

2019-20 ANNUAL REPORT

THE PEN/FAULKNER FOUNDATION



Friends of PEN/Faulkner,

PEN/Faulkner's 40th Anniversary year began with a burst of excitement and activity. Right out of the gate, demand for our education programs was at an all-time high. We started approaching our goals for the entire 2019-20 year as early as February. Our Nuestras Voces initiative was on course to serve a greater number of Latinx- and Hispanic-identified students and English Language Learners than ever, and our first few Literary Conversations were rich, engaging, and well-attended. The PEN/Malamud Award ceremony in December, honoring John Edgar Wideman, was a lovely and meaningful event.

Then, of course, the pandemic arrived. Within weeks, out of an abundance of caution, we postponed our remaining Literary Conversations, one of which had almost sold out, and turned our 40th Anniversary PEN/Faulkner Award Ceremony into a video tribute to our distinguished books and authors. The DC school system went virtual, and our education programs went virtual with them.

By the end of this year, however, PEN/Faulkner had already started to pivot. We began offering virtual versions of our Writers in Schools visits and Summer Writing Programs, reaching students with remote learning opportunities, and planning for full-scale virtual versions of those programs. We laid the groundwork for our Literary Conversations, which took a brief hiatus, to resume virtually this fall. In an uncertain financial and social environment, we have continued to serve our audiences and make our work accessible to as many people as possible.

We remain undeterred, and we will persevere!

Yours,

Gwydion Suilebhan, *Executive Director*



Our Mission

The PEN/Faulkner Foundation celebrates literature and fosters connections between readers and writers to enrich and inspire both individuals and communities.

Our Values



We are dedicated to the notion that our culture thrives when stories from a diverse variety of perspectives enrich our daily lives and when no voices are excluded from our conversations.

We believe the written word plays an essential role in contributing to civil discourse and in creating empathy within and among communities.

Fiction Awards



We honor contemporary American writers with the PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction, the most significant peer-juried literary prize in the United States, and the PEN/Malamud Award for Excellence in the Short Story.

Literary Conversations



We bring authors from around the country to locations throughout the DC area so that their work can provoke rich, civil public discourse about matters of urgent importance to our community.

Education Programs



We connect DC students in grades 3-12 with free books, author visits, and professional writing instruction—in both English and Spanish, thanks to our Nuestras Voces initiative—to inspire the next generation of readers and writers.

Writers in Schools

Free books and author visits

Summer Writing Programs

Out-of-school-time writing instruction

Essay Writing Workshops

In-school writing instruction

Together We Read

Multi-school author visits and literature discussions

2019-20 Highlights

This year's PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction went to ***Sea Monsters* by Chloe Aridjis**.

