

**MAINE
HUMANITIES
COUNCIL**

Harriet P. Henry
Center for the Book
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102-1012
(207) 773-5051
info@mainehumanities.org



2023
ANNUAL REPORT

JOIN THE DISCUSSION



Art: Daniel Minter

MAINE HUMANITIES

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

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 1997 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.

HOW TO REACH US

Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102-1012
(207) 773-5051
info@mainehumanities.org



@MaineHumanities
#MaineHumanities

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

No matter how you look at it, 2023 was a dynamic year for us at Maine Humanities. It was a year full of change, connections, and community building. You came with us as we asked the year's Big Question: "What if we go on this way?" Afterwards, we heard from attendees that this question helped them in their daily and family life as they considered decisions of great importance. You also joined us on Parable Path Maine as we explored Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower* and we packed Merrill Auditorium for Toshi Reagon's *Parable of the Sower Opera*. And you were with us for our first ever author headlined Readers Retreat with Rivers Solomon. Here at the office, our staff grew by two and we said a late spring goodbye to our colleague of 10 years, Hayden Anderson. It was a big year for us.

We are still feeling the weight and remnants of 2023 all around us — through massive loss, large scale death, and a lingering pandemic. At Big Question 2024, we asked "What do we hold onto? What do we let go?" as a way for us to imagine straddling the present and the past as we do our best to move forward. Moving forward means continuing to grow our humanities programming in ways that help people in Maine connect with each other, their cultures, and their histories. One way that our programming is growing is the introduction of a new program: Community History — a program that will be one part community history and one part storytelling. It's our hope that this program will help communities across Maine as they bring their stories and histories into the spotlight. As a part of this work, our staff will be visiting different regions of Maine as we develop and design this program. We're excited to connect with you in 2024!



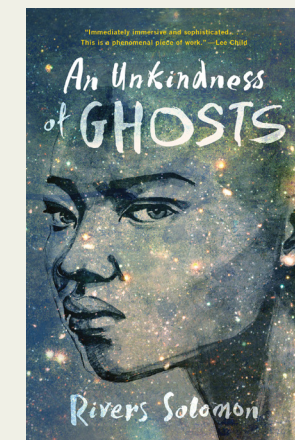
Samaa Abdurraqib
Executive Director

BOOKS & BIG IDEAS

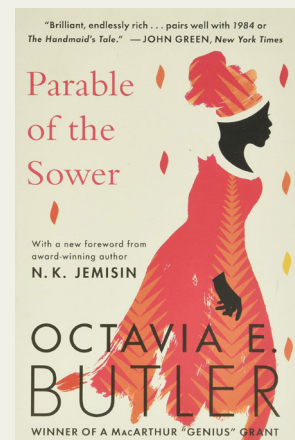
In 2023, two novels that offered communities a starting place for connecting to larger themes and initiatives across our work were Rivers Solomon's *An Unkindness of Ghosts* and Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower*. Both books continued our engagement with Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism as we dove deeper into the project of imagining new ways of being, new ways to engage with natural environments, new ways to create community, and new ways to survive and thrive.

An Unkindness of Ghosts was the featured book for Readers Retreat and also used as the core text of several programs in preparation for the annual spring event. And *Parable of the Sower* was read in Discussion Projects across the state as part of Parable Path Maine, a framework for community organizing and artistic engagement based on Octavia Butler's award-winning novel and lead by multi-hyphenate musician Toshi Reagon. The initiative culminated with a sold-out performance of Reagon's *Parable of the Sower Opera* at Merrill Auditorium in Portland.

Over 200 copies each in communities across Maine



Featured Read for
Readers Retreat



Featured Read for
Parable Path Maine

STAFF

Samaa Abdurraqib Executive Director	Meghan Reedy Program Coordinator Content & Narrative Development
Harper Batsford Program Coordinator Outreach & Community History	Lizz Sinclair Program Coordinator Grants & Partnerships
Karen Brown Office Manager	Sampson Spadafore Program Coordinator Communications & Content Creation
Diane Magras Director of Development	Kyle Volland Program Coordinator Implementation & Logistics
Marcela Peres Operations Manager & Program Specialist	Ian Watkins Communications Manager
Nicole Rancourt Program Manager	

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Gregory Fahy, Chair, Hallowell	Mazie Hough, Orono
Paul Buck, Vice-Chair, St. Agatha	Margery Irvine, Brooklin
Julie Sheehan, Treasurer, Auburn	Ryan Lolar, Portland
Joseph M. Hall, Secretary, Lewiston	Georges Budagu Makoko, Portland
Lawrence Boyle, Biddeford	Luis Millones, Portland
Reid Byers, Portland	Rosalani Moore, Verona Island
Jean Deighan, Bangor	Mouhamédou Niang, Portland
Martha Tod Dudman, Northeast Harbor	Amie Parker, Buckfield
Ayesha Hall, Auburn	Lise Pelletier, Fort Kent
Tam Thanh T. Huynh, Augusta	Brendon Reay, Blue Hill

