



Minnesota
Humanities
Center

2023 Annual Report

**growing
our
capacity
for
change**

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LETTER FROM KEVIN LINDSEY, CEO



This was an unprecedented year of programmatic growth for the Minnesota Humanities Center (MHC). We also received a record amount of Minnesota Legislative funding to administer Cultural Heritage and Children’s Museums grants and broke new ground with first-time funding for capacity building and emergency grants.

I asked MHC staff to redouble our effort to examine our country’s history and be a positive change agent in society after the murder of **Mr. George Floyd**. MHC staff in 2024 once again rose to the occasion.

MHC collaborated on the **‘Arc of Justice’** program with the Westminster Town Hall Forum to host Dr. Cornel West and Ifeoma Ike to discuss the state of justice in society after the death of Mr. Floyd. We provided scholarships to 25 Minnesota educators to participate in **“There IS a Balm in Gilead”** conference in Birmingham, Alabama, to learn about the Modern Civil Rights Movement.

We hosted a wonderful Juneteenth celebration that included Dr. Bernice King, created an award-winning film, **The Juneteenth Story: From Galveston, Texas to Minnesota**, and hosted, to rave reviews around the state to the play, **Kumbayah The Juneteenth Story** to help draw parallels from the past to the present.

We reflected on the love within communities by creating the **Essence of Joy** series where several chefs prepared wonderful food while sharing personal stories about community. We also initiated the **Headscarf’s Tea Gathering** in which women from all walks and stages of life had an opportunity to learn, share, and be in conversation with other women.

Returning to our literary roots, we expanded our **Minnesota Writers Series** with more authors and topics. We also partnered with Minnesota’s Poet Laureate Gwen Nell Westerman on several Poetry Sparks! events throughout the year.

Our Many Fronts: Veterans and Community Voices program explored refugee issues, hosted celebrated New York Times and Minnesota Book Award authors, and included new partners such as the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts. We also achieved a significant milestone when we received our third **“Dialogues on the Experience of War”** National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant.

We concluded the year with an amazing annual celebration in which we were honored with the presence of **NEH Chair, Dr. Shelly C. Lowe**, and we took time to recognize the 10th anniversary of **Learning from Place: Bdote** and the many people who played a role in its success.

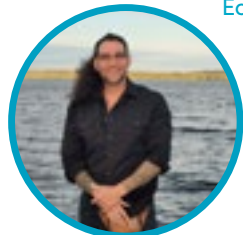
As I look forward, I’m as excited about our future as I’m pleased about this past year. Thank you for helping us create **a more just society that is curious, connected, and compassionate.**

Warmly,

our year in review

In communities across Minnesota and beyond its borders, through collaborations with educators, creators, authors, nonprofit, business and governmental organizations, elders, and so many others, we invited people to grow their capacity for change. Here's just a snapshot of the change-sparking moments we facilitated this year:

Objects of War: A Storytelling Circle (MHC)



Educator Professional Development: Teaching American Indian Content (Virtual)

Treaties, Strategies, and Traditionalism with Dr. Dennis Fisher (Bemidji)

TRUE Tuesday Session: Story Circle (Virtual)

Overcoming Racism: The Promise of Place (Metro State)

NOVEMBER '22

Cloquet Educator Workshops (Cloquet)

A Vision Trust of Black Men: Planning for 'A Soldier's Play' (MHC)

MN Writers Series: The Latitude of Mercy (MHC)



New Year's Eve at Paisley Park with OMG Media Solutions

Women, Life, Freedom Series (Virtual)

True Tuesday: Noticing Our Response to Conflict with Nonviolent Peaceforce (Virtual)



Great Northern Festival: Cultural Food Preservation, Climate Limitations, and Adaption (Minneapolis)

Educator Professional Development Story Circles (Rochester)

We Are Water (State Capital)

JANUARY

DECEMBER '22

Cloquet Educator Workshops (Cloquet)

A Vision Trust of Black Men: Planning for 'A Soldier's Play' (MHC)

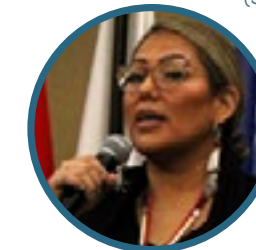
MN Writers Series: The Latitude of Mercy (MHC)



New Year's Eve at Paisley Park with OMG Media Solutions

Feeding Our Souls: The Essence of Black Joy (MHC)

Cultural Learning Journeys: Latine Hxstory and the Xican@ Pop-Up Book Movement (St. Paul)



Dakota and Ojibwe Languages Symposium (Onamia)

MN Writers Series: The Stories Whiteness Tells Itself (MHC)

Learning from Place: Bdote at the Great Northern Festival (St. Paul)

FEBRUARY



Headscarf Story Circle (MHC)

MN Writers Series: Wild Things (MHC)

Remembering: A Black Writers' Retreat (MHC)

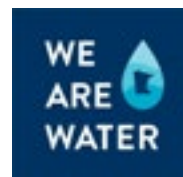
The Rebellious Life of Rosa Parks Film Screening (St. Paul)

Why Treaties Matter (Walker)

MARCH

Dinner and Conversation with Veteran and Author Elliot Ackerman (MHC)

Learning from Place (Cedar-Riverside/West Bank, Bdote/St. Paul, Hmong St. Paul)



We Are Water (Pine River and Hastings)

Poetry Sparks! National Poetry Month Celebration with Minnesota Poet Laureate Professor Gwen Westerman (MHC)

Educator Professional Development Story Circles (Inver Grove Heights)

Superintendent Leadership Breakfast Meetings (St. Paul)

APRIL



Arc Toward Justice: An Evening with Dr. Cornel West and Ifeoma Ike (Minneapolis)

TRUE Tuesdays: Youth Voice in Decision-Making (Virtual)

Headscarf Story Circle (MHC)

