

METROWEST
WRITERS' GUILD

2023 Annual Report



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POSITIVE RISKS & HAPPY REWARDS

A NOTE FROM OUR FOUNDER

Every time a writer presses “submit” on a story, they take a positive risk.

The “risk” part is important to acknowledge. Writing stories is a personal endeavor and submitting stories to be judged as worthy is a hard thing to do. The “positive” part, of course, is the beautiful moment of acceptance, which is only ever a possibility when you submit. The mark of the dedicated writer is accepting the rejections as an invitation to try again.

This year, the Guild took a few positive risks. To seek better financial stability, we applied for grants. We’ve had to learn how to write about ourselves, how to translate what we do into numbers that matter. To support the publishing dreams of our writers, we started a small press and launched our annual journal, the Fiddlehead Folio. Finally, to offer a more robust experience for our writers, we offered an October Retreat with in-person sessions on intriguing and advanced topics. We also continued to do things we do well: our write-ins, our quarterly cohorts, and our craft talks. This year, we offered craft talks from our most diverse set of instructors yet.

Those risks have resulted in wonderful rewards. We welcomed 50 new writers into our community this year. They’ve found us via social media or regular internet searches. Many have found us through word of mouth. We’re an organization that serves beyond our original state borders, reaching writers



in Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Utah, Arizona, Spain, and Ireland. Our instructors have beamed into us from Washington state, Oregon, Texas, and London. I’m excited about our potential as we reach out to new instructors from many different disciplines and locations.

We are further rewarded with seeing Guild words printed on the page and shared with our neighbors this year. The Fiddlehead Folio presents a special opportunity to MetroWest readers: to read the work of storytellers who live where they live. To support working and striving writers now while they are learning their craft. The Folio represents an invitation and a gift. I look forward to iterating on it in 2024, just as the Guild continues to iterate into the future.

The information in the pages of this annual report represent the extraordinary work of over 15 volunteers who have contributed to the operations of the Guild. They also are a snapshot into a dynamic community of creative people. Thank you for celebrating our year of accomplishment with us. May 2024 be just as productive, creative, and generous.

Yours in Creativity,
Kyra N. Wilson Cook
Founding Director



A Brand New Small Press!

One of our biggest goals for 2023 was to launch the Guild's small press. Well, we did it! Graphic Designer Amy Hall did a wonderful job capturing the spirit of the press with these logos, colors, and fonts for both the Press and the Fiddlehead Folio, our newly-launched literary journal. We featured 7 Guild authors in the first volume and can't wait to publish more!



Puddingstone Press

Puddingstone Press is the Guild's brand new small press! It will serve as the publishing entity for Fiddlehead Folio and any future Guild publications. In 2024 we hope to publish another issue of the Folio as well as an anthology of stories from Guild authors, and we will continue adding and iterating into the future.

Fiddlehead Folio

Fiddlehead Folio is the first publication from Puddingstone Press. It features stories, poems, art, and first chapters from 7 Guild authors and will be published yearly in print and online.

A Sold-Out First Run!

We launched the inaugural issue of Fiddlehead Folio on December 2, 2023 at our Literary Extravaganza. It was a fantastic and fun day, filled with friends, good cheer, and a SOLD OUT first printing of the Folio! This issue featured 7 Guild authors and we couldn't be prouder of their success!



The Guild has given me two precious things: community and belief. I am deeply grateful for all the people in this community who are writing and teaching and encouraging. I believe I will finish this story, and I believe it will be published. One day I'll see it in a book store and I cannot wait.

This is such a genuine and thoughtful writing community, full of members generous with their time, knowledge and experience.

The Guild allowed me to connect with a community of supportive and passionate writers, something I've been missing since I started writing 15 years ago.

