A Message from Ellen Oh

We Need Diverse Books CEO and President

Due to the tireless advocacy of our team members, WNDB has flourished in 2017. We now run 10 groundbreaking initiatives that address the lack of diversity in children’s literature — and we couldn’t have gotten here without supporters like you. Our successes are your successes, and we are excited to share our recent milestones with you.

In 2017 we not only expanded our existing programs, we also introduced four new initiatives to address publishing-related issues that have come to our attention. We kicked off the year with the launch of our first anthology, *Flying Lessons & Other Stories*, published by Random House Children’s Books. This compilation of short stories is now in its tenth printing and supports our goal of providing more diverse children’s literature.

In March, WNDB also held its inaugural Writing Cross-Culturally Workshop, in partnership with Madcap Retreats. We organized this workshop to provide writers with the resources to tell stories that are not their own with care and sensitivity; and we plan on hosting new retreats yearly.

Over the summer we proudly launched the OurStory app. Two years in the making, we built the app to be an easy-to-use resource for educators, parents, teens, and kids to discover inclusive books. Finally, to close out 2017, we named the first recipient of WNDB’s Bookseller of the Year Award — Sara Luce Look of Charis Books and More in Atlanta, Georgia. Given every two years, this award recognizes the vital role that booksellers play in introducing diverse books to the communities they serve.

2017 marked a year of maturation for WNDB, and to grow even further we will soon bring on an Executive Director to lead us through 2018 and beyond. I’m so pleased to announce that WNDB has received a generous donation to fill this important position, and we plan to bring the new director on board by summer 2018.

At our core WNDB remains a grassroots organization, and we simply wouldn’t have reached this point without the generosity of our donors. I invite you to read further about our accomplishments in 2017 and what our goals for 2018, and I ask you to please rejoin your efforts in supporting WNDB. While I look to our future with hope and excitement, I continue to strive for the day when we no longer have to say We Need Diverse Books — because that will have become the norm. With your help, we will reach that destination together.

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 which 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; we have four paid part-time staff members. Our executive committee and over 30 team members handle all programs and administrative needs.
2017 Executive Committee

Ellen Oh
CEO & President

Dhonielle Clayton
COO

Olugbemisola Rhuday-Perkovich
Board Member-at-Large

Judy Schricker
CFO

Our partners in 2017
Scholastic Reading Club
Library of Congress

Team Members
Caroline Tung Richmond (Program Director), Christine Vallas (Financial Manager), Stacey H. Lee (Legal Contact), Bryce Leung and Kristy Shen (Directors of Technology), S.E. Sinkhorn (PR Chair), Don Tate (Artist Outreach), Miranda Paul (Mentorship), Alex Gino and Sandie Angulo Chen (Panels), Terry Hong and Kathie Weinberg (Walter Awards Co-Directors), Jennifer Mann (Internships), I.W. Gregorio (Bookseller of the Year Award Chair), JoAnn Yao (Social Media Manager), Marietta Zacker (Walter Grants Co-Chair), Evelyn N. Alfred, Jim Averbeck, Tracey Baptiste, Elsie Chapman, Sona Charaipotra, Mayra Cuevas, Sayantani DasGupta, Steven Dos Santos, Alexandra Duncan, Maurene Goo, Sarah Hamburg, Amitha Jagannath Knight, Jarrett J. Krosoczka, Thien-Kieu Lam, Thien-Kim Lam, Alaina Leary, Kristen Lippert-Martin, Ki-Wing Merlin, Nicole Overton, Maria Salvador, Karen Sandler, S.E. Sinkhorn, Jessica Shub, Anya Steiner, Suma Subramaniam, Laurie Ann Thompson, Anne Ursu, Renée Watson, Nicola Yoon

Advisory Board
Meg Medina (Chair)
Lamar Giles (Chair)
Grace Lin
Linda Sue Park
Cindy Pon

Honorary Advisory Board
Tim Federle
Christopher Myers
Matt de la Pena
Cynthia Leitich Smith
Jacqueline Woodson
Gene Luen Yang
2017 Financials

Total income 2017: $318,775

Our 2017 Donations
- Foundation Grants $57,000
- Major Donors* (above $2000) $196,066
- Individual Donors (below $2000) $65,209

* This number includes anthology advances and royalties.

