


Writing Through



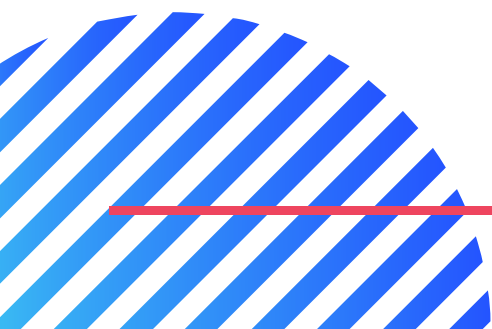
Annual Report

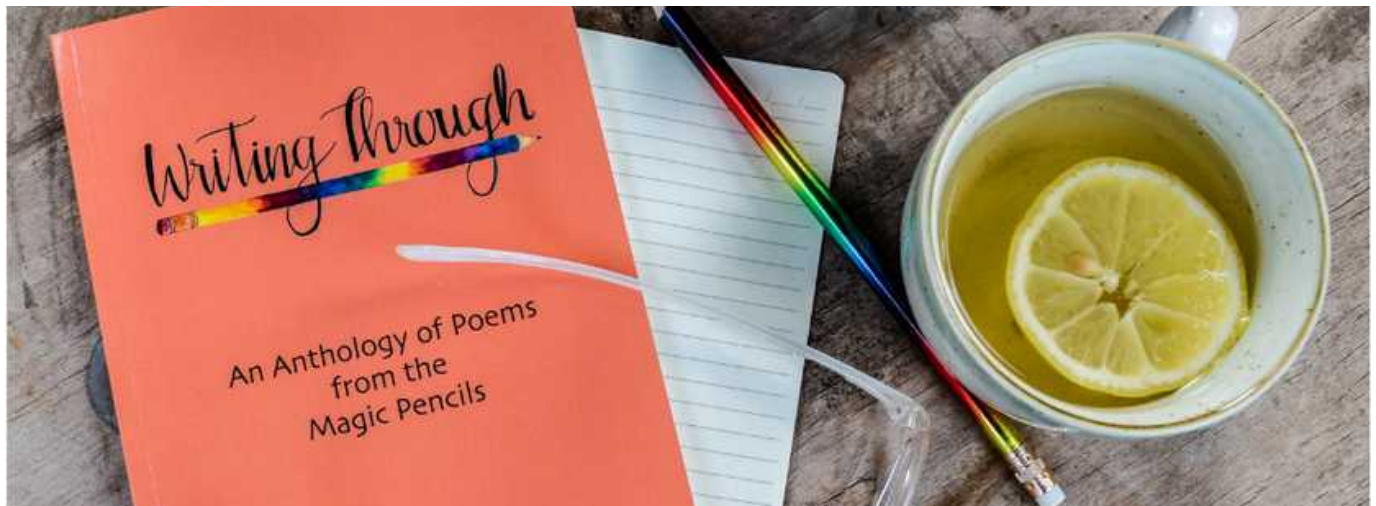
2021



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Executive Summary

Writing Through is an international educational U.S.-registered nonprofit which uses creative writing as a tool to develop thinking skills, language fluency, and self-esteem. Writing Through is non-sectarian and operates in all communities that can benefit from our work, creating spaces which aim to amplify every voice.

Although we are a small non-profit, over six years we have created a program and proven that it works across the globe, positively affecting change in its recipients and the people who deliver it. Via workshops efficiently run over a series of ninety-minute sessions, we aim to unlock and amplify suppressed voices wherever they may be, one poem, one story at a time.

Writing Through was founded by the novelist, poet and educator, Sue Guiney, in response to her experiences visiting Cambodia. There she found a people full of determination, joy, and hunger – not only for food, but also for education. The more she learned about the inadequacies of its educational system, the more she realized that writing workshops, which she had already begun to lead in the UK and Ireland, could well be adapted to the Cambodians. Although they themselves focused on the need for English language skills as a way out of poverty, Sue understood that they had also lacked the opportunity to develop their creative and critical thinking skills - skills which are needed just as much, if not more, in today's world.

This is what makes **Writing Through** unique. It has developed a series of workshops which promotes creative writing not only for its own sake, but as a way to unlock the thinking skills and creativity too long lying fallow. By working with local teachers, when necessary, it can work its magic with non-native English speakers, as well as native speakers. We meet our students wherever they are in their English ability. The point is not the language, although language development is one important byproduct. The goal is to allow the creative use of language to unlock new ways of thinking, viewing the world, and navigating one's way through it. This unique blend of skills training provided within an efficient atmosphere of fun and openness caused other NGOs and non-profits to request Sue's Cambodian workshop. This demand organically brought about the creation of **Writing Through** itself in 2015.

The Cambodian origin of the organization led to a unique model for finding its audience. Rather than trying to explain what **Writing Through** does to individuals who not only lack a sophisticated education, but often the basic necessities of life, **Writing Through** aims its outreach towards the organizations already helping those people. Throughout Cambodia, for example, private non-profits have provided the services the government does not provide since the fall of the Khmer Rouge in 1979. This includes a full education. In this way, Writing Through was able to reach workshop participants, of all ages including adults, and partner with a variety of already existing organizations. Our Partner organizations provide the students. We provide a specialized, unmet aspect of the education and training of those students. To date, we partner with nearly thirty organizations worldwide.



Although it began in Cambodia, it became clear that the skills **Writing Through** teaches are needed much beyond Cambodia itself. It expanded into Singapore in 2017 and then, soon after, into Vietnam. With each passing month, though, organizations from as far away as Nepal, India, Greece, the U.K. and the U.S. were asking for our help. The specialized **Writing Through** programming was clearly filling an educational gap around the globe.

As we continued to grow in SE Asia, we began to investigate how we might extend our reach. Surprisingly, the Covid-19 pandemic provided the answer. **Writing Through** adapted to an online service delivery model that has allowed it to begin delivering workshops remotely. Several of our most recent workshops were held online, one in California, and others with participants coming together at one time from around the world. We are now able to offer our workshops either in person or online, allowing us to expand without geographical constraints. In this way, between 2021 and 2026, **Writing Through** aims to expand its reach throughout a greater portion of the U.S., and then to wherever the demand for our programming exists.

Our expansion will be accomplished by creating Chapters within local communities. Our first Chapter is presently being established in New England and this will serve as a model in the future for how to achieve scale globally. Once again, and as always, we find these organizations, schools, community centers by word of mouth, or via our growing network of active local volunteers. No organization can be everywhere at once. But by partnering with existing community-based support groups, **Writing Through** has become both global and local at the same time.



In 2021, The Writing Through staff continued to use the creativity it teaches to solidify the new ways of reaching our students which we began at the start of the pandemic. Our newest improvement to our workshops is the addition of journal writing as one of our methodologies. This additional use of our techniques has already proven to be helpful to our workshop participants, as well as appreciated by them. The inclusion of journal writing is an example of how our programming grows organically, responding both to the needs of our students and the sensitivity of our facilitators. The continuing health and economic challenges of 2021 have worried and shocked us all. But throughout this second difficult pandemic year, Writing Through stayed true to its mission statement. We are more committed than ever to our goals, and more certain that the world needs the skills we teach.





Letter from the Founder

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As I began to write this annual letter, I first reread all that I had written at this time last year. It was a humbling experience. In many ways, the world we live in today is even more troubled than before. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to ravage our world as its mutations continue to devastate not only our health, but many of our economies and political systems. Just as the virus itself has evolved, all of us have had to evolve, to change lest we stumble.

Like everyone else, we at Writing Through had to think long and hard about our own viability, whether we were still needed in this new world of ours, and if so, how we would continue. The addition of my own personal health difficulties meant that 2021 was an even greater challenge to our organization. But in true Writing Through fashion, we brainstormed and discussed what would be the best use of our available resources, and it immediately became clear that we now needed a statement of our purpose, and a roadmap for our way forward. While we continued to run as many workshops around the globe as the pandemic allowed, I spent a great deal of time working with devoted volunteers to write a Business Plan which includes detailed reflections on who we were, who we are now, and who we aim to be. This effort would not have been nearly as successful if it wasn't for the hours of volunteer time provided by a key new partner, Harvard ClassAct, a non-profit initiative of the Harvard College class of 1978. I am personally grateful for their support of Writing Through and their commitment to helping us grow into a sustainable and mature organization.



The more we worked on this plan, the stronger grew the belief that our mission is needed more than ever. Surrounded by sickness and misinformation, we all need the skills to examine, observe, understand and creatively grapple with our new world. We are even more committed to the belief that artistic expression is the direct link to developing those skills. How do we develop the thinking skills so crucial to living in today's world? We develop them in ourselves and others through techniques that unlock the creative use of language. We develop them one poem, one story at a time.

In this, our sixth Annual Report, we will outline how we have continued to solidify our work while also meeting the unexpected demands of 2021. We have allowed our workshops to evolve as they reach new people while also responding to the needs of our already established relationships.

As we enter our seventh year, we can look forward to growing as an organization, and as a positive force within global education. But we never could have come this far or weathered the storms of 2021 without the interest and support of our friends. Thank you for joining Writing Through in the belief that developed thinking skills, increased self-esteem and improved literacy are among the most powerful weapons we have to combat the risks so many of us face in our world.

