A Message from Ellen Oh

Who could have imagined all the changes that would happen in a year?

When We Need Diverse Books™ (WNDB™) launched its inaugural campaign in April of 2014, it was to address the lack of diverse narratives in children’s literature. We had a vision for a better future, and we were determined to make this change happen.

Armed with statistics, we knew that the lack of diverse narratives had a direct correlation to our country’s literacy problem. We believed there was a pressing need for all of our children to learn tolerance and empathy of others. And we believed that a grassroots campaign was the best way to build momentum and bring attention to the ongoing problem.

The public support we received proved us right and helped us take our initiatives to the next level.

In July of 2014, WNDB™ incorporated, and in November, we ran an extremely successful Indiegogo campaign that is providing the basis for many exciting programs.

We have seen some important changes happen in the short time of our existence, including BookCon’s invitation to showcase two powerhouse WNDB™ panels that highlight diversity in both children’s and adult science fiction/fantasy literature.

But none of our success could have happened without all of your support. Many of you provided generous financial support, while others volunteered time and expertise to help us reach our goals.

Thanks to you – our amazing donors, volunteers, and supporters – we enter into 2015 well-positioned to affect more change. We are hard at work to put into effect meaningful programs, such as WNDB™ in the Classroom, the Walter Dean Myers Awards and Grants, and the WNDB™ internship program, spearheaded by Honorary Chair, Linda Sue Park. We’ve put diversity at the forefront of local and national conferences by sending diverse authors to be on panels around the country to continue to raise awareness among different audiences. Our educators and librarians have worked with School Library Journal to develop our first ever WNDB™ Booktalking kits, which we plan to roll out to booksellers, librarians and teachers in May 2015.

Meanwhile, good news is at hand. ALA made diversity the overall winner at the Youth Media Awards by honoring an incredible array of diverse books, authors and librarians. For the first time, the Newbery and honor awards went to three diverse authors. And in the comic book world, both DC and Marvel have committed to diversifying their superhero worlds.

Change is happening. There is so much more to do to ensure that this change sustains well into the future. But we are confident we can do it with the help of all our wonderful donors, supporters and volunteers.

Thank you for being a part of We Need Diverse Books™.
Our mission

We Need Diverse Books™ is a grassroots organization of children's book lovers that advocates essential changes in the publishing industry to produce and promote literature that reflects and honors the lives of all young people.

How we define diversity:

We recognize all diverse experiences, including (but not limited to) LGBTQIA+, people of color, gender diversity, people with disabilities, and ethnic, cultural and religious minorities.
How we're organized

Under the able leadership of Marieke Nijkamp, WNDB™ has applied for 501c3 status. Currently, An Open Book Foundation is acting as our fiscal sponsor.

We are governed by a volunteer executive board of international authors, and we have no paid regular staff. Our board and over 30 team members handle all programs and administrative needs.

Advisory Board
Jacqueline Woodson
Matt De La Peña
Linda Sue Park
Grace Lin
Cynthia Leitich Smith
Tim Federle
Christopher Myers
Cindy Pon

Our partners in 2014
School Library Journal
An Open Book Foundation
Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI)

Team members: Jennifer Baker (Social Media Manager), Allie Jane Bruce (Librarian), Dhonieille Clayton (Librarian), Stacey H. Lee (Legal), Bryce Leung & Kristy Shen (Dir. Technology), Karen Sandler (Facebook/Brand manager), S.E. Sinkhorn (PR Chair), Don Tate (Artist Outreach), Martha White (Strategic Partnerships), Nicola Yoon (Social Media), Renee Ahdieh, Barbara Binns, Elsie Chapman, Sona Charaipotra, C.D. Childers, Steven Dos Santos, Corinne Duyvis, K.T. Horning, Mike Jung, Lyn Miller-Lachmann, Tracy Lopez, Valynne E. Maetani, Jennifer Mann, Cassie Marketos, Caroline Richmond, Olugbemisola Rhuday-Perkovich, Cindy Rodriguez, Michelle Schusterman, Anya Steiner, Anne Ursu.
Total income 2014: $333,023

Project4Awesome 3% $10,000*
#CelebrateJackie 33% $110,000
IndieGogo Campaign: 64% $213,023

*Funds to be released when We Need Diverse Books™ is awarded 501(c)(3) status, independent from its fiscal sponsor.

