DIVERSE BOOKS DIVERSE IDEAS
It has been a busy year here at WNDB, especially as the country continues to reopen following pandemic closures, but it has been the energizing kind of busy that has reminded me of the importance of the work we’re doing.

In the pages of this annual report, we’re thrilled to share the new programs we’ve launched at WNDB this fiscal year, as well as provide progress updates on our ongoing initiatives, including our Mentorship program, our Native Writing Intensive, and much more.

We kicked off the fiscal year with our Internship Grant initiative, where we helped 25 interns start their careers in the publishing industry, and we closed it out with our Walter Awards ceremony in Washington, DC, where we honored the legacy of Walter Dean Myers by celebrating the next generation of diverse creators. In between, we continued to serve hundreds of diverse creators, publishing professionals, and students across the country.

This past spring, as anti-LGBT legislation has spread state by state, we provided over 1,500 bookish care packages and organized author visits for queer kids and teens, letting them know that we see them and support them just as they are. Recently, we hired Kaitlyn Patterson as our very first development manager. A former WNDB board member, Kaitlyn brings over ten years of fundraising experience to our team, and her position represents a new chapter of growth and expansion for our organization. Welcome, Kaitlyn!

Thank you again for supporting We Need Diverse Books. Our nonprofit is now eight years old and we’ve come such a long way from the Twitter hashtag that initiated our groundbreaking work in 2014. We couldn’t have gotten to this point without you and, together, we can continue to diversify the publishing industry and make our bookshelves more inclusive for readers everywhere.

Gratefully,

Ellen Oh, CEO & President
About

Founded by marginalized authors, We Need Diverse Books is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that strives to diversify the publishing industry from creation to classroom and to make bookshelves more equitable—all to promote literacy, build empathy, and reduce bias.

What We Do

WNDB affects change across the entire book-making pipeline. Our programs serve three core communities: the diverse writers who create books, the publishing professionals who acquire them, and the students who need them. For writers, we offer mentorships, grants, and workshops to help them get published. For diverse publishing interns, we provide career development opportunities and grants to help them thrive in an industry where their voices are historically underrepresented. And for educators and students, we host author visits, award grants, and donate thousands of diverse books throughout the country — because these titles can transform the lives of readers across the nation.
We launched our Educators Making a Difference Grant this spring to support teachers and librarians who are striving to diversify their bookshelves. We awarded 35 grants of $2000 each in our inaugural cycle—read more on the next page about the exciting projects that these grants will fund.

WNDB provided 5,000 copies of The 1619 Project by Nikole Hannah-Jones to educators, via donations from Bookshop.org and Penguin Random House. The recipients included Christopher Stewart, a school librarian in Washington, DC, who held a school-wide book club with his copies. “This donation is hope,” said Stewart.

We’re thrilled that many of the writers we’ve supported via grants, mentorships, and workshops are landing book deals! During this fiscal year, we’re excited to share that our mentee Malia Maunakea sold her middle grade novel Lei and the Fire Goddess to Penguin Workshop while our Revisions Workshop alumna Ashton Lattimore sold her book All We Were Promised at auction to Ballantine Books!

WNDB spearheaded our Support LGBTQIA+ Youth campaign to provide bookish care packages to affected kids and teens, in opposition to the anti-LGBTQIA+ legislation spreading nationally. We provided over 1500 packages and organized virtual author chats for the recipients to show them that we care and that they matter.

How we define diversity: We recognize all diverse experiences, including but not limited to LGBTQIA+, Native, people of color, gender diversity, people with disabilities*, and ethnic, cultural, and religious minorities.

*We subscribe to a broad definition of disability, which includes but is not limited to physical, sensory, cognitive, intellectual, or developmental disabilities, chronic conditions, and mental illnesses (this may also include addiction). Furthermore, we subscribe to a social model of disability, which presents disability as created by barriers in the social environment, due to lack of equal access, stereotyping, and other forms of marginalization.
WNDB established the Educators Making a Difference Grants to support educators who understand the power of diverse books and who want to incorporate these titles into their schools, libraries, and organizations. We received nearly 600 applications in our inaugural cycle and selected 35 winners who will each receive $2,000 for their institution. The funded projects include:

- Broadening the selection of LGBTQIA+ books at a school in California that, as recently as 2019, didn’t have a single title with LGBTQIA+ representation.

- Providing diverse books and resources to a bookmobile in rural Pennsylvania so that the 5,000 students it serves will have both “window” and “mirror” titles to read.

- Funding a school-wide literature festival in Wisconsin that will celebrate diverse books and provide community healing following the shooting of Jacob Blake.
Rise Up

We created Rise Up to offer support and resources to diverse mid-career publishing professionals. Due to issues like microaggressions and unsustainable pay, WNDB observed that many diverse employees leave the publishing industry altogether within three to six years of starting their first job. Rise Up seeks to help retain these professionals within a career field where their voices are needed more than ever.