Ever onward,

Sue

Sue Guiney, Founder and Executive Director, Writing Through

What We Accomplished in 2021

During 2021 Writing Through conducted 11 separate workshops across Cambodia, Singapore, and the United States. These workshops were run by five different Facilitators (some facilitating multiple workshops), six shadows assisted; they were held for six different partner organizations. We also held 2 free online workshops on World Mental Health Day and one community workshop in Siem Reap open to the public. In 2021, we added two new partner organizations. In Cambodia, we held a workshop at Banteay Srey High School as part of the HOWL Writer's Festival. We hope this will mark the beginning of working with more local secondary schools. Sue was also invited to Martha's Vineyard Charter School as an Artist in Residence. She worked with a small class of Eighth Grade students and used the opportunity to help them process effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and teach them about the history of Cambodia.



11 in 3

11 WORKSHOPS IN 3 COUNTRIES

94

STUDENTS

128

POEMS STORIES AND JOURNAL
ENTRIES WRITTEN

63

FULLY TRAINED FACILITATORS

2

NEW PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS



Business Plan

While much of the world remained shut down, we used the time to create a much-needed Business Plan. Throughout the year, Sue met with a group of dedicated volunteers to hone our message, focus our vision, and map our strategy for the next five years. This often difficult, though always rewarding, effort is a sign that the organization has indeed moved out of its infancy and into a more mature phase. As a group, we examined our assumptions and rededicated our programs to the needs of our present world, while also allowing ourselves to set ambitious goals for our future. This effort would not have been so successful if it wasn't for the hours of volunteer work provided by Harvard ClassAct and its members from the Harvard College class of 1978. The expertise they provided has propelled us into a new phase.

The Business Plan is a document aimed at a variety of audiences. It will be a crucial tool for our own internal use. It clarifies who we are and where we are going for potential funders. It explains our programs and methodology for new and existing Partners and volunteers worldwide. The document includes an Executive Summary, plus six Appendices giving additional detail on our Strategy for Growth, Impact, Current Financial Statements, Organizational Structure, Timeline, and Supporting Research.

To read the document in its entirety, please [click here](#).

The Chapter Model

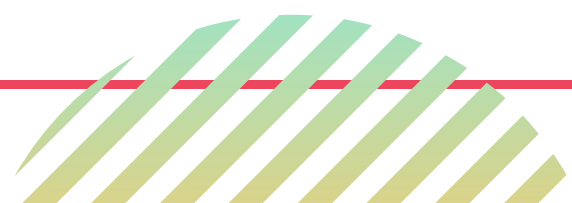
The process involved in creating our new Business Plan led to the decision that our expansion into the United States and beyond will be best supported by a Chapter Model. A Writing Through “chapter” is a regionally defined area in which Writing Through has several organizations with whom we can work. Each chapter provides a target for localized funding. Chapters will be started in areas where our volunteers can work either in-person or online, and where they can generate connections. Writing Through has previously named long-term sustainability as an organizational goal. We have also emphasized the importance of community as the cornerstone of our organization. The chapter model is a community-based approach to expansion and will be consistent with Writing Through’s values and commitment to creating sustainable impact.

The purpose of the chapter model is:

- To allow for more effective community-based outreach and networking
- To fully utilize Writing Through’s large volunteer network
- To improve scalability as Writing Through continues to grow its international presence
- To increase Writing Through’s eligibility for localized funding

This model is especially developed with our U.S. expansion in mind. A chapter can be started anywhere Writing Through has a group of volunteers interested in connecting us with potential partners and funders and can provide hands on the ground to help. This model divides the U.S. into bite-size chunks and gives access to the real need in particular areas. It will also allow interested volunteers to become more involved in Writing Through by creating an opportunity for them to bring Writing Through programming to their own communities.

Our first foray into the Chapter Model was in Connecticut. Much of 2021 was spent setting the groundwork for bringing our programming into that state while at the same time developing the essential concept of the chapter model. During the first part of the year, we were able to discover the areas of greatest need, find potential local communities to work with, and begin the process of targeting local funding. By the end of the year, we decided that for this first chapter, and especially because of the continuing pandemic, it would be better to cast a wider net. By December, we had shifted our goals to the entire New England region and hired a New England Coordinator. As the new year begins, we look forward to a year of solidifying our presence and joining with some of the new potential partners we have discovered throughout the region.



Journal Writing

In the summer of 2020, we offered free, online taster workshops as a way to stay connected and to offer our program to our community while many were in isolation. Through these, we developed, tested and improved a new Journal Writing segment. There are many benefits to keeping journals and in our session we discuss why people write journals, the benefits, and how we can create routines to help us work through events in our lives. We also chose to use a group writing format, so while we choose a shared experience, it highlights how everyone interprets it in their own way. This can highlight how similar and unique our circumstances can be. We were able to introduce it into our full curriculum at Anjali House in January. It was a wonderful success and we were thrilled with the introspection the students were able to share. We have since used it in a number of our online workshops and are excited to continue rolling it out to our partners.

Facilitator Training Session

Our facilitators are truly the backbone of Writing Through. With so many of our workshops in 2020 and 2021 being postponed or canceled, we wanted to make sure that we keep our volunteers engaged. With our new Facilitator Guides, programs and online format, we decided to have online Facilitator Training Sessions to keep everyone up to speed and to reconnect. We had two sessions to accommodate locations, our session directed to those in the Asian time zone were led by Kristin and those in the American time zones were led by Sue. We went over techniques, discussed how to deal with any difficult situations that may arise, and shared stories of workshop memories. They were wonderful events and by the end we were all excited to get back into the classroom, whether physical or online. We recorded the sessions and with some expert editing by Bee, we created a training video that our facilitators can watch whenever they need a refresher.



Reinstating the Newsletter

In September of this year, we sent out our newly formatted and reimagined newsletter which will now serve periodically as a way to bring our supporters along on our journey. With so much of our outward-facing work being postponed, it was a great time to share the internal growth that was going on behind the scenes. It turned out well and we received much positive feedback. We now have a newsletter scheduled for a few times each year. It will allow our supporters to stay involved even if they are unable to participate in any activities, and give us the chance to put the spotlight onto some of our most loyal supporters. We will continue this segment of Donor Spotlight in each newsletter.

You can see the newsletter [here](#).



Angkor Writers and Readers Festival

In December 2021, Howl Cambodia and the Angkor International Festival of Arts came together to produce the first Angkor Writers and Readers Festival. It brought together Cambodian and international writers, journalists and publishers. Writing Through was brought in as a collaborator and we were able to conduct a workshop in Banteay Srei, a beautiful area within the temple regions outside the city of Siem Reap. We worked with the local public high school and gave them a short-form workshop using the theme of Change. We then organized to transport the students into Siem Reap for one of the closing events at FCC Angkor, where four brave students read their poems to the audience. The organizers and attendees shared that it was their defining moment of the festival and look forward to expanding into new corners of the country and bringing

Writing Through along with them every step of the way.

After a year with only one workshop in Cambodia, finishing off with this experience was priceless and we look forward to collaborating again in 2022.



World Mental Health Day

October 12th was World Mental Health Day. In recognition of the intense toll the pandemic has taken on our collective mental health, **Writing Through** wanted to give back. We had two online workshops around the topic of mental health that were conducted for different time zones. We had wonderful discussions framed around connection and focusing on the feelings we might have experienced throughout the last two years. For many, being able to open up about these experiences was new to them but they were encouraged and acknowledged. Our goal is to be able to offer free workshops alongside global movements for empowerment and social justice.



Very Big Event 2021

For the second year, we invited our volunteers to a Very Big Event. This is an annual meeting with our global volunteers. We discussed how Writing Through has been developing, caught up with our volunteers and what they are up to and reminisced about our favorite workshop moments. Our Board Chairperson, Wendee Wolfson, introduced herself and explained a bit about the Board. We also awarded our Volunteer of the Year Award to Helena Antolin Cochrane. It was a wonderful event that brought the team together and as always, helped to reinvigorate the passion our volunteers have for Writing Through. We are so lucky to have such a dedicated, incredible group of volunteers and they truly make Writing Through the organization that Sue has always envisioned it to be.

Social Media

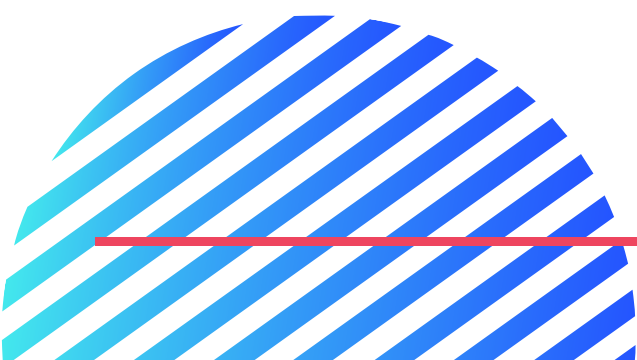
In the modern world, social media platforms are an excellent way to communicate and update anyone who supports the work you do. Therefore, in 2021 we made a conscious push to post consistently to promote the work we have been doing. With the use of the Canva website, we have been able to design stylish posts promoting our events, sharing interesting news articles, inspiring quotes, team and partner profiles and showcasing our participants' work. By keeping people updated on our work in real time we hope to encourage engagement and donations.

