ANNUAL REPORT
2019
MISSION & VISION

WHO WE SERVE

What Cheer Writers Club supports Rhode Island's makers of the written, spoken and illustrated word, including:

- Authors, Journalists, Playwrights & Poets
- Illustrators & Graphic Novelists
- Editors, Translators & Indie Publishers
- Podcasters & Spoken Word Artists

OUR MISSION

The Club's mission is to help these makers feel supported, find community and have access to the tools they need to succeed in their craft. We seek to burnish Rhode Island's reputation as a place where these creators, and their stories, can thrive.

OUR HISTORY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 2018</td>
<td>What Cheer Writers Club is founded as an RI nonprofit</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 2018</td>
<td>Grand Opening of space in downtown PVD &amp; programming launched</td>
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<td>April 2019</td>
<td>The Club hits 100 Members</td>
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<td>Dec 2019</td>
<td>Named Who to Watch by Providence Monthly</td>
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<td>June 2018</td>
<td>Beta testing the space begins</td>
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<td>First Member joins!</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 2019</td>
<td>Podcasting Studio opens</td>
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<td>July 2019</td>
<td>Voted Best Writing Club by Rhode Island Monthly</td>
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Writing is a solitary craft, and many content creators work in isolation with little financial support. The Club draws these creatives into a sustaining network, validating their work as important and vital to the creative life of our state. Already over 300 members have found inspiration, support and productivity at the Club, a testament to the need for a community dedicated to the cultivation of the content arts in Rhode Island.
What Cheer Writers Club acts as an umbrella organization, connecting local arts nonprofits, literary organizations, bookstores and publishers with resources such as free meeting space and event promotion. By unifying the Rhode Island content arts community, the Club elevates the state’s profile as a literary destination.

**WE SERVE:**

**Arts Organizations**
Reading with Robin
RI Council for the Humanities
RI Latino Arts

**Bookstores**
Rifraf Bookstore & Bar
Symposium Books
Twenty Stories Bookstore

**Media**
Media Education Labs
Motif magazine
Northern Command Studios
Patty J.com
The Public's Radio

"Collaboration between What Cheer and Frequency has been stellar...From affordable space for our classes to space for board meetings."
- Rekha Rosha, Frequency Writers Board Chair

**Writing Groups**
Providence Writers Group
RI Podcasting Club
Sci/Fi Fantasy Writers Group
Screenwriters Group

**writers organizations**
ARIA
Endless Beautiful
Frequency Writers
Goat Hill Writers
GrubStreet
The Club's monthly meet-ups are a space for creators to connect and share work through events such as a podcast listening party, a designer/writer meet-up and several open mics.

“It was great to be with likeminded people who are all attempting to do the same thing.”
—Matt Ferrara, Local Podcaster

“What Cheer has done a great job of letting artists know that there is a place that they can go to not just write their work, but share their work.”
—Damont Combs, Local Poet
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

400+ WRITERS ATTENDED MONTHLY PRACTICUMS

Each month the Writers Club holds free for members, low-cost for nonmembers, workshops on growing and sustaining a profession for RI creators and their work.

Grants
with Rhode Island State Council for the Arts (RISCA)

Publicity
with PR professionals Marilyn Busch, Karen Greco & Tess Woods

Audio Storytelling
with The Public's Radio & The MHC Group

Healthcare
with HealthSource RI & Blackstone Valley Community Health Care

Freelancing
with Providence Journal, Motif magazine, RI Monthly, & Newport Daily News

Interview Tips
with SpartanUp podcast producer Marion Abrams

Crowdfunding
with Anne Holland & Maureen Taylor of The Photo Detective

Publishing
with ARIA president Steve Porter, Mike Squatrito, Karen Greco & Robert Isenberg

RISCA’s Mollie Flanagan instructs local writers on how to apply for grants to support creative work.
CONNECTING WRITERS WITH OPPORTUNITIES

The Club acts as an amplifier to the many stories imagined and told across Rhode Island. We do this by promoting publications, readings, podcast launches, fellowships, grants and other honors received by our Members.

Additionally, we connect our Members with opportunities for publication and professional development through the RIters Resource e-newsletter and across social media channels.

820+
RITERS RESOURCE READERS

A bi-weekly e-newsletter featuring Club events, workshops, profiles of local creatives and grant deadlines.

2275+
FOLLOWERS

The Club’s social media feed @whatcheerclub broadcasts Member successes, events and opportunities across the state.
The Club was designed specifically for the writer, the illustrator, the translator, the editor, the podcaster to feel comfortable and professional.

10,000+ COWORKING HOURS

One of the founding ideas behind What Cheer Writers Club was affordable and accessible space where Rhode Island creatives could work on their personal projects and creative endeavors.

The Club’s cozy writing nooks, large drafting tables, window seats and reading chairs are available seven days and three nights a week for local creatives to work at half the cost of regular shared workspace.

"The Club is quiet, comfortable and I get more done here on nights and weekends than I do anywhere else!"