Launched in spring 2022, Rise Up features virtual workshops on professional development and mental health, in-person meet and greets, and a Discord community where members can ask questions and seek advice from other like-minded professionals.
WNDB in the Classroom

Every school year, WNDB provides free diverse books to low-income schools across the United States. This year, we donated more than 15,000 diverse titles nationwide to kids in need. Our giveaways included 4,000 copies of our 2021 Walter Award winners: *Punching the Air* by Ibi Zoboi and Dr. Yusef Salaam; and *When Stars Are Scattered* by Victoria Jamieson and Omar Mohamed with colors by Iman Geddy. WNDB was also the recipient of several generous book donations, including 5,000 copies of *The 1619 Project* by Nikole Hannah-Jones. Schools in Washington, DC; Nashville, Tennessee; and Minnetonka, Minnesota; received copies—some of them conducting school-wide reads of the important tome. WNDB also gave away nearly 1,500 LGBTQIA+ books in bundles to organizations in Florida to distribute to teens as they worked to combat growing book bans and help children feel seen.

The Black Creatives Fund Programming

WNDB established the Black Creatives Fund to better serve the needs of Black writers, both published and aspiring. During this fiscal year, we organized the second cycle of our Revisions Workshop, a program that helps aspiring Black writers edit their manuscripts and hone them for publication. We also hosted a virtual marketing symposium for published authors seeking to introduce their books to new audiences, and we launched the first year of our mentoring program for Black writers. This mentorship initiative paired seven aspiring writers with seven seasoned authors for a six-month period. In addition, we hosted virtual Q&A sessions with mentees where they were able to interact with publishing professionals.

LitUp with Reese’s Book Club

In partnership with Hello Sunshine and Madcap Retreats, WNDB is excited to coordinate the second application cycle of LitUp, a women’s writer’s fellowship for unpublished, underrepresented voices. Our goal? To identify five exciting writers with promising manuscripts and to provide them with mentorship and professional guidance. The six fellows from Year One of the program have now completed their mentorships with Hello Sunshine authors’ input and are revising their manuscripts before seeking literary representation.
OTHER PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

The Native Writing Intensive

Held annually in Texas, our Native Writing Intensive brings together Native writers from all over the United States and Canada to provide workshops, critiques, and community building across four days. Our 2022 cohort represented 11 Native/First Nation tribes. Our faculty included bestselling author Cynthia Leitich Smith and Heartdrum editor Rosemary Brosnan. Attendee Michelle Cronin said of her experience, “The WNDB Native Writing Intensive was one of the most profound experiences of my life. I am forever grateful to have spent four days surrounded by people who share one heart and one mind.”

Mentorships

Our Mentorships program connects emerging creators with seasoned authors and artists who offer professional guidance and critique over the course of a calendar year. We oversaw 16 mentorships in 2022, bringing our tally to 75 creators served since 2015. This year’s mentees include creators who teach at the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, who illustrate multi-faith and multicultural children’s books, and who have worked extensively in the film/television industry.

WNDB is also proud to share that several of our 2021 mentees have now secured publishing deals, such as TeMika Grooms who illustrated *Put Your Shoes on and Get Ready!* by Senator Raphael G. Warnock. Other successes include mentee Leo Quiles who sold his graphic novel *Home* to Feiwel & Friends and mentee Malia Maunakea who will publish her debut *Lei and the Fire Goddess* with Penguin Random House.

PUT YOUR SHOES ON & GET READY!
The Walter Awards

The Walter Dean Myers Award for Outstanding Children’s Literature, also known as “The Walter,” recognizes excellence in diverse children’s literature by diverse creators. The winners and honorees of the 2022 cycle are:

**Winners**

*Firekeeper’s Daughter* by Angeline Boulley  
(Young Adult)  
*Red, White, and Whole* by Rajani LaRocca  
(Younger Readers)

**Honorees**

*Last Night at the Telegraph Club*  
by Malinda Lo (Young Adult)  
*Revolution In Our Time: The Black Panther Party’s Promise to the People* by Kekla Magoon  
(Young Adult)  
*Borders* by Thomas King and Natasha Donovan (Younger Readers)  
*Root Magic* by Eden Royce (Younger Readers)

For the first time since 2019, we held the Walter Awards in-person at the newly renovated Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library in downtown Washington, DC. We welcomed student attendees from local middle and high schools and, following the event, we will donate copies of our winning books to educators nationwide.
Internship Grants

Initiated in 2014, our Internship Grant program provides grants of $3,000 to diverse publishing interns, supplementing their income as they gain a foothold in the industry. We began this initiative to help diversify the publishing industry from within, since it has historically been led by a majority white, straight, and cis workforce.

