"I'm glad this program continued even though we can't get together physically. This group helps me feel more comfortable sharing with others. It is important to stay connected."

- Participant
The Maine Humanities Council is a statewide non-profit organization that uses books, poetry, and big ideas to bring people together to discuss issues of importance. We’re a program partner, grantmaker, and connector of people and communities. Our connections strengthen our society and help shape the future of Maine. As Maine’s affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), we offer humanities programs and grants for all Mainers.

HARRIET P. HENRY CENTER FOR THE BOOK

The Maine Humanities Council is home to the Harriet P. Henry Center for the Book, Maine’s affiliate for the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress. The Library of Congress Center for the Book was established in 1977 to promote books, reading, libraries, and literacy. In 1987 the Maine Humanities Council established the Maine Center for the Book as a state affiliate of that program. It was renamed the Harriet P. Henry Center for the Book in 2003, in honor of Maine’s first female judge, a former Board chair of MHC and a longtime supporter of the humanities.

JOIN THE MHC

We connect...people with books, communities with ideas, and strangers with one another.

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Artwork: Eamon White

Emergency Relief Funding

Our 2020 began on Friday, March 13, when the team left the office for what would turn out to be the last time. None of us anticipated what was to come: The global pandemic, the national racial reckoning set in motion by the murder of George Floyd, everything about the long presidential election and transfer of political power.

We had to examine closely what was essential. How could we meet Maine communities’ real needs? We knew that connecting Mainers with one another, fostering individual and community agency, and inspiring increased civic engagement is vital work; we quickly learned that in-person interactions are just one of many ways to do it. 2020 became a year of hard-won clarity, experiment, and growth for the Maine Humanities Council.

Our 2021 began on Monday, March 8 – the first day on the job for our new Associate Director, Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib. Samaa brings a tremendous depth and breadth of knowledge and experience. As we keep moving through this time full of grief and possibility, we know that her galvanizing leadership will help us bring our vision closer to reality.

The MHC was honored to award rapid-response coronavirus relief funding to help ensure that vital cultural organizations across the state could continue finding creative ways to meet their communities’ needs.

These grants were provided as part of the $2.2 trillion CARES Act economic stabilization plan via the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Over $432,000 in operating support for nonprofit cultural organizations

98 grants awarded

16 Maine counties and both congressional districts represented
Essential DISCUSSIONS

In the summer of 2020, in the midst of pandemic, the Maine Humanities Council launched a substantial new program: the Discussion Project.

When we asked partners how we could help them through the unfolding emergency we were – and are – all living in, they said ‘keep doing what you do.’ But in order to keep doing what we do, we had to change how we do it.

So we did. We developed a way to offer our facilitated discussion programming directly, openly, flexibly to anyone in Maine who wants to bring people together through books.

The fourth cohort Discussion Project partners are already preparing for summer 2021.

"We are invited to practice openness and curiosity, patience and persistence, and ability to tolerate complexity, ambiguity, tentativeness, and vulnerability. A willingness to pay attention – to see better and with fresh eyes." - Participant

“Bringing people together from different Maine communities, even communities that are geographically far apart, was helpful to my experience of being a Mainer.” - Participant

SHARING SKILLS

“I was at first very hesitant about online meetings but I found them to be lively and valuable. I think it is really important for people to have this for sharing ideas and reaching beyond our isolation.” - Participant

When the pandemic began, the Maine Humanities Council had never hosted a program online. Within a month, we were offering skillshares across Maine demonstrating how to host meaningful discussions on Zoom.

How? First MHC staff immediately started learning from others about hosting rich online meetings. As soon as we could, we sought expert help to develop our skillshare on hosting text-based discussions online.

Then we practiced and practiced and practiced.

By acting quickly and sharing as we were learning we brought over 130 people together to gain crucial new skills during the stark opening months of the pandemic.

By the Numbers

139 community programs
95% of attendees feel more connected to their community

78% of attendees feel inspired to consider their personal connection with Maine - its past, present, and future.

95% of attendees feel inspired to learn more about a topic discussed in their program

IMPACT

Accessible Online EVENTS

The shift online was also an opportunity for us to clarify and then amplify key aspects of two public-facing programs, as well as extending their reach.

Read ME is our statewide summer reading experience highlighting two Maine authors. By holding author events online, we were really able to offer events that anyone in Maine could attend.

