The Minnesota Humanities Center connects our past, present, and future by bringing people together to increase understanding and spark change.
We began the year with the Federation of State Humanities Councils (FSHC) recognizing the Minnesota Humanities Center (MHC) with its top prize, the Schwartz Award, for our four-part multiple city collaboration, How Can We Breathe. The selection of How Can We Breathe by FSHC was the second Schwartz Award received by MHC.

In February Shelly C. Lowe was confirmed as the new Chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Lowe is a citizen of the Navajo Nation and grew up on the Navajo Reservation in Arizona. Lowe is the twelfth NEH Chair and first Native American. Lowe’s career in education has included leadership roles at Harvard University and Yale University.

In May, we were able to properly celebrate our 50th Anniversary with a rich, immersive, interactive party. The celebration was a wonderful night to reconnect with current and former grantees, sponsors, collaborators, and board members to discuss our past and our next 50 years.

We also took time to celebrate what we were able to accomplish with the Omaha Public School District (OPS) over the past ten years. While there is also some measure of sadness when a relationship such as OPS ends, we are eternally grateful for the many friendships that were created and the opportunity to reallocate resources and greatly expand our impact and service with Minnesota schools.

This past year, we saw substantial growth of MHC’s work in Third Way Civics. Third Way Civics is a college course that several Minnesota Colleges and Universities have begun offering. We are excited about the possibilities of Third Way Civics expanding to more colleges and universities, and possibly to high schools, in the upcoming year.

At the end of the fiscal year, MHC’s work with the Collaborative Legal Community Coalition on the event, Understand Our Duluth Lynchings: Racial Violence in America and the Road to Justice and Reconciliation, was recognized by the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) with its Award of Excellence and its top prize, History in Progress Award.

Many thanks to all of our friends, partners, and collaborators who helped us to bridge divides, spark positive change, and bring us all together this past year. I look forward to the promise of the new year as we continue to expand our horizons and the reach of the Minnesota Humanities Center.

Warmest wishes,

Kevin M. Lindsey
Chief Executive Officer

Letter from the CEO

As we began this year, we sought to lean into our vision and mission to bridge divides within society, spark positive change, and bring us all together.
Education

MHC’s work in education is a mixture of the traditional humanities work undertaken by Humanities councils to improve the delivery of humanities instruction and the emerging work within education to meet the social and emotional needs of students. The goal is to enhance student performance for all students by creating better relationships and authentic listening between and among students and adults.

Story Circles

Using Story Circles, MHC brings people together to learn from and listen to one another, to build relationships, to deepen their understanding of the humanity of other people, and to work in collaboration to solve problems. Story Circles help illuminate the differences and commonalities of the lives and voices of those people who comprise the circle by asking participants to show up authentically, speak vulnerably, and listen with empathy.

In an effort to expand the reach of MHC, Rose McGee, author of Story Circles Stories and MHC Humanities Officer, has begun training new facilitators.

Story Circles are transformational

• Develop Shared Values – Creating space to listen and reflect upon the vision of others allows for the development and refinement of shared values.

• Build or Restore Connection – Hearing others to understand and see the value of others in their community which leads to the possibility of seeing issues from a new perspective.

• Surface and Create Healing – Listening with empathy to surface outstanding areas of tension such that repair may occur between individuals that is impacting personal or organizational relationships and dynamics.

“...story circles can create. Story circles equalize us.”

“I valued the opportunity to connect with colleagues and professional acquaintances in a less hierarchical way. Circles provide a refreshing opportunity to interact with and learn from one another in a different setting.”

—Story Circle Participants

ISD 917 Partnership

Independent School District 917 asked MHC to utilize Story Circles to help facilitate better communication among students and to improve educational opportunities within its Alternative Learning Classes.
Youth Social Justice Project

Appreciating the desire of students in the Roseville Area School District (RAS) to address issues of social and racial justice they see in society, the students, RAS leaders, Youth Service America, the Minnesota Youth Council, Minnesota Alliance with Youth, and MHC developed a mini-grant program for students. The mini-grant program provided students with the opportunity to utilize the humanities to showcase their youth-led efforts to spark change in society. In total mini-grants awarded to 8 student-led projects reaching more than 1700 youth and impacting over 2400 students and families.

Dakota & Ojibwe Language Revitalization

Recently, the Department of American Indian Studies at the University of Minnesota estimated that there were likely less than 1,000 Ojibwe speakers in the United States. We convened 99 language revitalization scholars to celebrate revitalization successes, highlight the current state of the field, and strategize ways to continue enhancing the civic agency of Indigenous Minnesotans through linguistic and cultural revitalization.

