

Lit Youngstown 2021 Annual Report



Letter from the Director

The beginning of 2021 seems further away than a year. We were still completely online, and grateful for those connections, and for all we could do. The last days of 2021 still feel like a transition, and that makes it useful to spend a moment looking back.

Winter

Each Sunday until May, the New Book News series welcomed writers of books published during the lock-down (without the usual live events). The readings are archived on our *YouTube* channel. We hosted writing workshops on scene and writing for happiness. First Wednesday Readers Series continued online until July; winter readers included poet David Hassler of the Wick Poetry Center and poet and fiction writer David Swerdlow of Westminster College. James Winter led a lively online Teen Writers Workshop. A new monthly Happy Hour gave members a space for informal conversation. Food for Thought book series by Black authors continued with *The Nickel Boys* by Colson Whitehead and *An American Marriage* by Tayari Jones. We hired NEOMFA intern Cassandra Lawton as our first Outreach Coordinator; she began leading workshops at Akron Children's Hospital, planning research on writing with cancer survivors, and leading a fantasy book discussion. We moved into a larger office at St. John's Episcopal Church.



Outreach Coordinator, Cassandra Lawton

Spring and Summer

First Wednesday readers included Barbara Fant of Columbus, Heather Dobbins of Arkansas and Kellie Kirksey of Youngstown. The 21-members of the Fall Literary Festival planning committee began to assemble the fifth annual conference. We hosted workshops on publishing and on writing villains, and board members Tricia D'Avignon and Tommy Mihalopolous hosted outdoor Summer Mini Writing Camps. We resumed in-person Writers Circle and held our first in-person Happy Hour at V2. In July, we hosted an ekphrastic reading at the YWCA's Women Artists Show featuring Lena Carson, Julie Cancio Harper, Kellie Kirksey, Shari Della Penna and Cassandra Lawton. We staffed a tent at the Summer Festival of the Arts at its new location in Wean Park downtown.



Mini Summer Writing Camp



Couri Johnson Presents for the First
Wednesday Readers Series

Fall

Year-end First Wednesday readers included Michael Credico of Cleveland and Carly Sachs of Lexington, Kentucky. We staffed a table at Silly Science Sunday with a fun writing prompt. The new Food for Thought book discussion took up the idea of the writer (biographies, autobiographies, writer protagonist), and we added a film series. Our Fall Literary Festival took place in person with a few panelists Zooming in. We had nearly 150 attendees, and dozens of talks and readings. This year's featured readers were Teri Ellen Cross Davis (poetry), Matt Forrest Esenwine (children's literature), Mike Geither (playwriting), Bonnie Proudfoot (fiction) and Jan Beatty (memoir). YSU Painting Professor Dragana Crnjak and her students in a special topics class on public art completed the Andrews Ave. Memory Mural, now over 500'. We were honored to serve as fiscal agent and project partner, and to win a Youngstown CityScape Beautification Award for the project.



Teri Ellen Cross Davis reads from *A More
Perfect Union* at Fall Literary Festival



The Andrews Ave. Memory Mural

More Community Engagement

Thanks to our community partner YSU, we benefitted from paid student internships with Chelsea Ellington and Kennedy Romeo. With Thrive Mahoning Valley, we partnered on Dear Mahoning Valley, a storytelling project by recent arrivals to the Valley.

As director, I represented Lit Youngstown as a judge for the Tri-C |re|imaginings project, which this year engaged with Tommy Orange's novel *There, There*. Cassandra gave two talks for the Coalition for Community Writing Conference on research she conducted on community writing groups, and I delivered the keynote for the College English Association of Ohio, "Fluidity Strategies: Collaboration, Flexibility and Cake in Literary Arts Programs." Karen and Cassandra took the Racial Equity and Inclusion Training sponsored by the Wean Foundation, and we rallied at YSU to protest YSU's decision to sunset their participation in the NEOMFA program.

We donated \$100 to the YWCA Women Artists Show and to Black Boys Read, a local initiative. With over \$10,000 in grants from United Way, the Thomases Family Foundation, PNC, the Wean Foundation, Chris and Elliot Legow and other donors, we purchased hundreds of books for children in City schools working with YSU Project Pass tutors; 200 books for K-2nd grade Valley Christian students who received a copy of *Don't Ask a Dinosaur* by Fall Lit Fest feature Matt Forrest Esenwine; and 1520 books for 760 children enrolled in Alta Head Start.