OPENING UP DISCUSSION

Facilitated discussion of books and texts is a way for people to refine, unsettle, and expand their understanding of their own lives and the lives of others. Whether the people in a group are linked by their work, their place, or their lived experience, every one of our Discussion Projects fosters real communication and connection among participants through listening and being listened to. And the people who facilitate each group value and enjoy reading and exploring poems, stories, and ideas and drawing other people into meaningful discussions about them. In 2023 the Discussion Project continued to be our most requested program — with over sixty groups meeting in communities statewide.

“The ability to connect with others over a text is incredible. It has the potential to take hold and create change.”

**Discussion Project Participant,
Waterboro Public Library**

“There is something really magical about having a facilitator...it brings a whole different depth to the discussion, especially when you're talking about big subjects.”

**Discussion Project Participant,
Healthy Lincoln County**



FEATURED GRANTEE

THE KNEELING ART PHOTOGRAPHY

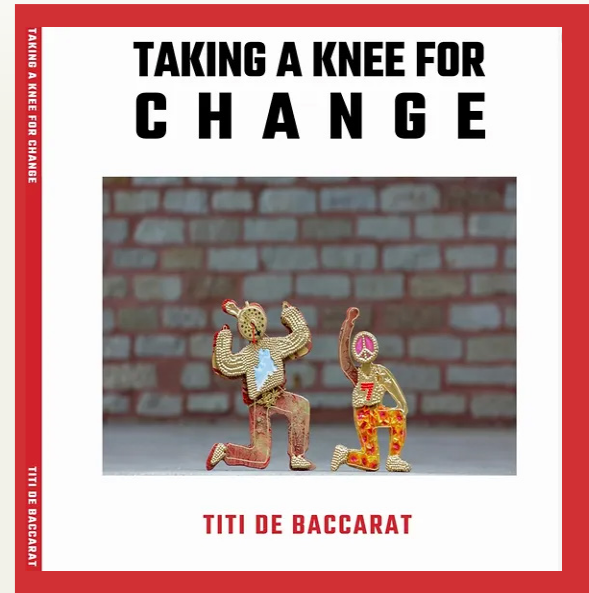
Taking a Knee for Change Workshops

MAJOR GRANT - \$7,500

Engaging Maine communities in social justice through interactive workshops led by Mainers who are working to end racism in Maine.

The Kneeling Art Photography is a community social justice art project exploring the meaning and evolution of the Take-A-Knee gesture. The project engages Maine communities through interactive workshops and the book *Taking a Knee for Change*, which highlights inspiring photographs and reflections of Mainers fighting to end racism both locally and nationally.

Funded by a Maine Humanities Major Grant, The *Taking a Knee for Change* workshops include discussions on civic engagement with photographers and activists featured in the book — inspiring participants to become agents of change and commit to justice and equality in their communities.



“What is the relationship between taking a knee to express love...and protesting for your rights?”

**Titi De Baccarat,
The Kneeling Art Photography**

GRANTS

Supporting humanities programs that engage Maine communities

Over \$135,000

in support to Maine nonprofits and communities

24 towns represented

21 grantees awarded an MHC grant for the first time



“I take comfort in knowing that people are more complex and interesting than the veneers we see online and scan on bumpers.”

**Panelist Heather Perkinson,
Maine Association of School Libraries**

HOW DO WE KEEP TALKING WITH OUR NEIGHBORS?

Making Room for Curiosity and Connection Even When There's Fear and Extremity in the Air

How do we keep talking with our neighbors, even when...they have ideas that frighten us? Even when we live really different lives? Even when it's difficult? Asking and answering questions like these is what libraries are for. Every day, librarians create chances for people to connect with each other about complex and challenging issues.

That's why in October of 2023 we hosted a special online panel discussion with a group of extraordinary people working with and in Maine's libraries, who shared how they do this vital thing— make room for curiosity and connection around difficult things.

This program was generously supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the United We Stand: Connecting Through Culture initiative. Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this program do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER

This is the work that we're doing together. We're grateful to have you along with us for this wonderful journey.

Supporting Maine Humanities also supports the idea that this work matters. It expresses the belief that the humanities can encourage critical thinking and public democracy. It celebrates the community we're fostering together; the agency that we're heightening; and the engagement we invite.

Supporting the Maine Humanities with a financial gift is an important kind of partnership. It helps pay for essential costs: books that anchor the ideas of our programs; facilitators and speakers who draw out the discussion that comes from those ideas, weaving powerful sails; and the staff, advisors, and operations that provide a sleek craft beneath it — all of which carries participants to extraordinary places in their own minds.