I'm immensely grateful for the Guild—a community that shines with warmth and encouragement for writers at every stage. It's a joy to engage with peers, sharing not only the triumphs and trials of writing but also honing our craft through exceptional classes, welcoming drop-in sessions, and fun social events. Every writer deserves this level of support! - Jennifer Lewy

HERE'S WHAT OUR MEMBERS HAD TO SAY IN 2023

I know I belong and am a writer, even when life gets in the way and I don't write much. And when I join back into activities again, I am welcomed and reminded.

The Guild has been so helpful in getting me to finish projects. I love the weekly accountability and connection of the Cohort groups, and the craft classes and content have been incredible for my development as a writer. The membership is so worth it.

The Guild has encouraged me to write my stories about the American Immigrant experience and helped me to hone my craft. It has been an invaluable experience! The Guild is full of amazing people and I'm happy to see it growing.

I have found classes to refine my craft, beta readers to improve my manuscript, and friends to support my book launch and the book launches of others. All of this in one of the kindest and friendliest communities around. -Howard Wolke



2023 BY THE NUMBERS

HOW'D WE DO?



28

Community donors! 25 repeat donors, donations ranging from \$5 to \$300.

50

New Guild members!

23

Magnificent instructors teaching classes

30

In person Fall Retreat attendees!

8

Business Supporters

2

Retreats, one hybrid, one fully online

184

Members in the Circle Community

324

Newsletter subscribers with an average 60% open rate

136

Total Guild events in 2023

40

Rejections earned, between journals, workshops, and publishers

3

Acceptances earned!

7

Guild Authors published in Fiddlehead Folio!

3

Grants received!



2023 GOALS ROUNDUP

Did we achieve what we aimed for?
Overall, signs point to yes!



1



Expand our new paid membership model

Goal Achieved! In 2023 we refined the offerings for our Premium Membership Tier and had 30 premium members.

3



Publish a digital Zine available only to MWWG Membership

Goal Achieved! In 2023 we published two issues of WORK IN PROGRESS, available only to MWWG members.

5



Reconnect with our local libraries

Goal partially achieved. We did reach out to multiple libraries and are in the process of developing ongoing relationships with several of them. There is more work to be done on this goal through 2024


7



Launch at least 1 Guild book in 2023

Goal Achieved! K. W. Onley launched her book SAVVY AND MARS: THE RIGHT WISH TO WISH on December 2, 2023 at our Literary Extravaganza. She sold out!


2



Launch our small press, starting with a Literary Journal

Goal Achieved! In 2023 we launched Puddingstone Press and our literary journal, Fiddlehead Folio.

4



Apply for and receive between 2-4 grants

Goal Achieved! In 2023 we received three major grants to help with our programming.

6




Collect 100 total rejections as a Guild

Goal partially achieved. The Guild racked up at least 40 rejections and 3 acceptances this year. That's pretty good! Guild members are out there submitting their work!

8



Offer stipends to Workshop and Cohort Leaders



Goal not achieved. Cohort leaders preferred to donate their time, and workshop leaders focused on other efforts in 2023.

THE FINANCIAL STATE OF THE GUILD

The Guild is a nonprofit entity because it allows us to invest our money in what we value, who we want to be in the future, and the stories we want to tell. We are committed to financial transparency, as reflected by our Statement of Activity for 2023

MetroWest Writers Guild Inc

Statement of Activity

January 1 - December 19, 2023

	TOTAL
Revenue	
Contributed income	500.00
Corporate & foundation grants	4,250.00
Donations directed by individuals	5,382.86
Grants from other nonprofits	3,900.00
Total Contributed income	14,032.86
PayPal Sales	64.00
Sales	9,752.94
Total Revenue	\$23,849.80
GROSS PROFIT	\$23,849.80
Expenditures	
Advertising & marketing	2,909.89
Social media	50.00
Total Advertising & marketing	2,959.89
Advertising/Promotional	479.36
Contract & professional fees	600.00
Accounting fees	200.00
Total Contract & professional fees	800.00
Instructor (Programming)	4,929.90
Office expenses	
Bank fees & service charges	31.00
Memberships & subscriptions	367.26
Office supplies	361.90
Printing & photocopying	427.48
Shipping & postage	1.10
Software & apps	2,946.16
Total Office expenses	4,134.90
PayPal Fees	3.24
Social Event Food	190.02
Social Event Venue Fee	430.00
Supplies	
Supplies & materials	482.20
Total Supplies	482.20
Vendor Fee	4,477.20
Total Expenditures	\$18,886.71
NET OPERATING REVENUE	\$4,963.09
NET REVENUE	\$4,963.09

