Letter from Ellen

Our organization continues to grow, thrive, and succeed — with your support.

As We Need Diverse Books® nears its third birthday, we celebrate another year of tireless advocacy to encourage diversity in children’s literature. Thanks to your continued support, WNDB has been able to sustain our vision of building a world in which all children can see themselves in the pages of a book.

Throughout 2016, we strove to build upon our existing programs — like the WNDB Internship Grants — and to implement new projects, as well — like the OurStory app. The success of our programming speaks to the hard work of our volunteers and to the generous support of our donors. Simply put, we couldn’t have done this without you.

On March 13, 2016, WNDB hosted an inaugural ceremony for its Walter Dean Myers Award for Outstanding Children’s Literature. Held at the Library of Congress, we proudly presented “The Walter” to co-authors Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely for their novel, All American Boys. The mission of this award is to honor the memory of writer and literary activist Walter Dean Myers and to celebrate excellent books that feature underrepresented voices.

In June 2016, we announced the second class of recipients for our WNDB Internship Grants. Our 11 recipients — more than double the number from 2015 — spent the summer in New York City working at prestigious publishing houses and literary agencies. In total, we now have 11 former interns who have found full-time jobs in publishing, 10 of whom are working in children’s literature.

Also in June, we held our first Master Class on Writing & Publishing, in conjunction with the Library of Congress. Organized by Newbery award winner Kwame Alexander, the Master Class covered a range of writing and publishing topics that targeted emerging writers and professionals who value diversity. The faculty included Alexander, National Book Award winner Jacqueline Woodson, and three New York editors.

In December, we were thrilled to announce the winners of the 2016 WNDB Walter Grants. This initiative was established to provide financial support for unpublished diverse writers and their
diverse works. This year, we awarded six grants of $2000 each — up from five grants in 2015 — to unpublished writers and illustrators.

Throughout 2016, we worked hard to complete our first anthology, *Flying Lessons and Other Stories*. Published by Random House Children’s Books and released in January 2017, the anthology received five starred trade reviews. It features middle-grade short stories by award-winning authors, including Matt de la Peña, Grace Lin, and the late Walter Dean Myers. The anthology itself aims to showcase prominent voices in children’s literature and bring diversity to bookshelves nationwide. Our WNDB in the Classroom program continues to make inroads at schools across the country, introducing diverse books by diverse authors to a new generation of young readers. This year, we donated 2,200 books — the equivalent of over $25,000 — to various schools around the country.

Up next, we will soon introduce the OurStory app to the public. After two years of development, the OurStory app is now live and we invite you to take a look around ([http://www.weneeddiversebooks.org/ourstory/](http://www.weneeddiversebooks.org/ourstory/))! The app is an easy-to-use resource to discover diverse books, which will be crucial for educators, parents, teens, and kids who want to read more underrepresented voices. It will also offer reader guides and exclusive WNDB content. Looking ahead, we are working hard to complete our YA short story anthology, *Lift Off*, scheduled for release in Summer 2018 and edited by Edgar Award nominee Lamar Giles. This collection will be dedicated to the memory of Walter Dean Myers and will feature such lauded authors as Daniel José Older, Gene Luen Yang, Nicola Yoon, and others.

Within the last year, WNDB expanded its reach and hit multiple milestones, but our programs and our organization itself would not exist without your help. Our dedicated volunteers, supporters, and donors form the very spine of WNDB, and we are very thankful for all of you.

*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 one paid part-time staff member. 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 Development

Olugbemisola Rhuday-Perkovich
Sr. VP of Community and Member Relations

Sona Charaipotra
Sr. VP Content Management

Karen Sandler
Sr. VP of Communications

Leland Keel
CFO

Thien-Kim Lam
Program Director

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 2016
Library of Congress Young Readers Center
Scholastic Reading Club

Team Members
Jennifer Baker (Panels), Terry Hong & Kathie Weinberg (Walter Award Co-Directors), Mike Jung (Internships Assistant Director), Amitha Knight (Social Media 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, Maurene Goo, I.W. Gregorio, K.T. Hornig, 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.
2016 Financials

Total income 2016: $200,038

Our 2016 Donations
- Foundation Grants $80,000
- Major Donors (above $2000) $41,699
- Individual Donors (below $2000) $78,339

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 dedicated applications, merchandise, and appearances).