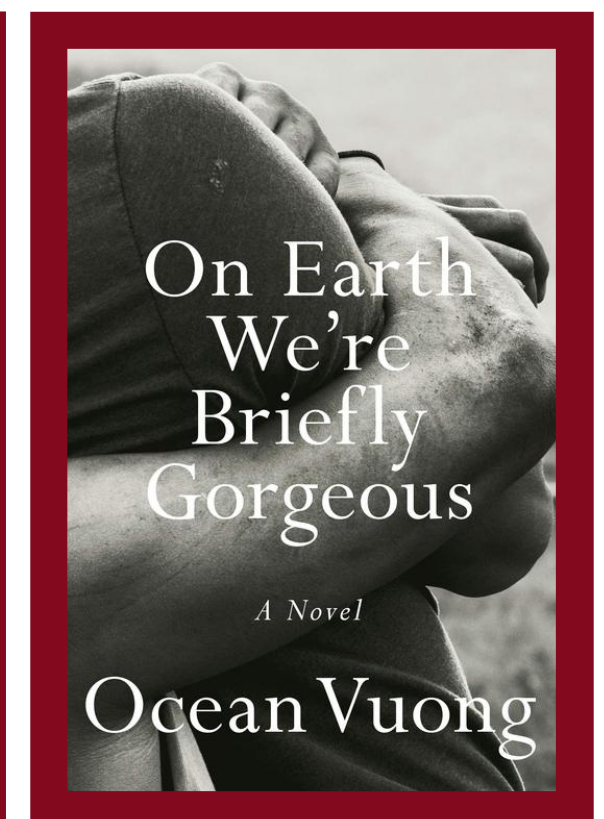
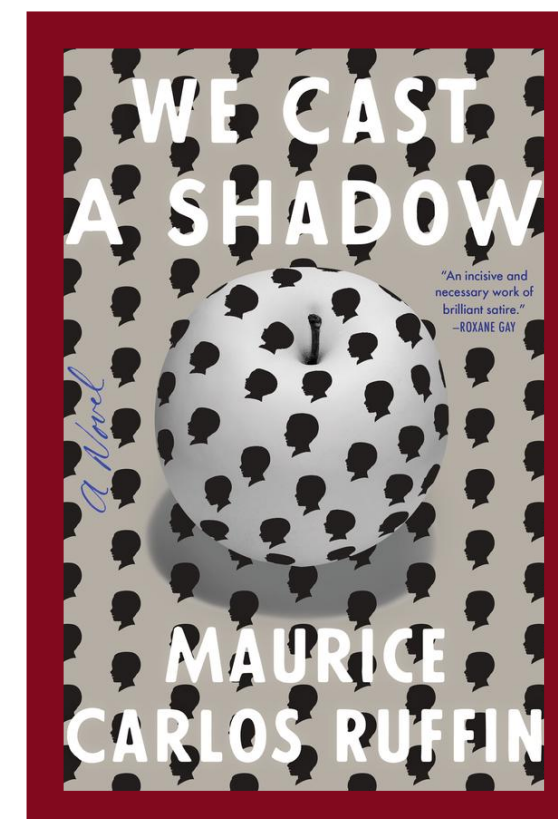
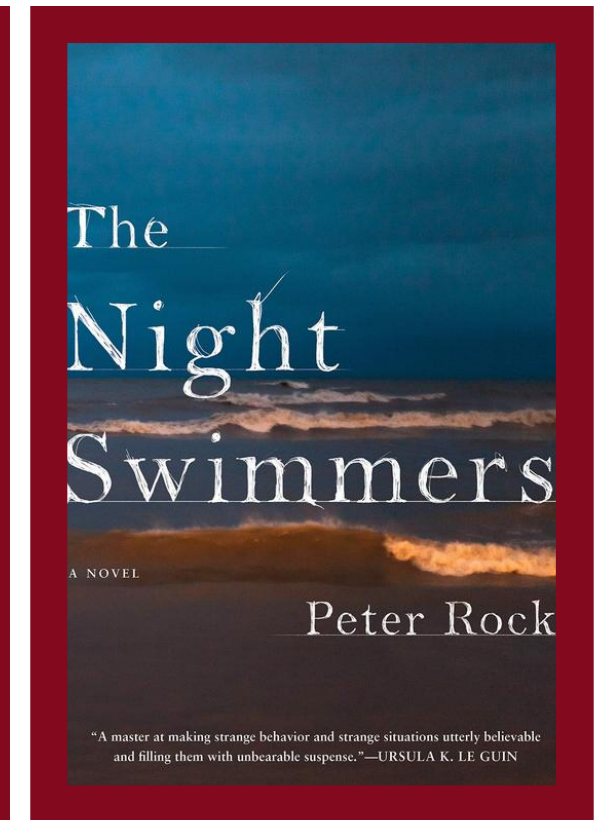
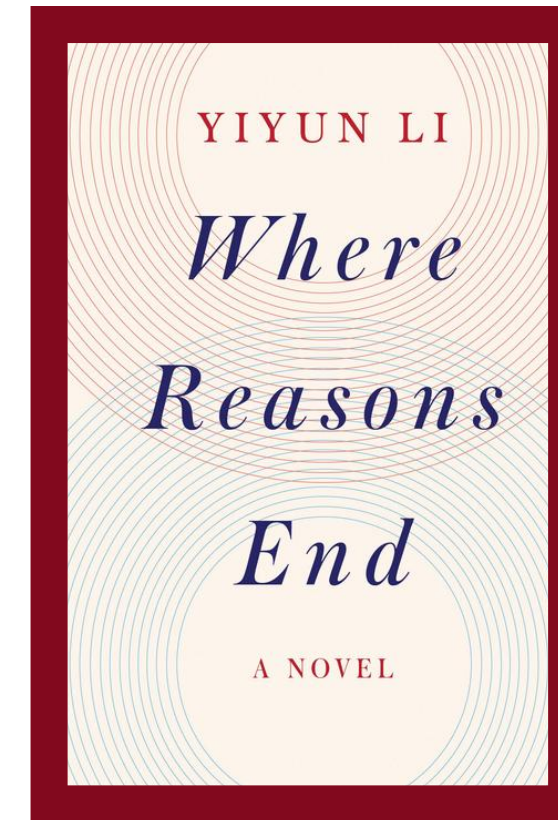
In the words of our judges:

