FROM THE STAFF:

In January 2020, the year stretched before us with goals of more offsite programming, membership growth, expanded space for community gatherings and financial sustainability. Looking back, we're grateful to have had the support of our community and our peers, to have persevered alongside them through a challenging year.

A year ago, we never expected to be conducting our first fundraiser out of our living rooms, or that we’d have to bring the feeling of a local literary community onto a computer screen. We could not have anticipated that we would close off our coworking space in downtown Providence, and the creative refuge it provides, in the same year we planned to open our doors to new audiences across Rhode Island.

Yet, in spite of these challenges, the Club’s programming was able to thrive virtually, thanks to generous support from donors and grants, the flexibility of our staff, and the understanding of our Members and the public. We saw even more clearly how the written, spoken and illustrated word can join us together in celebration and in triumph, and how it can carry us through distress and grief.

However, we also saw how divided our communities are: how even the best of intentions cannot make up for ongoing and systemic racial inequity. We understand that to be anti-racist is a daily, active practice—and that while we have grown in many ways this year as a staff, as an organization, and as a community, we must unequivocally do better every day.

We're grateful for the new partnerships that have emerged out of this year and helped us provide resources to an ever-expanding audience. We’re thankful to our Members for their willingness to try new forms, and for the integrity of their feedback.

Despite the many challenges of 2020, we come into 2021 with gratitude—for the myriad of ways it pushed us to reevaluate our mission and to forge new avenues of connection and support. There is work ahead, but we will continue to move forward alongside Rhode Island’s arts and literary community and its many creators with a renewed commitment.

With gratitude,

What Cheer Writers Club Staff
160 Westminster St., FL 2
Providence, RI 02903
www.whatcheerclub.org
@whatcheerclub
Our Values

Each year, we evaluate and recommit to the values that shape What Cheer Writers Club, to better understand where we fall short and how we can grow.

- **Accessibility & Affordability**
  Removing barriers of access to professional resources

- **Arts Awareness**
  Strengthening the appreciation of RI's literary arts

- **Racial Equity**
  Working to combat ingrained racism in our organization and the arts community

- **Responsibility to Community**
  Cultivating our relationship to RI's arts organizations, libraries and bookstores

- **Supporting Artistic Practice**
  Sparking creativity, nurturing careers, encouraging projects, fostering local connections

Who We Serve

What Cheer Writers Club supports Rhode Island's creators of the written, spoken and illustrated word.

Our Mission

To elevate the content arts in our state through accessible workshops and community gatherings where writers can feel supported and known by fellow creatives and patrons of the arts.

Our Vision

What Cheer Writers Club seeks to burnish Rhode Island's reputation as a literary destination—a place where content creators thrive.
MISSION & VISION

300+ allowed local creatives to come together during a time of increased isolation.

COFFEE & COCKTAIL CHATS

work at the Club’s virtual events, including a Nonfiction Showcase and a Podcast Listening Party.

MEMBERS SHOWCASED

50 kept writers accountable to each other for focused periods of time as we wrote alone, together.

VIRTUAL WRITE-INS

35 kept our Staff, Board, partners, classes and local writing groups connected as we pivoted to support RI creatives in a virtual world.

ZOOM MEETINGS

300+ CREATIVES SERVED THROUGH...

COFFEE & COCKTAIL CHATS

35 allowed local creatives to come together during a time of increased isolation.

Taking it Online

PANDEMIC RESPONSE

2150+ CREATIVES SERVED THROUGH...
LOCAL EXPERTS

at the Club's business practicums equipped creatives with the resources for increased financial stability during a time of great economic insecurity in the arts.

AUTHOR TALKS

showcased the work of local authors launching books during the pandemic, with tips for fellow writers.

RITERS RESOURCE NEWSLETTERS

kept local creatives up to date on Club events, local workshops for creators & opportunities for scholarships, grants and fellowships.

PODCAST TRAININGS

provided local podcasters with the resources needed to launch a podcast, with tips for recording safely out of their homes.

SLACK MESSAGE BOARD

allowed our Members to connect and share work and resources with other creatives across the state of Rhode Island.

What Cheer is such a phenomenal group filled with amazing people. Can't wait until we can all meet up in person again.”

Joe Hassan, Member

11,300+
MESSAGES BETWEEN MEMBERS

kept us all feeling a little less alone.
PANDEMIC RESPONSE

Taking it Outside

"You brought some joy in
the sadness."
Sage Morgan-Hubbard,
Event Attendee

ART IN THE FIELDS

The Club hosted a socially-distanced write-in at What Cheer Flower Farm, a local nonprofit that donates flowers to charities. Twenty-five local creatives wrote together among the blossoms.

WHAT CHEER CHALLENGE

The Club mailed 300+ Members CHEER cards with local illustrator Kelly Murphy's Providence Mural on the front and BINGO-inspired creative prompts on the back to help them stay inspired.
To encourage a safe, outdoor engagement, the Club teamed up with arts org The Avenue Concept to create writing prompts based on four works of public art in Providence.

