


Writing Through



Newsletter

Summer 2023



Summer 2023

The first half of 2023 has been a whirlwind of workshops, development and growth. We are so excited to update you on the beginning of one of the biggest years of Writing Through yet!

Workshops

20 Workshops

3 countries

258 Participants

New Partners

Cambodia

This year, Writing Through has gained three new Cambodian partners! We have been in discussions with all of them since 2021 and were thrilled to finally be able to hold the workshops this year. A Place To Be Yourself is a drop-in/resource center for the LGBTQ+ community; over 6 Sundays starting in February, Bee ran a workshop around the theme of 'Being Yourself.' Last year's Volunteer of the Year, Steve Scena, ran our first workshop with the teachers at HUSK Cambodia in March; they all wrote about their 'Dreams' and even made the founders tear up during the Big Event. And then just last month, Bee ran a workshop with the teachers of Stepping Stones School. It was a week full of laughter, interesting ideas and the development of new skills.



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Stepping Stones
Cambodia



USA

Sue continues to use her home of Martha's Vineyard as a model for how to develop a Writing Through presence in local US communities. So far this year, she ran two successful workshops for new Partners, with differing target populations. At the Up-Island Council on Aging, she met once a week for 5 weeks with a group of older writers, urging them to use their "beginner's brain" to reinvigorate their creativity. Their Big Event was held several weeks later at a winter-season community poetry night, to great applause and much fun.

Then, she started meeting once a week with five middle-school immigrant teens. Although their primary languages were Portuguese and Spanish, they worked together to investigate the theme of Connections in English. This was an especially fascinating workshop in that it was held at the Misty Meadows Equine Learning Center, and experiences with the horses themselves were used as the prompts. Many members of the Misty Meadows Board of Directors came to the Big Event to witness first hand the accomplishments and bravery of these young men who are navigating the move to a new country, a new language, a new culture and a new community. As so often happens, there were tears and hugs at the end, and we are already working with Misty Meadows to develop more workshops to be held over the coming months.



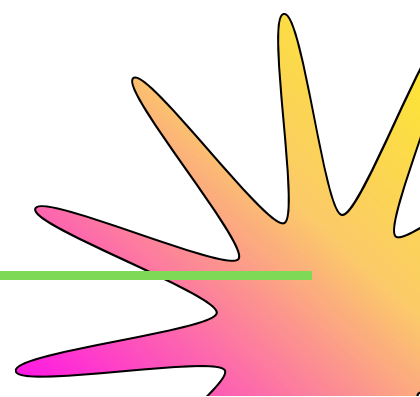
Mexico

After spending a few months in Cambodia leading workshops, our wonderful volunteer Steve Scena headed back to his home in Mexico. Last year, he connected Writing Through with some local organizations in Oaxaca and this year he has been continuing to build momentum! He has led workshops with two new partners and has a second workshop with Oaxaca Learning Centre in September.

The first workshop he completed in 2023 was with a group of secondary school teachers in the Etlas region. This was an interesting workshop because the teachers were eager to learn new strategies for engaging their students and Steve was able to use their own experience of challenges in the classroom as a prompt for their journal and story writing. He was joined by Xiran, one of this year's Wesleyan interns, who also thoroughly enjoyed the workshop.

The second workshop is ongoing and is with *Multiversidad Mundo Sin Fronteras*, a public university for students with big dreams and without the means to study privately. Their mission is very much in line with ours and we cannot wait to see how the workshop goes!

As always, a big thanks to Steve for all of his hard work in bringing his passion for Writing Through to his local community.



Summer 2023

Amazing Interns

This summer we welcomed our sixth cohort of Writing Through interns, and 2023 has us working with a larger group than ever. As always, we reached out to students at Wesleyan University to offer them a summer experience working in and learning about non-profit administration, including fundraising, communications and program development. Our full-time Wesleyan- Writing Through interns are Grace Kuth and Emma Condon, who are both rising seniors. They are also joined by Xiran Tan, who is summering in Mexico and working with our Facilitator there, Steve Scena. We are also pleased to have Sol Gonzalez join us from her home in Paraguay. Sol attends Yale-NUS in Singapore, and is focusing her efforts on researching the new regulations there surrounding non-profits, and helping us continue to build on our existing Singaporean Partnerships. We were especially pleased to have all four interns take part in the pilot of our new Facilitator Training Program. Their participation, creativity and insights were invaluable. Thank you Emma, Grace, Sol and Xiran for all your hard work and enthusiasm!



Candid Platinum Seal of Transparency

We are very proud to share that we have been awarded the Candid Platinum Seal of Transparency. This honour was bestowed by Guidestar, one of the world's largest indexes of nonprofits, with 1.7 million organisations listed. We pride ourselves on our transparency and this designation reflects our standards.

