



SEATTLE ARTS & LECTURES

ANNUAL REPORT

2019/20



“I love SAL and the way that it has enriched my life.”

—SAL PATRON

2019/20 was a year without precedent—

the first half was full of momentum for Seattle Arts & Lectures (SAL), with the most tickets and subscriptions we'd ever sold, and sold-out events with luminaries like Ta-Nehisi Coates, Rachel Maddow, Patti Smith, and Malcolm Gladwell. We welcomed more people to our events by offering 13% of SAL tickets for free or at highly reduced prices to those who otherwise couldn't afford to attend, and once again brought a rich diversity of voices to our stages, making sure that at least half the writers and thinkers we presented were Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). We are the only national literary presenting organization that has made a commitment of this type.

We also continued to focus on closing the opportunity gap for students in our community without access to literary arts enrichment opportunities. In the past three years, we've extended our Writers in the Schools (WITS) program to twice as many schools serving a majority of low-income students (from six to 12).

And then our whole world changed. We were all confronted by a global pandemic requiring us to socially distance, schools closed, all as we also worked to support historic uprisings for racial justice. As an organization focused on in-person experiences, the inability to gather has presented extraordinary challenges. But we've also discovered new opportunities to carry out SAL's mission and inspire

deeper connections in our community through writing and reading and storytelling.

We shifted most of our remaining spring events to an online format with a “pay-as-you-can” ticketing system, leaping over multiple barriers to access including income, disabilities, and distance. Our *SAL/ on air* literary podcast took off this spring, with 23 free SAL author talks listened to nearly 10,000 times from February to June. When schools closed in March, we continued to pay our WITS writers through June 30 so that they could create and share online creative writing classes for students and teachers and so that we could provide stable employment to local artists. And we offered that online content and support to schools at no charge, again breaking down barriers to participation with new strategies.

With the incredibly generous support of our donors, audience members, and funders, we ended 2019/20 in a strong financial position. A Payroll Protection Plan forgivable loan combined with strong box office sales in the first half of 2019/20, robust fundraising results, minimal requests for refunds, and reduced event production costs after moving most of our remaining spring events online allowed us to close 2019/20 with a surplus. That cushion will help buoy us through what we know will be a financially challenging year ahead.

We are so deeply grateful for you—our supporters and partners. We truly could not do this work without you.



Ruth Dickey
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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BOARD PRESIDENT, 2019/20

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Mission

Seattle Arts & Lectures champions the literary arts by engaging and inspiring readers and writers of all generations in the greater Puget Sound region.



SAL is a direct investment in our shared humanity.

MIN JIN LEE
LITERARY ARTS SERIES
JUNE 15, 2020

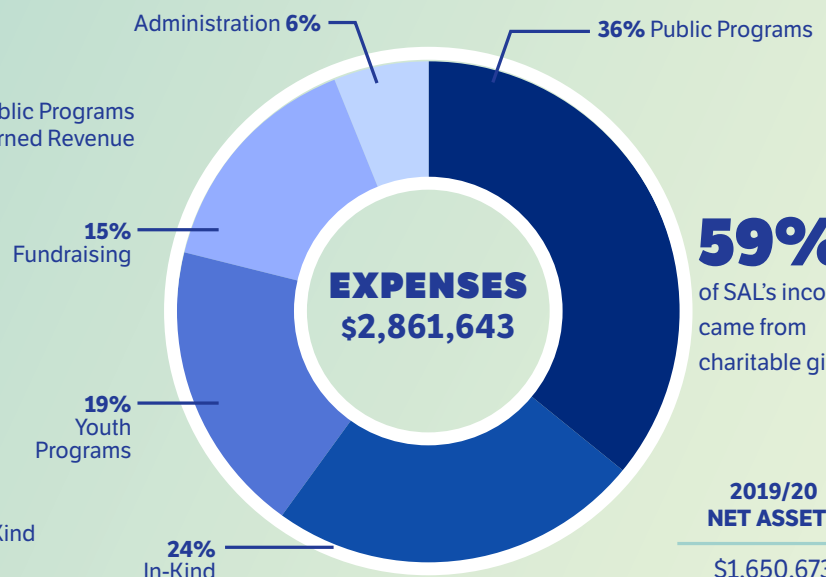
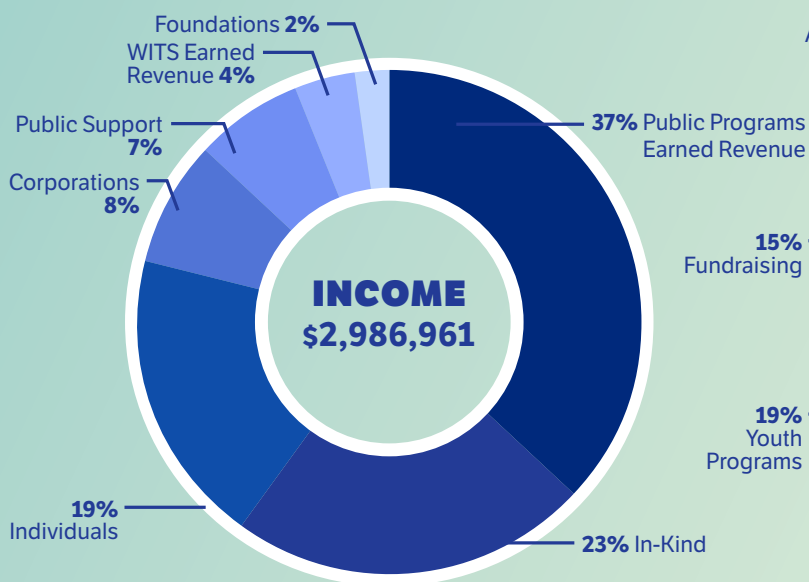


Something new that I learned about writing is that I'm good at it.