Set against spectacular Oaxacan landscapes and full of surrealist possibilities, *Sea Monsters* is a stunning exploration of the ways its brilliant teenage narrator's interior and exterior worlds are both fluid and in opposition. This dreamlike near-fable of equal parts philosophical and intellectual vigor is a book unlike any other; a true standout and a gift for these times in which we are all craving escape.



Our 2020 PEN/Faulkner Award finalists also included *Where Reasons End* by Yiyun Li; *The Night Swimmers* by Peter Rock; *We Cast a Shadow* by Maurice Carlos Ruffin; and *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* by Ocean Vuong.

This year, in celebration of our 40th anniversary, and in recognition of the need to shine a light on the full depth of American fiction, PEN/Faulkner introduced its first longlist, which also included *Patsy* by Nicole Dennis-Benn, *Sing to It* by Amy Hempel, *The Topeka School* by Ben Lerner, *A People's History of Heaven* by Mathangi Subramanian, and *The Bird King* by G. Willow Wilson.



The PEN/Malamud Award went to **Lydia Davis**. In the words of the Malamud Award Committee:

Wildly inventive, fiercely observant, a master of concision, **Lydia Davis** is arguably one of the most creative, funny, playful, cranky, and joyful short story writers at work today. She can craft a satisfying arc from a one-sentence missive about geography, or from a letter of complaint to a candy manufacturer, while also mastering more traditional narrative forms... It's tempting to say that Davis subverts form, but what she really does is teach us that the meaning of the word 'story,' itself, is endlessly elastic.





The True Reformer Building
The Jack Morton Auditorium at
George Washington University

The DC Public Library
American University's Katzen
Arts Center

The University Club
Penn Social

Our Literary Conversations, Awards
celebrations, and other literary
events reached **500 audience
members** at venues throughout DC.

Due to COVID-19, we were
unable to hold planned events
at the National Museum of
Women in the Arts and the
Miracle Theatre.