Total operating budget: $181,000

- General and Administrative* - $32,000
- Outreach and Advocacy - $18,000
- In the Classroom - $26,000
- Awards - $54,000
- Anthology - $10,000
- Education - $13,000
- Other Programs/Fundraising - $28,000
- Carry forward to 2017 to ensure continuing services - $238,835

* Administrative fees include: program management, insurance, legal and accounting.
The Walter Award

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.

Leaders: Terry Hong and Kathie Weinberg, Co-Directors

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

What we did in 2016: Co-authors Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely accepted the inaugural Walter Award for their 2015 novel, *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.

Throughout the year, our Judging Committee reviewed 68 submitted titles (all published during the 2016 calendar year) for the second annual Walter Award. All of the books were written by diverse authors whose work featured a diverse main character or addressed diversity in a meaningful way.
The Walter Award

What’s coming in 2017: In January, our Judging Committee announced the results of the second Walter Awards: *March: Book Three* by Congressman John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, and Nate Powell received the Walter Award; the Walter Honorees were *Watched* by Marina Budhos, *If I Was Your Girl* by Meredith Russo, and *The Sun Is Also a Star* by Nicola Yoon.

We celebrated the second annual Walter Award Ceremony at the Library of Congress on March 31, 2017.

WNDB will donate a minimum of 2,000 copies of *March: Book Three* across the United States to schools with limited budgets.

The third annual Walter Awards will expand into the middle-grade category. The 2018 Walter Judging Committee is hard at work reading and evaluating this year’s submissions. The results will be announced in January 2018.

For more details about the Walter Award, contact Terry Hong: terryhong@diversebooks.org
In 2015, We Need Diverse Books® 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 curated list of diverse titles to a national readership.

Leader: Dhonielle Clayton

What we did in 2016: We expanded our partnership with the Scholastic Book Club team, collaborating on eight classroom flyers and reaching millions of students ranging in age from toddler to teen. Each eight-page flyer will feature beloved classics, award-winning titles, and new releases — all written by and about people from traditionally underrepresented communities.

What we can expect in 2017: Due to the success of this program, we hope to continue and build upon our partnership with the Scholastic Reading Club, working together to help more kids discover the joy and power of reading. Coming up in 2017, we will work with Scholastic to distribute more Reading Club flyers, with the first debuting in October.

For more information on the Scholastic Reading Club flyers, contact Dhonielle Clayton: dhonielleclayton@diversebooks.org
The Walter Grants

WNDB provides key financial support to unpublished writers through the Walter Grants. The program was established to amplify and elevate diverse writers as well as their diverse works.

Leaders: Aisha Saeed, Marietta Zacker (Co-Chair)

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 2016: We awarded six grants of $2000 each — up from five grants in 2015 — to six unpublished writers and illustrators whose background and work are diverse. The grantees selected include: Jacqueline Alcantara, Jennifer De Leon, Jenn Hogan, Anna Nelson, Francesca Padilla, and Maurisa Lynne Thompson.

What’s coming in 2017: This year, five grants of $2000 each will be awarded to diverse writers pursuing publishing opportunities. We also celebrated the publication of The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas, one of the recipients of the 2015 Walter Grant. The Hate U Give received eight starred trade reviews and has spent multiple weeks on the New York Times Best Sellers List.

For more information on the Walter Grants and/or the Walter Award, contact Marietta Zacker: mariettazacker@diversebooks.org
WNDB® in the Classroom

WNDB® in the Classroom brings diverse books and authors into Title 1 and other schools with large low-income populations, providing free books and personal interaction with authors who are creating quality work today.

