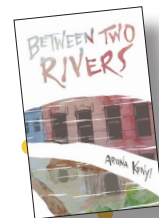
# OUR PATH TO PUBLISHING 200 BOOKS & COUNTING

**2007**

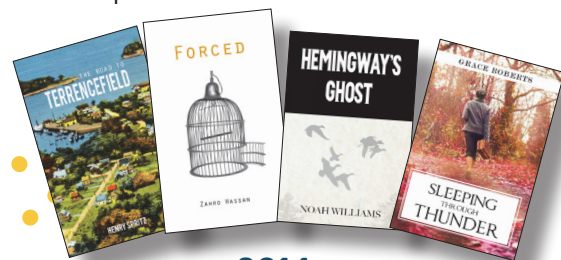


The Telling Room published its first anthology, *I Remember Warm Rain*.

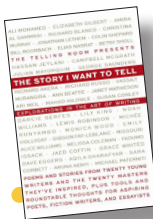
**2010**



Aruna Kenyi became the first Telling Room author to publish a full-length book, *Between Two Rivers*, inspiring the Young Emerging Authors Fellowship.

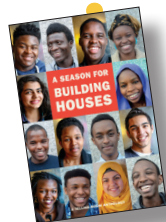


**2014**



The Telling Room launched our first four Young Emerging Authors books. That same year, we celebrated The Telling Room's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary by publishing *The Story I Want to Tell*, featuring professional writers alongside Telling Room authors.

**2015**



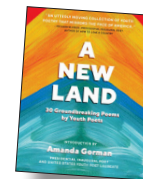
We published *A Season for Building Houses*, honoring the writing from our Young Writers & Leaders program, which received the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award that same year.

**2018**



Youth voices from Maine were on the national map again when we published *Little Bird's Flock*, which represented the State of Maine at the Library of Congress' Festival of the Book.

**2020**



Presidential inaugural poet Amanda Gorman wrote the introduction to our poetry collection, *A New Land*, now taught in classrooms across the State of Maine.

**2022**



We celebrated the publication of our 200<sup>th</sup> book, *SWARM! Volume IV*, which features writing by youth from all across Maine, from Passadumkeag to Portland.

"Knowing that I'm in a few of these Telling Room books and that someone could potentially relate to my own story is something that I'm honored to be a part of."  
 — KHALIL KILANI, ALUMNI AMBASSADOR PUBLISHED IN *NO TIME FOR REHEARSING*





# OUR 2022 - 2023 TEAM

## STAFF

Kristina M.J. Powell, Executive Director  
 Peyton Black, Community Engagement & Project Manager  
 Bridget Hoke, Publications Manager  
 Rylan Hynes, Communications Manager  
 James Kim, Teaching Artist  
 Amy Kimball, Teaching Artist  
 Jude Marx, Lead Teacher - Publications  
 Molly McGrath, Publications Director  
 Hipai Pamba, Young Writers & Leaders Co-Teacher  
 Rachele Ryan, Operations & Development Manager  
 Sarah Schneider, Development Director  
 Sonya Tomlinson, Young Writers & Leaders Lead Teacher  
 Meghan Vigeant, Teaching Artist  
 Nick Whiston, Programs Director  
 Marjolaine Whittlesey, Lead Teacher  
 Kathryn Williams, Teaching Artist

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 Sally Newhall  
 Moises "Mo" Nuñez  
 Catherine Richards Olney  
 Laura Shen  
 Donna Simonetti  
 Peg Smith  
 Sarah Welch  
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 Rachele Ryan, Staff member  
 Sarah Schneider, Staff Member  
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 Kristina M.J. Powell, Executive Director  
 Rachele Ryan, Staff Member  
 Sarah Schneider, Staff Member  
 Peg Smith, Board Member  
 Laura Shen, Board Member

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 Sean Findlen, Community Member  
 Rob Gould, Board Vice President  
 Rylan Hynes, Staff Member  
 Bob Keyes, Community Member  
 Matty Oates, Community Member  
 Kristina M.J. Powell, Executive Director

## SHOW & TELL: A LITERARY SPECTACULAR

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 Amanda Dettmann, Telling Room Ambassador  
 Rylan Hynes, Staff Member  
 Khalil Kilani, Telling Room Ambassador  
 Jarlath McGuckin, Community Member  
 Sean Mewshaw, Director  
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 Kristina M.J. Powell, Executive Director  
 Rachele Ryan, Staff Member  
 Sarah Schneider, Staff Member  
 Sonya Tomlinson, Staff Member

Our vibrant community makes it possible for us to empower youth through writing and share their voices with the world. We are so grateful for all the generous individual, corporate, and foundation donors who supported us this past year. See our full list of contributors at:

[tellingroom.org/donor-list](https://tellingroom.org/donor-list)



# COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

THE TELLING ROOM BELONGS TO A VIBRANT COMMUNITY OF YOUTH-SERVING ORGANIZATIONS AND ARTS NONPROFITS. WE ENCOURAGE WIDE SUPPORT OF MAINE'S MANY NONPROFITS THAT UPLIFT YOUTH AND THE ARTS SO OUR WHOLE COMMUNITY CAN BE STRONGER TOGETHER.