More than a year ago, MHC and Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC) collaborated to develop three biographies of inspirational American Indian leaders (Native American Lives Series) for 3rd–5th grade readers. This past year, two of the books, Ella Cara Deloria: Dakota Language Protector and Peggy Flanagan: Ogimaq Kwe, Lieutenant Governor, were honored with American Indian Youth Literature Awards by the American Library Association. Hundreds of Native American Live Series books were read and distributed to Minnesota elementary schools during MHC’s 2022 educational statewide tour, and more than 7,000 copies have been made since our initial print run.

From Mountains to Lakes

In partnership with St. Catherine University and Concordia University’s Center for Hmong Studies MHC hosted an educational forum to broaden awareness and understanding of Minnesota’s Hmong American community and improve educational outcomes for students. Scholars and community members discussed and reflected on Hmong history, diaspora, identity, and intersectionality. The workshop was led by Concordia University Professor Lee Pao Xiong and St. Catherine Professor PaDer Vang.

“[W]hen we take time to learn and share our language, we are working to undo real harm, but also to be intentional about our healing.”

—LT. GOVERNOR PEGGY FLANAGAN

Dakota and Ojibwe Languages Symposium, February 24, 2022

Omaha Public School Partnership

A Decade of Success!

After a decade of excellence, the Minnesota Humanities Center Education Strategy has concluded with Omaha Public Schools (OPS). This was a phenomenal partnership with OPS and the Sherwood Foundation. MHC, working with a multitude of scholars, created numerous course offerings that had a positive lasting impact for thousands of OPS staff during our ten–year partnership.

Over the past decade we served more than 4,500 individuals from 171 schools and organizations through a total of 537 offerings. On average OPS staff attended more than 8 offerings each. With this level of consistency, more than 4,000 hours of programming was offered totaling 150,000 hours of instructions with staff having attended an average of 33 hours.

“There were so many highlights of the MHC Education Strategy with OPS but for me personally, were the many opportunities we had for deeper engagement and implementation of relationship-based strategies within schools, across the district and the Greater Omaha community...These strategies seamlessly supported the district’s Academic Action Plan as well as the School Improvement Plan goals so it all came together as a beautiful piece of art.”

—DR. ELEANOR COLEMAN, OPS Project Lead
Civic Renewal

The enabling legislation of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) provides that our “democracy demands the wisdom of its citizens.” We believe that the charge of the NEH calls upon MHC not only to inform citizens about the mechanics of our democratic republic and its development throughout history but also to share and hear the stories of their fellow citizens to help them to develop the skills and desire to work together, across their differences, to build a better common life and a stronger union.

We design most of our civic engagement initiatives with the goal of having people grapple with diverse narratives of human experience (histories, biographies, faith traditions, ethical and political worldviews) as individuals and in partnership with others. Our hope is that the people involved will learn to humanize and not demonize those with whom they differ, discover, and develop shared goals, commit themselves to pursuing shared work that results in humanity flourishing, and understand that citizen-centered community-produced democracy is possible.

Third Way Civics

By co-developing curricula for colleges and K12 schools, we help young people recognize that complex challenges make democracy difficult, and to understand that there has never been one authoritative story of America. At the same time, our curricula alert students to our heritage of everyday people building good things together, and require them to practice the reflective, listening, reasoning, and deliberative skills that they need to do the same kind of work.

Third Way Civics (3WC) infuses civic learning and purpose into the curricula of colleges and universities around the state and country. It introduces students to major developments and debates in the history of American self-government, while helping them relate their learnings to their own public lives and values in practical, nonpolarizing, commons-building ways.

First piloted at Ball State University Teachers College in Indiana and Southeastern University in Florida, Third-Way Civics has now been adopted at institutions in Minnesota, including Minnesota State University at Mankato, North Central University, Winona State University and the Minnesota North system of community college campuses in northeastern Minnesota, as well as the St. Paul–based Metropolitan State University’s College in Prisons program.

