



Minnesota
Humanities
Center

2017 Annual Report

Welcome



Tumultuous as 2017 was, I affirm my faith in America and in its constant efforts to build democracy. At times, it seems that the foundations of our democratic effort are under attack: people and cultures demeaned, courts and judges are challenged, elections claimed as fraudulent. Yet the building of democracy goes on—because it must.

For our part here at the Minnesota Humanities Center (MHC), it is our mission “to build a thoughtful, literate, and engaged society.” We do this with people and cultures all over the state and beyond. We do it by delving deeply into challenges and concerns about which many of us care deeply and feel strongly. We draw upon all of the humanities, using literature, philosophy, theater, ethics, law, history – whatever is needed and helpful. We do it by asking questions, by creating and providing over 1,000 original resources that build understanding and broaden views.

Here are a few highlights of our work in 2017:

Last fall, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of “The Sympathizer,” Viet Thanh Nguyen, joined MHC and St. Catherine University to explore the reality that war lives on in memory and in our souls. His book “Nothing Ever Dies” served as the foundation for the conversation. His was the first event in a discussion series with notable authors around war and memory that launched our new Community Conversations program.

Starting with a relationship with the Smithsonian Institution in 2016 and 2017, MHC convened multiple state partners and communities across the state in a multiyear project (*Water/Ways*) to examine their own understanding and stewardship of water. Communities included: Detroit Lakes, Sandstone, New London/Spicer, Red Wing, St. Peter, and Lanesboro. MHC and our partners have taken action to help build (in relationship with our Dakota and Ojibwe neighbors) a new, informed understanding of water; its uses, our values around it, and our responsibility to it and each other. In 2018 and 2019, “We Are

Water MN” (the local accompanying exhibit to *Water/Ways*) will travel the state in eight new host communities.

The war in Vietnam and Southeast Asia, known often as the Vietnam War, was a turning point and a crisis. It was 50 years ago. We still don’t understand it fully, but it affects us every day. In 2017, we convened Vietnam Veterans, Veterans from the Allied Forces (the special guerrilla units that we recruited from Laos and Cambodia and Vietnam to fight on behalf of the United States), and others impacted by the war in Vietnam and Southeast Asia to help build programming that amplifies the absented stories of that conflict. In 2018 and 2019, in partnership with Twin Cities PBS (TPT) and six host communities, there will be Minnesota Remembers Vietnam conversations held across the state where the voices and experiences of these people can be heard.

MHC’s award-winning exhibit, “Why Treaties Matter: Self-Government in the Dakota and Ojibwe Nations” is now on permanent display at the Minnesota State Capitol. The exhibit (a partnership with the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council) explores relationships between Dakota and Ojibwe Indian Nations and the U.S. government in this place we now call Minnesota. It is a significant piece of Minnesota history and governance that we are honored to have helped bring to such an important space.

2017 was a year of building relationships, learning from and with community, and new ventures for MHC. We look forward to continuing to build a thoughtful, literate, engaged society in 2018 and beyond. We invite you to join us in that effort, and we thank you for your support.

David O’Fallon, PhD
President & CEO

\$2M

awarded in
26 grants

557

resources
distributed

9,644

Event Center guests
at 347 events

109

total MHC events

21,501

Participants in our programs, events, and exhibits:

1,553

52 events



K-12 Education

1,005

23 events



Veterans' Voices

10,311

19 events + 5 tours



We Are Water MN

411

6 events



Community Conversations

8,221

4 tours



Why Treaties Matter

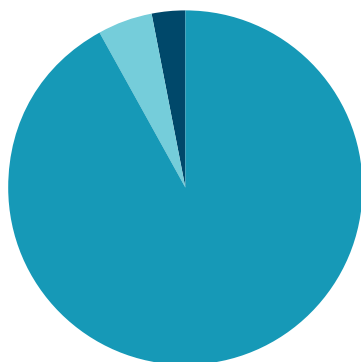
City Academy
Collegeville Institute
Education Minnesota
University of Minnesota
CommonBond Communities
Gillette Children's Specialty Care
Sheltering Arms Foundation
Fairview Medical Group
Penny George Institute
and more!