Children's Book Week Celebration (MHC)

Feeding Our Souls: The Essence of Asian Joy (MHC)

Welcome Reception for the Ambassador of Thailand (St. Paul)

MAY

Kumbayah the Juneteenth Story (Rochester, Golden Valley, St. Peter, St. Cloud)

Juneteenth Brunch with Dr. Bernice King (Minneapolis)

Learning from Place: Slow Roll'n Rondo (St. Paul)

Teaching American Indian Content to All (Coleraine)

We Are Water (Minneapolis)

Juneteenth Commemoration Film Release, "From Galveston, Texas to Minnesota"

JUNE

Why Treaties Matter (Eagan)

Learning from Place: St. Paul's Little Africa

Teachability Factors in General and Special Education: Harnessing Adult Data for Change (St. Paul)



Wakpa Triennial Festival Critical Conversations Facilitation (Series)

Learning from Place: Bdote (St. Paul)

Shakespeare in our Parks: Much Ado About Nothing (St. Paul)

MN Writers Series: The Sky Watched (Duluth)

Learning from Place: LGBTQ+ History in Downtown Minneapolis

JULY

Critical Conversations: Healing Through Equitable Recovery and Redevelopment (Minneapolis)

We Are Water (Minneapolis, Roseau)

MN Writers Series (St. Paul)

Headscarf Story Circle (MHC)

Mandela Washington Fellowship Workshop (MHC)



Wakpa Art Triennial (Twin Cities)

MN Writers Series (St. Paul)

Headscarf Story Circle (MHC)

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Mandela Washington Fellowship Workshop (MHC)

Wakpa Art Triennial (Twin Cities)

MN Writers Series (St. Paul)

Headscarf Story Circle (MHC)

MN Writers Series: Break Point (St. Cloud)

Fall Metro Indian Education Gathering (MHC)

Cambodian Heritage Celebration (St. Paul)



There IS a Balm in Gilead Healing Conference (Birmingham, AL)

Poetry Encuentro: A Latine Poetry Gathering (MHC)

Learning from Place: Bdote (St. Paul)

National Read a Book Day (MHC)

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

From Mountains to Lakes: Hmong Educational Forum (MHC)



Veterans Voices Month Celebration (MHC)

The Time War Takes, Jessi Atherton (MHC)

Poetry Sparks! Youth Writing Workshop (St. Paul)

Feeding Our Souls: The Essence of Latino Joy (MHC)

Our Ancestors Are Us: An Asian Adoptee Life Writing Workshop (MHC)

Excavating Excellence Speaker Series: Including an Indigenous Lens that Honors the Past, Present and Future (Staples)

Why Treaties Matter (Brainerd)

AUGUST

From Mountains to Lakes: Hmong Educational Forum (MHC)



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**Let's define
the humanities
for what they are,**

**something that
each and every
one of us do.**

**Telling our stories,
being who we are,
sharing our stories
with one another.
Because the
humanities are
the things that
teach us.**

—Dr. Shelly C. Lowe
Chair of the National Endowment of the Humanities,
speaking at our annual event, Passport to the Humanities.

catalyzing change through grantmaking

GRANTEE STORIES

Through nimble, responsive and efficient grantmaking we catalyze ideas and elevate voices, supporting individuals, nonprofits, schools and collectives across the state who leverage the humanities in pursuit of a more just society.



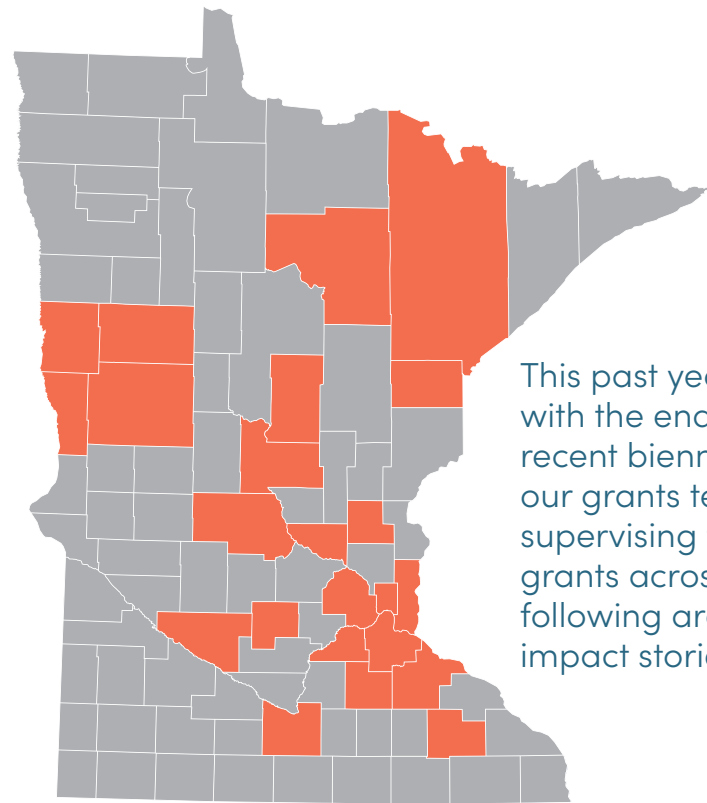
On November 4, 2008, Minnesota voters approved the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment to preserve and enhance some of the most important aspects of our state from drinking water to arts and culture. The amendment to the Minnesota Constitution, often referred to as the “Legacy Amendment,” created four funds, one of which is the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund (ACHF).

The Minnesota Legislature has generously provided ACHF funding to MHC to develop programming and issue and administer humanities grants. During the last two legislative sessions, MHC has received funding to provide various grants. In 2023, the scope of MHC’s grantmaking was expanded to include capacity building and emergency grants.

Creative people and organizations use humanities grant funding to create a wide range of transformational programming that expands knowledge, builds community and celebrates culture.

