

THE GIVENS FOUNDATION for African American Literature

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER 2011-2012

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The Givens Foundation is dedicated to enriching cultural understanding and learning through programs that promote and celebrate African American literature and writers. Each year, the Givens Foundation serves nearly 5,000 students, educators, readers, and writers in the Twin Cities and beyond.

Literary Arts Education

In its fifth year, **Spirited Minds and Strong Souls Singing**, the Givens Foundation's education program, is an innovative solution that supports Minnesota's academic standards for language arts and increases cultural understanding and learning for students and educators. In this program, African American teaching artists model culturally responsive instructional methods for teachers and diversify the instructional experience of students. In the classroom, teaching artists use inclusive curricula focused on classic and contemporary African American literature and literary arts such as storytelling, creative writing, spoken word, hip-hop, poetry, and memoir to increase students' awareness, knowledge, skills, and engagement.



"Content about the histories, heritages, contributions, perspectives, and experiences of different ethnic groups and individuals, taught in diverse ways, is essential to culturally responsive teaching."

— Dr. Geneva Gay
Author of *Culturally Responsive Teaching*

In 2010-2011, **Spirited Minds and Strong Souls Singing** continued to use culturally responsive methods to promote student engagement and to advance the reading, writing, and critical thinking skills of students. Through strategic partnerships with schools and districts, the program reached over 1,750 students through nearly 950 hours of literary arts residencies at 15 schools in the Twin Cities Metro and Duluth. Notably, the Givens Foundation developed curricula that included field trips to the Givens Collection of African American Literature at the University of Minnesota for students from Gordon Parks High School in St. Paul and Olson Middle School in Minneapolis.

This year, students and teachers participated in a formal evaluation of our education program, completing surveys and participating in interviews and focus groups. Results from the assessment found that both teachers and students felt that students were able to speak, write, and read better after participating in a long-term Givens literary arts residency and that residencies successfully increased access to and knowledge of African American literature and culture. Lastly, with support from the Pohlad Family Foundation, the Givens Foundation continued its intensive Northside Educational Initiative providing 100 literary arts residency hours to schools in North Minneapolis.

NOMMO: The Magic Power of the Word

The Givens Foundation's NOMMO African American Authors Series is a fixture on the Twin Cities' cultural landscape for bringing literary excellence to broad and diverse audiences. NOMMO Series events provide rare opportunities to publicly define the state of the art of African American literature and to locate the contributions of contemporary writers within the context of the African American literary tradition.

Over 220 people participated in our 2010-2011 NOMMO Series, which featured rich readings and conversations with award-winning poets Patricia Smith, Yusef Komunyakaa, and Gary Jackson at the University of Minnesota's HHH Cowles Auditorium. Students at Olson Middle School in Minneapolis enjoyed a visit and reading from poet Patricia Smith in conjunction with a 20-hour residency that featured her poetry. In addition to our live events, NOMMO authors continue to be featured in broadcasts statewide (to an estimated 10,000 viewers per airing) on Twin Cities Public Television as well as on the Givens Foundation's website. Check your listings for upcoming broadcasts of The Power of the Word or visit www.givens.org/nommo.

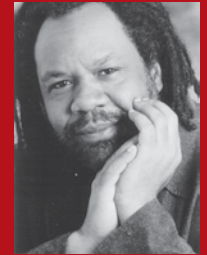
2011 - 2012 NOMMO African American Author Series

In 2011-2012, the NOMMO African American Author Series will feature fiction writer Percival Everett and poet Elizabeth Alexander.

Nov. 2, 2011
Percival Everett



Feb. 8, 2012
Elizabeth Alexander



University of Minnesota Assistant Professor Alex Pate is the NOMMO series curator.

All series events will be held at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey Cowles Auditorium and will begin at 7:00pm.

Givens Black Books Community Reading Campaign

In 2010-2011, with support from the Minnesota State Arts Board, the Givens Foundation debuted Givens Black Books, a community reading campaign with the goal of increasing access to and engagement in the literary arts in the Twin Cities' African American community. The 2010-11 campaign celebrated the work of J. California Cooper, an acclaimed playwright, storyteller, novelist and short story writer.