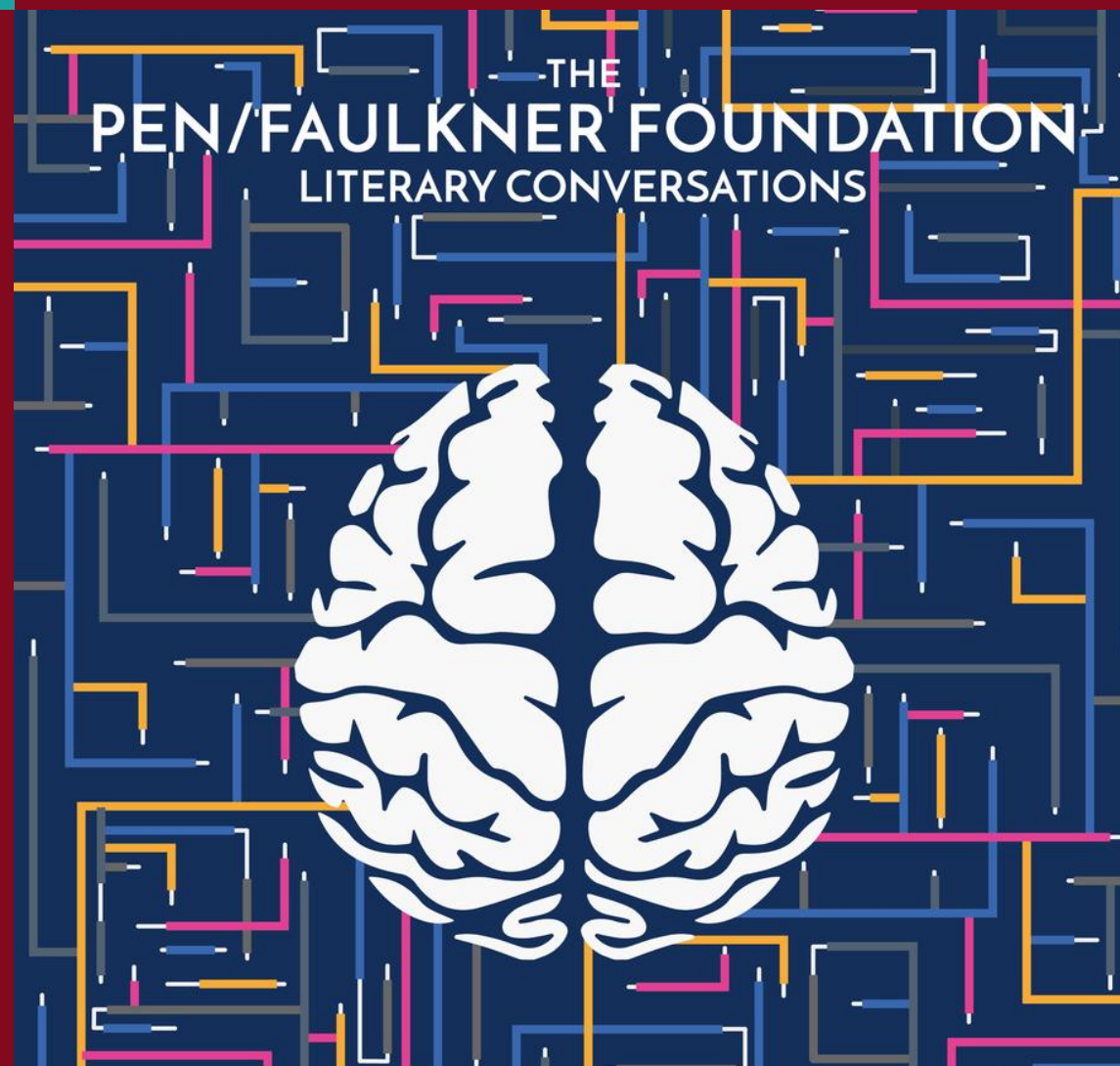
THE
PEN/FAULKNER FOUNDATION
LITERARY CONVERSATIONS

Unincarcerated

Writing in response to the need for systemic reform of the prison industrial complex. In partnership with *Impact/Justice*.

Wired

Literature of, by, and about neurodiversity and neurodiverse people. In partnership with the *GW Colonial Health System*.



This year's Literary Conversations and other literary programs:

Words & Pictures – The role of graphic novels in 21st century literature.

Banned Books Week – Banned books in DC. In partnership with the *DC Public Library Foundation*.

The PEN/Malamud Award Ceremony – This year's winner, John Edgar Wideman, in conversation with Lisa Page.

The authors and artists who joined us for our public literary programs included:

Chloe Aridjis · Reginald Dwayne Betts · Patricia Engel · Isaac Fitzgerald · Ebony Flowers · Ru Freeman · Nell Freudenberger · DaMaris B. Hill · Porochista Khakpour · Matthew Klam · Tony Lewis, Jr. · Yiyun Li · Scott McCloud · Alice McDermott · Zach McDermott · Edgardo Miranda-Rodriguez · Azareen Van der Vliet Oloomi · Francine Prose · Peter Rock · José Rodriguez · Luis Rodriguez · Maurice Carlos Ruffin · Rachel Louise Snyder · Nafissa Thompson-Spires · Esmé Weijun Wang · John Edgar Wideman · Ocean Vuong · Gene Luen Yang