Did You Know

The Arts and Cultural Legacy Amendment must be presented to Minnesotans for renewal as a ballot initiative before 2033?



2021-2023 Legislatively Named Grantees

This past year, coinciding with the end of the most recent biennium funding cycle, our grants team was busy supervising the work of 161 grants across the state. The following are just a few impact stories.

Cultural Music Program for Somali American Youth

The Afro American Development Association (AADA) in Moorhead leveraged grant dollars to promote and provide a specific place for Somali and East African immigrant youth to creatively learn and experience their culture. AADA was established in 2014 when a group of students attending local colleges in the Fargo-Moorhead area came together to support immigrants and first-generation Americans to pursue their goals and create promising futures for their families and communities.

The Work

Youth received culturally-attuned music lessons from Somali musician Nimcan Hilaac, first through an in-person workshop in Moorhead and then through a series of Zoom classes held over the following months. The program culminated with youth performing their own music at North Dakota State University, at four mini local festivals in Moorhead and at Somalia’s Got Talent in Minneapolis.

The Outcomes

100% of participating youth reported learning one new songwriting technique. Over 80% reported feeling more connected to Somali culture. 75% reported making deeper relationships with parents and/or family elders as a result of cultural education.

“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. Even more importantly, their grantmaking process is accessible and responsive, with their staff answering questions, reviewing applications, and providing feedback as requested. Their reporting requirements are not overburdensome but encourage grantees to share accomplishments and highlights.”

—Sarah Gruidl

Reviving Islamic Sisterhood for Empowerment (RISE)
2021-2023 Cultural Heritage Grant Awardee



A Hmong Winter Wonderland Coloring Book

Serving the largest diaspora of Hmong people, Hmong Archives secured a grant to create a unique coloring book that would not only be fun to color but would also educate readers and the broader public about Hmong culture while preserving and building Hmong identity and values. In realizing

its vision, Hmong Archives partnered with Hmong Educational Resource Publisher.

The Work

The grant helped produce a coloring book created by a collaboration of Hmong artists, designers, and volunteers, blending designs and symbols from traditional Hmong culture with the magic of Minnesota’s winter season. The book showcased the paj ntaub, or flower cloth, an integral part of the Hmong culture. This traditional needlework or cloth embroidery dates back several centuries and is an art form of creating patterns and designs with thousands needle strokes on a fabric cloth, with the designer usually incorporating symbolic images, whether it is family clan, nature, or folklore.

The Outcomes

A coloring book of more than 80 detailed and imaginative pages featuring the beautiful Hmong paj ntaub and reflecting the ethnic Hmong people and culture, teaching Hmong and non-Hmong children and families about the beautiful winter wonderland of Hmong Minnesotans.



Looking ahead

In 2024, we will award an additional \$12M in grants appropriated by the Minnesota Legislature from the 2023 biennium for cultural heritage, children’s museums, capacity building, civics, and emergency grants. Follow that significant work at mnhum.org/grants.

Migration Stories’ Movement as Language

Carmen Lucia Lincoln, through her company Dance Projects by ME, developed the Movement as Language Dance Program, where community members were guided through movement exercises and encouraged to develop their own choreography as a way of storytelling. The piece examined migration from unique perspectives. Every human experiences migration in one way or another, for some movers the migration experience is literal in moving from one country to another, for others it is a recovery from an accident, or transition to parenthood. When words are not enough – movement becomes our common language

The Work

This Movement as Language dance education programming project included four stages: community engagement to determine workshop goals and structure, movement workshops providing dance education and intersectional conversations, rehearsals to integrate community conversation and choreography with professional and community dancers, and a final public performance.

“It gives artists of all backgrounds and abilities an accessible opportunity to move together. This is a very encouraging and inviting program, welcoming everyone. This is very moving, as art is such an important part of our society and it was beautiful to see people that don’t usually take dance come to the workshops”

—Olivia, project participant

The Outcomes

33 dancers, which included non-professional dancers from the community, participated in dance performance workshops culminating in their performance of “Migration Stories” to a packed house of more than 140 people at the Southern Theater in Minneapolis.

“I think it allows for the decolonization of professional dance welcoming all of the different experiences”

—Favi, project participant

a year of

— expanded
programming

— deepened
understanding

— sparks
of change

creating change through programming

We create a stronger Minnesota by increasing understanding of the beauty, wisdom, and stories of its people. Through our programming, we curate stories and co-create engagement opportunities in education, civic renewal, immersive experiences and public programming.

Programming at-a-glance

103

TOTAL EVENTS

56

PUBLIC EVENTS

47

PRIVATE EVENTS

2

TRAVELING EXHIBITS

22,000

PEOPLE ENGAGED



Education

We strengthen and prepare school communities to address the challenges they are facing in a changing educational landscape. To advance a healthy educational system that re-imagines learning, we convene educators, academics, community leaders, and families to co-create curriculum, professional development, and instructional practices in areas such as ethnic studies, indigenous education and civics that meet the needs of our future leaders: mnhum.org/education



Public Programming

We partner with individuals, creatives, scholars, and organizations across the state to co-create opportunities for conversation and connection. We curate public events and programming, showcase storytellers and writers, host traveling exhibitions, and more to facilitate authentic, honest dialogue and amplify the stories and lived experiences of often-marginalized voices: mnhum.org/public

Civic Renewal

We leverage the humanities to foster a well-functioning democracy. We seek to build the capacity of everyday citizens to achieve common goals, influence the institutions that impact their lives, and lead our democracy through curious, connected, and compassionate work in their communities. Our programming explores hot-button issues in ways that build understanding, advances public discourse through scholar partnerships, and enhances civic learning through higher education partnerships: mnhum.org/civics



Immersive Experiences

We foster deep learning and greater understanding through community-curated immersive experiences. These experiences showcase the rich, vibrant, and diverse cultural and ethnic communities throughout Minnesota. Recent offerings have included Learning from Place, Feeding Our Souls, Headscarf Story Circle, BIPOC Writing Retreats, and more. When we appreciate and value one another, we can advance more inclusive policies, services, teaching, and behaviors that spark positive change: mnhum.org/immersive



amplifying voices, stories, and histories

MINNESOTA WRITERS SERIES

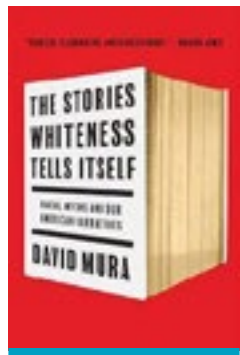
Too many of our places and spaces exclude voices, stories and histories that help people understand themselves and the world, narrowing our potential to bring about positive change. Meanwhile, Minnesota abounds with talented writers and poets.