We saw some changes to the board, wishing a fond farewell to Nin Andrews, Reaghan McCann and Joshua Nauman. New members Sarah Davis, Chelsea Ellington, Quincy Flowers, Daniel Gage and Jeffrey Murphy (co-treasurer) join Tricia D'Avignon (Chair), Liz Hill (Co-treasurer), Anthony Manna, Tommy Mihalopoulos, Nicole Robinson and Penny Wells, forming a dedicated and hardworking board.

Looking Forward

And we are looking forward! The 2022 First Wednesday Readers Series is queued up and will feature poetry, fiction and nonfiction writers from the region and beyond. This round of Food For Thought book discussions is meeting at the Michael Kusalaba library on Youngstown's Westside, as our former host, Cultivate Café, permanently closed during the pandemic.

The Fourth Wednesday Happy Hour is meeting in person at venues around the region. Winter Writing Camp will be back in person in February. Poetry Intensives, nine monthly, all-day writing workshops, will begin in January with a cohort of 20 and will feature regional poets as workshop leaders.

The Fall Literary Festival planning is underway for October 20-22 at Youngstown State. Our featured writers will be poet Joy Priest, fiction writer Kelly Fordon, documentary filmmaker Karla Murthy and screenwriter and film scholar Laura Beadling.

We are so grateful to all who worked with us, in many ways.

Write On!
Karen Schubert, Director



Mission

The mission of Lit Youngstown is to provide opportunities for writers and readers to experience and enjoy the literary arts. We support beginning and experienced writers in their goals to hone their craft, and share and publish their work. We believe that the acts of writing and reading serve as both window and mirror: fostering creativity and increasing understanding of the self and our diverse community.

Values



Our values help us achieve our goals.

- We provide a platform for writers to share their work
- We offer access to visiting writers with a wide range of styles and experience
- We pay teaching artists
- We design classes and events to be affordable and inclusive
- We foster a nurturing environment for helpful critical feedback
- We collaborate with other community organizations to extend our reach and build on the work being done here
- We recruit volunteers to engage our members' interest and talents, broaden the face of our organization, and strengthen our connection to individuals

Vision

We envision a society where literacy, reading, literary creativity and ideas are valued and celebrated, promoting empathy, self and cultural awareness, critical analysis, active citizenship, information, and knowledge.



Statement on Convicted Writers & Victims/Survivors of Crimes

As an organization with a focus on giving voice to and reflecting on the shared and individual experiences of those within our community, Lit Youngstown acknowledges and embraces those on divergent paths. We believe in restorative justice and welcome incarcerated members of the community and those reentering society. We also recognize the pain of victims and survivors and will continue to work toward providing a safe and brave space with the intention of preventing further harm.

Environmental Impact Statement

Lit Youngstown is dedicated to reducing our carbon footprint. To that end, we

- look for products such as paper with a high post-consumer waste content
- reuse materials such as signs and dishes rather than purchasing single-use products
- continue to hold some meetings and programs remotely
- hosted a year-long discussion on humankind and the natural world that included books on climate change and biodiversity
- offer vegetarian options at dinners
- purchased a white oak for our office host, St. John's Episcopal Church

We also strive to have a positive economic impact on our community by supporting local businesses.



Lit Youngstown
Statement of Financial Position Summary
As of December 31, 2021

ASSETS	
Bank Accounts	\$13,104
Total Current Assets	<u>\$13,104</u>
LIABILITIES	
Restricted Funds	\$0
Total Liabilities	<u>\$0</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$13,104
NET ASSETS	\$13,104

Statement of Activity

January - December 2021

Support and Revenue

Contract Income	5,347	
Foundation Grants	41,935	
Government Grants	4,086	
Religious Grants	505	
Corporate Grants	3,000	
Individual Contributions	14,775	
Sales/ Donations for Products	3,109	
Workshop and Program Fees	10,435	
Total support and Revenue		\$83,192

Expenditures

Administrative	6,680	
Contract services	1,860	
Programs	29,338	
Special Project	4,089	
Fundraising	1,598	
Staff Wages and Stipends	19,116	
Honoraria and Stipends	15,531	
Reimbursed Author Sales	2,308	
Intern Stipends	2,000	
Payroll Taxes	2,884	
Total Expenses		\$85,404

Change in Net Assets	-2,212
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Net Assets Beginning of 2021 15,315

Net Revenue End of 2021	13,103
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With Gratitude

Thank you to all those who worked to bring the light to Lit Youngstown in 2021.