Community organizations, local media partners and program participants helped the campaign exceed its goals by generating excitement about reading as a community. Reaching over 1,200 people of all ages, the program featured a series of book discussions across the metro area at community centers, libraries, and schools. Students at several Minneapolis and St. Paul schools participated in literary arts residencies based on curriculum developed for J. California Cooper's novel *Family* and *Homemade Love*. The campaign culminated with a literary luncheon in partnership with Delta Sigma Theta Sorority that featured readings by and audience exchange with J. California Cooper.

In 2011-12 Givens Black Books will celebrate a new featured author with a diverse offering of literary events across the Twin Cities. Stay tuned to www.givens.org for author information, event dates and ways to get involved.



Givens Black Books panel at Rondo Community Outreach Library

"The Givens Black Books discussion garnered more excitement about reading than any other event since I have worked at the library."

— Natalie Hart
Sumner Library



J. California Cooper at April 16, 2011 literary luncheon

Black Writers Collaborative Retreat Program

In November 2010, with support from the Jerome Foundation, the Givens Foundation hosted its fourth annual Black Writers Collaborative Retreat Program. Patricia Smith and Alexis Pate served as mentoring writers for the urban retreat at the Minnesota Humanities Center in St. Paul, MN.

The Givens Black Writers Collaborative Retreat Program launched with a four-day retreat for 10 emerging black writers from Minnesota. The retreat combined workshops, one-on-one meetings with National and State Mentoring Writers, free writing, and performances to develop craft, produce new work, and promote the writing life.

The writers selected to participate in the 2010-2011 retreat program were Cavis Adams, L'Tifa Al-Amin-Mussawir, Shirley Durr, Marjorie Grevious, Carla-Elaine Johnson, Miski Noor, Adaobi Okolue, Gregory Allen Simmons, Alicia Rose Steele, and Debra Stone. These writers demonstrated a commitment to the writing life and represented provocative and energetic voices of the literary arts scene in Minnesota.

In a culminating event, writers from the 2010-2011 retreat program staged a literary performance at the Pillsbury House Theatre, demonstrating works that were written during or inspired by the Givens Black Writers Collaborative Retreat Program.

"I don't know what I would have done next as a black writer in MN. I felt my voice being lost in the cultural divide."



Retreat writers Cavis Adams, Miski Noor, and Alicia Steele

"I've never received so much constructive and specific feedback for my writing. I've never produced so much in such a short period of time. The encouragement from mentors and peers drove me to write madly."



2010-2011 retreat program participants with Alexis Pate and Patricia Smith (center)

"This has been the most important and influential writing experience of my life. Working with other black writers allowed me to be myself and shed my anxious feelings about not being accepted or understood. This experience has been imperative for me to move forward. I see now and have specific names of a community behind me."

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Foundation News and Events

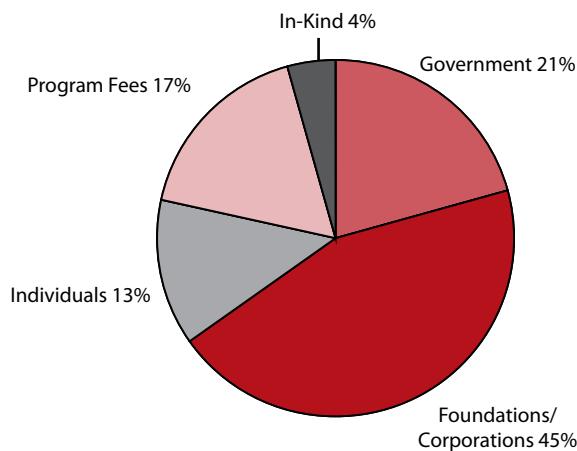
This has been a busy year at the Givens Foundation, a year in which the board and staff of the Givens Foundation focused strategically on strengthening our core. In highlights from 2010-2011, we honed our educational model and focused more specifically on our unique offering of African American culturally responsive curricula and instruction. We began to define and discuss the role that our programs and services play in providing African American writers and literary artists with opportunities to develop professional skills, to generate revenue, and to receive administrative support for engaging with community. We committed to an ongoing strategy to solicit major donors and convened a committee to plan our first gala benefit event. We continued to diversify our revenue streams by increasing our earned income and support from individual and government. We dramatically expanded our partnerships in support of our programs and increased our networks and exposure by participating in key local and national literary conferences and events. We also developed education residencies and national exhibits promoting access to and awareness of the Givens Collection of African American Literature. We launched an e-newsletter and leveraged social media to increase awareness of our programs and events. Lastly, we implemented a full-scale, formal evaluation of our programs.