And we were able to work more expansively with partners on our collaborative poetry performance program, Poetry Express. At the same time, the online events kept the intimacy among performers and their friends and family that makes Poetry Express so extraordinary.
2020 MAJOR GRANT Awards

Century Saturdays: The Story of Maine - Brick Store Museum
Edible Landscape Project - University of Maine Art Education
Freedom and Captivity - Creative Portland
The History of Developmental Disabilities in Maine - Maine Developmental Disabilities Council
Kittery’s Tide History - Tide Mill Institute
Maine Lit Fest Fellows Program - Maine Writers & Publishers Alliance
Molly Spotted Elk: Theatrical Script Development - Penobscot Theatre Company
Point of View: A Podcast of Maine Migrations, Immigrations, and Cultural Exchange - Portland Ovations
Screenings of Maine Documentary Jacinta: Ride or Die
Under a Yellow Star - Oxford Hills School District

For all 2020 MHC Grant awards visit mainehumanities.org

REMOTE FACILITATION Training

Nine trainings | Over 130 attendees

April

CARES ACT GRANT Awards

98 grants totaling Over $432,000

May

DISCUSSION PROJECT Inaugural Cohort

Virginia Akimana
Alice Pendleton Library
Bangor Public Library
Susan Bowditch
Cynthia Freeman-Cyr
Indigo Arts Alliance
Kennebunk Free Library
Deborah Cummings Khadraoui
Ladder to the Moon Network/Amjambo Africa
Lewiston Public Library
Liberty Library
Maine Access Points
Maine Family Planning
Maine State Prison
Maine Women’s Lobby Education Fund

Cody Mower
Naples Public Library
and Casco Public Library
Osher Map Library and Smith Center for Cartographic Education
Pittsfield Public Library
Rockland Public Library
Shaw Public Library
Southern Maine Agency on Aging
Southern Maine Conservation Collaborative
Southern Maine Women’s Re-entry Center
Topsham Public Library
Walker Memorial Library
Walter T.A. Hansen Memorial Library
West Paris Public Library
Yarmouth Committee for Housing Choices

For all 2020 MHC Discussion Project cohorts visit mainehumanities.org

For all 2020 MHC Grant awards visit mainehumanities.org

August

Fall MINI GRANT Awards

Eight projects Over $7,500 awarded

Fall DISCUSSION PROJECT

Over 30 communities Across 14 counties

September

NATIONAL BOOK FESTIVAL

Online POETRY EXPRESS Events

Two community poetry readings | Over 1,500 views

October

2020 Top READ

Featured in

19 Discussion Projects

Over 350 copies in Maine communities

For all 2020 MHC Grant awards visit mainehumanities.org

MHC Featured
Samara Cole
Doyon’s Magnificent Homespun Brown at Library of Congress
National Book Festival.
FEATURED PROJECT:

MANE DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL is creating an exhibit and associated events that tell the history of people with developmental disabilities in Maine during the era of institutionalism. The exhibit will incorporate oral histories from people who lived at Pineland Center, an institution founded in 1908 in New Gloucester. Rampant abuses and neglect at Pineland and elsewhere were exposed in the middle of the 20th century, leading to a movement for disability rights. Self-advocates and their allies fought to close Pineland (which happened in 1996) and create a system of services that would serve people with developmental disabilities in their homes and communities. Within this tragic history of stigmatization, isolation, and abuse live stories of perseverance, joy, and progress towards something better.

A year ago, our 2020 Winter Weekend on Toni Morrison’s Beloved was our last big in-person event before the pandemic. As we have so often this year, we looked closely at what was most vital to that program and sought ways to bring it to life in an online setting. The result is our first big on-line event since the pandemic started – the 2021 Readers Retreat on Chinua Achebe’s Things Fall Apart. Listen to four extraordinary speakers. Talk about it all with others. Find people you know and meet those you don’t. All online.

Federal, State, Corporate, Organizational, and Foundation Grants

Bancroft Fund
Margaret E. Bunham Charitable Trust
Davis Family Foundation
Federation of State Humanities Councils/Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
Helen & George Loh Chinn Charitable Corporation
Morton-Kelly Charitable Trust
Kane Foundation
National Endowment for the Humanities
The Onion Foundation
Simmons Foundation
State of Maine
Welch Charitable Fund of the Maine Community Foundation

Gifts from Individuals

Donors to the MHC generously supported our statewide humanities programming through the following funds: the Annual Fund, Winter Weekend (the program is now called Readers Retreat), program-specific support, and the Dorothy Schwartz Opportunity Fund. This list includes gifts made during our 2020 fiscal year: between November 1, 2019, and October 31, 2020. The asterisk recognizes gifts made through our Readers Retreat (Previously known as Readers Retreat).

MHC Circle ($5,000+)
Victoria and Allen Bornhorst
Brooks Family Foundation
Josephine H. Detter
Virginia Seckel

MHC Circle ($2,500 - $4,999)
Richard C. Barnes
Carly M. Beaumier*
Kenneth Spier and Joan Lattier
from a component fund of the Maine Humanities Council
Susanne Traudt*

MHC Circle ($1,000 - $2,499)
Peter Keller
Hayden and Meredith Anderson
Patrick K. & Mary E. Buel
Lawrence Boyle and Victoria Russell
Susan Crafton and Otto Einerwold in memory of Dorothy Schwartz
Douglas Chamberlin
Joseph A. Conforti
Jean Deignan and Glen Porter
John and Beverly Emerson*
The Robert G. and Jane V. Engel Foundation, Inc.
Gisele Gomper
Leila Green and Bruce Nonelis
Joyce and Wesley Hedlund
Douglas M. and Susan A. Henry
in memory of Harriet P. Henry
Alison Wolter*