Current Board of Directors: Tricia D'Avignon (Chair), Sarah Davis, Chelsea Ellington, Quincy Flowers, Daniel Gage, Liz Hill (Co-founder, Co-treasurer), Anthony Manna, Tommy Mihalopoulos, Jeffrey Murphy (Co-treasurer), Nicole Robinson and Penny Wells

Outgoing Members of the Board of Directors: Nin Andrews, Reaghan McCann and Joshua Nauman

Staff: Director Karen Schubert, Outreach Coordinator: Cassandra Lawton, Bookkeeper Heather Best

Workshop, Summer Writing Camp and Fall Literary Festival Faculty: Kelly Bancroft, Sandra Beasley, Jan Beatty, Nolan Boyd, Marion Starling Boyer, Nickole Brown, Wendy Brown-Baez, John Bullock, Da'Jon Carouthers, Robert Case, Keith Castillo, James Charlesworth, Narisa Chowdury, Teri Ellen Cross Davis, Meredith Doench, Sean Thomas Dougherty, Damian Dressick, Christopher Dum, Iris Jamahl Dunkle, Anne Elliott, Betina Entzminger, Nikki Ericksen, Matt Forrest Esenwine, Olivia Farina, Kelly K. Ferguson, Matthew Ferrance, Christina Fisanick, Mike Geither, Carrie George, Eliese Colette Goldbach, Pam Goldman, Gwen Goodkin, Pauletta Hansel, David Hassler, Hayley Mitchell Haugen, Amanda R. Howland, Angela Jackson-Brown, Jessica Jacobs, Emily Jalloul, Arya F. Jenkins, Jessica Jones, Annmarie Kelly-Harbaugh, Diane Kendig, Jason Kohler, Hyejung Kook, Cassandra Lawton, Margo Orlando Litell, Marjorie Maddox, Chloe Martinez, Luke McDermott, Matthew McKeague, Freesia McKee, Tommy Mihalopolous, Barbara Marie Minney, Julie L. Moore, Amanda Page, MoPoetry Phillips, Hilary Plum, Amber Ree Robinson, Jeanine Rees, McKayla Anne Rockwell, Barbara Sabol, Kayla Sargeson, Zach Savich, Lynne Schmidt, Karen Schubert, Molly Spencer, Dawson Steeber, Jennifer Sperry Steinorth, Nathaniel Stokes, Jimmy Sutman, Michelle Tarka, Tess Taylor, Zachary Thomas, Lizzie Tran, Michael VanCalburgh, Sara Moore Wagner, Candace Welsh, Batya Weinbaum, Jerry Wemple, John Gavin White, Laurin Wolf

YSU Student Interns: Chelsea Ellington, Kennedy Romeo

First Wednesday Series Readers and Co-hosts:

- Jan. 6 Lee Chilcote (Cleveland) and David Hassler (Kent) co-host Christopher Minton
- Feb. 3 Darlene Montonaro (Cleveland) and David Swerdlow (New Wilmington) co-host Iris Davis Hall
- March 3 Adam Hughes (Virginia) and Renay Sanders (Cleveland) co-host Jonie McIntire
- April 7 Laura Grace Weldon (Litchfield) and Grace Curtis (Dayton) co-host Barbara Sabol
- May 5 Cris Harris (NE Ohio) Kellie Kirksey (Youngstown) co-host Johanna Slivinske
- June 2 Heather Dobbins (Arkansas) and Barbara Fant (Columbus) co-host Jana Russ
- July 7 Rose Humber Howse (Pittsburgh) and Jason Baldinger (Pittsburgh) co-host Chris Barzak
- August 4 Nick Gardner (Mansfield) and Couri Johnson (Louisiana) co-host Adrien Lucas
- September 1 Michael Credico (Cleveland) and Nicole Burdge (Akron) co-host Brian Hill
- November 3 Carly Sachs (Lexington) and Eliese Goldbach (Cleveland) co-host Laurin Wolf