Poem videos

We are always looking for fun and creative ways to share our participants' work and last year Bee came up with the idea of producing videos of some of the poems written throughout the years. She has been doing this weekly and sharing them on all our social media platforms. The videos interpret the words with carefully selected video clips and a variety of voices. We end each workshop with a 'Big Event' in which each participant reads something they have written during the sessions, and through these we have learned the importance of hearing one's words spoken aloud. These videos help us reach our goal of giving a platform for voices seldom heard. To see some of these videos, [click here](#).

Impact Video

It is always difficult to show the impact that we have on both our participants and facilitators, but one of the most effective ways we have found is through hearing testimonials from the people who have worked with us. Our upcoming podcast, From the Magic Pencil, gave us many wonderful soundbites from different people explaining how the workshops have helped and changed them. We used a few of these clips to create a video we called 'The Impact of Writing Through'. There is a lot to be said for hearing directly from those we are able to help. To see some of these videos, [click here](#).



Podcast

In recent years the popularity of podcasts has only seemed to grow and grow and Sue had often thought about how wonderful it would be for Writing Through to have it's own podcast. This summer, Rachel and Eva, our Wesleyan interns, became determined to make that a reality. The idea was discussed, researched and developed until we came up with 'From the Magic Pencil,' a podcast with the goal to amplify voices of people whose stories need to be heard.

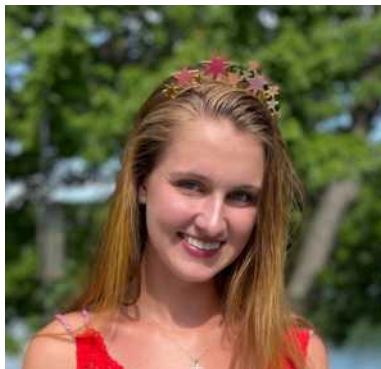
From the Magic Pencil will follow the lived experience of Writing Through participants, volunteers, partners and staff in Cambodia, Vietnam, Singapore, and the U.S. The podcast hosts, Sue and Kristin, will interview past and present Writing Through affiliates to amplify their voices of change, share their writing, and showcase their personal stories. In each episode, a poem or story written during a workshop will be read aloud. The podcast's goal is to create a space where we can showcase the work Writing Through has done and continues to do while sharing the voices of those in society who most need to be heard. The podcast is not a space to simply summarize everything Writing Through has done. Rather, it is a platform to lift up the many authentic voices of the people whose lives we have touched and help others to hear their stories.

The podcast is currently being edited and will be released in Spring 2022. We hope that this will be only the first of many seasons and we are already discussing season two.



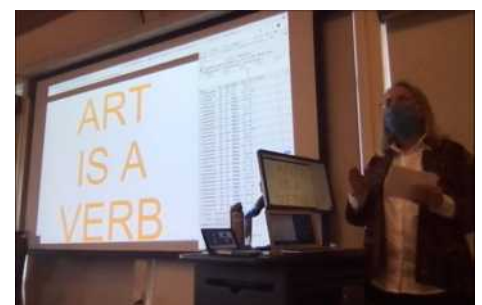
Internship

Despite the pandemic spilling into a second summer internship season, we were again able to host two interns from Wesleyan University in Connecticut. Although their work was again remote, Rachel Wachman and Eva Phelps continued in the tradition, now five years old, of providing invaluable help to the organization while learning new tools for their own studies and eventual careers. Working together, they kick-started our long awaited podcast series which will be aired in early 2022. They worked beside our Chapter Coordinator to further our expansion efforts while also helping smooth any technical difficulties encountered on our online workshops. Their efforts culminated in 2 additional efforts which further solidified our relationship with the university, namely a lecture by Sue given in the autumn about the relationship between writers and social programs, plus a [full article](#) about Writing Through that appears in the winter issue of the Wesleyan Alumnus Magazine. We are thrilled to be able to count them as continuing members of the Writing Through community, and are endlessly grateful for their hard work, boundless enthusiasm and support.



Literature for Social Change Lecture

The connections made by our Wesleyan interns allowed Sue to update and present a lecture there in the autumn which she has given to universities over the years throughout SE Asia and the UK. Her lecture, entitled Literature for Social Change, or A Funny Thing Happened on the Way From the Publisher, explains the role artists, and especially writers, have had in creating much needed social programs. By citing the important neurobiological research showing the changes that creative writing makes on the brain and one's ability to envision and persevere, Sue takes the audience through the history of artists affecting social change, and her own founding of Writing Through. The journalism and writing students of Wesleyan University were enthusiastic and appreciative, some of whom then went on to apply for the coming internship opportunities in 2022. Sue hopes to be able to give this lecture at other universities, spreading the word about the importance of arts education and the role of Writing Through within global education.



Our Programs

It should be noted that not all of our Partners hold workshops every year due to their individual funding or scheduling challenges. Below is a list of our most recently active partnerships.

Cambodia

Banteay Srei High School

is the first public high school we have worked with. The director and teachers encourage the students to take on new challenges and to have an eye on their futures. They wholeheartedly believed in the programming and we were so impressed by both the level of English and the engagement of the students and the staff.



Ponheary Ly Foundation

promotes access to quality education for children and youth across Northern Cambodia. They support students in rural communities and living in dorms in Siem Reap.



Asian Outreach Cambodia

has the vision of restoring hope and dignity to Cambodians by breaking the poverty cycle in rural communities. Their mission is to equip and empower these rural communities through training and resource development.



Anjali House

is the place where the Writing Through workshops started and developed. Our workshops now hold a prominent place in the center's annual schedule. We also provide teacher development programs and oversight as needed.



Children of the Mekong / Enfants du Mekong

is a French organization, based all over SE Asia. They have six centers across Cambodia, and after several workshops with Writing Through, proposed that they receive one workshop at each of their centers across the country, each year.

While Children of the Mekong/Enfants du Mekong continues to officially include Writing Through as a permanent strand of their programming, due to COVID restrictions we were forced to postpone our 2021 workshops.



Empowering Youth Cambodia (EYC)

runs four learning centers, operating as combined schools and community centers in Phnom Penh's poorest communities. We are looking forward to continuing with them in 2022 as our 2021 workshop was postponed.



Liger Leadership Academy (LLA)

educates promising youth of today to develop socially conscious, entrepreneurial leaders of tomorrow. They provide a residential scholarship program for economically disadvantaged students that combines a comprehensive, internationally competitive education with an innovative STEM and entrepreneurship curriculum. Liger believes a meaningful investment in the right few will change the lives of many. This year, Sue and Kristin were judges in a poetry competition organized by the students. We also had some of the students as our Podcast guests.



The Chelly Foundation

brings about positive changes to the lives of children and their parents in the Chumkiri area of the southern province of Kampot. This very rural area has been heretofore all but ignored by development workers. We are extremely proud to say that we were recently informed that two Chelly students who participated in our workshops have just been awarded scholarships for University in Phnom Penh.



PEPY Empowering Youth

works with young adults and students to develop youth leadership, learning opportunities and access to education for underprivileged Cambodians.



Singapore

Our work in Singapore continues to grow with our valued partners. Through them we continue to focus on the often underserved portions of the population, such as youth and adults with disabilities, and mature women coping with the challenges of aging.

ART:DIS (formerly VSA)

offers fine arts programs to children and adults 6-72 years of age who have physical or intellectual disabilities. These may include: Down syndrome, autism spectrum disorder, and cerebral palsy. This year they have rebranded to acknowledge their autonomy and are now called ART:DIS. This year, for the first time, we challenged the beneficiaries to write journal entries and stories and they excelled.



Society for WINGs

is a nonprofit organization established in 2007. WINGs' focus is on promoting active ageing for women of lower income brackets by providing knowledge, teaching skills and support in planning their financial future and living a healthier and more active lifestyle. Writing Through conducted some mixed online and in-person workshops this year as we navigated changing regulations and the safety of our volunteers and participants.



PPIS

is a nonprofit social welfare organization dedicated to working with women of all ages in carrying out their multiple roles in society. PPIS runs three core community services namely Family Services, Student Care and Early Childhood Education. With sixteen centers island-wide, the services work together to provide quality and holistic support as well as developmental programs for women and their families. We were able to complete both a Writing Through The Workplace workshop with them and a full workshop with the students all online.



Vietnam

In 2021, we were unfortunately, once again, not able to hold any workshops due to the continuing effects of the pandemic. However, we are looking forward to reinvigorating our connections with Vietnam once scheduling and further outreach are again possible.

United States

This year we expanded into the U.S., thanks to our online capabilities and the hard work of our volunteers living across the country.

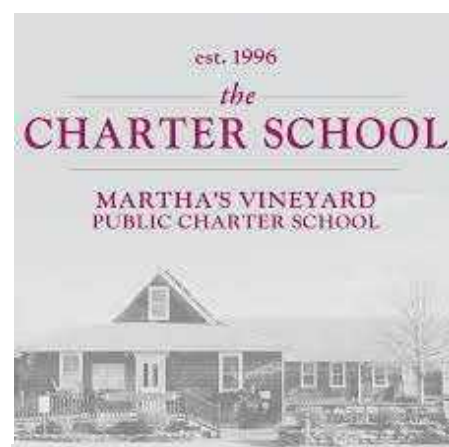
Youth Advocacy Club (YAC)

is a student-led club focused on tackling academic, financial and cultural barriers inhibiting student success on West Covina High School's campus, inspiring students to be advocates for themselves and their peers.



