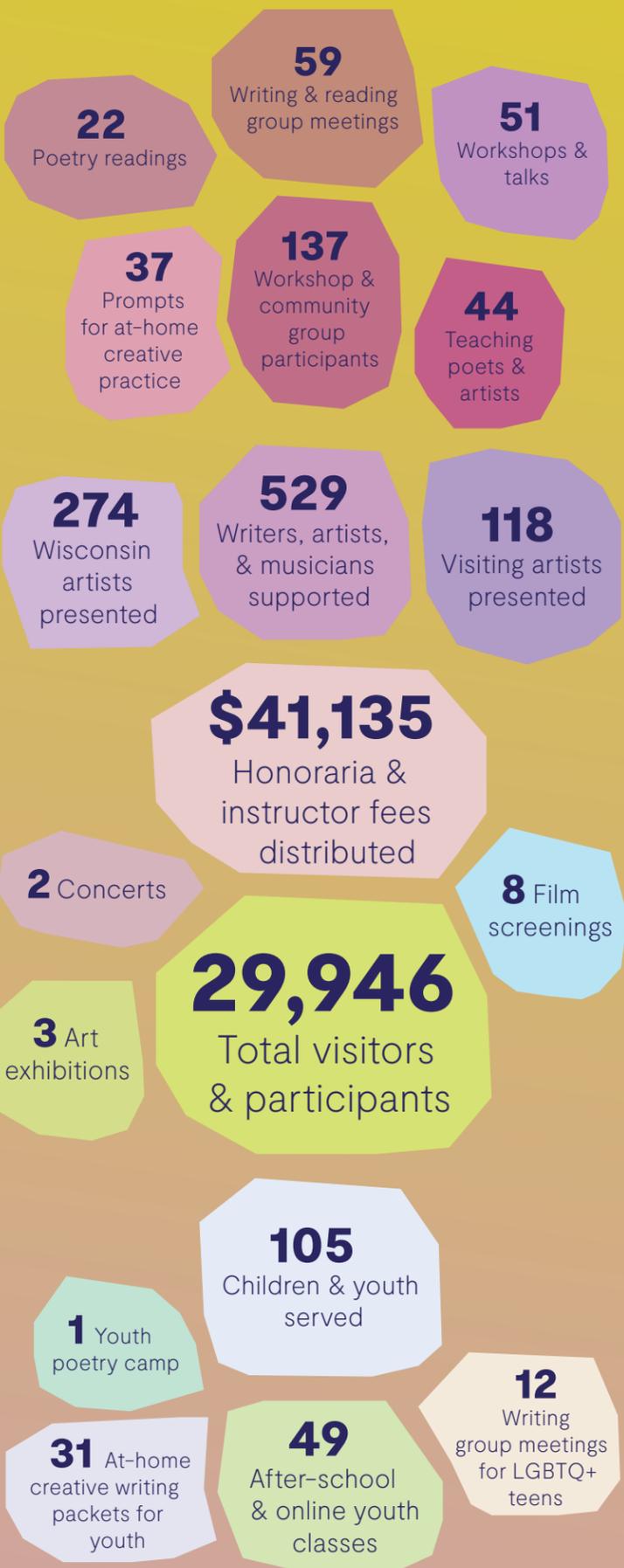


OUR IMPACT IN 2020



ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

NEA BIG READ

Just two months into the pandemic, our Big Read project brought together approximately 1,700 people to read and reflect on transgender poet Stephanie Burt's notable collection *Advice from the Lights*. With the help of a dozen local partner organizations, we distributed 500 free copies of the book, hosted seven virtual book discussions, presented a book-inspired film screening, created a community "quarantine" in response to Burt's poems, and offered a free online workshop and reading with the author. During a period of ever-intensifying isolation, the Big Read offered a ready means for widespread collaboration and connection, as well as an opportunity for important conversations about gender and broader themes of identity, just as calls for racial justice were spreading rapidly across the country. Nearly a year later, we remain grateful to have played a leading role in a project capable of creating new pathways for understanding differences of all kinds, especially during a defining moment in the lives of so many people.