Since its inception, nearly 200 hundred undergraduates have participated in Third Way Civics courses and the work has earned support from national funders such as the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the Teagle Foundation. Through our relationships with several teacher preparation programs, our Third Way Civics approach has also gained the attention of K12 teachers, principals, and districts across the state.
8 Pilot Courses across seven institutions, 5 in MN
Muncie, IN; Lakeland, FL; MSU-Mankato in Mankato, MN; Minnesota North College (Eveleth, Hibbing, Itasca, Rainy River, Vermillion, Virginia); North Central University in Minneapolis, MN; Winona State in Winona, MN; Metropolitan State University College in Prisons Program in Lino Lakes, MN

10 Faculty Trained in 3WC pedagogy

I’ve learned to listen, and that listening is often the best way to learn. All college should be this way.”
– MSU-Mankato Third Way Civics Senior

180 Students enrolled
8 Faculty have taught the course

8 K12 Teachers from 5 Districts trained in 3WC pedagogy and supported in creating curricular units ready for classroom use
MHC develops immersive experiences to allow individuals to get a better understanding and appreciation of the many rich and diverse cultural and ethnic communities in Minnesota as well as the history of the various cities and geographic areas in the state. Our immersive experiences are designed to allow participants to be reflective of the information they receive. Using memoir, poetry, literature, food, theater, storytelling, and learning journeys into sacred indigenous places and cultural corridors, our programs reveal different ways of thinking and being and create connections between people within community.

Honoring Juneteenth

Despite Juneteenth being officially recognized as a National Holiday, many people remain unfamiliar with its significance and the insight it offers to address current issues of social injustice. MHC was honored to collaborate with Sweet Potato Comfort Pie and community to bring the significance of this day to life. This past summer, *Kumbayah The Juneteenth Story*, a play written by Rose McGee, debuted in the Twin Cities. Building off its success, MHC partnered with Duluth Public Schools and local sponsors to bring two performances to the district in September. Between the two performances more than 1,000 students and community members learned the meaning of this special day.

“Our work with MHC has engaged our community with humility while tackling personally and systemically challenging content. MHC has done this work while honoring our individual and collective journey as an organization.”

—Duluth Public Schools
Learning from Place: Bdote

Our initial immersive experience began in 2013 when we brought participants to sites of great significance to Dakota people. Participants learn from Dakota community members Romana Kitto Stately, member of the Santee Sioux Nation and Project Director of We Are Still Here Minnesota and Ethan Neerdaels, Bdewakantunwan Dakota who is dedicated to reversing the trend of language loss and raising future generations of Dakota speakers. The popularity of the Bdote immersive experience has grown significantly with MHC hosting 20 public and private events last year. Nearly 2,000 people have attended the Bdote learning journey since its inception in 2013.

Learning in Community: LGBTQ+ History in Downtown Minneapolis

This immersive experience explored the history of the LGBTQ+ movement in the Twin Cities. Lead by local LGBTQ+ artists and community scholars, participants travelled through downtown Minneapolis to learn how gay and lesbian political power was built in response to political raids, the origin story of the how the first Pride festival was born from marches to Nicollet Mall, how parties in deserted industrial warehouses created solidarity within the community and how individuals in the Gateway District helped shape Twin Cities identity among the LGBTQ+ community in the United States.

“I’m deeply grateful to Ramona and Ethan for sharing their wisdom, personal stories, history, and trauma with us. It’s so powerful to share stories and transform hearts and minds that way, and I also recognize that it is likely exhausting and vulnerable. Thanks so much to them and to MHC for making these events possible.”

—Bdote Participant
Statewide Initiatives

As a statewide organization serving all Minnesotans, MHC seeks to partner with individuals, creatives, scholars, and organizations to broaden humanities access, learning and impact with large statewide initiatives and the administration of grants throughout all corners of the state.

Many Fronts
Veterans & Community Voices

For nearly a decade MHC’s longstanding Veterans Voices program and Veterans’ Voices Award has recognized, honored, and amplified the voices and contributions of Veterans within Minnesota. In 2021, MHC convened a Veterans’ Voices Advisory Committee which was co-led by Alex Tittle and Karin Aguilar-San Juan. Over the course of a year, this committee convened community conversations, encouraging MHC to expand this program to include the voices of loved ones and non-veterans who have borne the cost of war and conflict.

In 2022, MHC renamed the program to Many Fronts: Veterans and Community Voices, with programming directed toward Veterans as well as military families, refugees, and other communities that have been impacted by war. We anticipate that our work will allow us to disrupt commonly held stereotypes, unearth less visible narratives of war and the human experience, and help bridge the military-civilian divide.

Recent Many Fronts programs have included:

• A collaboration with the Minnesota Historical Society, TPT Twin Cities, and the Twin Cities Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League for Armed with Language. This film talk with writer David Mura and Karen Tanaka Lucas, discussed the little-known Military Intelligence Service Language School for Japanese Americans (MISLS) in Fort Snelling during WWII.

• September’s 9/11 reflection in Mankato (co-sponsored by MSU-Mankato and the Minnesota Military and Veterans Museum).