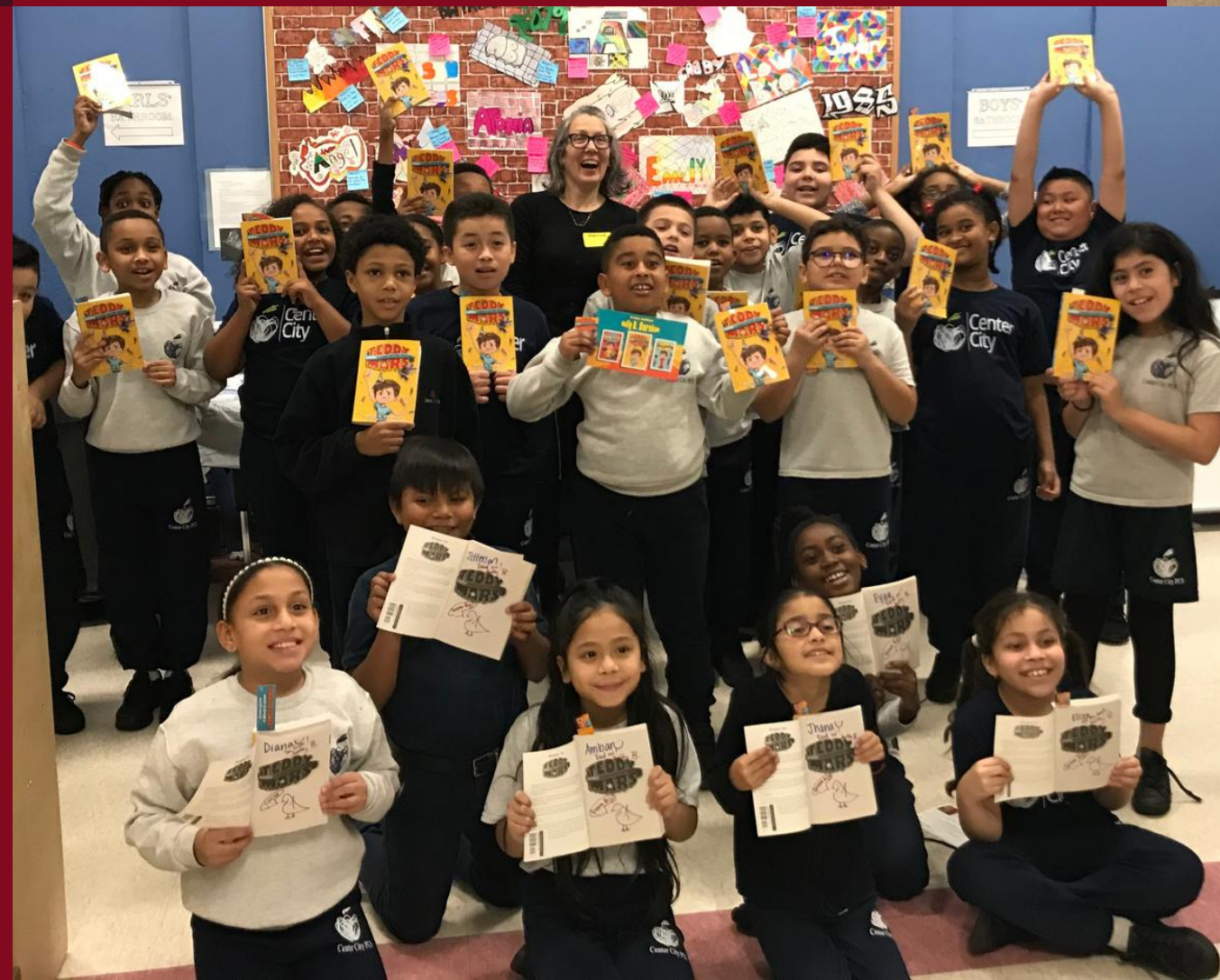




**Our Education Programs
served 279 classrooms in
grades 3-12 (and eight
adult education
settings):**



- **113 high school**
- **103 middle school**
- **63 elementary**



■ High
■ Middle
■ Elementary



Of our 287 program sessions:

- **63%** were Writers in Schools visits
- **26%** were Summer Writing Program sessions
- **7%** were Essay Writing Workshops
- **4%** were Together We Read gatherings

25% of our sessions were part of our Nuestras Voces initiative.