—Kate, Local Illustrator
“Working at What Cheer helps me live my best creative life... When I take the elevator up to the 2nd floor at 160 Westminster, I feel like creative Batman checking into his state-of-the-art lair. It allows me to set boundaries and not get crushed by my projects.”

—Lucas Pralle, Local Writer

8,875+

CUPS OF COFFEE

The Club provides unlimited complimentary coffee, tea and local spring water to writers.
Many podcasters create in low-cost, makeshift home studios. The Club’s Studio offers new and experienced podcasters access to an economical and professional recording space, as we educate new podcasters in the art of audio.

The Club’s podcast focuses on professional tips and advisories for writers, journalists, illustrators, indie publishers and podcasters across Rhode Island.

“It’s akin to any radio studio I’ve ever worked in... excellent mics, excellent equipment.”
—Cecil Hickman, Local Podcaster
Podcasting 101, the Club’s free-to-Members workshop, introduces the resources needed to launch a podcast with hands-on experience in the Podcasting Studio.

By lowering barriers of entry to storytellers across Rhode Island, the Club hopes to **amplify voices within the diverse communities** that make up our state.

“I’ve been looking for a practical guide to all this information for years…the class provides an excellent ‘launching-off’ point from which to experiment and learn more.”

—Podcasting 101 Student
A PLACE TO MEET

300+ HOURS OF FREE ROOM RENTALS

Members enjoy free room rentals for meetings and classes in support of content creation. Organizations that held writing classes, meetings, write-ins and workshops at the Club included:

- Frequency Writers
- GrubStreet
- PVD Writers Group
- RI Podcasting Club
- RI Screenwriters Group
- SciFi & Fantasy Writers Group
- Society for Children’s Book Writers & Illustrators

Note: When not in use by Members, the Club’s meeting rooms are available to organizations.

Rental clients include: BookBub, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Palantir, Upserve, and more. 100% of rental income goes to support the Club’s nonprofit activities.
PUBLICIZING THE LITERARY LIFE OF OUR STATE

1,300+
LOCAL EVENTS FEATURED

The Club publishes a free weekly calendar of literary events entitled Pressing Matters to uplift Rhode Island's identity as a place where literary creators and their fans can thrive. Some things we publicize:

- Local author book signings
- RI podcast launches
- Community library book sales
- Local reading series

1,465+
FOLLOWERS OF PRESSING MATTERS

The e-newsletter and social feed, @whatcheerpress, reach readers across the state.

“"The literary scene has exploded, and Providence really feels like a vibrant community for readers and writers now...In downtown Providence...What Cheer Writers Club has helped to centralize news about literary resources and events, and that has helped a great deal.”

—Emma Ramadan, Cofounder of Riffraff Bookstor

Club Staff at a local bookstore for Club Member Vanessa Lillie’s debut book launch.
FINANCIALS

**FY2019 Operating Income***

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Donations</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>$133,291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writer Services</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>$52,868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Rentals</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>$10,061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podcasting Revenue</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>$4,023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Income</td>
<td>$199,380</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FY2019 Operating Expenses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programming</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>$169,318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>$23,651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>$5,988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expenses</td>
<td>$197,004</td>
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*Note: These financials are unaudited. The Club received its 501c3 status in early Fall of 2019, and relied on donations received from literary minded donors. We have already secured, and will continue to secure, grants for the 2020 FY.

Additional Notes:
- The Club does not rely solely on income from Members due to the inherent financial instability in their professions.
- When not in use by our Members, the Club rents meeting rooms to outside organizations for income.
- Podcasting revenue is derived from low-cost ($10/hour) Studio rentals and from $10 admission for non-members to Podcasting 101.
1
SERVING WRITERS STATEWIDE
The Club will structure 2020 programming on bringing communities together around niche interests and genres. The Club will also serve creatives across RI by offering offsite programming and resources to communities outside of downtown Providence and by broadcasting Club services at events around the state.

2
SOLVING FOR SPACE
The Club anticipates membership growth to reach 500+ in 2020, with 175 of those members coworking. To meet needs such as private offices, expanded communal and kitchen areas, phone booths, etc., the Club will investigate real estate and rental options in Providence.

3
FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY
At just $5–$10 a month, Membership dues pay for just a fraction of the Club’s expenses. The Club will focus on obtaining grants, donations and sponsorships to ensure sustainability. The Club will launch campaigns aimed at organizations who provide additional income through room rentals.

4
STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS
The Club will grow as an umbrella organization, strengthening relationships with local writer–based organizations by promoting their events and by extending hours to accommodate for evening classes, encouraging them to make use of free rentals for writing classes and groups.
"The rapid growth in our membership speaks to how many creatives are among us, and how much they want to meet and collaborate. The Club provides a venue for these partnerships. We have podcasters who have found producers, screenwriters who've found script readers, freelancers who've found editors, poets who've found venues to read their work, writers who've found publishers. The community continues to build."

—Jodie Vinson, Program Manager