THE FIRST FUNCTION OF POETRY

One of the biggest questions we faced in 2020 included the following: How do we—as a literary organization that reveres language and understands its power—respond to a contemporary culture marked by a terrifying rise in hate speech, toxic rhetoric, rampant propaganda, and relentless assaults on truth and science? One of our answers came in the form of a new series of readings, conversations, and workshops focused on the intersections between poetry and social justice. Taking its name from an observation made by the poet June Jordan—that "the first function of poetry is to tell the truth"—*The First Function of Poetry* so far has considered topics and issues ranging from ecology and urban gardening to mass incarceration, income inequality, and most recently the climate crisis. The next installment of the series will focus on refugee experience and diasporic communities, with more programs anticipated throughout 2021.

IN-NA-PO

Woodland Pattern has redoubled its commitment to Native poets and writers by entering into an exciting new partnership with In-Na-Po (Indigenous Nations Poets). Founded in 2020 by Kimberly Blaeser with a board of directors that includes U.S. Poet Laureate Joy Harjo, In-Na-Po recognizes the role of poetry in sustaining tribal sovereign nations and Native languages, and is committed to mentoring emerging writers, nurturing the growth of Indigenous poetic practices, and raising the visibility of all Native writers past, present, and future. Woodland Pattern will be a programming partner in years to come and is proudly serving now in an advisory capacity and as In-Na-Po's fiscal receiver as the organization commences its work.

VOICES FROM OUR COMMUNITY

"Woodland Pattern is a nonprofit of value, not only to the local community but to world culture."
—Robert Ragir, supporter

"Becoming involved in the life of Woodland Pattern over the past year during the months of quarantine has been both grounding and a joyful homecoming for me."
—Stacy Szymaszek, poet and former Director of the Poetry Project at St Mark's NYC

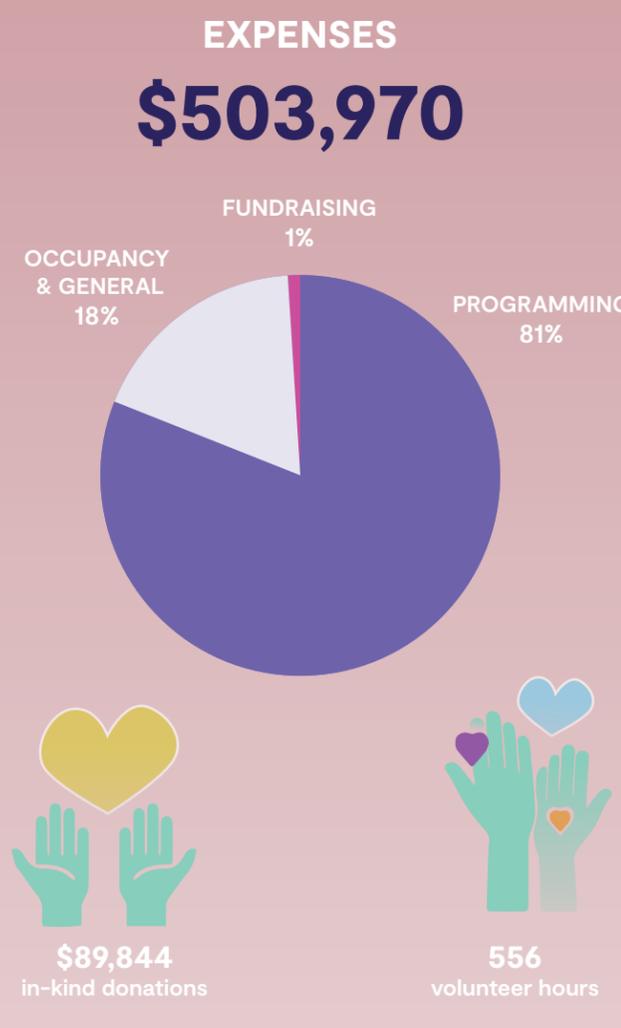
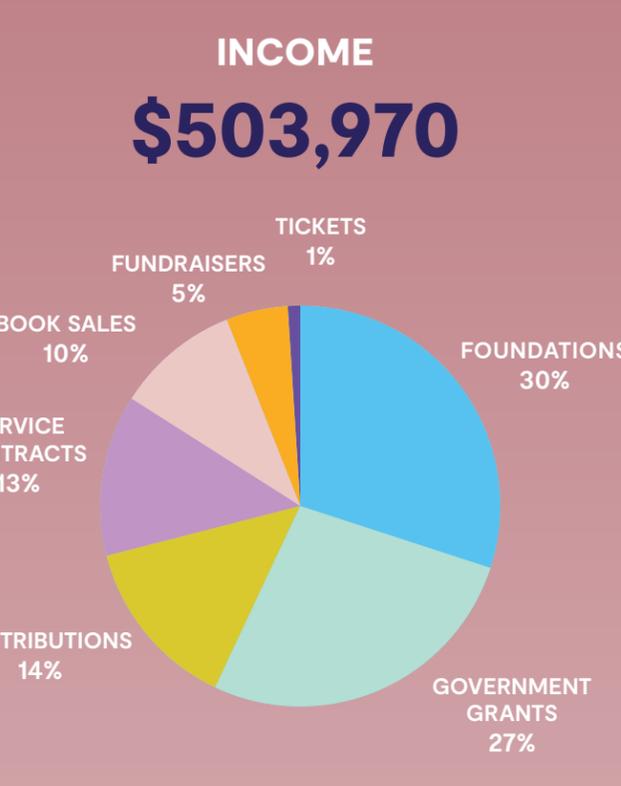
"We've hosted our events at Woodland Pattern, we carry our books at Woodland Pattern, and Woodland Pattern has just been very supportive of *Genre*, and at a lot of times when other people weren't."
—Nakeysha Roberts Washington, writer and founder of *Genre: Urban Arts*