Martha's Vineyard Charter School

Sue took part in the Charter School's annual Artist In Residence program. Over ten weeks, she met with a group of eighth-graders to delve into their thinking about the pandemic, their goals and the world around them. Using Writing Through techniques, the students were given a new chance to exercise their voices through collaborative and individual writing.



Endorsements and Feedback

Writing Through fostered my love for writing and developed more of my ability to write... Writing Through really gave me a lot of freedom to explore the possibilities and ideas that are popping up in my mind and I felt like that was really really powerful, because I can explore many things and write what I want as a writer.

Cheatra, a participant from Cambodia



One of the big reasons why Writing Through is just so amazing is that, when we start working together in group poetry sessions, we start talking more communally... and conversations start happening based on what our answers were to particular stimulus. Not to mention how funny it is sometimes, to create a poem with others, you can have a certain idea of what you want the writing to look like in the end, but when you start working with other people the whole idea that you originally had gets thrown out the window and it becomes a completely unique piece of writing and really teaches you the essence of collaboration.

Alexa, a participant from USA



I just think that the workshop, it's simple, but it's probably one of the most powerful things I've been a part of. It impacts people, both the student and the facilitator, in ways that are unusual, unexpected and just wonderful.

Patty, Long Term Facilitator



All of the students who took part in Writing Through workshops, the thing that improves the most is their thinking.... They feel scared, they think they will make mistakes... but the way that Writing Through designs the workshop they're interacting and people feel free about the mistakes they may make during the workshops. After the workshops, they produce stories and poems and their thoughts change, they think that they can do anything that they try.

Kim Ann, a staff member of a Cambodian partner



The environment that was created with Writing Through, it's a very open environment where you're not afraid to make mistakes, it's okay to make mistakes and it's okay to read your writing pieces to your friends and let them give you positive feedback. I felt very comfortable doing that and also sharing my ideas because you encourage us and tell us that everyone's ideas are not wrong and it's always something I've kept in mind until now.

Sou Cheng, a participant from Cambodia



Writing Through opened the door for me to think creatively.

Roun, a participant from Cambodia

It's a lifeline for a lot of people to have the opportunity to explore what's happened, to find words for those feelings, to share those feelings with one another and to finally have that magazine in their hand to say *look I wrote this*. It reminds me of something really difficult that I went through and I processed by writing. It's just unbelievably rewarding... It helps everybody who is involved in it and that's what's really wonderful about it.

Helena, Facilitator and Volunteer of the Year 2021



Who We Are

2021 was another interesting year. We continued working together as our small team and expanded our responsibilities to match job titles and talents. After years of guidance, Jenny Peason and Don Spencer have both stepped down from the board this year as they pursue new projects. Ming Xo is thriving in her career and has handed over her social media role to the core team as she gains more traction in her field. We have benefited greatly from the help of Ken Williams as our liaison from the Harvard College class of 1978 ClassAct group.

Some of our key personnel are:

Sue Guiney, Founder and Executive Director

Writing Through began in 2010 when the writer and teacher, Sue Guiney, presented the first creative writing workshop at Anjali House in Siem Reap, Cambodia. The program grew out of her experiences, positive and negative, from a volunteer trip she took to Cambodia with her family



in 2006. That trip led to her writing the first in her collection of novels set in modern day Cambodia, *A Clash of Innocents*. After several years, other NGOs in the area began to hear about the program and request it for their own students, leading her to found the nonprofit, Writing Through, in December of 2014.

Ever since the first workshop was run in Siem Reap, Sue has devoted her writing and much of her teaching to Cambodia. From 2011-2013, she was Writer-in-Residence in the SE Asia Department of The University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), the world's leading institution for the study of Asia, Africa and the Middle East. She has traveled around the globe discussing her experiences in Cambodia and drawing attention to that country's needs. Her Cambodian novels are among the only literary fiction written for an English-speaking audience about modern day, post Khmer Rouge Cambodia. The second in the collection, *Out of the Ruins*, was published in 2014. The final novel in the trilogy is due for publication in 2022.

Sue is also an internationally recognized poet. Besides her own poetry collections, her work has been widely published in literary journals and anthologized in collections devoted to global human rights issues.

Sue holds a B.A. from Wesleyan University, and a Master's Degree in Classics from The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Kristin Schuster, Deputy Director

Kristin is from Montreal, Canada but has spent the last twelve years living, working and traveling across three continents. After completing her university studies in Psychology with a special focus in both developmental psychology and behavioral neurobiology she decided to take a break to see a bit more of the world. This led to a new career as a tour guide and tour leader, making history come alive for thousands of guests. During a European winter she volunteered as an English Teaching Assistant in a college in Hanoi and fell in love with South East Asia, relocating there permanently in 2013. She has lived in Siem Reap, Cambodia since 2016 working in fundraising and communications and as a science teacher. She is thrilled to pass on her love of public speaking and to help students explore their creativity.



Bryony Rice (Bee) – Operations Coordinator

Bee is from a small village in Devon, England. She has been living and working in Cambodia for just over twelve years. She has held many different positions over the years from the personal assistant to a Thai businessman, to a sales manager in a small shop, volunteer coordinator and up until recently a full-time English teacher. Her love affair with Cambodia began before she'd even set foot there and continues to this day. She comes from a family of writers and loves to write in her free time. She now lives in Siem Reap with her wife. She has greatly admired the work of Writing Through for years and is thrilled to join the team.



Kim Dibb - Accounts Manager

Kim Dibb is from Vancouver Island, Canada. She is the Chief Financial Officer for Mustimuhw Information Solutions, Inc., a company providing health record software and virtual outreach solutions to First Nations across Canada. Prior to this role, she worked for over a decade with the Cowichan Tribes First Nation as the Comptroller and, in her early career, she served as a Logistics Officer in the Canadian Forces and in total spent twelve years with the Department of National Defense.



In 2015, she went on her first pro bono assignment to Siem Reap, Cambodia through the organization Accounting for International Development. She would return there in 2016 and 2017 to assist NGOs in developing financial management competency. She has been the Accounts Manager for Writing Through since 2019.

Kim is a Chartered Professional Accountant with a Bachelor of Commerce degree from the University of Guelph.

Rebecca Goldman - Volunteer Connecticut Coordinator

Rebecca (Becca) Goldman has a B.A. in History from Washington University in St. Louis where she also studied writing and education policy. She is interested in arts education and the history of education in the United States. Becca previously worked as a field organizer in Portland, Maine and most recently as a teacher at North Country School in Lake Placid, NY. She is excited to continue working with the Writing Through team to build their presence in the United States and feels lucky to be a part of such a passionate, innovative team.



Wendee Wolfson, Chair, Board of Directors

Wendee Wolfson is a Leadership Coach and Consultant to corporate executives, entrepreneurs, nonprofit directors, and family business leaders through her individual practice at Brickworks Advisors and through affiliations with Mobius Executive Leadership, the Georgetown University Executive Masters in Leadership program and the Halcyon Incubator Program for social entrepreneurs. In previous activities, she has consulted to families in business together, creating and facilitating programs on leadership development, and has worked with nonprofit boards to develop strategic initiatives and implement leadership transitions as a consultant and as a board member.

Wendee began her career and spent several years in the financial services industry. She was a founding partner of a venture fund focused on women entrepreneurs, and an angel investing group of women, funding entrepreneurial startups. She is currently a lead advisor to the Next Wave Impact Fund, formed for the purpose of educating and engaging more women in early stage investing into social enterprises.

She has a BA from Brandeis University in French Literature, an MBA from the Yale School of Management and a Certificate in Leadership Coaching from Georgetown University.



Trisha Craig, Member, Board of Directors

Trisha Craig is Dean of International and Professional Experience at Yale NUS, Yale's new liberal arts college in Singapore. Previously she was director of Wheelock College Singapore. Prior to moving to Southeast Asia, Trisha spent a decade as director of the Center for European Studies at Harvard University. Trisha is a political sociologist with a focus on institution building and has worked as a policy advisor and taught in many countries including El Salvador, Spain, the United Kingdom, Qatar, China, India, Thailand and South Africa. She is co-author of the book, *The Quality of Life in Rural Asia*, published by Oxford University Press, the author of many articles and a frequent contributor to the *Straits Times*, *TODAY* and *Times Higher Education* on issues of education and makes regular media appearances discussing global politics and elections. Trisha holds a PhD from Yale University and has served on the boards of a number of nonprofit organizations and government commissions.



Jen Flynn, Member, Board of Directors

Jen Flynn is the Senior Director for Global Outreach at Harvard University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Prior to Harvard, she was the Director of Educational Programs and Partnerships at EF Education, developing digital content and new media initiatives, designing academic programs, and building strategic relationships between EF and other educational organizations, including Apple, PBS, and Advanced Placement of the College Board. For more than six years, she worked at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University in a number of positions, most recently as Director of Advancement Outreach and Alumnae Affairs.

