

**MAINE
HUMANITIES
COUNCIL**

Harriet P. Henry
Center for the Book

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Portland, Maine 04102-1012
(207) 773-5051
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**2020
ANNUAL REPORT**

JOIN THE DISCUSSION

*"I'm glad this program
continued even though we
can't get together physically.
This group helps me feel
more comfortable sharing
with others. It is important
to stay connected."*

- Participant



JOIN THE **MHC**

We connect...people with books, communities with ideas, and strangers with one another.

The **Maine Humanities Council** is a statewide non-profit organization that uses books, poetry, and big ideas to bring people together to discuss issues of importance. We're a program partner, grantmaker, and connector of people and communities. Our connections strengthen our society and help shape the future of Maine. As Maine's affiliate of the **National Endowment for the Humanities** (NEH), we offer humanities programs and grants for all Mainers.



MEETING THE NEEDS OF MAINE COMMUNITIES

Our 2020 began on Friday, March 13, when the team left the office for what would turn out to be the last time. None of us anticipated what was to come: The global pandemic, the national racial reckoning set in motion by the murder of George Floyd, everything about the long presidential election and transfer of political power.

We had to examine closely what was essential. How could we meet Maine communities' real needs? We knew that connecting Mainers with one another, fostering individual and community agency, and inspiring increased civic engagement is vital work; we quickly learned that in-person interactions are just one of many ways to do it. 2020 became a year of hard-won clarity, experiment, and growth for the Maine Humanities Council.

Our 2021 began on Monday, March 8 – the first day on the job for our new Associate Director, Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib. Samaa brings a tremendous depth and breadth of knowledge and experience. As we keep moving through this time full of grief and possibility, we know that her galvanizing leadership will help us bring our vision closer to reality.

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HARRIET P. HENRY CENTER FOR THE BOOK

The Maine Humanities Council is home to the Harriet P. Henry Center for the Book, Maine's affiliate for the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress. The Library of Congress Center for the Book was established in 1977 to promote books, reading, libraries, and literacy. In 1997 the Maine Humanities Council established the Maine Center for the Book as a state affiliate of that program. It was renamed the Harriet P. Henry Center for the Book in 2003, in honor of Maine's first female judge, a former Board chair of MHC and a longtime supporter of the humanities.

Artwork: Eamon White

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Heather Sirocki, Scarborough

Iva Sussman, Houlton

HOW TO REACH US:

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Portland, Maine 04102-1012
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@MaineHumanities
#MaineHumanities

Emergency Relief Funding

The MHC was honored to award rapid-response coronavirus relief funding to help ensure that vital cultural organizations across the state could continue finding creative ways to meet their communities' needs.

These grants were provided as part of the \$2.2 trillion **CARES Act** economic stabilization plan via the **National Endowment for the Humanities**.

over **\$432,000** in operating support for nonprofit cultural organizations

98 grants awarded

16 Maine counties and both congressional districts represented



Essential DISCUSSIONS

In the summer of 2020, in the midst of pandemic, the Maine Humanities Council launched a substantial new program: the **Discussion Project**.

When we asked partners how we could help them through the unfolding emergency we were – are – all living in, they said ‘keep doing what you do.’ But in order to keep doing what we do, we had to change how we do it.

So we did. We developed a way to offer our facilitated discussion programming directly, openly, flexibly to anyone in Maine who wants to bring people together through books.

The fourth cohort Discussion Project partners are already preparing for summer 2021.



"We are invited to practice openness and curiosity, patience and persistence, and ability to tolerate complexity, ambiguity, tentativeness, and vulnerability. A willingness to pay attention – to see better and with fresh eyes." - Participant



"Bringing people together from different Maine communities, even communities that are geographically far apart, was helpful to my experience of being a Mainer." - Participant

Accessible Online EVENTS

The shift online was also an opportunity for us to clarify and then amplify key aspects of two public-facing programs, as well as extending their reach.

Read ME is our statewide summer reading experience highlighting two Maine authors. By holding author events online, we were really able to offer events that anyone in Maine could attend.

And we were able to work more expansively with partners on our collaborative poetry performance program, **Poetry Express**. At the same time, the online events kept the intimacy among performers and their friends and family that makes Poetry Express so extraordinary.