In the summer of 2022, WNDB provided grants to 25 interns who worked across children’s and adult divisions of the publishing industry. This cohort secured internships at various houses and agencies, including Hachette Book Group, Simon & Schuster, Levine Querido, and Gally & Zacker Literary Agency. Throughout the summer, we also organized professional development events for the interns as well.

Walter Dean Myers Grants

Our Walter Grants program was established to provide $2,000 grants to promising diverse writers and illustrators who are currently unpublished to help fund the completion of their creative work. This fiscal year, we awarded eight grants total. Recipients included: Noha Abdelaziz, Alex Abraham, H.K.R. Brice, Dulce-Marie Flecha, Fatou Hymes, Veronica Madrigal, Hazel Ureta, and Adriana Lebrón White. Our Walter Grantees were selected for their exceptionally strong writing samples and their beautiful rendering of their communities and identities interwoven into their work.
Emergency Fund for Diverse Creatives

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, WNDB established the Emergency Fund for Diverse Creatives to provide financial assistance to marginalized authors, illustrators, and publishing professionals who have lost income due to the pandemic. In 2022, we expanded this grant to include diverse educators, particularly those experiencing loss of income due to discrimination, anti-CRT, or book ban protests.

Creative Writing Awards with Penguin Random House

In partnership with Penguin Random House, the Creative Writing Awards offers $50,000 in scholarships to public high school seniors across the country. This year, the inaugural Amanda Gorman Award for Poetry was announced. The 2022 winners were:

- **Sagar Gupta**, Amanda Gorman Award for Poetry, Herndon, VA
- **Ife Martin**, Maya Angelou Award for the Spoken Word, West Bloomfield, MI
- **Kayla T. Xu**, Fiction / Drama, San Diego, CA
- **Eva G. Martinez**, Personal Essay, Franklin Square, NY
- **Arianna Steadman**, NYC Entrant, New York, NY

The winners also attended a virtual week of professional development with Penguin Random House, meeting online to receive one-on-one coaching from editors and to learn about the industry.
**Revenue Streams**

- **Foundation and Grants**: $421,500
- **Major Donors ($5,000 and greater)**: $484,894
- **Individual Donors (Below $5,000)**: $311,704
- **Fees for services, royalties* and interest income**: $255,394
- **In-kind donations**: $492,407

Total Revenue: **$1,965,899**

* This number includes anthology advances and royalties.

** Areas of Expenses**

- **Internship/Mentorship Grants & Awards**: $127,760 (includes $75K awards)
- **WNDB in the Classroom**: $353,521
- **Walter Awards**: $113,930
- **Black Creatives Fund**: $125,807
- **Native Fund**: $26,422
- **Other Programming**: $394,186 (includes $117K of awards)**
- **Fundraising**: $137,677****
- **General and Administrative**: $210,609

Total Expenses: **$1,489,912**

** Carry forward of funds to ensure continuing services and to fund programs**: $1,173,413

** Other programming includes Mentorship, Emergency Grants, LitUp Initiative, Educators Making a Difference and Outreach and Promotions.

**** Fundraising includes development and in-kind donations from our board members.
2021-2022 Board
Ellen Oh (CEO and President)
Dhonielle Clayton (COO)
Judy Schricker (CFO)
Zoraida Córdova
Minh Lê
Cornelius Minor
Kaitlyn Sage Patterson

Team Members
Caroline Richmond (Executive Director),
Elissa Petruzzi (Senior Program Manager)
Christine Vallas (Accounts Manager)
Linda Hom (Controller/HR)
JoAnn Yao (Social Media Manager)
Alaina Lavoie (Program Manager)
Breanna McDaniel (Program Manager)
Chelsea Villareal (Program Manager)
Ann Marie Wong (Project Director of LitUp)
Kieron Scullington
(Submissions Assistant of LitUp)
Kandace Coston
(Project Coordinator of Rise Up)

Our Partners

Penguin
Random
House

HarperCollins

Key Volunteers
Meg Cannistra and Miranda Paul (Mentorship)
Terry Hong and Kathie Weinberg
(Walter Awards)
Jennifer Mann and Linda Sue Park
(Internships)
Marietta Zacker (Walter Grants)
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
• Provide diverse books to classrooms and libraries
• Promote diversity in the publishing industry
• Aid diverse creators and educators in need

How can I send my donation to WNDB?
If you wish to give a gift by check, please make it out to We Need Diverse Books and send it to:

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

If you wish to make a donation online, you can contribute via WNDB’s donation website.

If you wish to make a sustaining donation or include WNDB in your Planned Giving, please contact Caroline Richmond at carolinerichmond@diversebooks.org.

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!