We Need Diverse Books® focuses both on unique programming (via WNDB in the Classroom, the Walter Awards for Outstanding Children’s Literature, the Walter Grants, the Internship Grants) and on outreach and advocacy efforts (through developing educational kits, dedicated applications, and appearances).

Total operating budget: $266,871**

** From 2016 to 2017, our general operating budget increased by around $85,000 due to the expansion of several programs and in conjunction with decreased spending in others (Education, Outreach & Advocacy). The Walter Award budget increased by $8,000 to accommodate a new awards category and additional event logistics. The WNDB in the Classroom budget increased by $32,000 as we donated more books. The Anthology budget increased by $21,000 since we added two more anthologies and disbursed advances to authors. Finally, the General and Administrative budget increased by $31,000 to hire more part-time staff, including a Program Manager, Financial Manager, and Social Media Manager.

- General and Administrative* - $63,435
- Outreach and Advocacy - $13,009
- In the Classroom - $58,460
- Awards (Walter Awards, Walter Grants, Internship Grants) - $61,960
- Anthology - $31,773
- Education - $10,665
- Other Programs/Fundraising - $ 27,569

Carry forward to 2017 to ensure continuing services - $291,069

* Administrative fees include: Program management, insurance, legal and accountancy fees.
The Walter Award

The Walter Dean Myers Award for Outstanding Children’s Literature, also known as “The Walter,” honors the legacy of celebrated children’s author and diversity advocate Walter Dean Myers (1937-2014).

Leaders: Terry Hong and Kathie Weinberg, Co-Directors

Why do we fund this award? WNDB firmly believes not only in supporting diverse writers and illustrators but celebrating their work, as well. To accomplish that, we created the Walter Awards to honor exemplary diverse books created by diverse writers and illustrators.

What we did in 2017: On March 31, 2017, WNDB hosted the second annual Walter Awards ceremony at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. Co-authors Congressman John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, and Nate Powell accepted the 2017 Walter Award for their 2016 graphic novel, March: Book 3, based on the Congressman’s life. Walter Honors were also bestowed upon Watched by Marina Budhos, If I Was Your Girl by Meredith Russo, and The Sun Is Also a Star by Nicola Yoon. Librarian of Congress Dr. Carla Hayden attended the event and delivered a welcome speech.

Our co-directors announced that the 2018 Walter Awards would expand to include two categories: Teen (13-19) and Younger Readers (9-13). The 2018 Walter Awards Judging Committee, led by co-chairs Terry Hong and Maria Salvador, was comprised of seven librarians, academics, and reviewers. Throughout the year, the Committee considered nearly 200 submitted titles (all published during the 2017 year) for the 2018 Walter Awards.
The Walter Award

In the fall, WNDB chose 53 schools across the United States to receive 30 copies each of the Walter Award-winning book *March: Book 3*. The books were delivered in January 2018.

**What’s coming in 2018:** In early 2018, the 2018 Judging Committee announced the winners of the 2018 Walter Awards. The winners include Jason Reynolds for *Long Way Down* (Teen category) and Carole Boston Weatherford and Eric Velasquez for *Schomburg: The Man Who Built a Library* (Younger Readers category). The Walter Honors were given to Mitali Perkins for *You Bring the Distant Near* (Teen category), Francisco X. Stork for *Disappeared* (Teen category), and Margarita Engle for *Forest World* (Younger Readers category).

WNDB held the third annual Walter Awards on March 16, 2018 at the Library of Congress. The event expanded to include a symposium on diversity in children’s literature, moderated by Newbery winner Linda Sue Park and featuring the 2018 Walter honorees as panelists. The symposium was immediately followed by the Awards ceremony, which was emceed by National Ambassador for Young People’s Literature Jacqueline Woodson.