Leaders: Ellen Oh, Olugbemisola Rhuday-Perkovich

Why do we target Title 1 and other schools with a large low-income populations?
For minority children living in poverty, lower literacy levels have been linked to the lack of representation in children’s books. By helping children find stories and authors they can relate to, we encourage children to connect to reading in a personal way and foster a lifelong love of reading.

What we did in 2016: Our team members presented at the International Reading Association and New York State Reading Association conferences on the importance of and opportunities offered by sharing diverse literature in the classroom. We also created a School Visit Database that will allow diverse children’s book creators to share information about their virtual and in-person programming with educators and library professionals around the world. Additionally, we created a comprehensive discussion guide for the Walter Award-winning All American Boys, and Book Club mini-guides for the OurStory app.
**WNDB® in the Classroom**

**What’s coming in 2017:** WNDB in the Classroom will develop a Discussion Guide for the 2017 Walter Award-Winning *March: Book Three*, and at least 18 Book Club mini-guides for the OurStory app. Once the database is launched, we will work with the social media team to organize a monthly promotional feature of a children’s book creator available for school visits and programming.

For information about WNDB® in the Classroom, contact Olugbemisola Rhuday-Perkovich: olugbemisola@diversebooks.org
WNDB® Anthologies

Flying Lessons & Other Stories and Lift Off

Two WNDB® anthologies will be published by Crown Books for Young Readers/Random House: *Flying Lessons & Other Stories* for middle graders, and *Lift Off* for young adult readers. Both collections feature contributions from well-established writers representing diverse voices; each title will also include a short story by a first-time author who won a slot via a WNDB-sponsored competition.

**Leader:** Ellen Oh and Lamar Giles

**Why an anthology?** Both anthologies will provide a school-friendly sampler of authors whose work can easily be incorporated into educational curriculum. Long-term, we hope these anthologies will be made available to as many Title 1 schools as possible.

**What we did in 2016:** For *Flying Lessons & Other Stories*, we promoted the book and signed advance reader copies at major trade events, including the American Library Association’s Annual Conference & Exhibition. The anthology also received five starred trade reviews prior to publication. For *Lift Off*, we solidified our list of 12 contributing authors, which will include stories by Jason Reynolds, Gene Luen Yang, and Nicola Yoon. We also selected Aminah Mae Safi as the winner of our YA short story contest; her story, “Be Cool For Once,” will be published in *Lift Off*.

**What we can look forward to in 2017 and beyond:** We celebrated the publication of *Flying Lessons & Other Stories* in January 2017. We also look forward to the release of *Lift Off* in 2018.
Initiated in 2014, WNDB Internships provide supplemental grants of up to $2,500 to interns from diverse backgrounds to work at publishing houses and literary agencies. After two years, 11 eligible interns have gone on to full-time work in the publishing industry.

Leaders: Advisory Board Chair Linda Sue Park, Anne Ursu, Jennifer Mann

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 2016: We added six grants to our existing five grants, for a grand total of 11 grants of $2,500 each. We also grew our established partnerships, which now includes nine publishers and six literary agencies. We were also able to offer our grantees outstanding summer events including CBC forums, a Writer’s House Panel put together by Michael Mejias which featured the expert advice of five industry giants, an evening with Bank Street Book Store, and a showcase on Jennifer Baker’s Minorities in Publishing podcast.

What to look forward to in 2017: As of June, nearly 100 applications have already been received for our 2017 internship grants. We have had three candidates receive internships, and have awarded seven grants. This year we will award a total of eight $2,500 grants to diverse publishing and literary agency interns. Each intern will also receive a MetroCard to cover NYC transportation needs.

For more details about the internship initiative, contact Jennifer Mann: jennifermann@diversebooks.org
Leader: Miranda Paul

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

What we did in 2016: The WNDB Mentorship program successfully completed its first year of mentorships, with give mentees. Two of our mentees’ books have gone on to to sell their work to publishers — Lisa Brathwaite’s Show and Tell: The Story of Eunice Johnson was acquired by Lee & Low; and Jacqueline Alcantara’s The Field sold to NorthSouth Books and her Freedom Soup sold to Candlewick.

