Letter from Ellen

In 2015, We Need Diverse Books’ vision came to life in a year filled with successes and milestones.

Although WNDB™ is less than two years old, we have been tireless advocates for diverse narratives in children’s literature. In 2015, we successfully implemented programs that bring us closer to our vision of a world in which all children can see themselves in the pages of books.

Without you--our amazing donors, volunteers, and supporters--we would not have been able to implement our successful programs. Many of you provided generous financial support while others volunteered your time and expertise to continue our vision.

In May 2015, we selected our inaugural class of WNDB Internships Grant recipients. WNDB’s grants helped these interns jumpstart their publishing careers and the programming WNDB lined up through our publishing partnerships provided them with networking opportunities. Three of our grant recipients have secured full-time jobs, at Lee & Low Books, Simon & Schuster, and Graywolf Press.

In August 2015, we awarded five Walter Dean Myers grants for emerging writers and illustrators. The grant allowed author Angela Thomas to replace her ailing six-year-old computer so she could complete her manuscript. She has since sold her YA novel The Hate U Give to Balzer + Bray after a 12-house auction. The book has also been optioned for film, set to star Amandla Stenberg.

In October 2015, WNDB’s mentorship program received nearly 300 applicants and in December, the committee chose five diverse up-and-coming writers to be teamed up with award winning authors who would serve as their mentors. The program is off to an excellent start with one mentee under contract, another mentee receiving an agent offer of representation, and a third with a manuscript being considered by an editor at a major publishing house. In response to the demonstrated interest and need, the WNDB Mentorship committee plans to expand the program in 2017 by doubling the number of mentorships awarded.

Most importantly, WNDB helped librarians, educators, and booksellers put diverse books into the hands of children. We entered into a partnership with Scholastic Book Club to create a We Need Diverse Books flyer that went into all the schools across the nation. And we’ve agreed to partner for 8 more WNDB flyers in 2016! Our Booktalking Kits have provided seasonal lists with book blurbs and comparable titles. We brought in diverse authors for school visits to Title I schools in the Washington, DC area. We also gave hundreds of copies of award-winning books to Title I schools, and are excited to be able increase that amount into the thousands for this fall.

With your continued support, WNDB enters 2016 positioned to effect even more change. We look forward to having you with us each step of the way.

Ellen Oh, CEO & President
Who We Are

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.

Our mission:
Putting more books featuring diverse characters into the hands of all children.

Our vision:
A world in which all children can see themselves in the pages of a book.

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:
We are governed by a volunteer executive committee of authors. We have no paid full time staff, but have two paid part-time staff members. Our executive committee and over 30 team members handle all programs and administrative needs.
Executive Committee

Ellen Oh
CEO & President

Dhonielle Clayton
COO & Sr. VP of Librarian Services

Lamar Giles
Sr. VP Communications

Olugbemisola Rhuday-Perkovich
Sr VP of Community and Member Relations

Karen Sandler
Sr. VP Fundraising

Sona Charaipotra
Sr. VP Content Management

Leland Keel
CFO

Advisory Board
Meg Medina (Chair)
Tim Federle
Grace Lin
Christopher Myers
Linda Sue Park
Matt de la Peña
Cindy Pon
Cynthia Leitich Smith
Jacqueline Woodson
Gene Luen Yang

Our partners in 2015
School Library Journal
An Open Book Foundation
Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI)
Library of Congress

Team members:
Jennifer Baker (Panels), Terry Hong & Kathie Weinberg (Walter Award Co-Chairs), Mike Jung (Internships Assistant Director), Amitha Knight (Social Media Manager), Thien-Kim Lam (Program Manager), Stacey H. Lee (Legal), Bryce Leung & Kristy Shen (Directors of Technology), Miranda Paul (Mentorship), Caroline Richmond (Assistant Treasurer), Aisha Saeed (Walter Grants), S.E. Sinkhorn (PR Chair), Don Tate (Artist Outreach), Anne Ursu (Internships), Elsie Chapman, Sandie Chen, C.D. Childers, Mayra Cuevas, Alexandra Duncan, Alex Gino, Sarah Hannah Gomez, Maureen Goo, I.W. Gregorio, K.T. Horning, Jarrett J. Krosoczka, Alaina Leary, Jennifer Mann, Maria Marquardt, Marieke Nijkamp, Nicole Overton, Cindy Rodriguez, Anya Steiner, Nita Tyndall, Danette Vigilante, Jessica Vitalis, Nicola Yoon.
2015 Financials

Total income 2015: $68,420

Where Our Donations Came From in 2015

- Children’s Lit Assn UT $10,000.00
- Project for Awesome $15,088.79*
- Picture Book Summit LLC $7003.28
- Individual private donation $5000
- Other donations $36,327.83

*Although a $10,000 donation from Project4Awesome was accounted in 2014, the donation in the amount of $15,088 was not paid until mid-2015 and is therefore included in this year’s annual report.