WNDB will donate a minimum of 2,000 copies each of *Long Way Down* and *Schomburg: The Man Who Built a Library* to schools with limited budgets.

**For more details about the Walter Award, contact Terry Hong and/or Kathie Weinberg at walteraward@diversebooks.org.**
WNDB® Scholastic Book Club Partnership

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 2017: We continued our partnership with Scholastic and created a new set of eight-page flyers that were distributed nationwide. Each flyer featured beloved classics, award-winning titles, and new releases — all written by and about people from traditionally underrepresented communities.

What we can expect in 2018: We plan to build upon our partnership with the Scholastic Reading Club to introduce more kids and teens to diverse literature. Every season, we hope to distribute flyers for several categories — from Pre-K to Grade 2 and from Grade 3 and up.

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

The Walter Dean Myers Grant provides key financial support to upcoming writers and illustrators from diverse backgrounds. We have thus far awarded 11 total grants of $2,000 each.

**Leaders:** Caroline Tung Richmond and Marietta Zacker (co-chair)

**Why do we support unpublished diverse writers?** Marginalized artists often face financial roadblocks that prevent them from creating their work, which is why we initiated the Walter Grants. Each grant supports a diverse writer or illustrator who has yet to be published.

**What we did in 2017:** The Walter Grant Committee was on break this year, and so the program was on hiatus.

**What’s coming in 2018:** WNDB will fund five Walter Grants at $2,000 each. In late spring, we will accept applications from unpublished writers and illustrators. Our judging committee will then choose five recipients based on merit and need.

For more information on the Walter Grants, contact carolinerichmond@diversebooks.org
WNDB® in the Classroom

WNDB® in the Classroom provides free books and author visits to low-income schools across the United States. By helping children find stories and authors that they can relate to, we encourage in them a lifelong love of reading. Since 2014, we have donated 10,000 books to economically disadvantaged schools across 28 states.

Leader: Ellen Oh

Why do we focus on schools with large low-income populations? WNDB in the Classroom specifically targets the literacy gap that affects marginalized U.S. youth. According to School Library Media Research, the reading scores among African American, Hispanic, and American Indian fourth graders significantly lag behind their white and Asian American counterparts. The authors also stated that the key to addressing this gap is to provide literature that offers children “a view of their cultural surroundings and insight on themselves.” For children from diverse communities, this means books that feature diverse characters.

What we did in 2017: In the fall, we selected 53 schools throughout the U.S. to receive a classroom set of the lauded. 2017 Walter Award-winning graphic novel, March: Book 3, which follows the life of Congressman John Lewis. Each school will integrate the text into its curriculum.
or use the set for book clubs and summer reading programs. We also gave away 300 diverse picture books to elementary schools nationwide, thanks to an incredible donation by Chronicle Books.

**What’s coming in 2018:** WNDB will give away 10,000 books — our most so far in any calendar year. We have four major book giveaways planned, including 2,000 copies of our new YA anthology, *Fresh Ink*, and 4,000 copies of our middle grade anthology, *Flying Lessons & Other Stories*. We will also give away 2,000 copies each of the 2018 Walter Award winners — *Long Way Down* by Jason Reynolds and *Schomburg: The Man Who Built a Library* by Carole Boston Weatherford and Eric Velasquez (illustrator).

**For information about WNDB in the Classroom, contact classroom@diversebooks.org**
Our anthologies feature original stories by award-winning authors and exciting new voices, thus supporting our goal to provide more diversity in children’s literature.

**Leader:** Ellen Oh

**Why anthologies?** Our anthologies provide a school-friendly sampler of short stories that can easily be incorporated into educational curricula. Long term, we hope that these anthologies will be made available to as many low-income schools as possible.

With each anthology, WNDB also hosts a short-story contest for a spot in the book by an unpublished diverse author. The winner receives payment of $1,000, and the contests are open to writers who are previously unpublished in any format.

**What we did in 2017:** In January, we celebrated the launch of *Flying Lessons & Other Stories*, published by Random House Children’s Book. This short story anthology received five starred reviews and features new work by award-winning authors including Grace Lin and Soman Chainani.