She has advised universities in Brazil, Poland, China, England, Scotland, the Middle East, Australia, and around the US in alumni engagement strategy and organizational capacity-building, and has served as a presenter at many professional conferences. She received her Master's degree from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, with a dual concentration in Administration, Planning, and Social Policy, and in Technology, Innovation, and Education; and received her Bachelor's degree with a double major in English Literature and Performing Arts from Colby College.



Don Guiney, Member, Board of Directors

Don Guiney is a US capital markets lawyer who practiced in London for twenty-six years, representing issuers and underwriting banks in a wide range of complex cross-border capital raising transactions. He currently serves as Executive Vice President and General Counsel of Impact Shares, a non-profit social impact investment fund platform. Prior to returning to the US, Don served as Senior Counsel at Baker & McKenzie, the global law firm.



Prior to joining Baker & McKenzie, Don was a partner for sixteen years at Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, a major international law firm based in London. Don has been involved in volunteer and pro bono work throughout his career. He has been the leader of the largest youth baseball and softball organization in the UK for over twenty years. For his service to the cause of youth sports in the UK, Don was named a torchbearer in the 2012 Summer Olympic Games in London. He has served as the President of the Harvard Club of the United Kingdom, the largest Harvard alumni organization outside the US. He is a board member of ClassACT HR78, a social impact accelerator focused on the Harvard alumni community. Don is a member of the Board of Directors of Anjali House, an educational shelter based in Cambodia. Don received his AB degree from Harvard College and his JD degree from Columbia Law School.

Amy Stillman - Special Adviser

Amy Stillman is Director, Communications, of GIIN (Global Impact Investing Network) where she has led the development and execution of the communications strategy to advance the GIIN's mission and brand.

Prior to joining the GIIN, she was Director of Communications at Impetus – The Private Equity Foundation, the pioneer of venture philanthropy in the UK, where she was responsible for both external and internal communications, and policy. Previously she was Head of Communications and Public Engagement at Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), the world's leading independent international development organization that uses volunteers to fight poverty and reduce inequality. Her background includes senior marketing and communications roles at commercial organizations, including Merrill Lynch and WATG, as well as marketing consulting at the Commonwealth Group. She moved to the social sector in 1999 as Marketing Director of global leadership development organization Common Purpose. Amy was based in the United Kingdom for 25 years before returning to New York in 2014. She holds a BA from Sarah Lawrence College.



Linda Rappaport - Special Adviser

Linda Rappaport is an internationally respected U.S. attorney. She is presently Of Counsel at Shearman and Sterling LLP, where she was a partner for over thirty years, and a former member of the Executive Committee. Her legal and business background is global, with substantial transactional and advisory experience in the U.S., Europe and Asia.

Linda also has extensive experience with corporate and Not-For-Profit Boards of Directors, serving as a member or advisor to numerous Boards of Directors.

She is presently Chair of the Board of Trustees of The New School, and a member of the Board of Governors of Mannes College of Music. She has also served as a Board member or Advisor of the Legal Aid Society of New York City, the New York Women's Foundation, and served as Trustee of Wesleyan University from 2011-2016.

Linda has a J.D. from New York University and a B.A., magna cum laude from Wesleyan University. She is also an accomplished flutist and performs with orchestras throughout the New York City area.



Don Spencer - Special Adviser

Don Spencer is a Managing Director and Founding Partner of Siguler Guff & Company, a global private equity investment firm headquartered in New York City. Siguler Guff focuses on finding or creating investment opportunities arising from market inefficiencies, such as market disruptions, capital starvation or government policies.

Don previously was a Senior Vice President and portfolio manager in the Private Equity Group of PaineWebber, Senior Vice President and general counsel of Atalanta/Sosnoff Capital Corporation, an institutional money manager and, prior to that position, was an associate attorney for three years with Atalanta/Sosnoff counsel, Shereff, Friedman, Hoffman & Goodman, where he specialized in representing financial services companies. He started his career in 1980 at Sullivan & Cromwell, where he represented financial services as well as investment banking clients.

Don is President of the Board of Managers of Oakwood Friends School, a Quaker boarding school in Poughkeepsie, NY. He served for many years in different capacities on the Board of the Adelpic Literary Society, the alumni association of the Alpha Delta Phi Society of Wesleyan University, a co-ed “fraternity”.

Mr. Spencer holds a B.A. from Wesleyan University and a J.D. degree from the New York University School of Law.



Our Thanks

Writing Through would like to publicly thank all of our Facilitators for their hard work and expertise in running our workshops, our Volunteers for their efforts to support the administration of our organization, and our Donors for their generosity and belief in our mission. We at Writing Through will always regard all these individuals as part of the Writing Through family.

Our Volunteers

Harvard ClassAct members from the Harvard College class of 1978

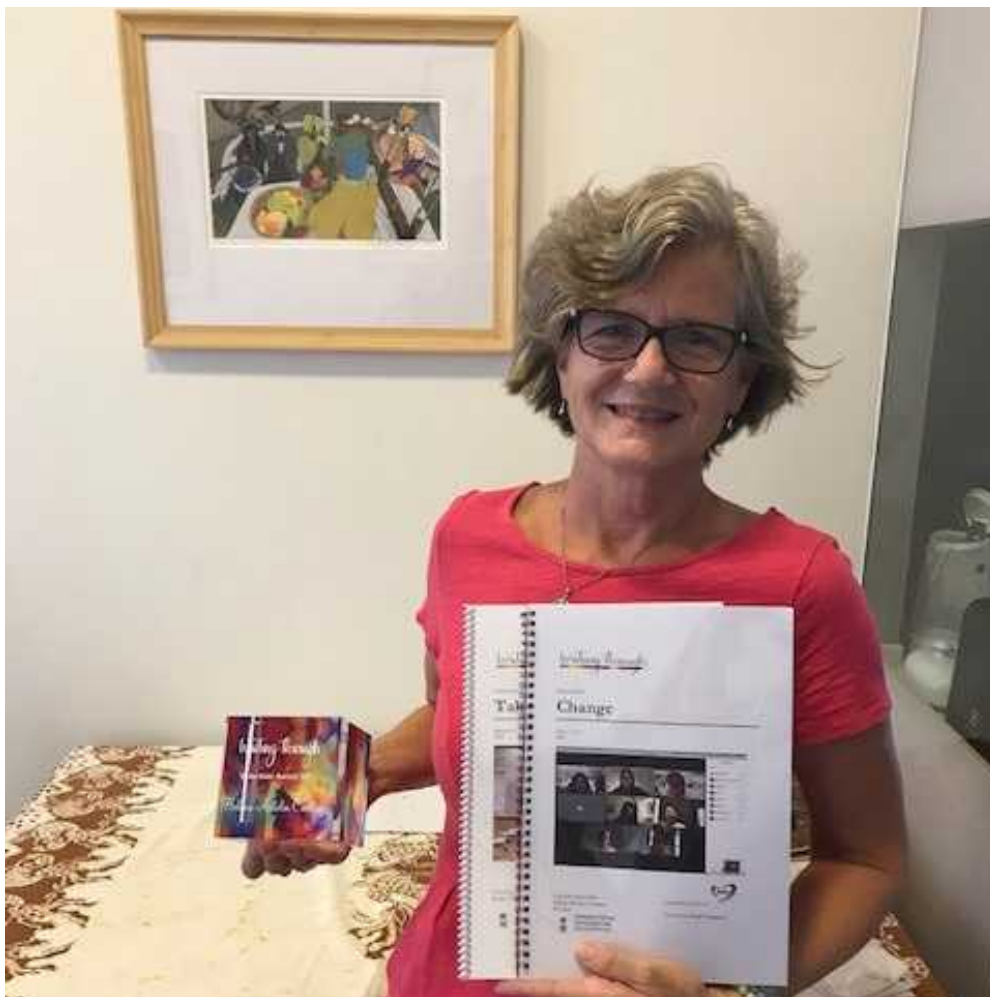
| | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Selin Ahipasaoglu | Sue Guiney | Barbara Rittner |
| Shahnaz Ali | Jeffrey Harris | Martha Scarborough |
| Jess Blackledge | Kitty Johnson | Steve Scena |
| Patty Bierley | Amy Kean | Kristin Schuster |
| Camille Britton | Freeda Kinkelin | Bronwyn Sharman |
| Raelee Chapman | Venezia Lim | Amy Stillman |
| Karen Christiansen | Anna Marti | Katarzyna Sumislawska |
| Angelene Chong | Wayne McCallum | Julia Tran |
| Helena Cochrane | Charlotte McEleny | Tamsin Tran |
| Bob Craig | Sally McHale | Tesheia |
| Robin Craig | Jeanne McKay | Vanderhorst |
| Kimbra Cutlip | Andrea McKenna | Sydney VanVleek |
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| Ann DeForest | Clara Mok | Ming Xia Ho |
| Kim Dibb | Anna Nguyen | David Xiang |
| Ally Dishong | Katy Oglethorpe | Alisha Yi |
| Kerry Driver | Dhooleka Raj | Sybille Young |
| Lisa Edmondson | Linda Rappaport | Anupama Zain |
| Nicole Friets | Bee Rice | |

Volunteer of the Year Award

A big congratulations to the winner of our Volunteer of the Year Award 2021,

Helena Antolin Cochrane!