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 Internship Grants Program) and on outreach and advocacy efforts (through developing educational kits, dedicated applications, merchandise, and appearances).

Total operating budget: $122,638

Administrative fees* 5% - $6,493.38
Outreach and advocacy 26% - $32,578.80
Programming 69% - $88,666.73

Carry forward to 2016 to ensure continuing services (and because some of the Indiegogo rewards were specifically for 2016 purposes): $219,891.76

* Administrative fees include: organizational costs, insurance, legal and accountancy fees.
WNDB™ Booktalking Kit

Leaders: Dhonielle Clayton and I.W. Gregorio

Working in partnership with School Library Journal, WNDB has provided educators with a toolkit to aid booksellers, librarians and teachers in the discovery and promotion of diverse books for two years and counting.

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 2015: Continued our partnership with School Library Journal and the American Booksellers Association to develop and distribute seasonal lists of titles in a sleek, well-designed information kit, distributed both in hard copy and PDF via the WNDB site. Partnered with the Smithsonian APA blog in providing graphics for their summer reading series.

What’s still to come in 2016: Kits will be updated seasonally and digital versions will be available for download.

For information on the WNDB™ Booktalking Kits, contact Dhonielle Clayton at dhonielleclayton@diversebooks.org.
WNDB™ Scholastic Book Club Partnership

What We Did in 2015: WNDB formalized a partnership with the Scholastic Book Club team – the biggest name for in-school trade distribution of children’s books – to develop and distribute a carefully curated list of diverse titles to a readership of middle grade students.

What We Can Expect in 2016: As WNDB continues its successful partnership with the Scholastic Book Clubs group, we’ll expand the WNDB flyers into the young adult realm with a list curated for high school students for the 2016-17 school year, along with a list for elementary school students. The flyers for each of the three age groups will be distributed twice a year.
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 2015: Authors Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely accepted the inaugural Walter Award for their 2015 collaboration, All American Boys, on March 18, 2016, at a ceremony at the Library of Congress. Walter honors were also bestowed on X: A Novel, by Ilyasah Shabazz and Kekla Magoon, and Enchanted Air, by Margarita Engle.

What’s coming in 2016/17: The second annual Walter Award and honors (for books published in 2016) will be announced in early 2017, with an Awards ceremony to be held at the Library of Congress on March 31.

For more details about the Walter Award, connect with Terry Hong
terryhong@diversebooks.org
The Walter Grants

**Leader:** Aisha Saeed

WNDB provides key financial support to unpublished writers through the grants program. 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 2015:** Awarded five grants of $2000 each to five unpublished writers whose background and work is diverse. Angela Thomas, one of our grant winners, received a book deal after a twelve house auction bid.

**What’s coming in 2016:** This year, five grants of $2000 will be awarded to diverse writers pursuing publishing opportunities.
WNDB™ in the Classroom

Leaders: Ellen Oh, Olugbemisola Rhuday-Perkovich

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, the lack of representation in children’s books has been linked to lower literacy levels. 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 lifelong love of reading.

How we did in 2015: Under our formal agreement with An Open Book Foundation, we brought ten diverse author visits as well as free books written by those diverse authors to Title 1 schools in the Washington, DC area throughout the year.

What’s coming in 2016: Author visits have begun as of February 2016 and will continue throughout the calendar year. Teacher’s guide for Walter Award winning book All American Boys is in development. WNDB will secure funding for more author/illustrator visits (in-person and via Skype) to schools and libraries. In addition, our partnership with the Library of Congress will host a Master Class on Writing and Publishing for Children and Teens, led by Newbery winner Kwame Alexander and National Book Award winner Jacqueline Woodson.

For information about WNDB™ in the Classroom, contact Ellen Oh at ellenoh@diversebooks.org
WNDB™ Anthology: Flying Lessons & Other Stories

Leader: Ellen Oh

The first 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 also includes a short story by a first time author whose story won a slot in the anthology via a WNDB-sponsored competition.

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 2015: Announced and finalized the line-up for the first WNDB anthology, which will be published January 2017 by Crown Books for Children/Random House. Authors confirmed for the MG anthology include Kwame Alexander, Kelly J. Baptist, Soman Chainani, Matt de la Peña, Tim Federle, Grace Lin, Meg Medina, Walter Dean Myers, Tim Tingle, and Jacqueline Woodson. WNDB will receive a one-time donation from Crown Books for the anthology. All future royalties have been donated to WNDB by the contributing authors.