Later in the year, we revealed the cover of our young adult anthology, *Fresh Ink* (formerly called *Lift Off*), and we announced our next middle grade anthology with Random House, to be published.
in Fall 2019. Titled *The Hero Next Door*, this exciting compilation will be edited by WNDB Advisory Board member Olugbemisola Rhuday-Perkovich and will feature stories by Linda Sue Park and her daughter Anna Dobbin, William Alexander, Cynthia Leitich Smith, Rita Williams-Garcia, and WNDB’s Ellen Oh, amongst others.

**What we can look forward to in 2018 and beyond:** We will organize a *Fresh Ink* panel and book signing at the ALA Annual Conference in June 2018. In August, we will celebrate the publication of *Fresh Ink*.

For more information about our anthologies, please contact Ellen Oh: ellenoh@diversebooks.org
Our Internships program, initiated in 2014, provides supplemental grants of up to $2,500 to interns from diverse backgrounds working at publishing houses and literary agencies. Since its inception, 13 of our former interns have found full-time work in the publishing industry.

**Leaders:** Advisory Board Chair Linda Sue Park and 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 2017:** We awarded nine grants this year, with seven grants given to interns at publishing houses and two grants given to interns within literary agencies. These nine interns held positions across the publishing spectrum as well, including Editorial, Marketing, Publicity, and Art and Design.

**What to look forward to in 2018:** We will award eight Internship Grants (and metro stipends) to deserving interns. Three of these grants will be funded by The Gnat, a storytelling series inspired by NPR’s “The Moth” and run by Namrata Tripathi, publisher at Kokila, an imprint of Penguin Young Readers.

For more details about the internship initiative, please contact Jennifer Mann: jennifermann@diversebooks.org
Our Mentorships program connects emerging writers and illustrators with seasoned artists who can offer professional guidance. These Mentorships cover multiple categories within children’s literature – picture book, middle grade, young adult, and nonfiction.

**Leader:** Miranda Paul

**Why do we mentor diverse authors?** WNDB believes that supporting new writers and illustrators early on in their careers is critical. We therefore created the Mentorships program to provide our participants with publishing advice and valuable feedback of their work, giving much-needed support as they enter this competitive industry.

**What we did in 2017:** We oversaw the mentorships of 12 authors and/or illustrators, bringing our total tally to 32 mentorships since 2015. Throughout the year, our committee reached out to new mentors and evaluated 194 applications for the 2018 mentees.

Several of our 2017 mentees have since signed with agents or have received book deals, including Teresa Robeson and A. M. Dassu.
**WNDB® Mentorships**

*What's coming in 2018:* We awarded 10 new mentorships to our 2018 mentees, and our mentors have also reached out or given feedback to more than a dozen finalists who were not awarded. Our goals for 2018 are to continue to keep the program going at the same level and discuss the feasibility of an expansion. We also plan on working with the social media team to create a blog series interviewing past mentors and mentees.

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

The OurStory app is a book discovery tool that celebrates diversity. It strives to include a wide array of titles with diverse content written by creators from marginalized communities.

Leader: Dhonielle Clayton

Why did we develop an app? As WNDB team members traveled across the country to attend conferences and book festivals, they heard a common theme – diverse books can be hard to find. OurStory seeks to answer that problem. It’s an easy-to-use tool that highlights books with diverse content and by content creators from marginalized communities.

What we did in 2017: We successfully launched the app in June 2017. We currently offer three membership levels: OurStory Kids (for ages 12 and under); OurStory Teens (for ages 13 and up); and OurStory Pro (for educators and librarians).

What’s coming in 2018: The WNDB tech team is hard at work creating a mobile version of OurStory, which will help us reach a wider audience. We’re also creating two additional versions for educators – OurStory Public will serve large public library systems, while OurStory Indie Bookseller will help booksellers sync their inventory to the app.