The list below includes the people and organizations that made financial gifts during the 2023 fiscal year (between 11/1/2022 and 10/31/23), the year of this report. If you'd like to join this group of partners, go to mainehumanities.org/donate.

ANNUAL GIVING – FISCAL YEAR 2023

Anonymous (6)
 Susan Abt
 Friends of the Albion Public Library
 William W. Alcorn
 Nancy Aldrich
 Douglas Allen
 Miles and Jennifer Archer
 in memory of Hayden Anderson
 Lelania Harpal Kaur Avila
 Sally and Ron Bancroft
 Richard E. Barnes
 Stephen P. Beale
 Carol M. Beaumier
 Peter Bellis
 in honor of Patti and Eric Bixel
 Lori Benson
 Patricia Bixel
 Constance Bloomfield and William McFarlane
 Victoria and Erno Bonebakker
 Victoria and Allen Bornheimer
 Dania Bowie
 Jim and Sarah Bowie
 Peter Bowman
 in honor of Steve Rowe
 (former ED/CEO/Maine AG)
 Marjorie A. Boyd, MD
 Dr. Lawrence A. Boyle and Victoria Russell
 Craig Bramley
 Emily and Norman Breitner
 Kathleen and William Brittain
 Rick and Anne Brown
 Elizabeth A. Burdick
 in honor of Hayden and Meredith Anderson
 and in memory of Hayden Anderson
 Paul E. Brunelle
 Paul Buck
 Michael D. Burke
 Margaret E. Burnham Charitable Trust
 Midge and John Burns
 Reid and Patty Byers
 through the Fred C. Rummel Foundation
 Corley Anne Byras

Helen Cafferty and Otto Emersleben
 William L. Case III
 in memory of Betsey Brewster Case
 of Bangor, Maine
 Douglas Chamberlain
 in honor of Hayden Anderson - with profound
 respect and appreciation!
 Paulette Chernack
 Jacqueline and Irvin Cohen Jr.
 Joseph A. Conforti
 in memory of Hayden Anderson
 Claire Connor
 Anthony Corrado
 Brad and Anita Coupe
 Nancy E. Crowell
 in memory of Bill and Mary Ellen Crowell
 Cynthia Freeman Cyr
 Richard and Bonnie D'Abate
 Sally J. Daggett
 Judy and Chuck Danielson
 Jay Davis
 Davis Family Foundation
 Carla Delude
 Craig and Sherry Dietrich
 Diversified Communications
 Linda J. Docherty
 Deborah Downs and Jon Gale
 in honor of Hayden Anderson
 Martha Tod Dudman
 Mimi Dunn
 Harland Eastman
 Tina and Caleb Elfenbein
 John and Beverly Emerson
 in memory of Hayden Anderson
 Susan Emmet
 Greg and Deborah Fahy
 Melody Fitch
 Robert and Kathleen Flory
 Ardelle Foss
 Donald and Elizabeth Fox
 Ed Friedman

Al and Phyllis Fuchs
 Gisela Gamber
 in memory of Dorothy Schwartz
 Noel J. Genova
 Phyllis and Bernard Givertz
 Nancy Glover
 Carolyn Gontoski
 Dennis Graffin and Jan Phillips
 Geoffrey M. Gratwick and Lucy G. Quimby
 Landis Green and Bruce Norelius
 Charlie and Sue Grosjean
 Ann Armstrong Guild
 Catharine W. Guiles
 Dr. Emily A. Haddad
 Judy Hakola
 Ayesha Hall
 Joe Hall and Melissa Sundell
 Ruth Hannan
 Melinda and Ralph Harder
 Ann Havener
 Stephen Hayes and Carol McCarthy
 Michael and Bridget Healy
 Joyce and Wesley Hedlund
 Douglas M. and Laura A. Henry
 in memory of Harriet P. Henry on what
 would have been her 100th birthday
 Janet Henry and Vernon Moore
 Erica Hirshler
 in memory of Marilyn and Eric Hirshler
 William and Mary Jean Holt
 The Honorable D. Brock and Mrs. Hornby
 Mazie Hough
 Beth Howe & Mac Passano
 Marcia Howell
 Tam Thanh Huynh
 Ramón Jesús Rodríguez Iglesias
 Margery Y. Irvine
 Erik C. Jorgensen and Tamara M. Risser
 Theodora J. Kalikow
 Beth and Joel Kane
 in memory of Hayden Anderson