Through a year with constantly changing restrictions and workshop formats, Helena pushed through and was able to facilitate and shadow a number of workshops with us. These would not have happened without her trusting **Writing Through** and the importance of the work. We are very grateful for her hard work and devotion to the **Writing Through** mission.



Our Advisory Council

Patty Bierley
Lucia Damacela
Lisa Edmondson
Dhooleka Raj
Linda Rappaport
Barbara Rittner
Martha Scarborough
Amy Stillman
Wendee Wolfson

Our Supporters

Our Partners are able to pay only a fraction of the real cost of our workshops. This year we received even less in administrative fees than in previous years. The rest of our budget must then, of course, fall onto the shoulders of our individual and institutional donors. We are endlessly grateful to them all.

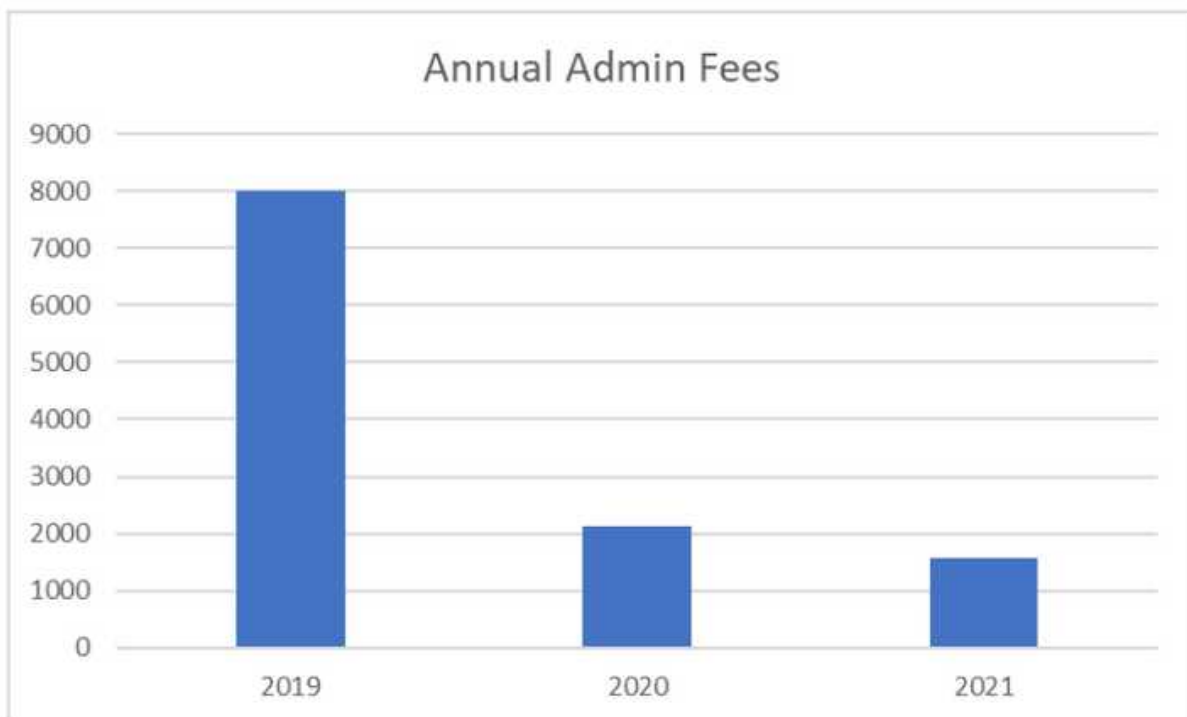


Chart 1 - 2021 administrative fees compared to 2020 and 2019 fees received

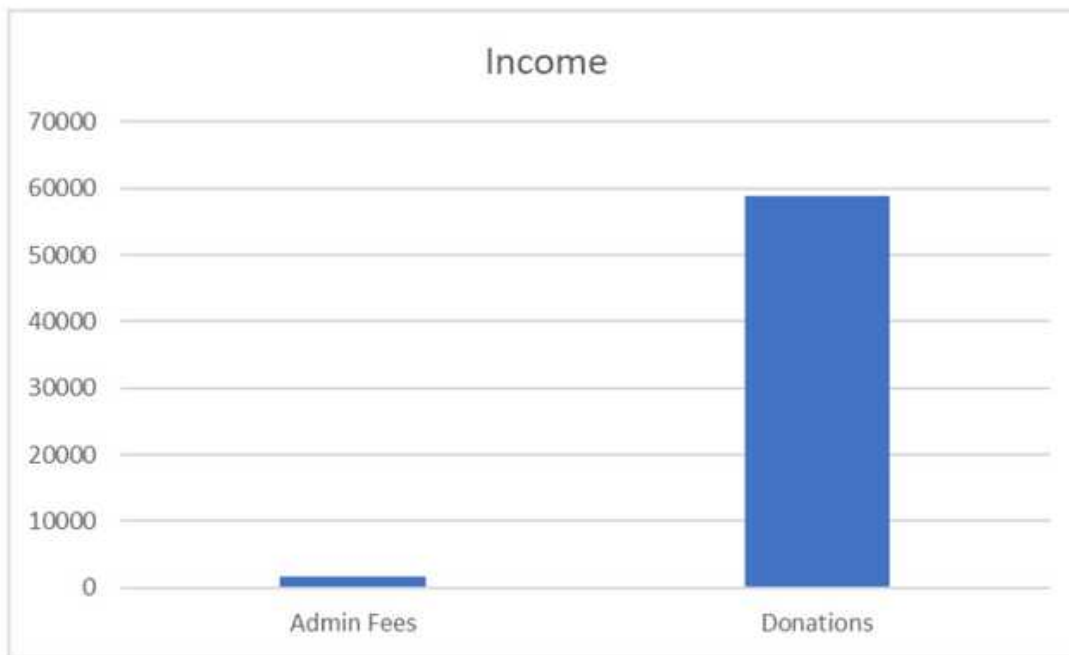
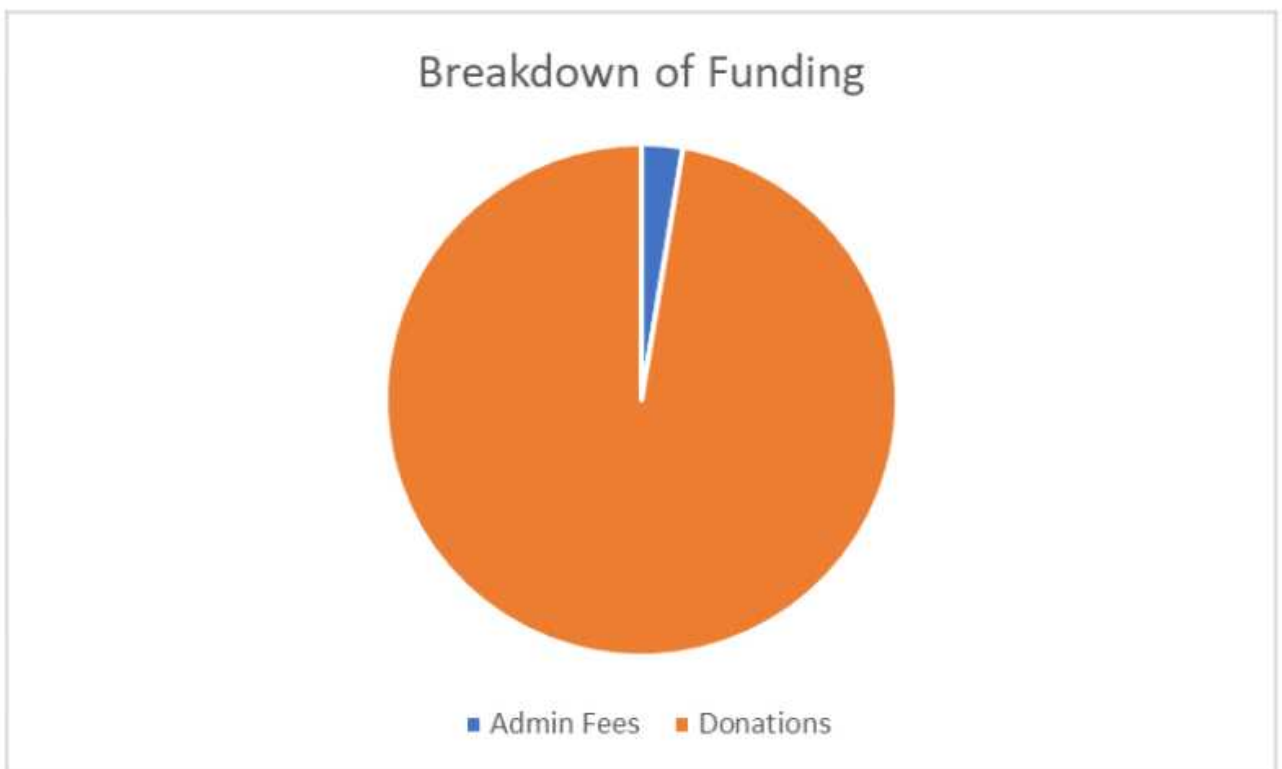


Chart 2 - 2021 administrative fees compared to donation amounts

The majority of our donations come from individual donors but we are beginning to see more institutional donations and are looking forward to more corporate sponsors.