“I believe that the reimagining work can be transformative and most importantly “inclusive” when identifying veterans in a diverse community of Minnesotans.... [this] work was not expected to be definitive, but on-going. My hope is that we convene a long-term strategy...”

—ALEX TITTLE, MA
Sr. Director, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Medica

“[By] drawing connections between and among individuals, groups, and communities affected by wars in a broad sense, we can begin the work of inviting and encouraging various kinds of needs to surface. We can get more creative and more relevant.”

—KARIN AGUILAR-SAN JUAN, Ph.D.
Professor and Chair of American Studies,
Macalester College
MN Writer Series
This past year, MHC hosted several authors and writers to inspire audiences to think about their own stories and world differently.

As a result of the interest of audience to expand authors, MHC has launched the Minnesota Writer Series in 2023.

Truth, Equity & Justice
How We Make Our Way Forward (Again)

Generations of scholars have argued that America will never be whole until reparations are provided for the moral debt created by slavery, Jim Crow laws, and the vestiges of the caste system it created. The international cry for justice after the murder of Mr. George Floyd and the stark racial disparities laid bare by the pandemic have renewed the sense of urgency around reparations and truth and reconciliation commissions.

In October, MHC along with its partners – the Center for the Study of Black Life and the Law and Minnesota Equity and Justice Project – convened an international panel of scholars, community advocates, and lawyers for “Truth, Equity & Justice: How We Make Our Way Forward (Again).”

This day-long program, filled with song, poetry, and conversation, explored how we move toward justice.

“The earnest care and consideration people are able to endure to create places for healing and reconciliation and people being brave and curious on small and large levels give me hope.”

—Truth, Equity & Justice: How We Make Our Way Forward (Again) Together participant

Some of the authors that MHC hosted:

Suleiman Adan  |  Tess Montgomery
Anika Fajardo  |  David Mura
Carolyn Holbrook | Samantha Sencer

We Are Meant to Rise
Voices for Justice from Minneapolis to the World

Ifrah Mansour  |  May Lee Yang
Sun Yung Shin | V.V. (Sugi) Ganeshananthan

What We Hunger For
Refugee and Immigrant Stories about Food and Family

Andrea Gilats
After Effects
A Memoir of Complicated Grief

FEATURED GUESTS

Virginie Ladisch
Senior Expert, Programs, at the International Center for Transitional Justice

Marcella Naidoo
Former Regional Director of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa and Executive Director of the Black Sash

Keith Ellison
Minnesota’s Attorney General

Samantha Sencer

Andrea Gilats

Carolyn Holbrook

Tess Montgomery

David Mura

Suleiman Adan

Virginie Ladisch

Marcella Naidoo

Keith Ellison

Anika Fajardo

Carolyn Holbrook

Tess Montgomery

David Mura

Suleiman Adan

Minnesota Humanities Center 2022 Annual Report
Grants & Impact Around the State

Cultural Heritage Grants
Distributed 2021-23

Documentaries
Nearly 10% of all funded projects
• Gathering and sharing stories of community members
• Cultural practices & beliefs
• Identities in Minnesota

Cultural Celebrations
Half of all funded projects (54)
• Festivals amplifying food, language, holidays, cultural traditions, and art of communities in Minnesota
• Performances celebrating culture & identity

Education
More than 40% of all funded project (45)
• Cultural workshops & classes teaching dance, language, and art of communities in Minnesota
• Books & educational resources for K-12 youth; resources to broaden horizons and deepen cultural understanding for adults