WITS STUDENT



2019/20 Financials



59%
of SAL's income came from charitable gifts

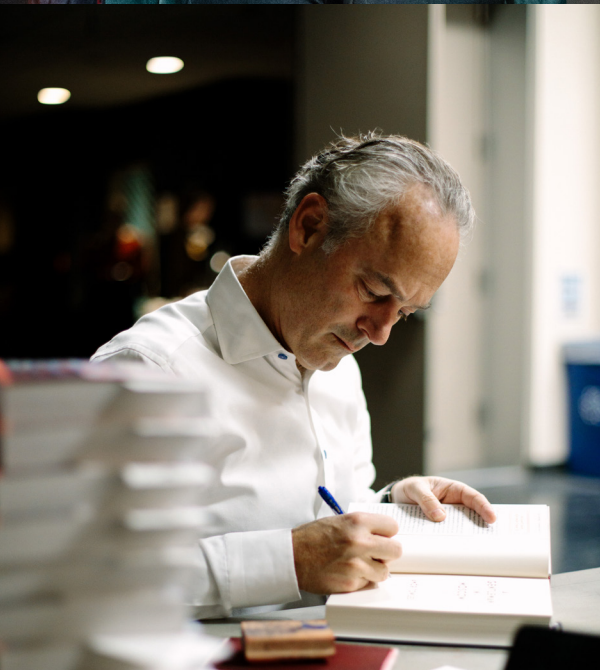
2019/20 NET ASSETS

\$1,650,673



30,313 ATTENDEES

2019/20
SEASON



**Being part of Seattle
Arts & Lectures' series
reminds a writer of
'the best time we can
ever have.'**

NAOMI SHIHAB NYE,
POETRY SERIES
SEPT. 19, 2019



PUBLIC PROGRAMS

SAL's public programs present the most talented and thought-provoking writers and thinkers of our times to connect, challenge, and inspire our audiences. In 2019/20 our programs included Literary Arts Series, Journalism Series, Poetry Series, Women You Need to Know (WYNK), Hinge, Summer Book Bingo, and SAL Presents.



13% of SAL tickets were provided at very low or no cost to community members who otherwise cannot afford to attend.

You are such an essential organization.

SAL PATRON

Thank you for finding a way to keep these author events going. You are keeping me connected to humanity.

I love SAL!

SAL PATRON



2,307

SUBSCRIPTIONS

SOLD

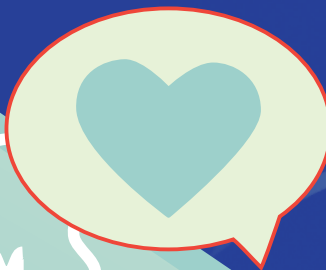
A 64% INCREASE
SINCE 2016/17

5 VIRTUAL EVENTS



Thank you for your tenacity in providing this important programming to us during these difficult times.

SAL PATRON



74%

of SAL audience members say they will recommend SAL events to others.

YOUTH PROGRAMS

SAL's Writers in the Schools (WITS) matches professional creative writers with local K-12 public schools for yearlong classroom residencies in which students discover the power of their creative voices as they develop essential writing skills. Our Seattle Youth Poet Laureate program elevates the voices of local youth committed to civic and community engagement as well as poetry and performance.

**I liked my [WITS
writer] because
I could be very
honest with her
in tough times.**

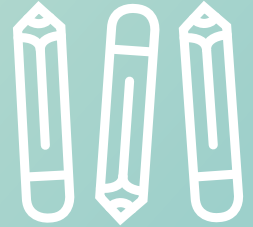
WITS STUDENT





WITS writer residencies take place across 180 Puget Sound classrooms in 32 public schools & at Seattle Children's Hospital.

38% of students served by WITS last year were low-income and/or in extended hospital care.



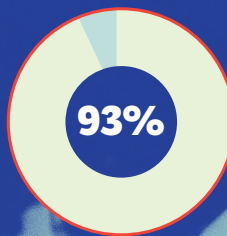
4,978
K-12 STUDENTS

THROUGH CLASSROOM
RESIDENCES & SPOTLIGHT
AUTHOR VISITS

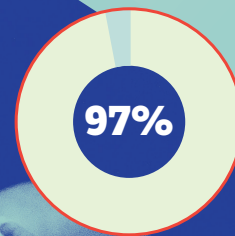
72%
of students reported that they can use the new writing skills they learned in the future.

Now, in remote teaching, [WITS] is even more critical in providing students ways to express themselves, cope, build a writing community, and try new writing strategies and techniques.

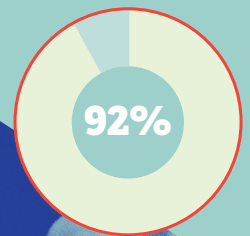
WITS CLASSROOM TEACHER



of teachers say their students improved their writing skills.



of teachers agree that WITS strengthened their school's language arts program.



of teachers report that they learned new teaching skills through a WITS residency.

After COVID-19, WITS writers:

36 pre-recorded online videos & written lesson plans

8 online classroom residencies

16 live video sessions with students

2 online WITS classroom celebrations



our **FIRST EVER** virtual year-end showcase of student work



"I have seen increased confidence and a new love of writing in students who are going through unimaginably hard things.

WITS CLASSROOM TEACHER

THANK YOU

Seattle Arts & Lectures is deeply grateful to these corporate, public, and foundation partners for their generous support of our work in 2019/20.

We are also tremendously grateful to

*the many individuals and additional partners who so generously contributed to our work last year. A full list is featured on our website at **www.lectures.org/individual-giving/**.*

Presenting Sponsor

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