Our thanks go out once again to:

Takeda Pharmaceutical Company

Donations of \$1,000 and over

Ed Annunziato
Sarah Boothby Kendall
Darcy Bradbury and Eric Seiler
Karen and David Brush
Trisha Craig and Tom Brenner
Robin and Robert Craig
Jennifer Flynn and Richard Yieh
Susie Goldman
Jamie and Jeffrey Harris
Alan R. Miller Foundation
Cassie Murray and Bill Plapinger
Carol Ostrow and Mike Graff
Linda Rappaport and Len Chazen
Alyssa and Jocelyn Spencer
Don Spencer and Vickie Riccardo
Mary and Jerome Vascellero
Sally Williams-Allen
Wendee Wolfson

Donations of \$500 and over

Patty Bierley
Bob Bowie
Ann and Bill Dobbs
Linda and David Lakhdir
Ellen Muglia
Steven Okuhn
Amy Rugel
Martha and William Scarborough
J.D Smith

Donations of \$500 and under

Nancy Bard
Karen and John Burgess
Nancy Cotton
Kim Dibb
Deb Durkin and Arend Dikkers
Rena Epstein
Carol and Richard Gross
Betsy Hecker
Robin Heller
Laura Hess
Lang Luntao
John Moore
Benedicte du Cheyron Monroe a
nd William Monroe
Leo Richardson
Julie Sakellariadis
Barbara Schuster
Susan Wilen
Lisa Wong

Financials

Writing Through Statement of Financial Position (Unaudited) As at and for the Year Ended December 31, 2021

| | | Writing Through | |
|--|-----------|--|---------------|
| | | <i>Statement of Assets, Liabilities, and Net Assets -- Unaudited</i> | |
| | | <i>December 31, 2021 and 2020</i> | |
| Assets | | 2021 | 2020 |
| Cash and Cash Equivalents - unrestricted | \$ | 64,495 | 60,521 |
| Total Assets | \$ | 64,495 | 60,521 |
| Liabilities and Net Assets | | | |
| Current Liabilities | | | |
| Accounts Payable | | 5,000 | - |
| Current Portion of Long-Term Debt | | 517 | |
| Total Current Liabilities | | 5,517 | 295 |
| Long-Term Loan* | | 20,188 | 20,705 |
| Net Assets | \$ | 38,790 | 39,521 |
| Total Liabilities and Net Assets | \$ | 64,495 | 60,521 |

*On June 5, 2020, Writing Through received a long term Covid-19 Disaster Relief Loan from the US Small Business Administration in the principal amount of \$21,000, which will be amortized over 30 years and bears interest at an annual rate of 2.75%.

Writing Through
Statements of Support, Revenue, Expenses, and Changes in Net Assets -- Unaudited
Years Ended December 31, 2021 and 2020

Changes in Net Assets

| Support and Revenue | | 2021 | 2020 |
|---|-----------|---------------|---------------|
| Administrative fees | \$ | 1,978 | 2,797 |
| Donations from individuals, unrestricted | | 58,879 | 48,312 |
| Donations from Foundations & Institutions, unrestricted | | | 5,600 |
| Merchandise | | 98 | 155 |
| Other income | | 182 | 500 |
| Total Support and Revenue | \$ | 61,137 | 57,364 |

Expenses**Program Services**

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|---------------|---------------|
| Executive Director Compensation | \$ | 10,000 | |
| Staff Salaries | | 24,346 | 14,898 |
| Travel and per diem expenses | | 122 | 6,058 |
| Workshop supplies and printing | | 88 | 1,234 |
| Other expenses | | | 42 |
| Total Program Services | \$ | 34,556 | 22,232 |

Writing Through
Statements of Support, Revenue, Expenses, and Changes in Net Assets -- Unaudited
(continued)
Years Ended December 31, 2021 and 2020

| Support Services | | 2021 | 2020 |
|---------------------------------|-----------|---------------|---------------|
| Bank fees | \$ | 1,910 | 1,932 |
| Business licenses and fees | | 298 | |
| Consulting | | 5,000 | |
| Employee benefits | | 2,221 | 1,285 |
| Executive Director Compensation | | 5,000 | |
| Loan interest | | 335 | |
| Office expenses | | | 20 |
| Online services | | 1,807 | 1,531 |
| Staff Salaries | | 10,414 | 15,194 |
| Travel and per diem expenses | | | 2,951 |
| Other expenses | | 327 | 334 |
| Total Support Services | \$ | 27,312 | 23,247 |
| Total Expenses | \$ | 61,868 | 45,479 |
| Change in Net Assets | | (731) | 11,885 |
| Net assets, beginning of year | \$ | 39,521 | 27,636 |
| Net Assets, End of Year | \$ | 38,790 | 39,521 |

Work from our participants

Cambodia

Rising

a group poem by the writers of Anjali House

You shine like a star
The sky is beautiful
Clouds are blue
You belong in the mystical world
Mother, sun, father, sky
Look at the flower

It smells beautiful like perfume
I feel like staying in the sky
Keep watering it or it dies
Your face is like the full moon
Don't go away I will be back soon

Fighting the shy getting stronger
Open mind like the sunshine
You will get better than before
Share your mind together
Blast through your barriers like a rocket
Keep your nerves away in your pocket
You will get happiness in your life



Stay Home Stay Safe

a group journal entry by the writers of Anjali House

I heard from my teacher that schools are going to close. I heard it from Facebook. I heard it from my family. I remember that we were all sad. I was happy I could go visit my family, I could visit my homeland. I could eat more food. I don't go to school. I have time to do lots of things, because the virus spread over the world. Sometimes I felt stressed because I stayed home a lot. It's hard to study online. I felt sad. I can't meet my friends and teachers. And I feel like I miss my teacher. I can't play with my friends.

People all over the world are getting nervous. I used to see a lot of people at the market, but now almost every shop is closed. It's hard to wear masks every day. Some people have no work. Some people find it hard to find a job, because of Covid. I feel hungry because now my father doesn't have a job. I saw no more tourists. I stay at home and don't go anywhere because I'm scared of Covid. I saw the news and they were talking about the virus that lots of people are dying. I can't go anywhere I want. I feel bored when I stay home every day. I can't taste a lot of food I want to taste. I can't travel anywhere. I forgot the lesson. I forgot my friends' names. I forgot my friends' faces. I have learned what is hard times. I have learned a lot of hard work. I can read a lot of books with my brother. Sometimes I miss my friends because school closed a long time and they got married. I have a headache because I played too much on my phone and games.

Now my happiness is back because I get to meet my teachers and friends again. The government posted on Facebook. The school told the students to come back. My school updated. New grades, new people and now I remember my friends' faces. When I saw my friends I wanted to run and hug them, but because of coronavirus we cannot touch each other. I am surprisingly excited. I have a lot of new things to learn. I feel happy when I see that my school changed a lot. I can remember my lessons again.

I hope the coronavirus goes away. I hope there is a way to cure the virus.

The Storm I see

By Sophy, aged 14

Banteay Srey High School, Cambodia

I saw a storm
I feel scared
The sky changes
blue to black
I hear a sound
of wind
and after the storm
I saw the sun
I feel fresh
I hear a bird sound
but I saw something
is broken.
I saw houses, a school, roads, trees, are damaged.
I saw the grass
grows up and the sky
is changing black
to blue.



Singapore

Get the Monster of COVID out of Planet Earth Immediately

A group Journal — Very Special Arts (renamed ART: DIS), Singapore

In my experience, we were confused. It should be ok. Things always change. I felt bored because I had to stay at home. Again with the lockdown. I know that the 21st of July 2021 was heightened alert. There is a surge in the COVID cases. Just because people say 2020 was the worst year, it was not the worst year to me. There were distractions at home. I cannot go to Starbucks to drink coffee. My experience staying at home was quite like going to work, more than eating outside.

It made me feel a little bit shocked, but it is for my own good and safety so I have to obey. I feel bored. I Zoom with my friends. Do exercise. It makes me feel safe to Check In. I miss my friends. I like to go to school. Studying at home was ok, but not now. We're not so sure how it works but we will try it. They have to follow the government rules in Singapore.

I think I'm ok, I got vaccinated before the lockdown. I feel that when I got my second jab, I felt numb in my arm. I fell asleep for two days. She got a fever and a stiff neck. I had a fever too. I had a sore arm. I didn't have any side effects, I took paracetamol. My whole body is tired. I was sickly for two days.

When I was at home, I felt bored, I couldn't go out. I feel new normal. We are waiting to travel again. Stop pressing the lockdown button and chill. In Orchard and Somerset they have to use the temperature scanning and use the Trace Together Token to keep Singapore safe from communities.

We can go travel. I hope the world goes back to normal. I hope I can go dance. I hope I can fly to New Zealand with my mother and go camping. I want to go to New York City. I want to have my own airplane. I don't know, I am still uncertain about my future. I hope Singapore gets more safe management measures. I hope I can play table tennis and badminton. I want to ride a horse. My future dream castle with my favourite animals together with me in the garden. I hope this week will wait for my trace together app to say we are vaccinated and get to go out. I hope the pandemic ends so that we don't have COVID anymore so I can go to Malaysia and not share a room with my brother! Get those monsters out! I hope to go to Hong Kong. I have not seen my friends for a year and I don't see them now, if they see me, I will regard them as strangers.