Ka Joog
Somali Museum
MN Children's Museums
Veterans Defense Project
St. Paul Federation of Teachers
North Junior High School
Anishinabe Academy
and more!

By the Numbers

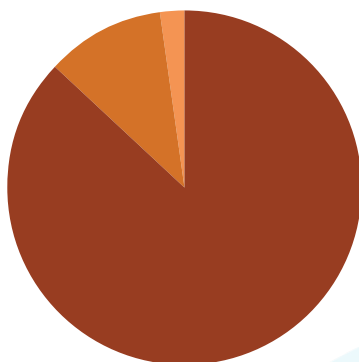
This report reflects our 2017 fiscal year:
November 1, 2016 – October 31, 2017

Support & Revenue



■ **Government Grants:** 92%
■ **Earned & Other Revenue:** 5%
■ **Contributions:** 3%

Expenses



■ **Program Services:** 87%
■ **MGMT & General:** 11%
■ **Fundraising:** 2%

Support & Revenue

Contributions	\$231,539
Government Grants	\$7,992,423
Earned & Other Revenue	\$402,559

Total Support & Revenue **\$8,626,521**

Expenses

Program Services	\$6,611,924
Management & General	\$798,432
Fundraising	\$188,439

Total Expenses **\$7,598,795**

Net Income from Operations

\$1,027,726

Programs

K–12 Education

by Sung Ja Shin & Eden Bart, Program Officers

One educator at a time leads to transformed school culture and systemic change. In 2017, MHC held the third annual Educator Institute, an intensive weeklong experience that led 40 educators to deeply examine their practices and take action to increase student engagement. They joined a network of 120 educators who completed this program and are leading relationship-based educational change throughout the state. As a direct follow up, many of these educators invited MHC into their communities—including Winona, St. Cloud, Moorhead, and Osseo—to provide additional resources and training.

MHC supports educators throughout the state to integrate stories that are typically missing into their classrooms through foundational workshops like Increase Engagement Through Absent Narratives and Learning from Place: Bdote, as well as the Absent Narratives Resource Collection. Through 52 presentations, conferences, and workshops, over 1,550 educators learned how to bring these resources into their classrooms.



Veterans' Voices

by Blake Rondeau, Program Officer

Veterans' Voices programming had an exciting year of change and collaboration in 2017. A key feature of this year's work was a partnership with Twin Cities PBS (TPT) surrounding the war in Vietnam and Southeast Asia and the epic documentary from Ken Burns and Lynn Novick "The Vietnam War." This work kicked off with a series of four community listening sessions that shaped the direction of our Minnesota Remembers Vietnam work with TPT, and culminated in grants to six community organizations around the state to support dialogue and understanding around a complex, traumatic part of our shared history.

This year also brought exciting growth and new connections to our Veterans' Voices network thanks to 21 new recipients of the Veterans' Voices Award, 11 participants in our storytelling training, and 15 new Echoes of War discussion leaders.



Community Conversations

by Kirk MacKinnon Morrow, Program Officer

Community Conversations programming experienced a year of growth and development in 2017. From our Common Place events in partnership with Sweet Potato Comfort Pie to the launch of our War and Memory dialogue series, this was a time of new activities, new audiences, and new connections!

One highlight of a busy year came in September when we hosted An Evening with Viet Thanh Nguyen with St. Catherine University as the first installment of our War and Memory series. This event drew 300 people to the campus of St. Kate's to hear Minnesota's own Kao Kalia Yang in dialogue with Nguyen, author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, "The Sympathizer." The event touched on topics of war, justice, and collective memory. MHC's Community Conversations programming will draw on the lessons learned and connections made in 2017 as we chart the course for the future.



We Are Water MN

by Jennifer Tonko, Program Officer

In 2017, we completed the last half of the *Water/Ways* and "We Are Water MN" tour, with stops in Red Wing, Sandstone, Lanesboro, and Detroit Lakes. Each of these communities hosted the exhibitions in their own way, creating complementary exhibits, engaging students and children, and bringing together local artists, scientists, academics and educators, public servants, and the business community.