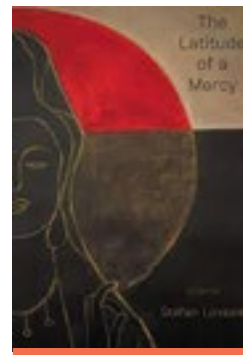
That's why we expanded our Minnesota Writers Series this year, to recognize and celebrate the writing ecosystem in the state, to create space for narrative expression, and to inspire audience members through deepened understanding. We featured five books and their authors this year, showcasing a range of topics and perspectives. In total, more than 250 people attended these intimate, compelling events.



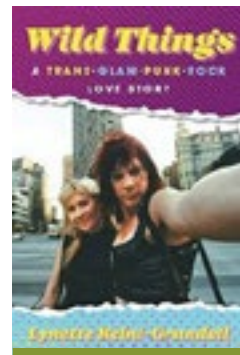
Children's Book Week Appreciating the impact of children's literature on the imagination of children, we celebrated the week with an afternoon of books, story time, games, and crafts. One featured book was "Where We Come From" by noted Minnesota writers, Diane Wilson, Sun Yung Shin, Shannon Gibney, and John Coy.



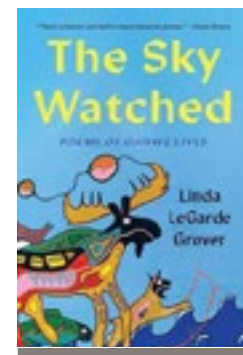
Minnesota Book Award winner David Mura read from and discussed "The Stories Whiteness Tells Itself: Racial Myths and Our American Narratives." Together with fellow Minnesota Book Award winner **Alexs Pate**, the two discussed issues of race, history and education.



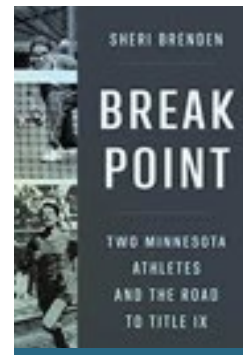
Co-sponsored with **Veterans for Peace**, we welcomed poet Stefan Lovasik to read from and discuss "The Latitude of a Mercy," his most recent poetry collection. Stefan, a Vietnam combat veteran, brought into striking focus the landscape of war, the lasting consequences of it, and the resilience of the human spirit.



We marked **Trans Day of Visibility** by welcoming Lynette Reini-Grandell and her trans spouse Venus de Mars for a deeply personal conversation on Lynette's book, "Wild Things: A Trans-Glam-Punk-Rock Love Story." RECLAIM, a nonprofit working to increase access to mental health care so queer and trans youth may reclaim their lives from oppression, co-sponsored this powerful event.



Author and poet Linda LeGarde Grover read selections from her recent collection. She was joined on stage with Dr. Jill M. Doerfler, Chair of American Indian Studies at University of Minnesota-Duluth. They discussed the joys and complexities of a life devoted to writing, poetry and the ways it has deepened her connection to her Native culture. In celebration of poets, young and old, the audience was invited to share their own poetry.



Author Sheri Brenden was joined by her sister, Peg Brenden, for discussion of her book "Break Point: Two Minnesota Athletes and the Road to Title IX," the story behind the groundbreaking 1972 federal court case that took on the unequal system of school athletics nationwide.

Co-sponsored by the **Minnesota Coalition of Women in Athletic Leadership** and hosted in both St. Cloud and Red Wing.



Did you know?

The Minnesota Humanities Center is responsible for the nominating process for the state's poet laureate, making recommendations to the governor. **PROFESSOR GWEN NELL WESTERMAN** was appointed by Governor Walz and Lt. Governor Flanagan in 2021. This year, she released a new collection of poems, "Songs, Blood Deep," and marked National Poetry Month by hosting a special Poetry Sparks event at our event center.

"Poetry is song. In this role, it will be my responsibility to help sing the stories of all the people of Minnesota."

—Professor Gwen Nell Westerman, Minnesota's Poet Laureate

facilitating authentic, honest dialogue

JUNETEENTH

Known as Emancipation Day and America's second Independence Day marking the end of slavery in the United States, Juneteenth became federal holiday in 2021 and a Minnesota state holiday in 2023. The day presents an opportunity to engage in authentic dialogue, in story sharing, and in immersions that deepen our collective understanding of our past and the pursuit of Black liberation, justice and equity.

Through Minnesota Humanities Center partnerships and programming, we challenge the romanticized notions of the past, examine them through broader, more diverse viewpoints, and imagine solutions to our present problems. For the second year in a row, our Juneteenth celebration consisted of a keynote brunch conversation, a multi-stop theatrical play, and a film.



A Juneteenth Brunch Conversation with Dr. Bernice King

Community members came together at Westminster Presbyterian Church for a dialogue with Dr. Bernice King entitled **It Starts with Me: Cultivating a Beloved Community Mindset to Transform Unjust Systems**. The moving conversation brought fresh perspective to the questions of where we go from here and how we overcome today's inequities and injustices to build that beloved community. We provided all attendees with a copy of Dr. Bernice King's "It Starts With Me."