In 2010-2011, the Givens Foundation welcomed new board members Debra Stone and returning member Deneen Law, both of whom bring new skills and talents to the organization. In the last year, with much appreciation for service, we bid farewell to board members Jennifer Gostovic and Eryka Jackson. We also mourned the passing of Eddie Phillips who was a long-term and significant contributor to the Givens Foundation and its programs; Beck Horton, one of the Givens Collection's original patrons; and Deborah Torraine, a Givens Literary Artist.

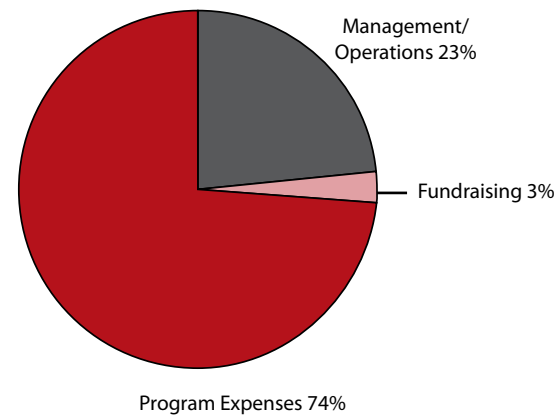
OCT. 20, 2012
SAVE THE DATE!



Income 2010-2011



Expenses 2010-2011



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www.givens.org/join-support

INCOME 2010-2011

Government	69,061
Foundations/Corporations	148,527
Individuals	44,262
Program Fees	57,384
In-Kind	14,500
Total	333,734

EXPENSES 2010-2011

Program Expenses	243,377
Education	109,203
NOMMO	50,210
Retreat	23,538
Black Books	60,426
Management/Operations	77,988
Fundraising	11,168
Total	332,533

2010-2011 Community Support

Generous contributions from the community make it possible for the Givens Foundation for African American Literature to impact diverse audiences and to illuminate the richness of the human story as told from African American perspectives. Thank you to all of our 2010-2011 fiscal year contributors!



Senator Al Franken visits with representatives from the Givens Foundation and the Givens Collection, January 2011, at the University of Minnesota.

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Although we have tried to be accurate in these listings, mistakes do occur. Please contact us if we have missed or misspelled your name.

SAVE THESE DATES

2011 - 2012

November 2, 2011

NOMMO Series:
Percival Everett

November 3-6, 2011

Givens Black Writers
Collaborative Retreat

November 11-12, 2011

Givens Foundation's 5th
Biennial Education Conference

February 3, 2012

Givens Collection Exhibit
Opens — Bibliophilia:
Collecting Black Books,
UMN Andersen Library

February 8, 2012

NOMMO Series: Elizabeth
Alexander

February 29-March 3, 2012

Panel at AWP Conference in
Chicago

April 21, 2012

Literary Luncheon in
partnership with Delta Sigma
Theta

June 18, 2012

Givens Foundation's Golf
Classic

October 20, 2012

Givens Foundation's Inaugural
Gala

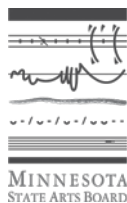
The Givens Foundation's 5th Biennial Education Conference *Reach and Teach Through African American Literature and Culture*

The Givens Foundation's 5th Biennial Education Conference will be held on November 11 and 12, 2011 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel and Suites in Bloomington, Minnesota. The conference will feature keynote speakers Bernice Johnson Reagon, a major cultural voice for freedom and justice for more than 45 years and Dr. Geneva Gay, internationally known scholar in multicultural education. Minnesota's T. Mychael Rambo will lead Saturday's plenary session.

For more information on the speakers, workshop schedule and to register visit the conference page at www.givens.org.

Learn more, join, donate, discuss

www.givens.org



This activity is made possible in part by a grant provided by the Minnesota State Arts Board through an appropriation by the Minnesota State Legislature from the State's general fund and its arts and cultural heritage fund with money from the vote of the people of Minnesota on November 4, 2008.



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High school students visit the Givens Collection at the University of Minnesota as a part of their Givens Foundation literary arts education residency.