These communities examined how water influences the culture, history, and economy of the places where they live and work. Over the summer, we spent a lot of time on the road, finding new host communities to partner with, and in the fall, we were able to bring them together in St. Paul to begin work with our new cohort of communities: Minneapolis/St. Paul, Bemidji, Crookston, Fond du Lac/Duluth, Austin, Northfield, Grand Rapids, and Mille Lacs/Onamia.



Event Center

by Nicole McMahon, Event Center Director

We had a great 2017 in the Event Center, hosting hundreds of events and introducing thousands of people to MHC! Over 9,000 people visited our center throughout the year hosting a variety of events including healing retreats, art of hosting trainings, strategic planning retreats, school graduations, board retreats, and weddings.

The MHC program staff had the chance to partner with multiple Event Center clients to bring our educational programs to their organizations while meeting here. Event Center staff have worked hard to ensure everyone who walks through our doors is welcomed to our center and has a great experience. We look forward to another successful year.



More Than Just an Exhibit

Annamarie Gutsch

“Why Treaties Matter: Self-Government in the Dakota and Ojibwe Nation” is a nationally recognized, award-winning, traveling exhibit made in partnership with the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, Minnesota Humanities Center, and the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian. This exhibit explores relationships between Dakota and Ojibwe Indian Nations and the U.S. government in this place we now call Minnesota, focusing on, how treaties affected the lands and lifeways of the indigenous peoples of this place, and why these binding agreements between nations still matter today.

Within our time to create, there always seemed to be an even more profound time to silently reflect and think – time to stretch our minds beyond why we were creating a project with ongoing deep reflection to envision exactly what we were trying to portray to our audience. What was our goal? We wanted to change Minnesota’s dismal understanding of our American Indian communities and create a hunger to learn more while perhaps creating new relationships in a way never accomplished before. With this goal in mind, the greatest collaboration I’ve ever participated in—the “Why Treaties Matter” exhibit—was born.

From start to the finish, the “Why Treaties Matter” collaboration and exhibit run, several members of the development team—consisting of me and a core group of outstanding Humanities Center program directors and administrators—spent endless hours of vision-building time together. Time spent sitting around a table, coffee or some beverage and snacks nearby, papers strewn about, where we pondered the simplest or the most complex ideas or thoughts, or just ripped apart raw details in an agenda for an upcoming program. This was far more than just your everyday nine-to-five working group. It was a group on a mission; a mission that we often proclaimed was “to change the world.” This team of inspiring leaders seemed the perfect group of individuals whose eyes, when mixed together, could see far beyond what most people are capable of envisioning. And as we gathered, it became clear to me that this magnetic force drawing our visions together was truly one that would lead to great success.

The “Why Treaties Matter” exhibit success wasn’t due to any one person’s academic or intellectual abilities or because we

From start to the finish...several members of the development team—consisting of me and a core group of outstanding Humanities Center program directors and administrators—spent endless hours of vision-building time together.

were equipped with greater administrative capacity or even money to turn out such a successful exhibit and programming. It was truly a recipe with healthy doses of eager world changers coming together to contribute their collective knowledge and stories. Most importantly, we were not necessarily the masters of the knowledge but more like the gatherers of it. The true master creators and voices of this project were the cultural leaders, elders, and community members who led this initiative. They came together with us, to sit around the table and helped create a tangible, truth-filled exhibit that has successfully moved towards changing how treaties and the history around them are viewed by both native and non-native people.