Change does not happen alone, and we are so grateful for the partnership of schools, libraries, businesses, media partners, and nonprofits throughout Maine that make it possible for us to fulfill our mission. Thank you to each of these community partners for their creativity and collaboration:

A Room of One's Own Bookstore  
 Back Cove Books  
 Baxter Memorial Library  
 Beautiful Blackbird Festival  
 Bowdoin College  
 Briar Patch Books  
 Cultivating Community  
 Desert of Maine  
 Dimillo's  
 Dski Design  
 EqualityMaine  
 FACE Foundation  
 Farnsworth Museum  
 Flatbread Company  
 Growing to Give  
 Gulf of Maine Research Institute  
 Holocaust and Human Rights Center  
 Hurricane Island Outward Bound School  
 Indigo Arts Alliance  
 International Community Center  
 Lucky Fox Books  
 Maine Academy of Modern Music  
 Maine Association of Nonprofits  
 Maine Climate Action Now!  
 Maine Department of Education  
 Maine Writers & Publishers Alliance

Make It Happen!  
 Market Street Eats  
 Mayo Street Arts  
 Nonesuch Books & More  
 The Opportunity Alliance  
 OTTO  
 Pink Eraser Press  
 Portland Community Squash  
 Portland ConnectED  
 Portland Museum of Art  
 Prince Memorial Library  
 Portland Public Library  
 Portland Public Schools Summer Learning  
 Portland Trails  
 Print: A Bookstore  
 Prosperity ME: the Center for Financial Education  
 Quiet City Books  
 Royal River Books  
 Sherman's Books & Stationery  
 Southworth Planetarium  
 SPACE  
 The State Theatre  
 Union Wharf Market  
 University of Southern Maine  
 Unwritten Roads  
 Walch Publishing, Inc.

Waterfall Arts  
 WBFY  
 Winky Lewis Photo  
 WMPG  
 Youth Leadership Advisory Team

Above: Education Manager Marjolaine Whittlesey and a summer camper take a break from writing to lend a hand growing crops for food insecure families at Growing to Give's Scatter Good Farm in Brunswick.

Below: Telling Room alum Noor Sager is cheered on by writing mentor Deirdre Fulton at the Baxter Memorial Library after Noor's hometown author reading.



## AMBASSADORS

Yousif Alshuwaili  
 Amanda Dettmann  
 Cam Jury  
 Khalil Kilani  
 Nina Powers

## INTERNS

Olivia Dimond  
 Leo Eichfeld  
 Cam Jury  
 Madeleine McCormick  
 Robby Sheils

## ADVISORY BOARD

Susan Conley  
 Sara Corbett  
 Gibson Fay-LeBlanc  
 Anja Hanson  
 Patty Howells  
 Lily King  
 Celine Kuhn  
 Ari Meil  
 Genevieve Morgan  
 Michael Paterniti  
 Tim Schneider

## COMMITTEES

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Anya Endsley, Chair, Board President  
 Rob Gould, Board Vice President  
 Bob Zager, Board Treasurer  
 Ninette Irabaruta, Board Secretary  
 Kristina M.J. Powell, Executive Director

### GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Rob Gould, Chair, Board Vice President  
 Kristina M.J. Powell, Executive Director  
 Catherine Richards Olney, Board Member

### HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Catherine Richards Olney, Chair, Board Member  
 Rob Gould, Board Vice President  
 Nancy Kittredge, Community Member  
 Libby Lauze, Community Member  
 Kristina M.J. Powell, Executive Director  
 Sarah Welch, Board Member

# READING AHEAD: OUR 2023 - 2027 STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES



## FOSTER AND EXPAND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The Telling Room engages with the literary arts, education, and youth empowerment communities. We aim to deepen our ties with existing partners and alumni as we forge and foster new connections.

By furthering our values-centered funding and resource opportunities, we will collaboratively expand access to our programs and publications while advancing alumni engagement.



## STRENGTHEN PROGRAM MODEL AND IMPACT

As we deepen our understanding of our organization's impact through refined evaluation and data collection, we seek opportunities to advocate for and expand access to our programs, ensuring youth have space to explore their world through writing.

Curiosity drives us to continue to examine our program model while strengthening the systems and infrastructure that support our mission. We will regularly share our practices and the impact of our work with the community.



## ENHANCE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR GROWTH

Since its inception, The Telling Room has built a foundation that has enabled our organization to grow continually. We commit to formalizing systems and centering our culture of learning so that our team, the youth we work with, and the broader Telling Room community are holistically supported.

With enhanced infrastructure, we position The Telling Room to effectively support and reach more of Maine's young writers, now and in the future.



## BUILD A MORE DIVERSE, EQUITABLE, AND INCLUSIVE ORGANIZATION

We aim for justice to be felt, seen, and centered in our practices. We foster belonging and actively uplift the diverse identities that strengthen our organization and community. We commit to developing our individual and shared cultural competency, advocating for youth, and increasing accessibility at The Telling Room.

Led by Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) practices, we will align operations and build organizational infrastructure to support staff and volunteers who reflect the youth we serve.



LEARN MORE AT:  
[tellingroom.org/strategic-plan](https://tellingroom.org/strategic-plan)



WRITE. SHARE. INSPIRE.

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At The Telling Room, we empower youth through writing and share their voices with the world.

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