Over 2,400 contributors from 164 countries, with an average donation of $137 per person.

Major donors will be included on our website, on the special Wall of Thanks.
* Administrative fees include: organizational costs, insurance, legal and accountancy fees.

** Fundraising fees include: IndieGogo and JustGiving Fees, as well as our fiscal sponsorship fees.

We Need Diverse Books™ focuses both on unique programming (via WNDB™ in the Classroom, the Walter Award for Excellence in Diverse Literature, the Walter grants, the Publishing Internship Program) and on outreach and advocacy efforts (through developing educational kits, dedicated applications, merchandise, and appearances).

**Total operating budget:** $272,000

Administrative fees* 9% - $25,000
Fundraising fees** 18% - $50,000
Outreach and advocacy 28% - $75,000
Programming 45% - $122,000
Carry forward to 2016 to ensure continuing services (and because some of the Indiegogo rewards were specifically for 2016 purposes): $81,023
What we've been up to in 2014

- BEA/BOOKCON announces all-white, male panel of children’s book authors for its conference.
- Under the leadership of Ellen Oh, We Need Diverse Books™ team is established and social media campaign planned to protest and galvanize a response.
- WNDB™ website goes live.
- Organization files for non-profit status and establishes board and executive board.
- WNDB™ announces The Walter Award, in honor of the late Walter Dean Myers, longtime advocate of diversity in children’s literature.
- Partnership with ABA and School Library Journal for “booktalking” kits.
- Partnership with An Open Book Foundation to connect authors and their books with schools in need in the Washington DC area.
- Indiegogo campaign launches to fund WNDB™ initiatives. Goal $100,000.

April
- We Need Diverse Books™ campaign takes Twitter and other social media sites by storm. 107,000 tweets over a three-day period.
- WNDB™ panel presents at BookCon to a standing-room-only crowd.
- Intense media attention leads to partnerships with numerous publishing organizations.

May
- WNDB™ reaches $100,000 goal in three weeks. Creates stretch goal of $25,000 to fund publishing internship program.
- Internship grants program announced under the volunteer leadership of Linda Sue Park and Anne Ursu.
- Major matching grant by Daniel Handler to We Need Diverse Books™.

2014
- Indiegogo campaign ends with $320,000 to fund WNDB™ initiatives.
Our Projects

**WNDB™ Booktalking Kit**

*Leaders: Ilene Wong Gregorio, Hannah Gomez, and Allie Jane Bruce*

Working in partnership with *School Library Journal*, WNDB™ will provide educators with a toolkit to aid booksellers, librarians and teachers in the discovery and promotion of diverse books.

**Why are toolkits important?** We believe that educators need hands-on support as they expand the way they select and promote diverse stories to children. Strong title suggestions, book blurbs, and comparable titles make it easier to get kids excited to try new titles.

**What we did in 2014:** We solidified partnership with *School Library Journal* and the American Booksellers Association to develop the initial list of titles and the kit prototype. Partnered with the Smithsonian APA blog in providing graphics for their summer reading series.

**What's still to come in 2015:** Toolkits will debut in May of 2015 via the Indiebound Whiteboxes and online. We’re looking for a sponsor to allow mass-delivery to libraries and schools across the country.

For information on the WNDB™ Booktalking Kits, contact I.W. Gregorio at [iwgregorio@diversebooks.org](mailto:iwgregorio@diversebooks.org)
The Walter Award

Leaders: Aisha Saeed administrator, Dhonielle Clayton and Kathie Weinberg co-chairs

Named after Walter Dean Myers who dedicated his life to writing and promoting excellent work for children that represented many perspectives and experiences, the Walter Award grants $2,000 to an outstanding book written by a diverse author in any calendar year.

Why do we fund this award? We believe that celebrating excellent books that push open our notions of diversity is vital to changing the landscape of publishing.

What we did in 2014: Judging panels were selected and criteria was developed for the award.

What’s coming in 2015/16: The first Walter Award will be announced in early 2016 for a title published in 2015.
The Walter Grants

Leaders: Aisha Saeed and Marietta Zacker

WNDB™ provides grants of $2,000 each to five unpublished writers whose background and work is diverse.