AWARDEES
(NEO)Muralismos De México
Saint Paul
30,000 Feet
Roseville
826 MSP
Minneapolis
Adrian Holliday
Brooklyn Park
African American Leadership Forum
Minneapolis
African Economic Development Solutions
Saint Paul
Afro American Development Association
Moorhead
Alondra Cano
Minneapolis
Ana Nunro
Edina
APIA MN Film Collective
Savage
Arcata Press
DBA Saint Paul Almanac
Saint Paul
Art From The Inside MN
Maplewood
Artistry
Bloomington
Artistry, Honesty, Healing, Action. (AHHA!)
Saint Paul
Black Tablearts
Minneapolis
Bois Forte Tribal Government
Nett Lake
Brittfit50 Indigenous Health, Wellness and Cultural Arts
Minneapolis
Bruce Corrie
Saint Paul
Bryan Thao Worra
Minneapolis
CAPIUSA
Brooklyn Center
Carmen Lucia Lincoln
Saint Paul
Center for Leadership and Neighborhood Engagment
Minneapolis
Children’s Museum of Southern Minnesota
Mankato
COMPAS, INC.
Saint Paul
Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio (CLUES)
Saint Paul
Cow Tipping Press
Minneapolis
Duluth Children’s Museum, Inc.
Duluth
East Side Freedom Library
Saint Paul
Farhia Omar
Minneapolis
Friends of the Mississippi River
Saint Paul
Funny Asian Women Collective (FAWK)
Saint Paul
Great River Children’s Museum
St. Cloud
Green Card Voices
Minneapolis
Hispanic Advocacy and Community Empowerment Through Research (HACER)
Saint Paul
Hmong 18 Council
Saint Paul
Hmong Achieves
Saint Paul
Hmong Cultural Center
Saint Paul
Hunger Solutions Minnesota
Saint Paul
In Black Ink
Saint Paul
In Progress
Saint Paul
India Association of MN
Saint Paul
Iraqi and American Reconciliation Project
Minneapolis
Iyana Galloway
Brooklyn Park
Jena Holliday
Brooklyn Park
Ka Joog
Minneapolis
Ka Zoua Xiong
Brooklyn Center
“MHC is one of few local grantmakers to fund cultural work led by BIPOC organizations. They support important initiatives around storytelling, art-making, and community-building overlooked and undervalued by many traditional grantmakers....”

—SARAH GRUIDL
Reviving Islamic Sisterhood for Empowerment (RISE), 2021-2023 Grant Awardee
MHC recently completed a Capital Campaign that raised $3.5 million to preserve and repair our home, an architectural landmark near Lake Phalen in St. Paul. This building provides a critical foundation that supports our statewide programs and impact. As part of our 50th year and the building renovations, we celebrated with the region’s most influential humanities change-makers, scholars, and community members, along with nonprofit and business leaders this past May. We are grateful to the City of Saint Paul and the State of Minnesota for proclamations declaring Thursday, May 12, 2022 as Minnesota Humanities Center Day.

This immersive evening had our guests venturing through the past, participating in the present, and envisioning the future. We celebrated being one of the country’s first humanities councils with our emcee T. Mychael Rambo and with the soulful vocals of Thomasina Petrus and the King’s Quartet as our musical guest!
Classical Actors Ensemble brought Shakespeare to the MHC lawn this summer with their production of “Loves Labors Lost”. Community members from around the Phalen Park neighborhoods joined us for a summer evening with the Bard. Community members were also invited to join in a special conversation with the play’s directors, Hannah Steblay and Samantha V. Papke, and Shakespeare scholar, Dr. Amy Muse, associate professor of English at the University of St. Thomas, to discuss the themes the play explores and the complexity of gender in Shakespeare’s world.
Supporting the Humanities

Humanities Circle donors are curious, connected, compassionate people who care about getting to the heart of innovative social change to create a just society. MHC is deeply grateful to the supporters listed below who put the power of their philanthropy to work in support of the humanities.

VISIONARY | $100,000+
National Endowment for the Humanities
The Teagle Foundation

GROUNDBREAKER | $20,000-$99,999
F.R. Bigelow Foundation
Saint Paul and Minnesota Foundation

DYNAMO | $10,000-$19,999
Hardenbergh Foundation

CHANGEMAKER | $2,500-$9,999
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The Minnesota Humanities Center gratefully acknowledges the generosity of the following individuals, corporations, foundations, and institutions that made donations in support of MHC.

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Christine Wolf
Ellen Zacharias
Financials

Revenue

- Government Grants: $3,112,044
- Contributions: $365,894
- Programmatic: $463,613
- Release of Net Assets: $5,500,000
- Investment: $(6,394)

TOTAL: $9,435,157

Expenses

- Staffing: $2,365,019
- ReGrants: $2,729,408
- Contract Services: $3,029,653
- Administrative: $1,248,465

TOTAL: $9,372,545

Donors:

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- Vusumuzi & Nothando Zulu
Leadership

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“I was thoroughly impressed with the professionalism, enthusiasm, nimbleness and political sensitivity exhibited by the MHC team. Throughout there was also a sense of commitment to mission and compassion. It makes me even more humbled and excited about being a board member with many future opportunities to bring resources to Greater Minnesota.”

—NANCY ARONSON NORR, MHC Board Member
We’re excited about 2023 as we seek to expand some of our existing programming, launch new initiatives, demonstrate how we view the power of the humanities, and see more guests return for meetings and overnight retreats at our Event Center. Please stay in touch as this year promises to be a year of growth. I look forward to seeing you soon at MHC as we create more spaces for people to listen, learn, and collaborate together.

—Kevin Lindsey