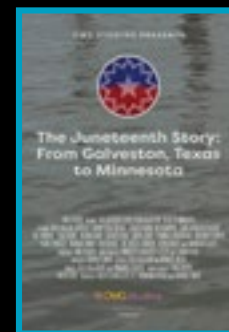
Kumbayah: The Juneteenth Story

Written by Rose McGee and in partnership with Sweet Potato Comfort Pie, this fictitious, two-act play was presented to communities across Minnesota through partnerships in Rochester, St. Cloud, St. Peter and Golden Valley. Leveraging the power of the humanities – theater – helped audiences connect to and understand the stories and histories excluded from dominant narratives, better equipping them to imagine solutions to present problems.



The Juneteenth Story: From Galveston, Texas to Minnesota

Film has the power to reflect who and where we are, while inspiring us toward new, more just futures. We supported the production of OMG Studio's six-part docuseries, "The Juneteenth Story: from Galveston, Texas, to Minnesota," which tells the Juneteenth story through historians and descendants of enslaved captives transported to Galveston Island during the transatlantic slave trade between 1816 and 1836, including an interview with St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter III. Directed by Monique Linder, the film received four film festival awards in 2023.



bridging divides with compassion

MANY FRONTS: VETERANS' AND COMMUNITY VOICES

Our goal is to disrupt commonly held stereotypes, unearth less visible narratives of war and the human experience, and help bridge the military-civilian divide.

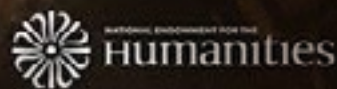
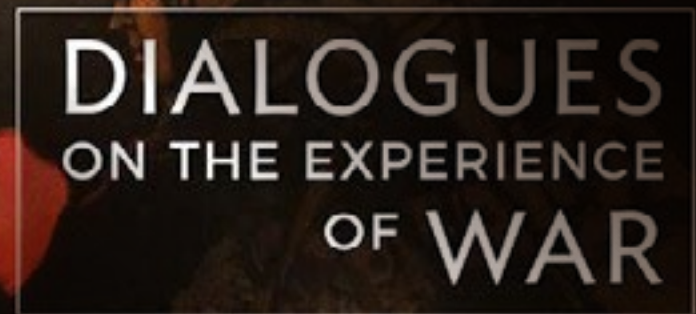
We do this work—as vital today as ever—through collaboration and partnerships, offering stories and experiences that will foster curiosity, forge connection, and fuel compassion. That work this year included:

The End of War in Afghanistan

We welcomed New York Times bestselling author and decorated Marine veteran **Elliot Ackerman** to our event center for dinner and a conversation about his recent book, "The Fifth Act: America's End in Afghanistan."

A Soldier's Play

We partnered with SoulTouch Productions and the Ordway Theater to form "A Vision Trust of Black Men" to support a group of Black men committed to uplifting the Black community and embracing the legacies of Black Veterans. The Vision Trust supported the Ordway's production of the acclaimed "A Soldier's Play" written by Charles Fuller, which tells the story of a murder investigation of a Black Army Sergeant within an all-Black unit.



Objects of War

Co-sponsored by the Minnesota Historical Society and the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans and moderated by a Veteran and a refugee, we hosted a storytelling circle centered around Objects of War. Participants brought their own object that helps them tell their story, whether dog tags of a family member lost in service, a good luck charm kept by a soldier, or a family heirloom that traveled across the world by a refugee. The conversation examined why we hold on to certain material objects, and how they can help us better understand the human experience of war.

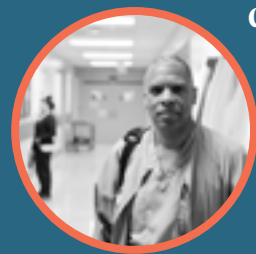
Veterans' Voices

Minnesota was the first state in the nation to create Veterans Voices Month. This year, we marked the occasion with dinner and a poetry reading from **Jessi Atherton**, a U.S. Army Iraq War Veteran and author of "The Time War Takes." Atherton shared personal stories of gifts from home and objects she kept with her during her military service.



Jessi Atherton

“With all of the disparities driven by systemic racism that affect our Black community, my hope is that the conversations we have started, and will be having, through the Vision Trust will make a difference. We cannot legislate; we cannot purchase; we cannot command; and we cannot hope that these issues rectify themselves. It will take intentional, focused discussions to change the hope into the realization of the results we can achieve.”



— Dr. David Hamlar
Minneapolis surgeon, retired Two-Star General in the Minnesota Air National Guard, Veterans Voices Award recipient, and MHC board member.

Spark Spotlight

Professor Tanya Miller received support from MHC, which included attending Jessi Atherton event, to allow her students to work with local military veterans in Park Rapids, Minnesota, on an oral history project, which ultimately was included in a larger national project through the Library of Congress and was published locally in an anthology entitled, "The Untold Stories of American Veterans." All 24 students that participated in the project felt engaged and rewarded by the project.

deepening our collective understanding

10 YEARS OF LEARNING FROM PLACE: BDOTE

Many Minnesotans erroneously believe that there are no remaining Indigenous people in Minnesota. These missing and false narratives create harm and stifle our individual and collective potential.



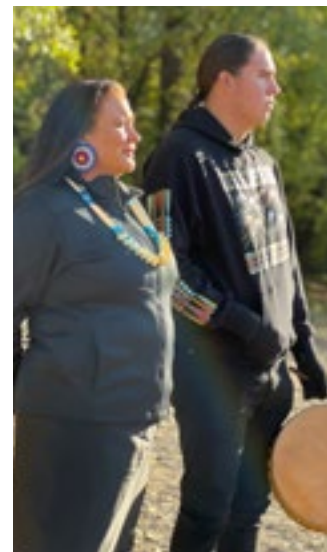
Bdote is a Dakota word that generally means "where two waters come together." The Bdote, where the Mississippi River and the Minnesota River, come together is central to Dakota spirituality and history.