- December 1 Andrew Rihn (Canton) and RC Wilson (Kent) co-host Gayle Catinella

New Book News Readers:

- January 10: Tina Kelley, Stephanie Strickland & Alice Friman
- January 17: Larry Smith, Ann Keniston & Diane Wald
- January 24: Cynthia Bosley, Indran Amirthanayagam & Page Hill Starzager
- January 31: Kim Roberts, Philip Metres & Kevin Carey
- February 7: Cynthia Atkins, Gustavo Hernandez & Darren Demaree
- February 21: Kelli Russell Agodon, Jennifer Jean & Erica Bodwell
- February 28: Andrew Welsh-Huggins, Kristen Lepionka, Yolonda Tonette Sanders
- March 14: Fred Shaw, Frannie Lindsay, Kerry Trautman
- March 21: Barbara Marie Minney & Steve Brightman
- April 11: Nicole Santalucia, Teri Ellen Cross Davis, Shara McCallum
- April 18: Cassandra Atherton, Peter Johnson
- April 25: Meg Kearney, Quinto Collins, Chloe Martinez
- May 2: Laura Van Pooyen, Genevieve Kaplan, Jennifer Sperry Steinorth

Program Partners & Hosts: Public Library of Youngstown & Mahoning County, St. John's Episcopal Church, Westside Bowl, WYSU, Youngstown CityScape, YSU Art Department

Volunteers: Pam Anderson, Rebecca Banks, Cherise Benton, Barbara Brothers, Daphne Carr, Angelina Connelly, Emma Dang, Chelsea Ellington, Nathan Ferguson, Rosemary Fuller, Daniel Gage, Hannah Gordon, Shirley Hill, Hannah Labonte, Adrianna Lamonge, Karen Lapidus, Marjorie Maddox, Jonie McIntire, Madison Nofl, Jordan Pintar, Maureen Reardon, Rebecca Moon Ruark, Kaya Russell, Rikki Santer, Bella Spencer, Kayla Stockton, Madison Umbrel, Olivia Wickham, Madison Wrigley, Elena Zandier, Christine Zheng

Financial Support

Patrons and Foundation funders (\$500 or more): Pamela Anderson & Al Bartholet, Nathalie & James Andrews Foundation, Nin Andrews, Karen Brody, Barbara Brothers, The Centofanti Foundation; Chris & Elliot Legow, NEOMFA, Ohio Arts Council, Lowell & Ellen Satre, PNC Foundation, Raymond J. Wean Foundation, St. John's Episcopal Church, Thomases Family Foundation, United Way of the Mahoning Valley, Suzanne Winick, WYSU, Youngstown Foundation

Donors: Susan Alexander, Debra Allen, Rebecca Banks, Mari Barnes, Elizabeth Bartz, Sandra Beasley, Nancy Beeghly, B&J Perfumes, Suzanne Bobosky, Marion Starling Boyer, James Charlesworth, Marie Davidson, Sean Thomas Dougherty, Donna Dzurilla, Fireline, Dana FitzGerald, Diane & Tim Fitzpatrick, Barbara George, Chris Gibowicz, Pam Goldman, Great Garage Doors, Erin Gyomber, Julianna Cancio Harper, Mitchell James, Michael Khandelwal, Elizabeth Kauffman, Kellie Kirksey, Nancy Koerbel, Karen Lapidus, Anthony Manna, Reaghan McCann, Jonie McIntire, Barbara Marie Minney, Darlene Montonaro, Carol Morris, Craig Paulenich & Karla Krodel, Ellen Perduyn, Maureen Reardon, Jean Romeo, Lisa Rosenthal, Rebecca Moon Ruark, Barbara Sabol, Renae Sanders, Larry & Sally Sears, Lydia Seaton, Sojourn to the Past,

Unitarian Universalist Church of Youngstown, Karen Weyant, Writers Conference of Northern Appalachia