Susan A. Kaplan
 Sheldon Katz
 Deborah Keefe
 Janet Kehl
 Edward J. Kelleher, Esq.
 Frederic R. Kellogg
 James and Beth Kilbreth
 Cornelia Kittredge
 Molly Kizer
 Stephanie Kumble
 Gloria Williams Ladd
 in memory of Lincoln F. Ladd
 Helen & George Ladd Charitable Corp.
 Neil and Cathy Lamb
 Kristin Langellier
 Catherine and Gary Larkin
 Alice Larrea
 William H. Laubenstein III
 Theodate Lawlor
 Michele Lettiere
 Dale and Rich Lewis
 Carl Little
 Thomas and Leslie Lizotte
 Linda Lord
 Dr. Ben and Barbara Lounsbury
 Mary Sue and John Love
 Kit Lunney & Rick Barton
 Eric Lupfer
 in memory of Hayden Anderson
 Esther Mackintosh
 in memory of Hayden Anderson
 Nancy M. MacKnight
 in memory of Hayden Anderson
 Robert and Marlene Mailloux
 Larissa Malone
 Peggy and Roger Marchand
 Ray Marcotte
 Karen Massey and Jeff Thaler
 Audrey Maynard
 in honor of my mother, Pamela Lord,
 on her 80th birthday
 Blainor McGough and Brian Arlet
 Alan McIlhenny and Elizabeth Ackerson
 James McKenna and Jane Orbeton
 Sarah F. McMahon

Abbott and Nancy Meader
 Patricia Messler
 Mr. and Mrs. George Metcalf
 Daphne S. Meyer
 Lynne Miller and Lawrence Simon
 Rebecca Millett and Kevin Kobel
 Luis Millones
 Joanne and Earl Morse
 Morton-Kelly Charitable Trust
 Ann Nelson
 Mamie Anthoine Ney
 in memory of Thomas and Margaret
 Anthoine and in memory of
 Hayden Anderson
 Peter O'Brien
 in honor of Hayden Anderson
 Onion Foundation
 Edward A. Barrett and Nancy H. Orr
 Dorothy Osher
 through the D. Osher Foundation Trust
 Harold and Peggy Osher Norumbega Fund
 of the Maine Community Foundation
 Carol Parks
 Haste Family Fund
 in memory of Harriet S. Passerman
 Rosalie Tyler Paul
 Margaret and John Peacock
 Lise Pelletier
 David Pence
 Rita Kay and Richard Bergeron
 Glen Porter and Jean Deighan
 Lynne Priest
 Jane and Jim Pringle
 Mr. and Mrs. Charles E. Prinn III
 Erica Quin-Easter
 Jo Radner
 in honor of Joe Conforti
 David Richards
 in memory of Hayden Anderson
 Marta Rieman
 Liam Riordan and Susan Thibedeau
 James and Loretta Risner
 Winfield and Victoria Robinson
 Liv Rockefeller and Kenneth Shure

Mary Jane and Howard Rosenfield
 Thomas Rumpf
 John Ryan and Jenny Scheu
 Jean Sanborn
 Patricia Sanborn
 Ted and Sharon Sharp
 Valerie Sherman
 Bonnie Shulman
 Linda Silka and Laurence Smith
 Douglas B. Sinclair
 Ursula and William Slavick
 Beth Snyder
 Stephen Sokol and Gerda Neu-Sokol
 Benjamin Soule
 Rick Speer and Judy Frost
 Seth and Laura Sprague
 Didi Stockly
 Paul and Sarah Strickland
 Lucy Strobbe
 Sarah Margaret and Mark Stuart Fund
 Iva Sussman
 Pamela Taylor
 Theresa Telenga
 Denise A Tepler
 Alalia Thaler
 Linden Thigpen
 Bob and Judy Tredwell
 Miriam Kellogg Truslow
 Diane C. Vatne
 Julia Walkling
 John and Maryanne Ward
 Peter and Margie Webster
 in memory of Hayden Anderson
 Shannon Webster
 Susan Wegner and John Fischer
 Roberta and Gordon Weil
 Welch Charitable Fund of the Maine
 Community Foundation
 Carol Wishcamper
 Rosie Wohl
 Doug and Judy Woodbury
 Kartika Wright
 Nancy Ziegler and Kermit Lipez

THE STATE OF OUR STORY 2023

During Fiscal Year 2023, the Maine Humanities Council had an operating income of \$1,777,860 and operating expenses of \$1,415,093. 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 expense figures reported in the information below and in the Maine Humanities Council's audited financial statements include in-kind contributions of time, mileage, and materials, valued at \$398,239.

REVENUES 2022 – 2023

National Endowment for the Humanities	\$966,954.58
State of Maine Funding	\$119,720.14
Contributions and Grants	\$128,056.00
In-kind Contributions	\$398,239.61
Program, Investment, and Other Income	\$128,700.80
Unrealized Gains/Losses	\$36,189.14

TOTAL \$1,777,860.27

EXPENSES 2022 – 2023

Programs, Re grants, and Technical Assistance	\$1,041,105.76
Administration	\$130,636.79
Fundraising, Marketing, and Communications	\$243,351.31

TOTAL \$1,415,093.86