When we began this immersive experience in 2013, some participants shared that they were

unaware that Indigenous people still lived in Minnesota. Our mission is to spark change by increasing collective understanding. That's because developing a deeper understanding of ourselves, our communities, and our histories can help us close the relationship gap in creating policies, services, and programs that are inclusive, relevant and impactful.

“There is a missing narrative about what happened to the Dakota People who have lived here for 12,000 years. We're able to share the stories and how we are connected to the land as a relative and not as a resource and honor the people who suffered here.”

— Ramona Kitto Stately
Santee Sioux Dakota, and co-creator of Learning from Place: Bdote



The profound impact of Learning from Place: Bdote has inspired MHC Learning from Place events of all kinds.

24 Public and private Bdote events

600 Bdote events attendees

9 Learning from Place: Hmong events

853 people educated by offerings



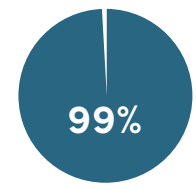
Interested in seeing Learning From Place: Bdote for yourself? Watch our short film, "10 Years of Bdote."

Learning From Place: Bdote

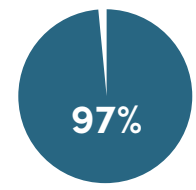
grew from a collaboration with Saint Paul Public Schools and the Bdote Memory Map into an experience that has transformed thousands of participants from across industry sectors.

Impact of Learning from Place Events:

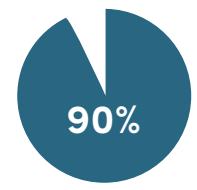
Participants tell us that our immersive experiences helped them:



Develop greater understanding



Develop greater compassion



Increase self-awareness

fostering equitable learning environments

The education landscape is changing rapidly, from external pressures to diversifying needs. Too often, systems are outdated, institutions are unprepared for scholar needs, and curriculum excludes the lives, experiences and stories of scholars.

That is where our work in education comes in, helping teachers teach and learners learn more deeply and inclusively. We believe that education is and must be for everyone, and that creativity and innovation are essential. Consider just a few highlights from this year:



Building a more inclusive sense of belonging

We trained over 50 Intermediate School District 917 educators of all levels in **Story Circles** so every voice in the district could be heard. Story Circles are being implemented in Alternative Learning classrooms to build deeper relationships, integrate student and family voices and connect new staff. We also facilitate collaboration between districts to leverage resources and deepen impact.



BIPOC Educator Institute

Also with ISD 917 and Metropolitan State University, we hosted a **BIPOC Educator Institute** for teachers in their first five years of teaching, with the goal of reducing teacher burnout and resignation. Our work sought to build community among BIPOC educators and learn skills to navigate education systems with resistance, resilience, and reimagination.

Cloquet Educator Professional Development

Alongside four Ojibwe community experts—Naawakwe/William Howes, Bidaasige/Thomas Howes, Nenaaw/Charles Smith, and Roxanne DeLille—we led a daylong **Learning from Place: Danakiwining** for 63 middle school and high school educators from Cloquet Public Schools. This was the culminating event of our three-year relationship with the district and included immersions in Ojibwe ways of teaching and learning, connection to Ojibwe resources and content, and development of lesson plans that move from a celebrations-focus toward a transformative citizen approach.



Third Way Civics

Beyond K-12 education, our civic renewal work serves college professors and students through our Third Way Civics offering, a one-semester course that seeks to put Americans' long history of division into context, turning division into opportunity for individual and collective growth using primary source readings and student-directed inquiry. To ensure on-campus success, we engage higher education faculty and administrators in a three-day summer workshop. Partners this year included Hamline University, Indiana University-Bloomington, University of Missouri-St. Louis, Stanford University, joining Minnesota State University-Mankato, Winona State University, University of St. Thomas, Ball State University, and Southeastern University.

Discover the power and potential of Third Way Civics at mnhum.org/thirdwaycivics

“Profoundly humbling, transformative, and life altering. Most significantly, the experience has imprinted on me the necessity to hold myself, my content, and our education system to a standard that honors humanity and tells the truths that are necessary.”

—An educator who participated in the There IS a Balm in Gilead conference

Spark Spotlight

Our mission is to spark positive change. And we are achieving that. But don't take our word for it. Here are a few comments from those benefitting from this successful change:

“Next year my school will have Story Circle start the day for our traditional classrooms to help curve behavior and get students voices heard. My principal has been so impressed with my classes the last couple of years.”

—Story Circle Participant

“In the past 3 years we have seen a 63% decrease in behavior issues and a 72% increase academically since I started using Story Circle on a regular basis. That is from 4th to 5th grade. Previously we saw an uptick in behavior and a slide academically. Allowing students to have a voice makes all the difference.”

—Craig Wiles, 5th Grade Teacher

Find K-12 educator professional development resources and upcoming offerings: mnhum.org/k-12



There IS a Balm in Gilead National Conference

We provided scholarship to 25 Minnesota educators to join our staff at There IS a Balm in Gilead: Healing from the Events of 1963, an in-depth, interactive field study of the **Modern Civil Rights Movement** and the pivotal role that Birmingham, Alabama, played in making the promises of the U.S. Constitution a greater reality for more Americans.

To deepen conference experiences and catalyze change, we brought participating educators back together after the conference for continued learning and discussion on

how we can support building ethnic studies curriculum in Minnesota. And, we engaged their and other administrators from St. Peter, Lakeville, Intermediate School District 917 serving the southeast metro, Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Stillwater in a conversation about teaching “hard histories” and the Modern Civil Rights Movement, facilitated by **Dr. Martha Bouyer**, lead scholar for the NEH Educator Institute Stony the Road We Trod and lead scholar for There IS a Balm in Gilead Healing conference.

empowered, federally recognized council



The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) is an independent federal agency and one of the largest funders of humanities programs in the country, serving and strengthening our republic by promoting excellence in the humanities and conveying the lessons of history to all Americans.