In soft summer mist
our sister sits and ponders
the roots we all share.
Submission by Member John Picinich

Thanks to the Club for the prompt...I was able to get in gear, make some time, and get some writing done. It felt great.”

Vikki Warner, Member

Blown away by the beauty and the response and gorgeous nature of the work.”

Fran Loosen, The Avenue Concept

DEAR RHODE ISLAND

Co-founded with Member Jessica David, Dear Rhode Island is a community-led project to build connection using the power of letters. By the end of 2020, the program had connected 1,000+ penpals.

What a great program...[the letters] will really help fill some of the void of isolation our elderly clients are experiencing.”

Katrina Hayes Slee, South County Health

ECSTATIC EKPHRASTIC

To encourage a safe, outdoor engagement, the Club teamed up with arts org The Avenue Concept to create writing prompts based on four works of public art in Providence.
To bring podcasting skills to youth age 13 to 18, the Club partnered with the Laotian Community Center and RI Black Storytellers.

The Club collaborated with the local reading series to bring in author Courtney Maum to speak about Before and After the Book Deal.

Marta Martínez and Club staff hosted the first in a partnership of free virtual podcast training for Latinx creatives in Rhode Island.

At Wikipedia for Writers, RI Council for the Humanities Arts & Culture Research Fellow Janaya Kizzie shared the rules for writing and editing on Wikipedia.

Mollie Flanagan of the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts presented creatives with opportunities for financial aid during the health crisis.

Nonprofit Creature Conserve’s Lucy Spelman led an Environmental Writers Round Table.

The Club held virtual write-ins every Sunday in November for writers taking the National Novel Writing Month challenge.

RI Black Storytellers

To bring podcasting skills to youth age 13 to 18, the Club partnered with the Laotian Community Center and RI Black Storytellers.

RI Latino Arts

Marta Martínez and Club staff hosted the first in a partnership of free virtual podcast training for Latinx creatives in Rhode Island.
MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Mary-Kim Arnold was the recipient of a 2020 Howard Foundation Fellowship.

No Voice Too Small, illustrated by Jeanette Bradley, was named a Kirkus Reviews Best Picture Book of 2020.

Damont Combs received a RISCA grant in support of his Tell Your Truth poetry open mic.

Bathsheba Demuth was named a Carnegie Fellow for her environmental history research into the Yukon River.

Stephanie Gorton's Citizen Reporters was one of World magazine's 2020 Books of the Year.

Oge Mora was named a 2020 Forbes 30 Under 30 Honoree in Arts & Style.

Alex Nunes and Ana Gonzalez's Mosaic received the Edward R. Murrow Award for best podcast in the New England region.

Mariahadessa Ekere Tallie's Layla's Happiness won the 2020 Ezra Jack Keats Award.

Despite the challenges of 2020, Club Members had some incredible creative accomplishments. Subscribe to the RIters Resource newsletter to see more!

whatcheerclub.org/riter-resource

30+ BOOKS PUBLISHED by Members in a pandemic year

25+ MEMBER PODCASTS recorded from home studios
FINANCIALS

FY2020 OPERATING EXPENSES
Note: These financials are unaudited.

- Total Expenses: $198,559
  - 83% Programming
  - 12% Administrative
  - 5% Fundraising

FY2020 OPERATING REVENUE
Note: These financials are unaudited.

- Total Revenue: $199,373
  - 50% Donations
  - 26% COVID Relief & Grants
  - 24% Memberships & Programs

Note: These financials are unaudited.
The Club’s new LitRI Patreon page allows supporters and fans to learn about our small state and its big reads while supporting our nonprofit as a monthly subscriber.

In addition, every two weeks the LitRI newsletter dives deep into Rhode Island's libraries, bookstore staples, new projects and reimagined classics.

WWW.PATREON.COM/LITRHODEISLAND

WHAT FEAR! A VIRTUAL MASQUERADE

Not only was the Club’s first fundraiser the virtual party of the season—with mysterious chambers to explore, literary costumes, and surprise performances by local actors, authors and podcasters—it also raised $2500 towards Club programming.
2020 CLUB MEMBERS