The “Why Treaties Matter” exhibit has touched over 84,000 lives since 2011. For an exhibit that existed well beyond its imagined time to tour various venues across Minnesota for six total years, that’s some spectacular record. What is even more profound is that out of the countless pairs of eyes and minds that gathered information from this rich visual and personal learning experience, most had likely never seen or heard any of this before. Although we knew this was the case, the responses were still overwhelming to us. Email after email proclaimed, “Why haven’t I heard this history before?” Think about that. The real history and story of the lives of our American Indian/ indigenous people to this land and most people have never heard anything of it before. This is why we so steadfastly held to our claim that we would “change the world.” As we embark on the seventh year of this remarkable journey, I like to think in a small but profound way that we did. ♦

Annamarie Gutsch is the former Executive Director of the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, and a Government Relations Director for the Red Lake Nation. She has also worked for the Minnesota Department of Human Rights, for Veterans Affairs, and at the Office of the Revisor of Statutes. Annamarie serves on the Minnesota Humanities Center’s Board of Directors and was instrumental in creating the traveling exhibit Why Treaties Matter: Self-Government in the Dakota and Ojibwe Nation.

Veterans' Voices Found

Dr. Bradley Sidle

Hush.

Stop talking.

I'm not interested.

Talk to the hand.

And so it is, when our voices are silenced, our stories cut short, our contribution squashed.

The Minnesota Humanities Center offers a course, the Veterans' Voices Workshop for Educators, which I was honored and pleased to take, on giving place to a too often neglected voice—namely, the voice of the Veteran. We in the social studies discipline study wars and war plans; we count the number of fatalities and clearly communicate the final outcomes of the battles waged on the field. But the voices of the Veterans we too often overlook.

Our class was held at Camp Ripley in central Minnesota. I have driven past this area many times, and had no idea of the vast resource for military training here in my backyard. I checked in at the gate with the slightest twinge of fear and trepidation. I certainly did not know quite what to expect. My first real inclination that I was in a different world was when we came out of our first plenary and went to the dining hall. Everywhere were uniforms and insignia that I did not understand and could not interpret. The Veterans in our group were quite familiar; and told me that though I felt like a thousand eyes were on these non-uniformed civilians, I was underestimating the truth! Many eyes were on us, but it turned out the vast majority were friendly eyes. Many conversations took place with women and men on active or reserve duty, and the narratives that had long been absent were already being spoken in a sense of honesty and frankness that I greatly appreciated.

We toured the facilities of Camp Ripley, and the Veterans in our midst were quite entertaining as they told of their own experiences at camp and in service. I rather expected a monolithic sharing of the same old, same old. I think my first major learning was that there is not one Veteran's voice, but a wide variety of Veterans' voices. I certainly knew that multiple sources and multiple attestations of a narrative give that

I left the professional development with a profoundly greater appreciation for the sacrifices and accomplishments of all who engaged in military service.

narrative verifiability, but I also learned with new confidence that no voice accounts for all voices. Hearing the highly individualized and significant narratives of a wide variety of Veterans brought a vitality and personal representation to the truth.

The plenaries themselves were filled with extraordinary bursts of insight. I will never forget the passion in the story of an officer speaking about the Minnesota First in the battle of Gettysburg. I wanted to thank him for what felt like his personal presence at the battle! We were all visibly moved. The resources I received from the experience were also tremendously valuable and immediately applicable when teaching about the behind-the-scenes experiences of war. The extraordinary resource, *Standing Down: From Warrior to Civilian* by Donald H. Whitfield, ed., contained short readings I could use to examine a wide range of reporting on the Veterans' experience. Each reading contains a brief introduction and discussion questions that provided ample material for use in my seventh grade classroom. Interestingly, the History Theater in St. Paul recently staged a show, "The Things They Carried," which is represented in this anthology with a nice excerpt.

I left the professional development with a profoundly greater appreciation for the sacrifices and accomplishments of all who engaged in military service. On a more personal note, it also gave me the opportunity to talk to my 100-year-old father about his service in World War II and hear his response to the lectures I heard and the articles I had read. This was a tremendous workshop offered by the Humanities Center, and I encourage anyone who is able to take part in the Veterans' Voices Workshop for Educators. I am confident in stating that no one will leave without their professional and personal sensitivities engaged and enlarged. ♦

Dr. Bradley Sidle teaches 7th Grade U. S. Studies at Folwell School (Performing Arts Magnet) in Minneapolis, MN. The student body at Folwell is urban, diverse, and committed to learning in and through the arts.