For more details about the OurStory app, contact Dhonielle Clayton: dhonielleclayton@diversebooks.org
Bookseller of the Year Award

The Bookseller of the Year Award is WNDB’s newest program. Booksellers are one of the most important gatekeepers in the publishing industry. Not only do they curate collections, they get books into the hands of readers and they have the power to create bestsellers. But more vitally, they have the power to represent – meaning that children can go to their stores and either search in vain for books that reflect their world, or smile when they see themselves on the shelf.

Leader: I.W. Gregorio

Why did we create this award? WNDB wanted to recognize the role that booksellers play as drivers of the publishing industry. No one can read or buy a book that they’ve never heard of. This award is our thank you to the independent booksellers of our country, for championing the cause of diverse books and showing that they can, in fact, sell.

What we did in 2017: We launched the program and we chose our first winner out of over 25 nominations. The recipient of the first Bookseller of the Year Award is Sara Luce Look of Charis Books and More in Atlanta, Georgia. As the oldest feminist bookstore in the country, Charis Books is a local institution that is proud and open about its mission to reflect a wide spectrum of experiences, lives, and families.
Bookseller of the Year Award

Throughout the year, our committee worked with indiebound.org to allow users of the WNDB OurStory app to purchase their collections from independent booksellers. They also established a partnership with Edelweiss— the premiere source for booksellers to discover new books – which allowed books featured on the OurStory app to be specially marked in the Edelweiss catalog.

**What we can expect in 2018:** In March, WNDB welcomed Sara Luce Look to our annual Walter Awards in Washington, D.C. where we presented her with the Bookseller of the Year Award. Our committee will work with Sara to create a “best practices” document that will encourage other booksellers to follow the lead of Charis Books and More. We will also maximize the utility of the OurStory app for independent booksellers.

For more details about the Bookseller of the Year award, contact I.W. Gregorio: iwgregorio@diversebooks.org
WNDB® Retreats

In partnership with Madcap Retreats, WNDB Retreats provide a welcoming space for diverse writers and for writers seeking to tell diverse stories.

Leaders: Dhonielle Clayton

Why do we offer retreats? Our aim for this program is two-fold. With our OwnVoices Retreat, we provide writers from marginalized backgrounds with the tools to get their manuscripts ready for submission and to help them navigate the publishing industry. Additionally, participants will be able to socialize with other diverse writers and seek mentorship from our diverse faculty.

With our Writing Cross-Culturally Retreat, we provide writers with the resources for telling stories that are not their own with respect and sensitivity. Participants attend workshops where we discuss representation and misrepresentation, as well as learn how to analyze any internal biases and how that affects their writing.

What we did in 2017: In its inaugural year, the Retreats program received 100 applications for our first Writing Cross-Culturally retreat, led by YA authors Leigh Bardugo, Daniel José Older, and Nicola Yoon. The workshop was held over four days in beautiful Gatlinburg, Tennessee.
What’s coming in 2018: In March, we hosted our second Writing Cross-Culturally Retreat, with acclaimed authors Laurie Halse Anderson and Marie Lu serving as faculty. The event was located in Lyles, Tennessee and featured lectures, breakout sessions, and writing exercises, as well as numerous opportunities for mentorship and critique.

For more details about the mentorship initiative, contact Dhonielle Clayton: dhonielleclayton@diversebooks.org
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 and illustrators** through our Walter Awards and Walter Grants.
- **Diversify our classrooms** via WNDB in the Classroom.
- **Promote diversity in publishing** through the WNDB Internship Grants.
- **Provide mentorships to promising writers and artists** with our WNDB Mentorship Program.
- **Promote diverse programming** via WNDB-organized panels at conferences and festivals across the country.

**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 Caroline Richmond, Program Director, at carolinerichmond@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](http://smile.amazon.com).
whatever you buy helps WNDB move closer to our 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!

**Volunteering**

To volunteer for WNDB, contact Caroline Tung Richmond: [carolinerichmond@diversebooks.org](mailto:carolinerichmond@diversebooks.org)

To donate: [http://weneeddiversebooks.org/fundraising/](http://weneeddiversebooks.org/fundraising/)