Why do we support unpublished diverse writers? WNDB™ wants to help remove financial barriers for new talent entering the field of children’s publishing.

What we did in 2014: Established the eligibility criteria and identified judges.

What’s coming in 2015: The first grants will be announced in Fall 2015.

For more information on the Walter Grants and/or the Walter Award, contact: aishasaeed@diversebooks.org

WNDB™ in the Classroom

Leaders: Ellen Oh

Working with An Open Book Foundation, WNDB™ in the Classroom brings diverse books and authors into Title 1 school classrooms, providing free books and personal interaction with authors who are creating quality work today.

Why do we target Title 1 schools? For minority children living in poverty, literacy has been linked to the lack of representation in children’s books. By helping children find stories and authors that they can relate to, we help children connect to reading in a personal way and foster their life-long love of reading.
How we did in 2014: Entered into a formal agreement with An Open Book Foundation to bring ten diverse author visits as well as free books written by those diverse authors to Title 1 schools in the Washington, DC area.

What's coming in 2015: Author visits have begun as of February 2015 and will continue throughout the calendar year.

For information about WNDB™ in the Classroom, contact Ellen Oh at ellenoh@diversebooks.org

WNDB™ Anthology: Stories for All of Us

Leaders: Ellen Oh

The WNDB™ Anthology will be published by Crown Books for Young Readers/Random House. Written by a well-established group of authors representing diverse voices, this collection of middle grade short stories will also include a short story contest-winner – previously unpublished – as a way to introduce his or her work to readers.

Why an anthology? The anthology provides a school-friendly sampler of authors whose work can easily be incorporated into curriculum. Long-term, we hope the anthology can be made available to as many Title 1 schools as possible.

How we did in 2014: We entered into an agreement with Crown Books for Children/Random House, to publish the anthology. WNDB™ will receive a one-time donation from Crown Books. All future royalties have been donated to WNDB™ by the contributing authors.

What we can look forward to in 2015 and beyond: The publication date for the anthology is January of 2017.

WNDB™ Internships

Leaders: Advisory Board Chair Linda Sue Park and Anne Ursu

Our internship program provides supplemental grants of up to $2,500 to interns from diverse backgrounds at publishing houses.

Why do we support internships? We believe that by increasing the number of book professionals who represent a wide array of backgrounds, publishing houses will have the ability to make more nuanced and thoughtful acquisitions and marketing plans.

What we did in 2014: Extensive publisher and university outreach.

What to look forward to in 2015: The grant information will be sent out to college career offices and publishing houses in spring 2015. WNDB™ will begin supporting interns as early as Summer 2015.

For more information about the internship initiative, contact lead volunteer Anne Ursu at anneursu@diversebooks.org
WNDB™ Mentorships

Leaders: Marieke Nijkamp and Miranda Paul

**Why do we mentor diverse authors?** We believe that supporting new authors early in their career is essential to their success in the field. By providing writers with advice, feedback, contacts and instructions, we offer much-needed support to improve their craft as well as their understanding of the publishing industry.

**What we did in 2014:** Developed a rough project proposal and steering committee.

**What's coming in 2015:** An application and selection process that will match individual writers and illustrators with mentors for a one-year period beginning in 2016.
WNDB™ Diversity Festival

Leaders: Ilene Wong Gregorio and Jennifer Baker

In the Summer of 2016, WNDB™ will host a hybrid book festival and writers conference to shine a light on diverse books, and to bring together all the players in the publishing industry, including readers, teachers, librarians, writers, agents and editors.

Why a festival? The festival will allow readers, writers and the publishing industry to exchange ideas and participate in discovery of diverse books and authors.

What we did in 2014: Identified possible venue for festival.

What to look forward to in 2015: Finalizing festival venue, preliminary speaker lineup and exhibit hall.

Be part of the change. Support We Need Diverse Books™.

How you can help?

To volunteer, contact Miranda Paul at mirandapaul@diversebooks.org
To donate: http://weneeddiversebooks.org/fundraising/
"When there are enough books available that can act as both mirrors and windows for all our children, they will see that we can celebrate both our differences and similarities, because together they are what make us all human."

- Rudine Sims Bishop
WNDB™ 2014 annual report designed by Tracy López.

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