The Mentorship committee also selected 12 new multi-published industry professionals to serve as 2017 mentors. Furthermore, we opened our program for new applications and received over 150 applicants. A group of experienced readers selected approximately 50-60 finalists, and from those finalists our mentors each chose one recipient. The final 12 mentees selected were notified and began their mentorship on or shortly after December 31, 2016.

What’s coming in 2017: Because we’ve received a high volume of applications per year (between 150-300), we realize we are serving less than 10% of those requesting a mentor. Therefore, in addition to offering a minimum of 10 mentorships, we also hope to become more visible through appearances at major writing events and online, as an expanded WNDB program sharing tips, education, and mentorship opportunities to more diverse writers.

For more details about the mentorship initiative, contact Miranda Paul: mirandapaul@diversebooks.org
WNDB® OurStory App

Leader: Dhonielle Clayton, Thien-Kieu Lam

Why did we develop an app? As WNDB team members traveled across the country to conferences and book festivals, they spoke with librarians, teachers, educators, parents, and kids and heard a common theme – diverse books were hard to find. OurStory seeks to solve that problem. We created an easy-to-use tool that highlights books with diverse content that are written and/or illustrated by creators from marginalized communities.

What we did in 2016: We developed the framework and features of the app, including creating such materials as book guides and reading maps to enhance the reading experience. We successfully beta-tested the app and implemented the feedback, and our browser version recently went live. We invite you to take a look at http://www.weneeddiversebooks.org/ourstory/.

What’s coming in 2017: We excitedly look forward to launching the internet browser version of the OurStory app on June 15, 2017. We will then focus on introducing our downloadable apps for iOS and Android tablets and mobile devices. Both free and paid memberships will be available — the free version will ensure access to all users while the paid version will help fund WNDB programming.

For more details about the OurStory app, contact Dhonielle Clayton: dhonielleclayton@diversebooks.org and Thien-Kieu Lam: thienkieulam@diversebooks.org
How to Help

WNDB needs your help to continue and further our mission! Here’s what WNDB can do with your support.

Support diverse authors through our Walter Awards and Walter Grant programs, named for children’s literature luminary Walter Dean Myers. The Walter Awards are an annual recognition for the most outstanding diverse YA and MG literature by diverse creators. In each category, YA and MG, one book will win the Walter and an additional 1-2 books will be recognized with Walter Honors. The Walter Grant is awarded to five unpublished diverse authors or illustrators each year, providing the financial support needed to focus on creating publishable works.

Diversify our classrooms. In tandem with the Walter Awards, WNDB in the Classroom will provide $40,000 in funding to purchase the award-winning books and donate them to students in economically disadvantaged schools. 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 Walter Award-winning titles. 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 children’s book publishing career. This encourages students from diverse backgrounds to consider careers in publishing and also adds diverse perspectives to publishing companies and literary agencies.

Provide mentorships for promising writers and artists. WNDB Mentorships seek to pair veteran authors and illustrators with new writers and artists to help develop 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, with the goal of fostering positive, honest, and constructive discussions on diversity and show both publishers and readers like that a diverse book is just a good book any child can enjoy.
How can I send my donation to WNDB?
Checks payable to “We Need Diverse Books” can be mailed to:

We Need Diverse Books  
10319 Westlake Drive #104  
Bethesda, MD 20817

Contribute online to WNDB via Paypal.

If you wish to make a sustaining (annual) donation or include WNDB in your Planned Giving, please contact Lamar Giles, Sr. VP of Development at lamargiles@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 to opt-out) whenever you are shopping on eBay.

- iGive is a website that functions as a portal to many e-commerce sites you’re likely already using. 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 for WNDB, contact:
Thien-Kim Lam
thienkimlam@diversebooks.org

To donate:
weneeddiversebooks.org/fundraising