"My sister lives in Milwaukee. Y'all are crucial to the cultural life of the city."
—Tongo Eisen-Martin, poet laureate of San Francisco

"In January 2018, I was part of a listserv that got an email asking for volunteers to help out at WP. I was eager to get involved some way in the Milwaukee writing community and, wow, what an amazing place to do that. I met some wonderful people: [staff members], other volunteers, brilliant local writers, kind people, generous with their art and time ...It's been amazing spending most of my time in Milwaukee getting to help this literary staple."
—RS Deeren, writer and volunteer

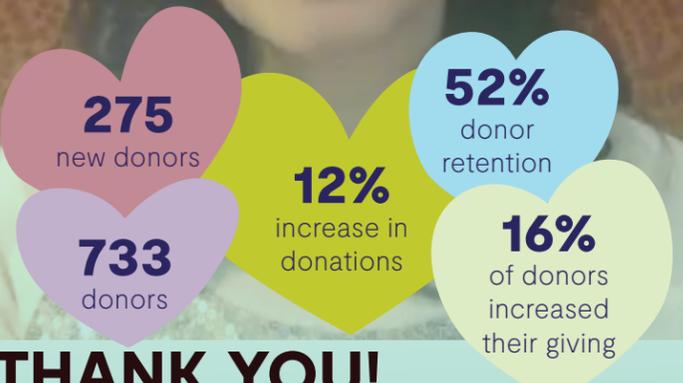
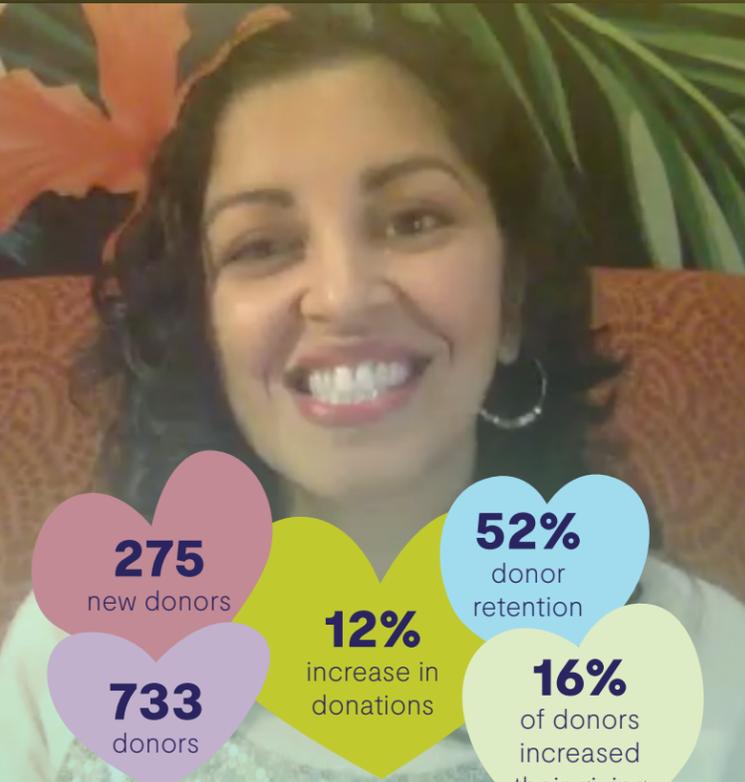
"Long before I stepped foot in Woodland Pattern, it loomed as a sort of myth or legendary site of inspiration for small-press culture. And so when I visited for the first time . . . I was surprised that the reality eclipsed the dream. It's simply one of the best places on earth."
—Josh Edwards, poet and editor of *Canarium Books*