Platinum
Transparency
2023

Candid.

Summer 2023

Poetry Outreach Festival NYC

"Woodstock of the Spoken Word"

In May, Sue traveled to New York City to take part in the annual poetry festival sponsored by Poetry Outreach and CCNY (the City College of New York). Sue read poems by participants of workshops held in both Siem Reap and Oaxaca, as well as one of her own. Over the course of the day she was able to meet many like-minded people and continue the process of collaborating with Poetry Outreach, with an eye towards expanding the Writing Through programming into New York City Schools. Sue is also working with the team at Poetry Outreach, Pam Laskin and Alyssa Yankwitt, to develop a new program using the resources of both organizations. Alyssa traveled to Siem Reap in February to shadow Sue's annual facilitation of the Anjali House workshop. It was exciting to have her with the team in Siem Reap, and start brainstorming how our two organizations can work together.



Singapore Visit

Kristin went to Singapore for the first Writing Through visit since before COVID. The Singapore-based volunteers helped shape Writing Through from the beginning, not only facilitating workshops throughout Southeast Asia but also helping with strategy, planning and programming. Over the last few years, the landscape in Singapore has changed, thus this trip was vital to understand Singapore today. Kristin was graciously hosted by our board member, Trisha Craig and her insight was extremely helpful. She was also able to meet with our long-term partner, Society for Wings to begin planning a new type of workshop to more specifically meet their client needs. Kristin also had the great pleasure of finally meeting Andrea McKenna Brankin, one of our extremely dedicated volunteers, in person.

Summer 2023

New Training Pilot

Drum roll, please....Writing Through is happy to announce the launch of our new digital training program for Facilitators! This June, long-time Writing Through volunteer, Patty Bierley, led a pilot course for volunteers and staff living all around the globe. The course covered everything from Writing Through's pedagogy to classroom management. The course consisted of seven classes over the span of two weeks. In the first week, volunteers and staff reviewed communication strategies, discussing leadership skills, the complexities of cross-cultural work, and how to foster a creative environment. In week two, the course focused on the ins and outs of running a workshop, reviewing the structure and core belief system that backs the Writing Through process. Perhaps one of the most exciting aspects of this pilot course was the fruitful discussions our volunteers and staff were able to have, sharing teaching experiences and lessons from a wide array of backgrounds.

Looking forward, this course will allow Writing Through to reach a broader group of people, expanding the Writing Through family of Facilitators who can then bring our programs to their own communities. The course will officially begin this fall. If you'd be interested in joining, or know someone else who would, please contact us at info@writingthrough.org.



Board and Staff News

We are always proud of our hardworking and dedicated staff, but we are especially proud of our Deputy Director, Kristin Schuster, who just completed her Master's in Psychology and Neuroscience of Mental Health from Kings College, London. And if that wasn't enough in itself, she graduated With Distinction! Congratulations, Kristin!! And more congratulations are due...our Board member, Votey Cheav, also completed her course in the Executive MBA program at HEC Paris. Well done!

Summer 2023

Donor Spotlight

Writing Through would not be able to do all of our work without our donors' generous support. We want to take this opportunity to spotlight one of our most important supporters, J.D. Smith. He is a wonderful poet and playwright who truly understands the importance of our work. We truly appreciate his ongoing support since the beginning of Writing Through.



Why do you support Writing Through?

— “

I support Writing Through because learning to write well is crucial for thinking clearly and fully participating in the wider world, and these possibilities should be available for everyone regardless of how their life began. People who can write have ways to name and discuss their reality and find out they have a voice of their own. Whether their strengths ultimately lie with writing or something else altogether, they will increase the ability to realize their potential and benefit others as well as themselves.

” —

A big THANK YOU to JD and to all of our supporters.



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Ways to Support Writing Through

Become a Writing Through Champion

Writing Through is excited to announce a new and easy way to become a Sustaining Donor! With a small monthly donation, you can help us continue to fund workshops and creativity throughout the year. Reliable monthly donations would cover lulls in funding during off-seasons and encourage long-standing partnerships with individuals who are passionate about supporting our mission. For as little as \$5 a month, you can help support our Facilitators and volunteers in spreading Writing Through to more countries and communities. That's less than a latte! A little goes a long way here at Writing Through.

To become a Writing Through Champion, [click here!](#)

Alternatively, you can press the Sustaining Donor button under the [Help Change Lives](#) tab on our website. Our participants around the world thank you!

Other ways to support Writing Through

We continue to welcome one-time donations through our [website](#).

You can organize a fundraiser for us:

This is a way to connect with your community, have fun and help us raise money to reach even more people. Our aim is to continue as an international charity with a local footprint and by working within your local community, you can help us to continue achieving that goal.

For more information, help or guidance, please reach out to info@writingthrough.org

