

THE GIVENS FOUNDATION for African American Literature

ANNUAL 2008-2009

In this issue:

Education Program
NOMMO Authors Series
Black Writers Retreat
Foundation News



Sonia Sanchez working with students at Southside Family Charter School.



Students presenting their work at Friendship Academy

Literary Arts Education

Spirited Minds and Strong Souls Singing, delivers black artists and writers into Twin Cities Metro classrooms to use African American literature as a vehicle for cultivating literary minds and enriching the quality of education for students. Our Givens Foundation Literary Artists use contemporary and classic African American literature in K-12 classrooms to:

- Enrich literary skills – reading, writing, and critical thinking skills.
- Promote the use of story-telling, drawing, and creative writing as a means of self-expression and self-empowerment.
- Increase access to African American literary resources for the students, teachers, schools and communities.

In 2008-2009, the Givens Foundation education programs had its third full year. The program reached 1,200 students through literary arts residencies at seven Twin Cities Metro schools and after-school community sites. For the first time, we were able to develop and implement a literary arts residency that engaged 45 students in reading and discussing the works of the NOMMO Series authors. This year, we were also able to develop four new curricula based on African American literature and writers and to offer professional development to teachers and artists via two workshops.

In addition, this past year, the Givens Foundation hosted the Twin Cities Big Read from September 2008 through May 2009 including events, book clubs, film showings, and literary arts residencies at 26 sites throughout the Twin Cities Metro and engaging more than 700 people in our community in reading, discussing, and celebrating Ernest Gaines' novel, *A Lesson Before Dying*. The Big Read was sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts, ArtsMidwest, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The Givens Foundation developed expansive partnerships with Hennepin County Library and the African American Read-In to host Big Read book clubs and events. As part of the Big Read, the Givens Foundation distributed more than 750 books to students and adult readers throughout the Twin Cities. In addition, we distributed more than 19,000 readers and teachers guides, audio guides, and bookmarks throughout the year.

"We have seen improvements and writing and reading—with 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students reading more and showing more enjoyment in reading, as well as showing improvements in their ability to speak. . . Those students have done just phenomenal work with the Givens teaching artists."

—Ethel Norwood, Principal, Friendship Academy



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Visit us online at www.givens.org

The mission of the Givens Foundation for African American Literature is to enrich cultural understanding through programs that promote and celebrate African American literature and writers. Each year, the Givens Foundation serves nearly 5,000 youth and adults in the Twin Cities and beyond.

NOMMO: The Magic Power of the Word

The Givens Foundation's NOMMO African American Authors Series has become 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 work and contributions of national as well as Twin Cities African American writers within the present authoring of our literary tradition.

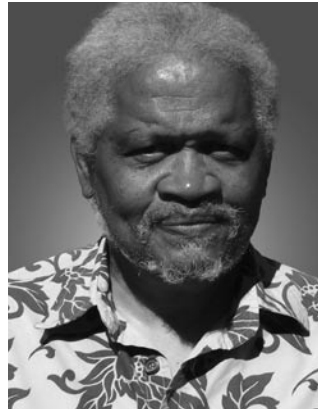
True to its meaning as "the magic power of the word" the NOMMO Series serves:

- To create platforms for the work of African American authors within our communities.
- To aid in the understanding of the significance of living African American writers.
- To create an imperative for the exploration and understanding of African American literature.

Our 2008-2009 NOMMO Series featured literary masters Sonia Sanchez, John Edgar Wideman, and Ntozake Shange.

Ticket sales and event attendance exceed our projections by 34% with a total of 628 attendees. The Sonia Sanchez event was video recorded by Twin Cities Public Television and has been shown multiple times since its original broadcast in February 2009 with each broadcast being watched by an estimated 10,000 viewers statewide.

In 2009-2010, the NOMMO African American Author Series will feature author and activist, Ishmael Reed (November 11, 2009) and poet and biographer, Quincy Troupe (April 28, 2009). All series events will be held at the University of Minnesota's Coffman Union Theater and will begin at 7:00pm.



Novelist, poet, and essayist
Ishmael Reed



Poet, biographer, and memoirist
Quincy Troupe

2009 - 2010 NOMMO African American Author Series

Nov. 11, 2009
Ishmael Reed

Apr. 28, 2010
Quincy Troupe

All series events will begin at 7:00 pm and will be held at the University of Minnesota's Coffman Union Theater, 300 Washington Ave. SE, Minneapolis.