2020 FINANCIAL REPORT



INVESTING IN A LIFETIME PRACTICE OF READING & WRITING

For four decades, your generosity has funded programs that promote advanced literacy and creative expression while encouraging exchange across the performing, visual, and literary arts. Now, we are happy to announce a way you can help ensure a Woodland Pattern for future generations. In the midst of last summer's economic uncertainty, a longtime supporter reached out to us and offered a \$50,000 match to open an endowment with the Greater Milwaukee Fund. Thanks to several wonderful additional supporters, we are now in a position to open the endowment! As you consider your giving this year and in the years to come, we hope you'll keep in mind this new opportunity to make a lasting impact.



THANK YOU!

In 2020, Woodland Pattern received private and public support from the following foundations and entities: Academy of American Poets (with funds from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation), Bader Philanthropies, Brico Fund, Gardner Foundation, Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Herzfeld Foundation, Camille A. Lonstorf Trust, Mellon Foundation, Poetry Foundation, Meyer & Norma Ragir Foundation, RDK Foundation, Jack & Lucille Rosenberg Fund, Christine A. Symchych & James P. McNulty Charitable Fund, Milwaukee Arts Board, Milwaukee County CAMPAC, Milwaukee County CARES for Arts & Culture, Milwaukee City Community Development Block Grant, MPS Partnership for the Arts & Humanities, National Endowment for the Arts, Wisconsin Arts Board, and Wisconsin CARES for Cultural Organizations.



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Destiny Fletcher
Elizabeth Hoover
Nikki Janzen
George Jones
David Kruger
Swar Masannat
Jenni Moody
Jessie Roy
CJ Scruton

Community Curators
Roberto Harrison
Unwriting Borders: Latinx Poetry Series
Jay Mollerskov
Formations Series for New & Improvised Music
Hal Rammel
Alternating Currents Live
Takahiro Suzuki
aCinema
Janelle Vanderkelen
aCinema