What we can look forward to in 2016 and beyond: A YA anthology is in the works.
WNDB™ Internships

Leaders: Advisory Board Chair Linda Sue Park and Anne Ursu

Our internship program, initiated in 2014, 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 to we did in 2015: The initial class of five interns received grants of $2500 each to support them during their summer internship sessions. Partnerships with Children’s Book Council and Society for Children’s Books Writers and Illustrators provided additional networking opportunities for the interns. Three of the interns have secured jobs in publishing.

What to look forward to in 2016: Grants will be awarded to eleven interns for summer experiences. Internships are expanded to included opportunities within literary agencies. We will continue to develop partnerships to provide networking opportunities for interns.

For more details about the internship initiative, contact Anne Ursu: anneursu@diversebooks.org
Leader: 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 2015: An application process and selection process was created for the program. After receiving over 300 applications, five mentorships were awarded and matched with five well-published mentors for a one year program continuing through December 15, 2016.

What’s coming in 2016: Continue the program and expand to provide more mentorships to better accommodate the need as shown by the large number of qualified applicants.
How to Help

We Need Diverse Books needs your help to continue and further our mission! With your donation, WNDB will be able to:

Support diverse authors through our Walter Award & Walter Grant programs, named for children’s literature luminary Walter Dean Myers. The Walter Award is an annual recognition for the most outstanding diverse YA or MG book (by a diverse author) published that award year. In addition, Walter honors are given to an additional 1-3 diverse books. The Walter Grant is awarded to five unpublished diverse authors or illustrators each year, providing them with financial support so they have time to focus on writing publishable works.

Diversify our classrooms: In tandem with the Walter Award, WNDB in the Classroom will provide funding to purchase 5,000 to 15,000 copies of the award-winning book and donate them to students in Title 1 schools across the country. By teaming with other non-profits for distribution, WNDB will increase the number of books available to students in need. WNDB also plans to create curriculum based on the donated books to be used in the classroom. By providing these books to students, WNDB will bring the Walter Award book to the widest audience possible.
Promote diversity in publishing: The WNDB Internship Grant provides supplemental funding for diverse college students interested in a career working with children’s books in the publishing industry. This encourages students from diverse backgrounds to consider careers in publishing and also adds diverse perspectives to the publishing companies and literary agencies involved.

Provide mentorships for promising writers and artists: The WNDB Mentorship Program seeks to pair veteran authors and illustrators with new writers and artists to help them develop their craft and navigate the children’s literature industry. The program furthers WNDB’s mission through discovering and encouraging diverse voices, which will contribute to the overall number of diverse books in children’s literature.

Promote diverse programming: WNDB will continue to have a presence at conferences and festivals across the country, aiming to foster positive, honest, and constructive discussions on diversity and show people that a diverse book is just a good book any child can enjoy.
How can I send my donation to WNDB?
If you wish to give a gift by check, make the check out to We Need Diverse Books and send to:
We Need Diverse Books
10319 Westlake Drive #104
Bethesda, MD 20817

If you wish to make a donation online, you can contribute to WNDB via PayPal. If you wish to make a sustaining (annual) donation or include WNDB in your Planned Giving, please contact Karen Sandler, Sr VP Fundraising: karensandler@diversebooks.org.

Are there other ways to support WNDB?
When you are shopping on Amazon, eBay, and other e-vendor sites, you can direct some of your purchase to WNDB!

Amazon Smile donates 0.5% of your purchase price to the nonprofit of your choice, at no extra cost to you. The first time you visit Amazon’s homepage via smile.amazon.com, you can log into your regular Amazon account and search for We Need Diverse Books when prompted to choose your charity. Then, as long as you shop through smile.amazon.com, whatever you buy helps WNDB move closer to its goals.

Sellers and shoppers on eBay can choose to donate percentages at the time of purchase. Visit our charity page here to get started. Add WNDB to your list of favorite charities, and you will be prompted to donate (always with the option not to) whenever you are shopping on eBay. iGive is a website that functions as a portal to many e-commerce sites you’re likely already shopping on. Once you have an account, you can install a browser button and then choose WNDB as your charity of choice. iGive will direct some of your purchase price to our organization at no extra cost for you.

Corporate Matching
Did you know most companies will match employees’ charitable contributions? A great way to increase the amount of your gift is to find out if the company you work for will match your donation. Most companies will match dollar for dollar, while some even double or triple your gift. Ask your human resources department to find out if your company matches gifts for 501(c)(3) organizations!
To volunteer, contact:
Thien-Kim Lam
thienkimlam@diversebooks.org

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