OUR 2024 GOALS



I

Develop robust, sustainable community standards

As the Guild grows so does our need for transparency, accountability, and community standards. In 2024 we will develop a robust set of standards and policies that will keep our community safe and healthy into the future.

2

Publish a Guild Anthology and Fiddlehead Folio Volume II

We are so proud of our success launching Fiddlehead Folio and Puddingstone Press in 2023, and publishing 7 Guild authors in the inaugural volume of the Folio! In 2024 we will increase our publishing output, with another issue of Fiddlehead Folio plus an anthology of stories by Guild members. We will also seek our first member-written book to publish through Puddingstone Press.

3

Revamp our Cohort program to make it more sustainable

Since mid-2022 Guild members have joined our community-focused Cohort groups, which run quarterly and meet once a week. In 2022 we were forced to cap Cohort at one group per quarter. In 2024 we will revamp the structure of this beloved program to open it to more members and ensure it remains a Guild staple even when the current facilitators are unavailable.

4

Apply for and receive between 3-5 grants

Building a sustainable Guild means we need revenue from outside sources. As a 501c3, we are eligible for state and federal government grants. We're also eligible for grants from private foundations. Now that we have operated successfully for two years, it's time to seek greater financial stability. In 2024 we will seek larger and continuing sources of funding.



5

Offer a multi-month, professionally led workshop

Formal critique workshops are the final piece of regular programming the Guild wants to introduce. In 2024 we will offer at least one multi-month, professionally led critique workshop for writers serious about polishing their work. We will also foster smaller, less formal, peer critique groups for those who are not quite ready for the larger workshop.

6


Introduce regular in-person events and write-ins throughout the year

Our 2023 Guild Census told us that our members hope for more in-person meetups. While the bulk of our programming will remain online for accessibility purposes, in 2024 we will offer more regular chances for face-to-face interaction. This will look like a combination of write-ins, social meetups, our Fall Retreat, and field trips to inspiring locations.

7

Launch at least 1 Guild book in 2024

We're so proud of Jen Lewy and Howard Wolke for launching their debut novels in 2022, and K. W. Onley for launching her book in 2023! We think that it should be a new tradition to launch and celebrate Guild books at least once a year. Be it at the Silver Unicorn or another venue in our community, we plan to launch a Guild-written book every year from now on. We hope it will be yours!



8

Reconnect with our local libraries

The public libraries of MetroWest were our original homes for write-ins. After COVID struck, we had to stay away. Many of our favorite writing spots have gone through significant renovations since we last visited. It's time to go back, say hello, and reestablish our strong relationships with them.



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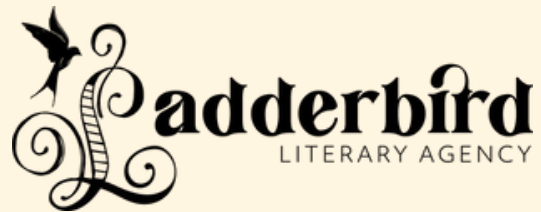
A decorative vine with dark green leaves and small berries winds across the top and sides of the page. It starts from the left, goes up and across the top, and then curves down towards the bottom right corner.