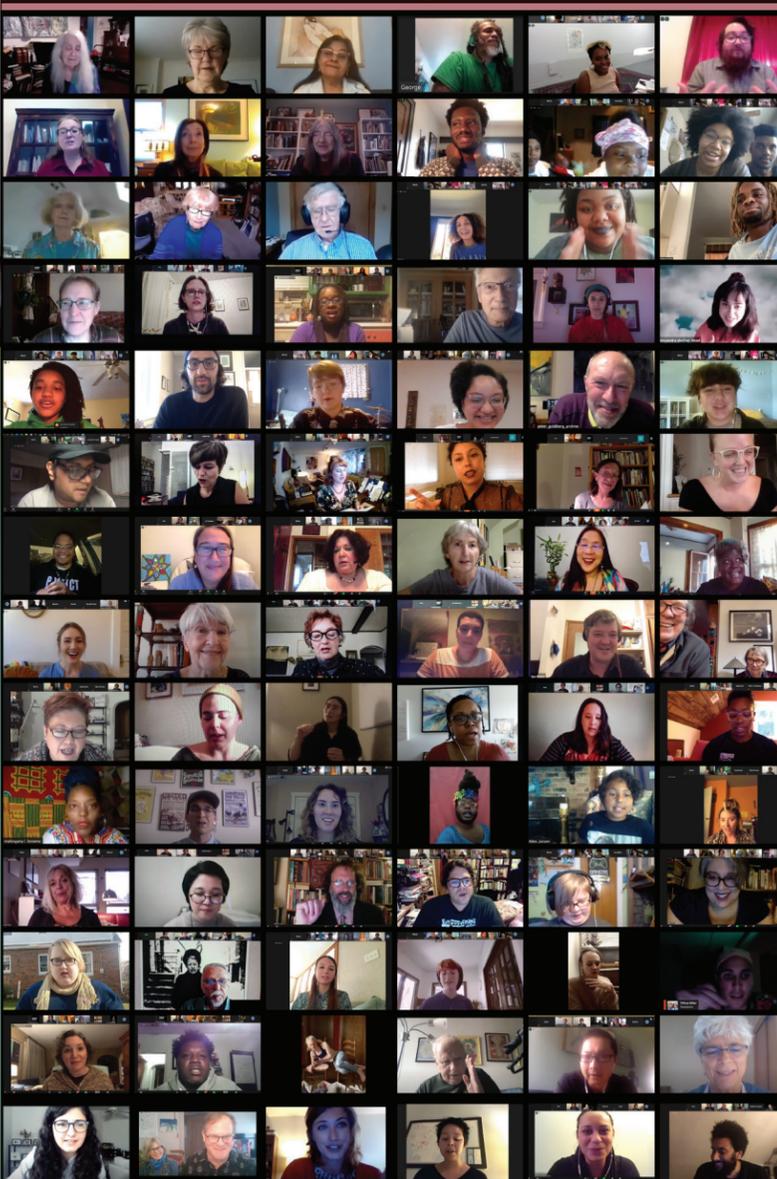
OUR TEAM

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WOODLAND PATTERN Book Center

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



Dedicated to the discovery, cultivation, and presentation of poetry, independent literature, and the arts.

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTORS



Welcome to the 2020 Woodland Pattern Annual Report—a glimpse back on a year unlike any other. Beyond writ-large juxtapositions of tragedy and perseverance, 2020 doesn't yield itself easily to summary, and attempting to characterize Woodland Pattern's year feels further complicated by a sense that we have ceased to mark time by a calendar but are rather observing it through the mercurial seasons of a pandemic.

That said, last year was a transformative one for our organization. We found new ways of gathering and persisting through virtual programs that projected us into one another's homes. To our astonishment, attendance for our many online readings, workshops, and other events regularly included people from all over the world, while our *Prompts Against Anxiety* series engaged thousands of people over email and social media. The pandemic was also a catalyst for completing various tech projects: We built a brand-new website last spring and launched an online "book center" in July. And perhaps most importantly, we found ourselves collaborating passionately and deeply with our local and national community. In so doing, we've laid the groundwork for a number of post-pandemic endeavors, including—with Milwaukee and Wisconsin Poet Laureate Dasha Kelly Hamilton—a Youth Poet Laureate program that we hope will soon make creative writing curricula a mainstay in high schools across the city.

None of these things would have been possible without you—our members, donors, board of directors, staff, visiting artists, instructors, volunteers, and friends. 2020 was a stressful and painful year, one which could have borne very different outcomes for Woodland Pattern. Without public and private relief funding or support from you, it is highly probable we would not be writing you this letter! Your care and kindness have made all the difference. So, please, accept our heartfelt gratitude for your part in having ferried Woodland Pattern through.

With many thanks,

Jenny Gropp & Laura Solomon
Executive Directors

WAYS YOU CAN SUPPORT OUR MISSION IN 2021

- ◇ Volunteer
- ◇ Become a member
- ◇ Make a financial or in-kind donation
- ◇ Become a recurring donor
- ◇ Sponsor a fundraiser
- ◇ Support our capital campaign
- ◇ Give to our endowment fund