University of Minnesota Assistant Professor Alexis Pate is the NOMMO series curator. Pate teaches courses in writing and black literature, including a course on "The Poetry of Rap."

Check out
Amiri Baraka:
The Power of the Word

www.givens.org

**NOMMO: Dogon meaning
"the magic power of the word."**

Black Writers Collaborative Retreat

In November 2008, with support from the Jerome Foundation, the Givens Foundation hosted its second annual Black Writers Collaborative Retreat. Sonia Sanchez and Carolyn Holbrook served as mentoring writers for the retreat which was held once again at the Dwelling in the Woods Hermitage Retreat in McGrath, MN.

The Givens Black Writers Collaborative Retreat is a four-day retreat for 10 emerging and established black writers from Minnesota who are at critical junctures in their artistic development. The retreat combines workshops, one-on-one meetings with National and State Mentoring Writers, free writing, and performances to:

- Promote the “writing life.”
- Support the crafting of excellence in African American literature.
- Provide opportunities for the creation of literary collaboration, community, and the sacred space within which art is born.

Beverly Cottman, Danielle Daniel, Keli Garrett, Reginald Harris, Gavin Lawrence, Don Strong, Kimberly White, Genesis Williams, Lori Young-Williams, and Paris Williams were selected to participate in the November 2008 retreat. These writers demonstrated a commitment to the writing life and represented provocative and energetic voices of the literary arts scene in Minnesota.

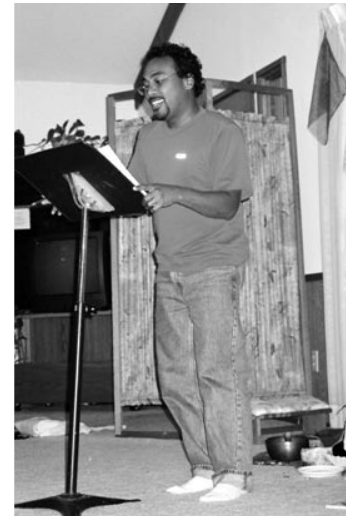
In culminating performance events, writers from the May and November 2008 retreats staged literary performances last year. The Nu Griots and Nu Griots 2 performed at Penumbra Theater, demonstrating works that were written at or inspired by the Givens Black Writers Collaborative Retreat.



November 2008 Retreat Participants with mentoring writers Sonia Sanchez and Carolyn Holbrook.



Sonja Sanchez shares her wisdom with retreat participants (above). Gavin Lawrence reads from his work (right).



“I have rediscovered the poet in me. The poet that has been at the root of my work. Work that was built on my individual truth, coached in my people’s sensibilities.”

—Beverly Cottman,
November 2008 Retreat Program Participant.



Retreat participants performed their works as the Nu Griots at Penumbra Theater.

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INCOME 2007-2008

Government	44,000
Foundations/Corporations	123,949
Individuals	74,995
Program Fees	25,559
In-Kind	3,104
Total	271,607

EXPENSES 2007-2008

Program Expenses	199,119
Education	101,796
NOMMO	73,160
Retreat	24,163
Management/Operations	65,976
Fundraising	1,500
Total	266,595

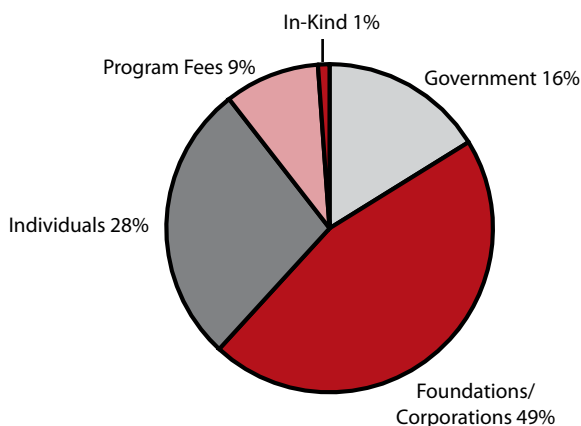
Welcomes, Shout Outs, and Farewells On Board

In 2008-2009, the Givens Foundation welcomed Darlyne Bailey, Jessica Jackson, Jasmine Stringer, and Thomas Nelson. These new board members have brought tremendous talents and new energy to the organization. In the last year, with much appreciation for service, we bid a fond farewell to board member Michael Bingham. At our annual meeting in August 2009 the board approved Beverly Propes and Alvin Stafford to join the board. We look forward to welcoming them in the new year!