The Helen and Bruce Hornby Fund
Meredith Jones & Daune Murch
Edwin J. Kehler, Esq.
Lincoln F. Laid and Glenna William Laid
Sally and Ted O’Hearn
John and Jacqueline Opperman
Alfred & Dorothy Suit Osher Foundation
Steven Peterson
from the Haste Family Fund of the Maine Community Foundation
Malcolm and Susan Rogers*
John and Maryanne Wend
P.J. and Judy Wiss*
Carol Winklemper

$750 - $999
Brad and Anne Coope
Angela J. Connolly
Robert Keallman

$500 - $749
Anonymous*
Red and Penny Byrne
through the Fred C. Runnell Foundation
William J. Cavan

in memory of Betty Brewer Case
Paul Dorrin
David and Fay Harrison*
Marian Hough
Thomas and Leslie Loutre
Audrey Maynard and Kathryn Smith Jr
in memory of Pamela S. Lord
Alan McHaffey
and Elizabeth Ackerson
Mary and Benjamin Pratt*
Anne Russell
Ted and Sharon Sharp
Julie and Robert Wicking
Peter and Margie Webster*
Alisa Weil*
Douglas and Judith Woodbury
Mr. and Mrs. Daniel A. Zilkha

$250 - $499
Anonymous(1)
Susan Adams
in honor of Rebecca and the SAMA book group
Ruth Anderson
Anne Beattie
June and Sarah Bowers*
Mayoress A. Boyd, MD*
Pam Buch
Carol/Moon Carino*
Anthony Corrado
Marilyn Crowley
Peter Durbin
Ned and barley Dougherty*
Deborah Driscoll and Joe Gile* Christopher Durnan
Gray and Deborah Foley
Melody Fish
Ann A. Gold
Joseph Hall
Anne Haelterman
Anne and Dick Jackson
Janet Kepp
Ann Kleiber and Kevin Witherm
James and Beth Kilber
Karen Stathopoulus and Kim Krauss
Alice Leman
Sarah S. Means*
Charles Miller
Lisa Minnella
Virginia News-Hoffen
David Richards
Rick Spier and Judy Frost
Jean Sardar
Patricia Sibis
John Ryan and Jenny Schu
Hilton and Dick Stochly
Nate and Bob Stone*
Larry Stroble
The Sussman Family
Bob and Judy Tiedtke
Candace and Edward Wolkoff*

$100 - $249
Anonymous(4)
Susan Alt
William W. Alcon
Jonathan and Nancy Aldrich
Douglas Allen
Michael and Jennifer Archer
Sally and Ron Aronov
Marta Barkley
Barbara Barrall*
Martha Barkley
Sally and Ron Barr
Barbara Barrall*
James and Beth Clave
Anne-Blythe Broyer
Paul and Cathie Broach
Maurice Bren* William Black and Jackie Brown
Constance Brownfield and William McFarlane*
Victoria and Erina Bubnovskian
Emily and Norman Buxton
Richard and Anne Brown

IT HAPPENS STATEWIDE
THANKS TO YOU

Last year was a challenging one, but Maine Humanities Council supporters pulled through in a big way. You helped us weather a stormy sea, ensuring that we had the funds for the tools we needed to build the boat that would take our programming forward. Your gifts were crucial in supporting our 2020 work – online discussion groups, virtual speaker talks, facilitator mentorship initiatives – throughout the state. And you gave us room to make our vision real, despite the storm. Thank you for your incredible generosity.

WAYS TO GIVE

Would you like to support the programming mentioned in this publication, and other MHC projects around the state?

Online: mainehumanities.org

A monthly gift: only $15 each month results in a $180 total gift, $30 per month gives $600 by the year’s end; and $85 ends up being a generous $1,020.

A qualified charitable distribution through your IRA, or gift of stock.

Joey P. and Judy Lockard
The Haste Family Fund of the Maine Community Foundation

 minimize_giveaway:

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The Haste Family Fund of the Maine Community Foundation

All gifts received by the Maine Humanities Council during Fiscal Year 2020 (11/1/2019 - 10/31/2020) are represented in these pages. If you donated after this time, you’ll be thanked in our next Annual Report.
THE STATE OF OUR STORY

2020

During Fiscal Year 2020, the Maine Humanities Council had operating income of $1,839,766 and operating expenses of $1,819,952. Grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, including highly competitive grants, made up an important component of the budget. This support was supplemented by a diverse range of other income streams: from the Library of Congress, the State of Maine, generous support from private foundations, the individual contributions highlighted in this report, and program income and investments. Both the income and the operating expenses reported for the fiscal year and in the Maine Humanities Council’s audited financial statements include in-kind contributions of time, mileage, and materials, valued at $194,750.

REVENUES 2019 — 2020

National Endowment for the Humanities $1,144,431.00
State of Maine Funding $68,504.00
Contributions and Grants $184,784.00
In-kind Contributions $194,750.00
Program, Investment, and Other Income $247,307.00
TOTAL $1,839,776.00

EXPENSES 2019 — 2020

Programs, Grants, and Technical Assistance $1,433,861.00
Administration $195,781.00
Funding & Marketing $190,310.00
TOTAL $1,829,952.00