SHARING SKILLS

"I was at first very hesitant about online meetings but I found them to be lively and valuable. I think it is really important for people to have this for sharing ideas and reaching beyond our isolation." - Participant

When the pandemic began, the Maine Humanities Council had never hosted a program online. Within a month, we were offering skillshares across Maine demonstrating **how to host meaningful discussions on Zoom**.

How? First MHC staff immediately started learning from others about hosting rich online meetings. As soon as we could, we sought expert help to develop our skillshare on hosting text-based discussions online.

Then we practiced and practiced and practiced.

By acting quickly and sharing as we were learning **we brought over 130 people together** to gain crucial new skills during the stark opening months of the pandemic.

By the Numbers

IMPACT

139 community programs

95% of attendees feel more connected to their community

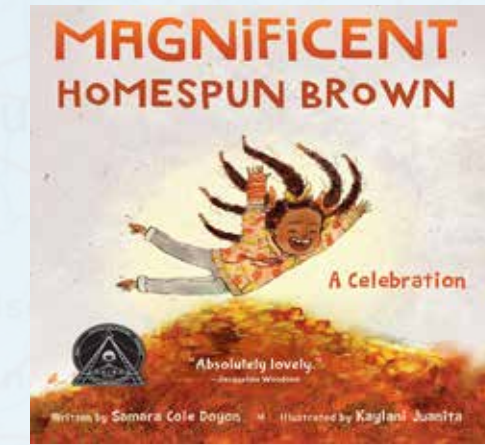
78% of attendees feel inspired to consider their personal connection with Maine - its past, present, and future.

95% of attendees feel inspired to learn more about a topic discussed in their program

2020 MAJOR GRANT Awards

Century Saturdays: The Story of Maine- Brick Store Museum
 Edible Landscape Project- University of Maine Art Education
 Freedom and Captivity- Creative Portland
 The History of Developmental Disabilities in Maine
 - Maine Developmental Disabilities Council
 Kittery's Tide History - Tide Mill Institute
 Maine Lit Fest Fellows Program- Maine Writers & Publishers Alliance
 Molly Spotted Elk: Theatrical Script Development- Penobscot Theatre Company
 Point of View: A Podcast of Maine Migrations,
 Immigrations, and Cultural Exchange- Portland Ovarions
 Screenings of Maine Documentary Jacinta- Ride or Die
 Under a Yellow Star- Oxford Hills School District

For all 2020 MHC
 Grant awards visit
mainehumanities.org



MHC Featured
Samara Cole Doyon's *Magnificent Homespun Brown* at Library of Congress National Book Festival.

Jaed Coffin & Pat O'Donnell
 Over 830 views

Online
 Read ME
 Author Talks

NATIONAL BOOK FESTIVAL

Online **POETRY EXPRESS** Events
 Two community poetry readings | Over 1,500 views

REMOTE FACILITATION Training

Nine trainings | Over 130 attendees

May

April

June

August

September

October

CARES ACT GRANT Awards

98 grants totaling
 Over \$432,000

Virginie Akimana
 Alice Pendleton Library
 Bangor Public Library
 Susan Bowditch
 Cynthia Freeman-Cyr
 Indigo Arts Alliance
 Kennebunk Free Library
 Deborah Cummings Khadraoui
 Ladder to the Moon Network/
 Amjambo Africa
 Lewiston Public Library
 Liberty Library
 Maine Access Points
 Maine Family Planning
 Maine State Prison
 Maine Women's Lobby
 Education Fund

DISCUSSION PROJECT Inaugural Cohort

Cody Mower
 Naples Public Library
 and Casco Public Library
 Osher Map Library and Smith Center
 for Cartographic Education
 Pittsfield Public Library
 Rockland Public Library
 Shaw Public Library
 Southern Maine Agency on Aging
 Southern Maine Conservation Collaborative
 Southern Maine Women's Re-entry Center
 Topsham Public Library
 Walker Memorial Library
 Walter T.A. Hansen Memorial Library
 West Paris Public Library
 Yarmouth Committee for Housing Choices