Send COVID to Mars.



With Gratitude - My Humble Abode

Story by Min

Society for WINGS, Singapore

On a rainy November 2016 morning, my husband, Jasper and I, moved into our new home. Together with us, my in-laws and Jasper's brother's family too. Yes, we are officially now the 3-generation family coming together under one roof, a nifty eleven of us, from the youngest of a five-year old to my father in-law who is in his late seventies.

Prior to this move, Jasper and I were living in a rather spacious two-storey three-bedroom apartment, with the living and dining area along with the kitchen on the ground level whilst the resting spaces are housed upstairs. Spanning across a floor space of 1600 sq ft, that was really quite comfortable for just 2 people and a dog. We had been living there since we got married almost a little over 2 decades now, my peaceful sanctuary and humble abode. For someone who adored tranquil living (I still do), this space was nothing less than a sacred pad.

Our lives took a drastic change when the apartment started to fall apart - leaking ceiling, cracked walls and burst pipes, and not to mention, strange noises in the night that sent our dog howling and scurrying off with his tail caught between his hind legs! Thoroughly unimaginable or perhaps not so, given it's really an old apartment to begin with. We were the second owners to have lived in this space. Alas, here comes my in-laws trying to convince us to move out of this dread, to only be talked into moving into a new home with everyone in tow. There you have it, that was how we finally moved in as one big family. Now, do not get me wrong, I did not (and still do not) resent the idea. In case you wondered, that is, but it can be challenging especially in the beginning. A lot of adjustments, mentally, emotionally and physically, in every sense of the word. A lot more human "noise" now on a daily basis, as you can imagine.

So, do I miss my old space? Absolutely, however this change has pulled us closer together as a family. We look out for one another, we have each other's back. Looking on the bright side, I now have an even larger space to move around in, what with the three levels plus an attic, a front porch for gardening and a mother-in-law who enjoys cooking for the entire family. Fantastic, one might say. Finally, our dog, Coco, would have approved of this new home too. You see, this is his final resting place, forever with us in our little garden in the backyard.

Sad Moments in Life

By Evelyn

Society for WINGs, Singapore

Hurt and pain bring out the worst in me.
 My behaviour towards you was beyond imagination.
 Please forgive this unkind soul.
 Who allows the blackness of the red heart surface.
 She learnt from her stupid mistakes.
 Pray to grow up with kindness and compassion
 Yes, it will take time,
 Have faith.
 Believe in oneself.
 Live life with inner happiness.



United States

Icarus, Ruler of Clouds

A group poem by the YAC Club of West Covina HS

The lost city of Atlantis
 Beckoning siren, soft carpet ocean
 How I dream of you on my lofty clouds
 I can see this innocent infant behavior
 swinging fearlessly into the sky
 You personify the city
 Brain waves
 Reddened cheeks, the color of coral
 Your mellow yellow rays and your salty ocean blues
 Rock me to sleep with a siren's tune
 A distorted vision
 never to come true
 You camouflage, escaping my everyday fantasies
 Lost and light butterflies
 here I am flying into the sky
 but my wings are wet, I submerge again for you



Group Journal

Youth Advocates Club (YAC), California

I remember that day so clearly. Fifth period chemistry – we were watching a movie. I remember the security guard bringing in a stack of paper and saying that the school would shut down for two weeks. I remember everyone talking and noise



everywhere. All these questions: what are classes going to be like? How are assignments going to be done? Just wondering about this new experience.

I remember getting a reminder message from my AB Calculus teacher saying to stop by her classroom after school. I remember seeing a line of students and a bustling classroom when I walked in and these huge packets filled with weeks' worth of calculus problems before me.

Seeing those packets, the break – it felt more like a break in a way. It was formal and dull and more distant. At the time I didn't think much of it. I thought we'd go back to school shortly after.

I remember I was nervous, actually, and unsure. This is despite the fact that a lot of people were excited because it was a break. For some reason I anticipated that things would actually be much worse, and it was very ominous.

If I recall correctly, it was raining that day. It was difficult to cover my backpack from the rain, and I remember thinking: "It never rains in California." I remember thinking "What a day for it to rain."

I remember the front of the school was packed with students. Everyone was saying "see you next week" or "we'll see how it goes!" My best friend and I covered ourselves with our choir dresses and ran to the car. And I never saw half of those people again.

We had so much hope that it would be gone in two weeks. It turned into a month and then two more weeks, and then "we're finishing the semester remotely", and then "we're finishing the year remotely". Now everyone just says, "I'm just glad I'm going to graduate." We've lost a lot of that hope.

I can't help remembering what Martha said about the butterflies.

I think that eventually we'll get to see each other in person again. Although that may not be in the near future, I know it will happen. Things are looking up. Looking back, I was kind of naïve. I kind of celebrated the break, but now I worry about the safety of my peers and my friends. The constant fear that they are going to get sick makes it even more difficult.

When I first heard about it, I remember it was my history teacher – he was giving us

flyers and said we can still have zoom meetings. I remember feeling so happy that I didn't have to dress up to go to school. I don't like changing.

I'm a bit sad that I was proven correct; things got worse. We have been away from school for a lot longer than two weeks. I have just been down. I don't know. I still have dreams, like real dreams, that we're on campus somewhere or we are at school with the past classes from when we were last on campus. I wake up sad because I remember the friends that I didn't get to say goodbye to. I've lost so much spark within myself for certain things. I've lost that sense of pride that I used to get from helping people, because now everyone is helping people and I don't know what else they need.

One of the things that I miss most is when I used to wait at the bus stop with my friend after school and we'd get on the bus and talk about our days. Just us. I loved that part – all the little things that happened that you can't do with online school. There's no bus stop for online school.

I miss the physical connection with people. I remember waiting for my parents to pick me up right there at the pickup line, and I would always talk to people. I'd see people walking, and in the library. You never realize how many people you talk to or you've grown a connection with until there's no bus stop anymore.

I miss the random things that would happen. Someone would walk up and do a magic trick. The birds would be crazy one day. These small events that happened don't happen anymore.

I miss hiding under the awnings after lunch when all the seagulls would swoop down because of the bell. I remember we all used to run and hide under our binders. West Covina is a very interesting place with a lot of people and lots to do. I never really thought about going to prom. I thought it's a hundred bucks. I might not go. Now that that decision has been taken away from me, it hurts a little more. The things that West Covina is known for: our rallies, our dances, aren't available anymore. That's the part that hurts.

I remember I was in the choir and really involved with the theater program.

I remember our teacher sending out a reminder that our concert was canceled.

I remember the reminder saying that we will schedule a new concert, all activity has stopped for now, and we will see you guys when we come back. None of that has happened. I

remember thinking this is perfect; we have

time to learn the songs we don't know. Now that we have all the time in the world, we want to be back in school under all that pressure.



Global Public Workshops

The Meaningful Life

World Mental Health Day Online Workshop, North America

What kind of journey will my life take today?

Will I be alone or with other people?

What will make me happy today?

How can I make other people happy today?

How can I associate with good people?

How can I get love from other people?

How can I get trust from people?

How is youth important to society?

I want peace and harmony today

I want to create a delicious meal

Smiling and love connections between people

Being with family would be wonderful

But not possible at this time

Memories of shared times will bring me joy

Creating a meal to share will make me happy

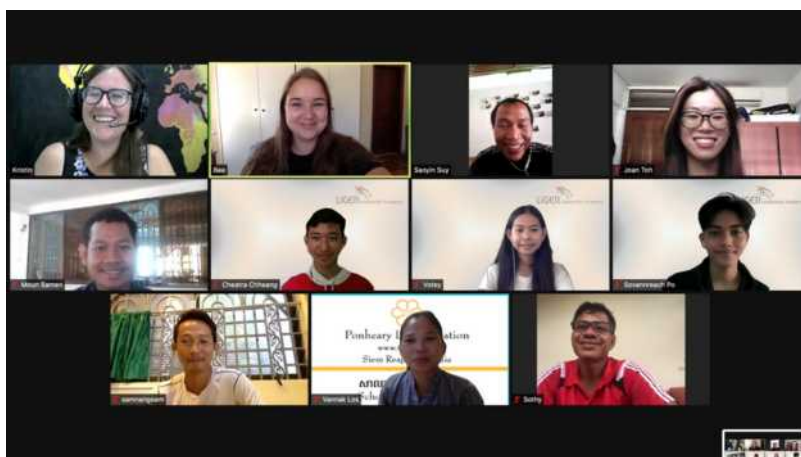
The aromas and laughter fill the room

New memories will be created today

Kindness and honesty will make people trust you

Being positive and open

Today's journey brings me meaning.



Speak the Moment

World Mental Health Day Online Workshop, Asia

Dusk, I speak the moment with nature

Love, I speak the moment with safety, comfort and familiarity

Dawn, I will speak the moment with joy for another day

Bond, I will speak the moment with joy from the bottom of my heart

Forever, I will speak the moment of the spark

Together, we will build a foundation of connection within ourselves

Magic, we will seek it together no matter how much time it takes

Bond, love, joy, these are all I need