- 4,830 books donated
- 4,437 students served
- 47 schools and community partners
- 65 educator partners
- 65 visiting authors

**Our Education
Programs
achieved the
following
totals:**

**Our Education Programs
served 89.3% Title I
students in all eight
wards of DC:**

- Ward 1 – 12.8%
- Ward 2 – 6.4%
- Ward 3 – 4.3%
- Ward 4 – 27.7%
- Ward 5 – 14.9%
- Ward 6 – 6.4%
- Ward 7 – 17%
- Ward 8 – 10.6%

Selected authors who participated in Writers in Schools, our Essay Writing Workshops, Together We Read, and our Summer Writing Programs:

Alan King · Amy Sawyer · Arianna Skibell · Atia Abawi · Carmen Rodrigues ·
Caroline Bock · Carolivia Herron · Cedric Tillman · Cristin Terrill · D. Watkins ·
DaMaris B. Hill · David Baldwin · David Nicholson · Derrick Weston Brown ·
Dolen Perkins-Valdez · Edgardo Miranda-Rodriguez · Elizabeth Acevedo ·
Emma Otheguy · Erin Tegan · Gareth Hinds · Gordon James · Innosant Nagara ·
Jaqueline Jules · Jahzara the Savvy Diva · Jason Reynolds · Jessica Anya Blau ·
Kellie Watkins · Kelsi Bracmort · Kenechi Uzor · Kondwani Fidel · L.Y. Marlow ·
Laini Mataka · Leah Henderson · Lisa Page · Luis Rodriguez · Marc Taylor
Nobleman · Mariama Lockington · Mark Oshiro · Mary Amato · Meg Medina ·
Melissa Wade · Mensah Demary · Milagros Terán · Molly Burnham · Naomi Ayala ·
Natalie Hopkinson · Nell Freudenberger · Nic Stone · Nicole Chung · Nikki
Grimes · NoNieqa Ramos · Patricia Valdez · Reginald Dwayne Betts · Rex Ogle ·
Robin Talley · Tiffany Jackson · Tony Lewis, Jr. · Tracey Baptiste · Winifred
Conkling · Yolanda Young



FINANCIALS

With the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic during Q3 of the fiscal year, which necessitated several programming cuts, we began making prudent, forward-looking financial decisions designed to conserve financial resources for an uncertain FY21. As a result, our balance sheet for the current fiscal year reflects our desire to keep serving our constituents, moving forward, in as robust a way as we historically have.

Individual: 36%
Government: 16%
Foundation: 15%
Board: 13%
Corporate: 3%
Earned Income: 5%
In-Kind/Other: 11%

\$841,957
TOTAL INCOME

\$796,053
TOTAL EXPENSES

Education Programs: 33%
Awards: 15%
Literary Programs: 8%
Administrative: 24%
Fundraising: 20%

THANK YOU!

We are grateful for the support of the following organizations, without which our work would not be possible.



FOUNDATIONS

The Capitol Hill Community Foundation
The Diana Davis Spencer Foundation
The Greater Washington Community Foundation
The Hattie M. Strong Foundation
The Nora Roberts Foundation
The Scottish Rite Foundation
The Share Fund
The Whitehead Foundation

CORPORATIONS

BP America
Disney Worldwide
Graywolf Press
Politics & Prose
Relegation Books

GOVERNMENT

The DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities
The Library of Congress
The Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs
The National Endowment for the Arts

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTERS

Contributors to PEN/Faulkner are the lifeblood of our organization, and we are delighted to recognize the invaluable part they play in our success.

This list includes donors who contributed between 7/1/19 and 6/30/20.

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SUILEBHAN**

Executive Director



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Writers in Schools Director



**SHAHENDA
HELMY**

Programs and Logistics Director

**ADRIANA
THORNTON**

Nuestras Voces Associate



**AMANDA
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*Media and Communications
Associate*

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“For the past seven years, I have been privileged to provide my students not only with books that they can annotate and keep, but also with unforgettable conversations with living authors.”

—Clare Berke, *English Teacher and Department Chair*



“I feel deeply honored, grateful, and overwhelmed to receive this news, which arrives at a moment of strange, unfamiliar isolation from the outside world.”

—Chloe Aridjis, author of *Sea Monsters*