“[The humanities] remind each and every one of

us that we are not alone here, that there are other people here, that we are all looking at things together, that we’re all asking some of the same questions. And I think that when we truly look at what we’re asking and who we are, we can see the beauty that is all around us.”

—Dr. Shelly C. Lowe
Chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities,
speaking at MHC’s annual event, *Passport to the Humanities*.

The Minnesota Humanities Center is one of 56 federally recognized humanities councils and the proud recipient of many NEH grants. NEH funds open new worlds of learning for Minnesotans, including the following experiences we brought to life last year.

National History Day Since 1974, National History Day (NHD) has empowered middle- and high-school students around the world to embrace exciting new roles as researchers, historians, writers, filmmakers, web designers and artists. NHD equips teachers with a robust, year-round history curriculum. Together with the Minnesota Historical Society, we developed and implemented programming to deepen and increase NHD reach into southwest Minnesota.

Federal Boarding School Initiative In April 2023, NEH announced a new inter-agency partnership with the Department of the Interior to expand the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative through the collection of oral histories and digitization of records documenting the experiences of survivors and descendants of federal Indian boarding school policies. MHC has worked to encourage more discussion within Minnesota schools about the history of Federal Boarding Schools in Minnesota.

United We Stand grant program is the Biden Administration’s efforts to prevent and address hate-motivated violence and foster unity and reconciliation within the United States. MHC staff Kevin Lindsey, Rose McGee, and Sung Ja Shin traveled to Birmingham, Alabama, to be a part of the *There IS a Balm in Gilead: Healing from the Events of 1963* conference. Lindsey served as a keynote speaker, McGee and her non-profit, *Sweet Potato Comfort Pie*, worked with local officials to gift pies to facilitate healing, and Shin worked to facilitate 25 Minnesota educators having the opportunity to learn more about the role Birmingham, Alabama, played in the Modern Civil Rights Movement and the work of community leaders to overcome acts of violence such as the bombing of the 16th St. Avenue Church that claimed the lives of four girls attending Sunday School.

Dialogues on the Experience of War MHC received its third award over the past 10 years under the above NEH grant program and was honored to be the only state humanities council to receive such a grant from NEH. The grant, *Examining Military Service from the Margins*, will encourage Veterans and community members to examine the experiences of female, Black, American Indian, LGBTQ, and immigrant service members across United Services history and the complicated dynamics behind service to a country that does not always recognize their constitutional rights.

Spark Spotlight Chair Lowe invited leaders from the Virginia, Texas, and Minnesota state humanities councils to talk about their work to facilitate healing in their respective communities after tragedy. Our work on the award-winning *How Can We Breathe* programming inspired Alabama residents to ask MHC for help creating and participating in *There IS a Balm in Gilead: Healing from the Events of 1963*.

facilitating change through partnership

The work of the Minnesota Humanities Center is the work of partnership. Thank you to the following generous organizations for making humanities education and deepened understanding possible through partnership.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| African Economic Development Solutions | Macalester College | Power of the People |
| American Indian Community Housing Organization | Mayo Clinic | Promise Neighborhood |
| Anderson Center at Tower View | Memorialize the Movement | Public Art Saint Paul |
| Association of Minnesota Public Educational Radio Stations | Minneapolis Public Schools | Read Brave Saint Paul |
| Breck School | Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans | RECLAIM |
| Cambodian American Community Partnership | Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources | Red Hen Gastrolab |
| Central Minnesota United Way | Minnesota Department of Agriculture | Reviving Islamic Sisterhood Empowerment |
| Classical Actors Ensemble | Minnesota Department of Health | Saint Cloud City Council |
| Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans | Minnesota Department of Natural Resources | Saint Paul Almanac |
| Diverse Reads | Minnesota Equity and Justice Project | Saint Paul Area Chamber |
| Duluth Public Schools | Minnesota Historical Society | SEWA-AIFW |
| Education for Liberation Network MN | Minnesota Indian Affairs Council | Somali TV of Minnesota |
| Forum on Workplace Inclusion | Minnesota National Guard | SoulTouch Productions |
| Funny Asian Women Kollektive | Minnesota Pollution Control Agency | Stearns County Museum |
| Gwen Nell Westerman, Minnesota Poet Laureate | Minnesota Public Defenders | Sweet Potato Comfort Pie |
| Hamline University | Minnesota Public Radio | Telling Queer History |
| Historic Fort Snelling | Minnesota State University, Mankato | The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library |
| Hmong Cultural Center | Minnesota Women’s Press | The Juneteenth Foundation |
| HmongTown Marketplace | Mitchell Hamline School of Law | The Nocturnist Podcast |
| iDream.tv | MN BIPOC Kid Lit Creators | Twin Cities Diversity Equity and Inclusion Roundtable |
| Illinois Humanities Council | MN Council on Economic Education | University of Minnesota |
| In Black Ink | Nashinspired | University of St. Thomas |
| Justice Research Center | Nobles County Integration Collaborative | WCCO |
| Kamma Hospitality | OMG Digital Media | Westminster Town Hall Forum |
| KMOJ 89.9 FM | Ordway Center for the Performing Arts | Winona State University |
| LatinoLEAD | Palabristas | Women’s Initiative for Self Empowerment |
| Liberal Arts Engagement Hub | Pangea World Theater | Youthprise |
| | Pilgrim Lutheran Church (St. Paul) | |
| | Pillsbury United Communities | |

About this list: For the purposes of this annual report and reporting obligations to the National Endowment for the Humanities, partners included here are defined as organizations or groups that worked collaboratively with MHC to advance our mission and expand our reach. It is not an exhaustive list of every individual, organization or collective with whom we partnered this past year.