Fall MINI GRANT Awards

Eight projects
 Over \$7,500
 awarded

Fall DISCUSSION PROJECT

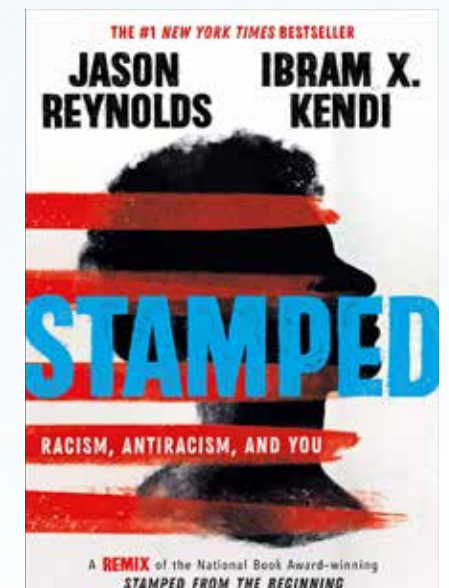
Over 30 communities
 Across 14 counties

For all 2020 MHC
 Discussion Project cohorts visit
mainehumanities.org

2020 Top READ

Featured in
19
 Discussion Projects

Over
350
 copies in Maine
 communities



GRANTS

10 MAJOR GRANTS

36 MINI GRANTS

10 ARTS & HUMANITIES GRANTS
in partnership w/Maine Arts Commission

16 MAINE COUNTIES

TOTAL AMOUNT AWARDED **\$81,951**

FEATURED PROJECT:

MAINE DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL is creating an exhibit and associated events that tell the history of people with developmental disabilities in Maine during the era of institutionalism. The exhibit will incorporate oral histories from people who lived at Pineland Center, an institution founded in 1908 in New Gloucester. Rampant abuses and neglect at Pineland and elsewhere were exposed in the middle of the 20th century, leading to a movement for disability rights. Self-advocates and their allies fought to close Pineland (which happened in 1996) and create a system of services that would serve people with developmental disabilities in their homes and communities. Within this tragic of history stigmatization, isolation, and abuse live stories of perseverance, joy, and progress towards something better.

Photo: Kyle Dubay

Readers RETREAT

Many Readers ONE BOOK

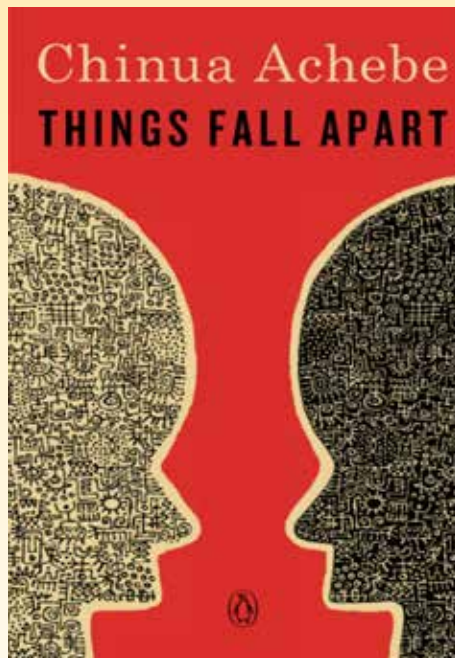
A year ago, our 2020 Winter Weekend on Toni Morrison's *Beloved* was our last big in-person event before the pandemic.

As we have so often this year, we looked closely at what was most vital to that program and sought ways to bring it to life in an online setting.

The result is our first big on-line event since the pandemic started – the 2021 Readers Retreat on **Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart***. Listen to four extraordinary speakers. Talk about it all with others. Find people you know and meet those you don't yet. All online.

JOIN THE DISCUSSION
MAY 6-8, 2021

TICKETS at
mainehumanities.org



IT HAPPENS STATEWIDE THANKS TO YOU

Last year was a challenging one, but Maine Humanities Council supporters pulled through in a big way. You helped us weather a stormy sea, ensuring that we had the funds for the tools we needed to build the boat that would take our programming forward. Your gifts were crucial in supporting our 2020 work – online discussion groups, virtual speaker talks, facilitator mentorship initiatives – throughout the state. And you gave us room to make our vision real, despite the storm. **Thank you for your incredible generosity.**

All gifts received by the Maine Humanities Council during Fiscal Year 2020 (11/1/2019 - 10/31/2020) are represented in these pages. If you donated after this time, you'll be thanked in our next Annual Report.

Ways to GIVE

Would you like to support the programming mentioned in this publication, and other MHC projects around the state?

Online: mainehumanities.org

A monthly gift: only \$15 each month results in a \$180 total gift; \$50 per month gives \$600 by the year's end; and \$85 ends up being a generous \$1,020.

A qualified charitable distribution through your IRA, or gift of stock.