An Evening with Viet Thanh Nguyen

Anh-Hoa Thi Nguyen



Bearing witness to the conversation between Viet Thanh Nguyen and Kao Kalia Yang hosted by MHC, I felt the rare experience of being reflected as a Vietnamese refugee and immigrant, an Asian woman, a poet, artist, scholar, activist, and human.

What does it feel like to be invisible? What does it mean to be heard? How does one exist if their experiences are never accounted for? How do we break the cycle of violence towards people that structures of power refuse to see?

I came to Minnesota in July of 1975 as a baby, a war refugee with only my immediate family, in a US government-issued white onesie. I grew up in St. Paul isolated, without any other Vietnamese families in my neighborhood. My six older siblings and I made up the Vietnamese population at school. Although my father spoke a little English and my mother only Vietnamese, English was the language I spoke with my siblings at home. My parents had neither the emotional capacity nor the vocabulary to tell me about “the War” that we fled from, leaving all of our extended family, belongings, and history behind.

Growing up, no one else seemed to want to talk about the Vietnam War. None of the kids in class knew what it was, and it was never taught in school. As I got older, I couldn't shake this haunting need to learn more about the war in order to understand my parents and my own identity and history as a Vietnamese person. I didn't realize it then, but the tools I used to unearth this past were the tools of the humanities. I sought out Vietnam history books and Vietnamese/Vietnamese American literature, war documentaries and Vietnamese art and artists. I travelled to Vietnam to visit the “American” war museums and to see and touch the land that instantly felt like home. And, standing in the swirling sea of Saigon traffic, I felt, for the first time in my life, as if I were whole.

Bearing witness to the conversation between Viet Thanh Nguyen and Kao Kalia Yang hosted by MHC, I felt the rare

experience of being reflected as a Vietnamese refugee and immigrant, an Asian woman, a poet, artist, scholar, activist, and human. Both Viet and Kao Kalia spoke to the heart of those that feel invisible, sharing with a captivated audience their thoughts and theories about the complexity of constructed memories, cultural and economic complicity in war, the need to confront one's own capacity to be inhumane in order to prevent future harm, and the role of the artist/writer to create change. They gave validity to ghosts and civilians, and voice and value to the unseen, the unheard and the forgotten. Viet and Kao Kalia generously shared their gifts of genius with vulnerability, courage, and tremendous vision.

In gratitude for their words and wisdom, I no longer feel alone. ♦

Anh-Hoa Thi Nguyen is a poet, community artist, activist and educator. She was born in Saigon, Vietnam and grew up in St. Paul, Minnesota. She holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Mills College in Oakland, California where she was awarded the Mary Merrit Henry Prize in Poetry and the Ardella Mills Literary Composition Prize in Creative Non-Fiction. She is the founder of Pomelo Press, completed a residency at Hedgebrook, a Voices of Our Nation Arts Foundation (VONA) alumna, Elizabeth George Foundation Fellow, and a Minnesota State Arts Board Artist Initiative Grant Winner.

Leadership

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair

Susan Heegaard St. Paul

Vice Chair

David Dayhoff Minnetonka

Secretary

Bryan Ljung New Brighton

Treasurer

Anne Novak Mendota Heights

Colleen Aho Minneapolis

Meredith Beeson Minneapolis

Keith S. Brooks St. Paul

Brianna Erickson Eagan

Rebecca Evan Minneapolis

Susan Heegaard St. Paul

Les Heen Maynard

Patrick Henry Waite Park

Annamarie Hill Gutsch Duluth

Jean A. King St. Paul

Lisa Laliberte Belak Roseville

Jules Matembo Kitoy Shakopee

Margaret Leibfried Fridley

Sakinah Ali Mujahid Bloomington

Anne Novak Mendota Heights

Trudy Ohnsorg St. Paul

Susannah Ottaway Northfield

Anita Patel Minneapolis

Brian R. Steeves Apple Valley

Sylvia Strobel St. Paul

James Peterson Minneapolis

Alexander Tittle, Sr. Woodbury

Diane Tran St. Paul

Steve Troutner Maple Grove

Kristin White Minneapolis

KEY STAFF

President & CEO

David O'Fallon, PhD

COO

Carol Aegerter

Director of Programs

Casey DeMarais

Donors

Generous donations from the following individuals, foundations, and businesses helped support MHC's operations and programs from November 1, 2016–October 31, 2017. Thank you!