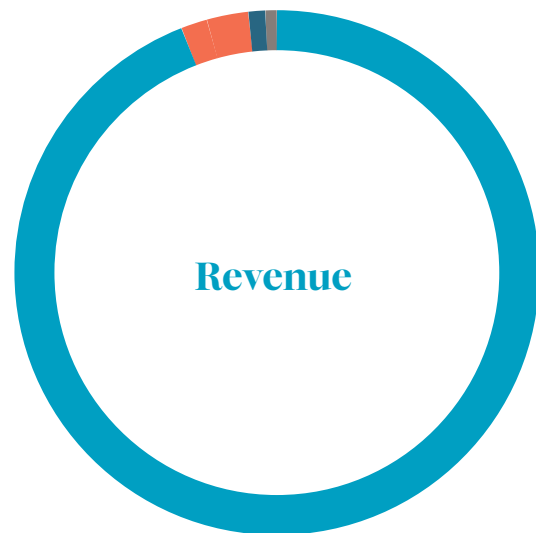
seeding change through generosity

Our pursuit of a more just society is funded in part through the generosity of donors—the national, regional and local organizations, agencies, corporations, and individuals who believe in the power of story, connection and understanding.

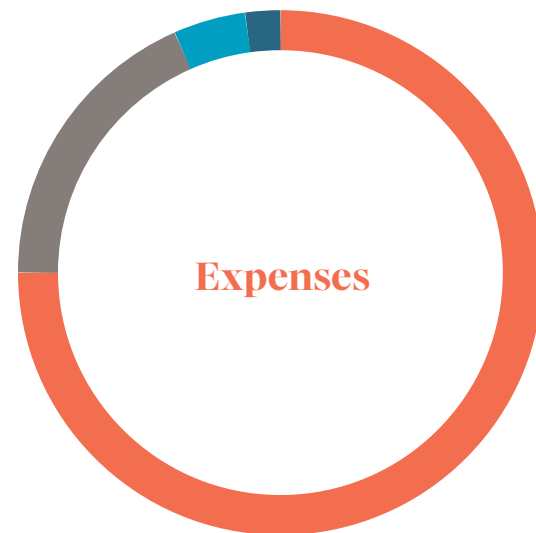
We'd like to especially thank the **National Endowment for the Humanities, the Lumina Foundation, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, the Minneapolis Foundation, and Thrivent Financial** for their contributions. Every donation, whatever amount, is vital to our work. **For questions on donations or donors, please contact Ann Mayers, Director of Development, at ann@mnhum.org or 651.772.4262.**

Financials

Statement of financial position November 1, 2022, through October 31, 2023 (FY23) for Minnesota Humanities Center.



● Contributions	\$179,674
● Grants	\$20,847,838
● Investments	\$105,174
● Programmatic	\$952,639
Total	\$22,085,324



● Staffing	\$2,180,504
● Programming	\$5,256,723
● Administrative	\$778,758
● Professional Services	\$1,341,223
Total	\$9,286,458

Stewarding the Work

The Board of Directors provides oversight of management, finances and strategic decision-making of the Minnesota Humanities Center. As community leaders, compassionate Minnesotans, and dedicated volunteers, their contributions are invaluable to our mission of sparking positive change.

Fiscal Year 2023 Board of Directors

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strategic priorities

Our work over the next four years will be guided by the following strategic priorities, adopted by the Minnesota Humanities Center Board of Directors this fall.

— **Prioritize Organizational Strength** creating a strong, diverse, and inclusive organization that excels in operations, governance, and financial management.

— **Champion Innovative and Responsive Programming** that increases a collective understanding in society, with particular emphasis on stories of traditionally marginalized and underrepresented communities throughout Minnesota.

— **Ensure Broad Humanities Support** of individuals, creatives, scholars, and organizations throughout the state through partnership with the Minnesota Legislature, National Endowment for the Humanities, and private donors.



Letter from Board Chairman Joshua Ney

THE POWER OF STORYTELLING UNITES US.

We at the Minnesota Humanities Center create a stronger Minnesota by building spaces for all of us to learn about and enjoy the beauty, wisdom, diversity, and stories of all its people. MHC's work grows because Minnesotans long for opportunities to come together to work on solutions, to hear from those who for far too long have not been at the table, and to understand themselves and the world in which they live. This truly speaks to the core of our mission of sparking positive change!

MHC continues to expand the work we do, how we do it, and why we do it. We've refined our mission, adopted new strategic priorities, and continue to broaden and deepen programming offerings and grantmaking impact. This is a transformational time for us as board members to witness and we as board members are excited to share these experiences with our communities across the state. Experience the Minnesota Humanities Center with us as we seek to understand each other better through the humanities.



Minnesota
Humanities
Center

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St. Paul, MN 55106

Sara Janssen
1943 Dayton Ave
St Paul, MN 55104

growing capacity for change

There's a role for each of us to play, together, in creating a just society that's curious, connected, and compassionate. Find yours today:



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[mnhum.org/give](mailto:info@mnhum.org)

Partner with us
info@mnhum.org

Follow us



MHC Event Center

Centrally located in a historic building on St. Paul's East Side, our full-service meeting and event center has onsite catering, overnight accommodations, and flexible meeting spaces. Our building is also home to the offices and programs of the Minnesota Humanities Center. We host hundreds of educational and community events each year, and are a place where people gather, strengthen connections, and participate in meaningful dialogues. **Consider us for your next meeting, retreat, or special occasion!**

“Bottom line, this place was EXCELLENT! Everyone in our group loved it! Great rooms, great location (green space), great food, friendly staff! It exceeded my hopes which is why I am already planning my next event.”

—Teresa Romain
Access Abundance! Inc.