ANNUAL GIVING – FISCAL YEAR 2020

Federal, State, Corporate, Organizational, and Foundation Grants

Betterment Fund
Margaret E. Burnham Charitable Trust
Davis Family Foundation
Federation of State Humanities Councils/Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
Helen & George Ladd Charitable Corporation
Morton-Kelly Charitable Trust
Kettering Foundation
National Endowment for the Humanities
The Onion Foundation
Simmons Foundation
State of Maine
Welch Charitable Fund of the Maine Community Foundation

Gifts from Individuals

Donors to the MHC generously supported our statewide humanities programming through the following funds: the Annual Fund, Winter Weekend (the program is now called Readers Retreat), program-specific support, and the Dorothy Schwartz Opportunity Fund. This list includes gift made during our 2020 fiscal year: between November 1, 2019, and October 31, 2020. The asterisk recognizes sponsors of Winter Weekend (Readers Retreat).

MHC Circle (\$5,000+)

Victoria and Allen Bornheimer
Brooks Family Foundation
Josephine H. Detmer
William H. Laubenstein III*
Virginia Swain

MHC Circle (\$2,500 - \$4,999)

Richard E. Barnes
Carol M. Beaumier*
Kenneth Spier and Joan Leitzer
from a component fund of the
Maine Community Foundation
Suzanne Trazoff*

MHC Circle (\$1,000 - \$2,499)

Peter Aicher
Hayden and Meredith Anderson
Patti and Eric Bixel
Lawrence Boyle and Victoria Russell*
Helen Cafferty and Otto Emersleben
in memory of Dorothy Schwartz
Douglas Chamberlain
Joseph A. Conforti

Jean Deighan and Glen Porter
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Alfred & Dorothy Suzi Osher Foundation
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Community Foundation
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John and Maryanne Ward
Pip and Judy Wick*
Carol Wishcamper

\$750 - \$999

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Angela J. Connelly
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\$500 - \$749

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Peter and Margie Webster*
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Mr. and Mrs. Daniel A. Zilkha

\$250 - \$499

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in honor of Rebecca and
the SMAA book group
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Marjorie A. Boyd, MD*
Paul Buck
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Anthony Corrado
Marilyn Crowley
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\$100 - \$249

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and William McFarlane*
Victoria and Erno Bonebakker
Emily and Norman Breitner
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**\$100 - \$249
(continued)**

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\$50 - \$74

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Shannon Webster
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Up to \$49

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Frances Betz
Martha Binder
Deborah Bowman
Geraldine Bush
Joan Bussiere
Ann Carter
Roderick and Judy Collette

Margaret Cruikshank
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 in honor of Rockport Library
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Dani Longley
Pamela Lowe*
Stephen and Martha Maines
 for the Let's Talk About It program
Blainor McGough and Brian Arlet
Abbott and Nancy Meader
Barbara Moore
Margaret R. Muir
Pauline Polstein
Marta Rieman
Winfield and Victoria Robinson
Sarah Sparks
 in memory of George Floyd
Seth and Laura Sprague
Michael Starr
Susan L. Tananbaum and
 Joe Frazer
Linda Tatelbaum
Yolanda Theunissen and
 Richard C. Veit
Rosie Wohl
Les Volland
K.S. Walker
Shannon Webster
Roxanne Wheeler
Rose Wohl

THE STATE OF OUR STORY 2020

During Fiscal Year 2020, the Maine Humanities Council had operating income of \$1,839,766 and operating expenses of \$1,819,952. Grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, including highly competitive grants, made up an important component of the budget. This support was supplemented by a diverse range of other income streams: from the Library of Congress, the State of Maine, generous support from private foundations, the individual contributions highlighted in this report, and program income and investments. Both the income and the expense figures reported in this figure below and in the Maine Humanities Council's audited financial statements include in-kind contributions of time, mileage, and materials, valued at \$194,750.

REVENUES 2019 — 2020

National Endowment for the Humanities	\$1,144,431.00
State of Maine Funding	\$68,504.00
Contributions and Grants	\$184,784.00
In-kind Contributions	\$194,750.00
Program, Investment, and Other Income	\$247,307.00

TOTAL \$1,839,776.00

EXPENSES 2019 — 2020

Programs, Re grants, and Technical Assistance	\$1,433,861.00
Administration	\$195,781.00
Fundraising & Marketing	\$190,310.00

TOTAL \$1,819,952.00