\$50,000+

Anonymous Foundation*

National Endowment
for the Humanities*

State of Minnesota (Operating Support)

State of Minnesota

Arts & Cultural Heritage Fund*

\$20,000–\$49,999

McKnight Foundation

Minnesota Historical Society

\$10,000–\$19,999

Hardenbergh Foundation

MN Department of Agriculture**

MN Department of Health**

\$5,000–\$9,999

Boss Foundation

Harlan Boss Foundation for the Arts

Highground Cyber*

Stephen and Jill Troutner*

\$1,000–\$4,999

Atomic Data*

Keith and Mary Bednarowski

Casey DeMarais*

JNBA Financial Advisors*

Jean King & Stuart Appelbaum*

Meristem, LLP*

Mutual of America*

Kennon and Nina Rothchild

The Allegro Fund of
Saint Paul Foundation

Paul Thissen

Emily Anne Tuttle

Synergetic Endeavors*

Uptown Plumbing, Heating & Cooling*

US Bank*

Maxine H. Wallin

\$500–\$999

AFG Fund of Vanguard Charitable

AMVETS Department of Minnesota*

Bremer Bank*

Sara Evans

Friends of the St. Paul Library

Guthmann Family Fund

Patrick Henry*

Anita Patel*

James Peterson

Patricia Ploetz

Alex Tittle

UBS Financial Services*

United Veterans Legislature*

\$100–\$499

Carol Aegerter

Meredith Beeson*

Carol Buesgens

Keith Burke*

CAIR Minnesota, Inc.*

Page and Jay Cowles

Paul Dove

Brianna Erickson*

Katherine Harter

Susan Heegaard*

Gary Henrickson

Bob Kohnke*

Sheila Laughton

Margaret Leibfried

Mark Lenz

Bryan Ljung*

David O'Fallon

Trudy Ohnsorg

Susannah Ottaway*

Tom Pfannenstiel

Michael Rosen

Julianne Schwietz

Sung Ja Shin

Christianna Shortridge

Matthew Spector

Sylvia Strobel

Margret Swanson

Robert Tapp

Diane Tran

US Bank Foundation

Up to \$99

Anonymous (2)

Amazon Smile

Mica Anders

Jessica Arver

Catherine Baldwin

Bruce and Harriet Bart

Steven Beto

Mary Burns-Klinger

David Dayhoff

Gilbert de la O

Annamarie Gutsch

Les Heen

David Hokenson

Alison Link

Richard and Colleen Miner

Anna Newcombe

Michael O'Rourke

Rachel Schmitt

Brian Steeves

United Health Group

Cathie Wemlinger

Kristin White

Golden Yang

In-Kind

Allegra Downtown St. Paul

Min Enterprises Photography

Minnesota Public Radio

Showdown Displays

St. Catherine University

*Support in full or part for Veterans'
Voices

**Support for We Are Water MN

“To believe in the power of the humanities is simply to believe in the power of education. The study of history, of languages, of cultures, of civilizations, of the human impulses to make art and literature, to organize ethical lives, to fashion ways of seeing and believing that are rooted in fundamental values...

These enterprises are called the humanities because they are what makes us human, what makes us creatures of principle rather than circumstance, of honor rather than expedience, of foresight rather than accident and happenstance.”

—1991 Minnesota House Testimony on behalf of MHC

mnhum.org



@TheHumanitiesCenter



@mnhumanities



@humanities



Minnesota
Humanities
Center

*Building a thoughtful, literate,
and engaged society.*

987 Ivy Ave E. St. Paul, MN 55106
mnhum.org | 651-774-0105