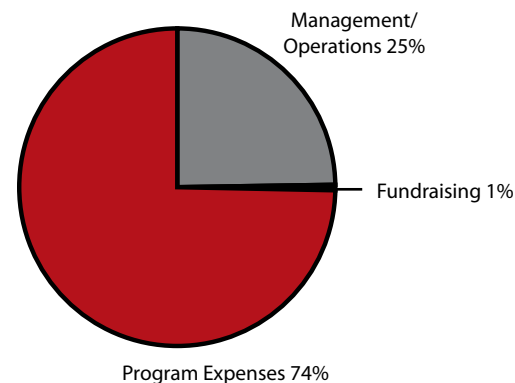


Student participants in a Givens Literary Arts Residency.

Income 2008-2009



Expenses 2008-2009



Investing in the Next Chapter: The Givens Foundation's Major Donor Campaign

In 2008-2009, we continued our campaign to raise \$750,000 from major donors to expand the programs and organizational infrastructure of the Givens Foundation. The Givens Foundation's Major Donor Campaign has supported an expansion of our educational programming, as well as increase our programs and services for African American writers through our NOMMO African American Authors Series, collaborative, retreats and workshops for writers. Campaign funds are also being used to build our organizational capacity and reserve. We are happy to report that in our second year of the campaign, we received leadership gifts and pledges now exceeding half of our goal! In the last year, as the economy turned downwards, we have been especially grateful for the commitment of members of our community who see the value of our work to cultivate a broader community of readers, to equip the newest generation of writers with the resources they deserve, and to give voice to the next chapter of African American literature.

2008-2009 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 2008-2009 fiscal year contributors!



Alexs Pate, Irma McClaurin, and John Wright serve as local literary scholars at the Twin Cities Big Read launch event.

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Friendship Academy
Southside Family Charter School
Pillsbury United Communities
Hennepin County Home School
Elite Academy
Oak Park Center
Buffalo High School

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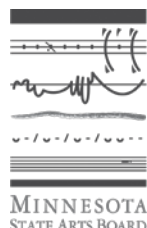
Although we have tried to be accurate in these listings, mistakes do occur. Please contact us if we have missed or misspelled your name.



NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE ARTS



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This activity is made possible in part by an Arts Across Minnesota grant provided by the Minnesota State Arts Board through an appropriation by the Minnesota State Legislature.

LOOKING FORWARD to 2009 - 2010

Fourth Biennial Education Conference

In November of 2009, the Givens Foundation will continue its tradition of convening current and future educators at a biennial conference that focuses on providing techniques and strategies for integrating African American literature into curricula.

At this day-long, invitational symposium, Givens Literary Artists will conduct workshops with educators that support African American cultural competencies and model diverse literary approaches for engaging and building relationships that serve as a platform for improving academic performance in students.

This year, the Givens Foundation will host its conference in collaboration with African American Accelerated Learning. Symposium workshops will use African American literature as a springboard for developing reading, writing, and critical thinking skills; demonstrate engaging activities that motivate constructive self-expression in students; and will provide access to African American literary resources for teachers, students, media specialists, after-school program coordinators, and schools.

100-Hour Geographic Initiatives

The Givens Foundation is committed to being an innovative solution that supports Minnesota's academic standards for language arts and that helps to close the achievement gap for Twin Cities students.

During the 2009-2010 academic year, with support from the Pohlad Family Foundation and Travelers, the Givens Foundation will launch geographic initiatives to provide 100 literary arts residency hours to schools on the Northside of Minneapolis and in St. Paul.

The initiatives will focus on schools that, according to district data, demonstrate the greatest gap in achievement for African American students. In these initiatives, the Givens Foundation will work with districts and schools to craft flexible approaches to classroom and after-school residencies that lay the foundation for long-term relationships with schools, support curricular goals for teachers, and create dynamic learning experiences for student participants.

Givens Foundation's 4th Biennial Education Conference

"Cultivating Literary Minds Using
African American Literature"

November 6th, 2009
Holiday Inn and Suites, Bloomington

Save these dates!

November 6

Givens Foundation Education
Conference 8a – 9p
Holiday Inn and Suites,
Bloomington

November 11

NOMMO African American Authors
Series: Ishmael Reed
7p, UMN Coffman Union Theater

November 12-15

Givens Black Writers
Collaborative Retreat

April 28

NOMMO African American Authors
Series: Quincy Troupe
7p, UMN Coffman Union Theater



For program and
event details:
www.givens.org