Adam Thiesen  Edward McSweeney  Jim Raffus  Marissa Gallerani  Robin Nyzio
Alexandra Tilden  Ehlavna Napolitano  Jocelyn Foye  Marissa Torsiello  Robin Rains
Alexis Ingram  Elaine Blais  John Gray  Mark Binder  Rose Weaver
Aliza Holstein  Elise Jeanmaire  John McGrath  Mark Santow  Sam Howard
Allison Logan  Elizabeth Carden  John Pienich  Marliot Blanco  Sam Simas
Anma Brooks  Elizabeth Moylan  Jon Daskam  Mary Geraldine  Samantha Stanley
Amy Eiler Lewis  Ella Fassler  Jordan Hevenor  Harrington  Sara Shukda
Amy Mendillo  Elle Wibisono  Joseph Hassan  Mary-Kim Arnold  Sarah Bregler
An Uong  Emily Blanchard  Josephine Eke  Matt Keefer  Sarah Frye
Andie Armstrong  Emily Danforth  Joshua Hernandez  Maureen Taylor  Sarah Rainone
Andrew Colannino  Emily Dennen  Judee Burr  Media Education Lab  Sashia Cagen
Andrew Lomehier  Emma Kramer  Julia Sanchez  Michael Brady  Sean Carlson
Andrew Rock  Emma Ramadan  Julie Gerstenblatt  Michael DeValve  Seth Schulin
Andy Affleck  Eric Anderson  Karen Greco  Michael Fine  Seth Yurdin
Anita Kestin  Erin Perfect  Karen Weavill  Michael Klein  Shadiyah Ali
Ann Bruno  Ethan Gruner  Karina Lutz  Michael Marra  Shawn Fennell
Ann Hood  Fallon Masterson  
Ann Wilberton  
Anna Aresi  Frank Maradiaga  Kate Gagnon  Michelle Cruz  Sherri Nelson
Anne Holland  Gale Eaton  Kate Lane  Michelle DuFala Reiff  Solar Central Systems
Anne Marie Keohane  Galen Auer  Kate Schultz  Mike Ferguson  Stephanie Steoll
Ann Harnett  Garrett Bliss  Kathryn Robenheimer  Molly Huddle  
Anthony Wursch  Gayle Gifford  Katie Corey  Nancy Green  
Ashley Bendiksen  Genesis Barrera  Katie Hughes-Pucci  Nancy Lucia Hoffman  
Ari Koontz  Goat Hill Writers  Kelly Ireland  Nicole Freiner  
Batshsheba Demuth  Gonzalez Cuervo  Kerry McKenna  Nicole J Caruth  
Beatrice Pulliam  Greg Howard  Kevin Gilligan  Nicole Sintetos  
Ben Jolivet  Helen Shore  Kevin Nichols  Northern Command Studies  
Bob Curley  Hester Kaplan  Kiersten Marek  Olivia Dolphin  
Bob Morris  Hilary Levey Friedman  Kou Nyan  Orrin Hantrytt  
Caitlin Howle  Holly Gabariault  Kristen Coughlin  Pam Steager  
Caleb Alexander  Jacob Lippincott  Kristen Falso Capaldi  Pamela O'Hara  
Candace Clavin  Jacqueline Goulin  Kristen Ferreira  Patricia McAlpine  
Carolyn Decker  James Roberts  Kristen Ray  Patty J Jeffrey  
Cecil Hickman  Jamie Samons  Kyle Simmons  Paul Lawrence  
Chad Descoteaux  Jane Gerhard  Laurie Mattaliano  Peter O'Donnell  
Charlie Suisman  Janice Gan  Leonardo Hernandez  Providence Clemente  
Cheryl Ludwig  Jannelle Codinianni  Leslie Jean  
Chris Revill  Jarrod Brousseau  Liana Cassar  
Christena Carollo  Jason Brady  Linda Pritchett  
Christian H. Kenschaft  Jay Walker  Lis Wheeler  
Cindy Elder  Jeanette Bradley  Lucas Mann  
Cindy Holt  Jeaninne Peterson  Lucas Paille  
Clayton Henry  Jeff Schneidler  Marína Martinez  
Colin Carlton  Jennifer Currier  Lynsey Ford  
Courtney Moody  Jennifer Del Signore  Marc Guilleot  
Danielle Stockley  Jennifer Ingham  Marcia Cone  Renee Hobbs  
David Shapiro-Zysk  Jennifer Bourke  Maria Giddings  Richard Hendrie  
David Skarbek  Jesse Folhemus  Maria Mutch  Richard Ring  
Davis Alaniello  Jessica D'Avanza  Mariabdessa Ekere  
Deborah Ring  Jessica David  Tailie  
Diana Crow  Jessica LaBrie  Marie Esposito  
Diane Josepowicz  Jessica Laman  Mariko Neveu  
Donald Saracen  Jill Poisson  Marisa Brown  
Donna Houlle  Jim Almo  Marisa DelFarno  Robin Cravey  

2020 CLUB SPONSORS

Allegro Printing  Allison Logan  Card's Furniture & Mattresses  Commerce RI  
Ann Arbor Community Foundation  Dexter Donation  Inkfish Books  Maclotte  
Anonymous  Fran Loosen  Marc Guilleot  Maureen Taylor  
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Caitlin Howle  Hilary Levey  Rhode Red  

RI Council for the Humanities  Seven Stars Bakery  
Shark Sketchbook  Sharon Carpenter  
Symposium Books  

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