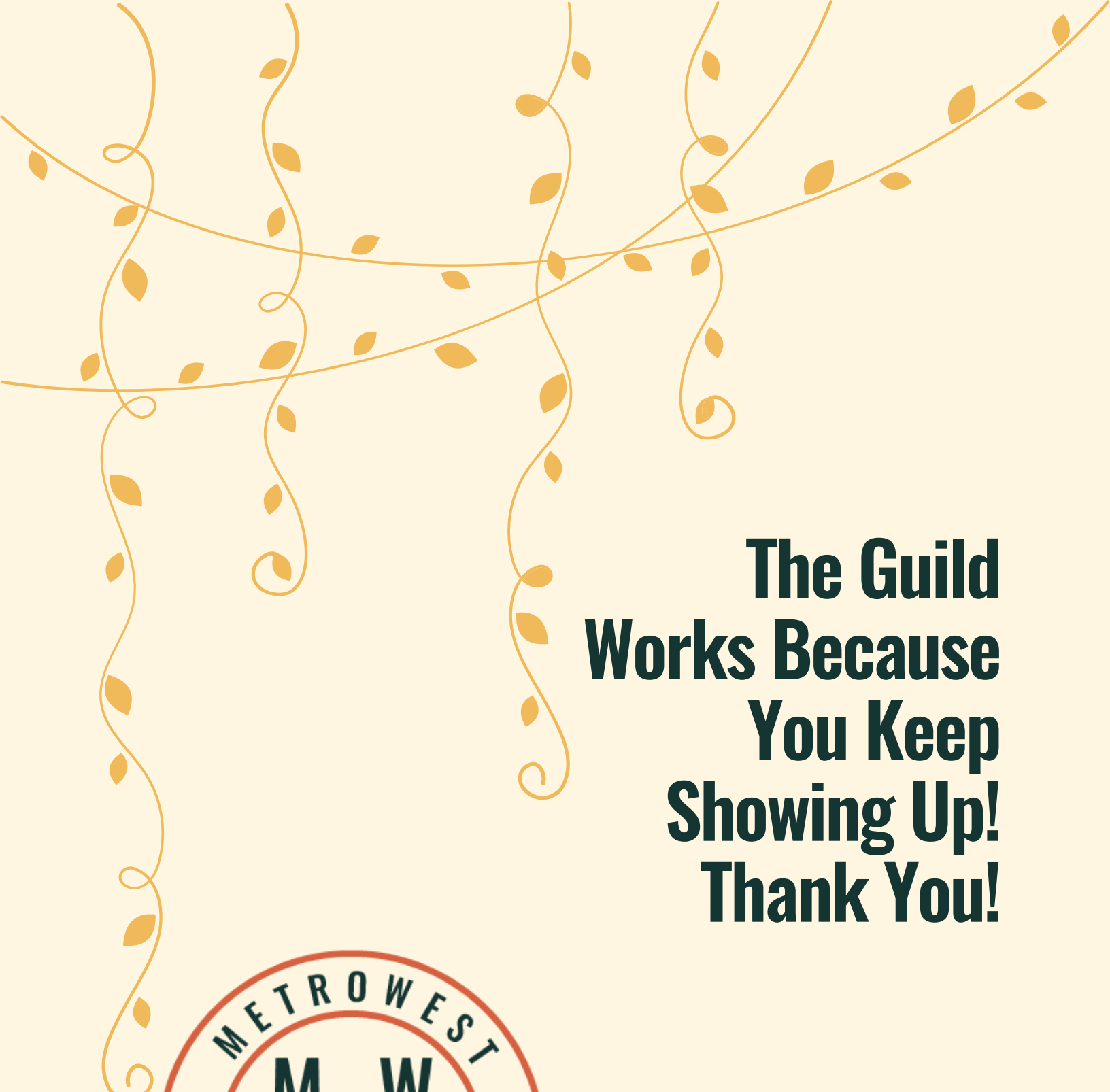
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SUPPORTERS, PARTNERS, AND GRANTORS!





**The Guild
Works Because
You Keep
Showing Up!
Thank You!**



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