



Winter 2024 Racial Equity Accountability Report

Youth Programs

- Designed and launched WITS Rewritten. WITS Rewritten is a pilot program that provides WITS at no cost to K-12 public schools that serve students furthest from educational justice. It is driven by our interest in broadening and deepening student access to the literary arts. There is no programmatic difference between WITS and WITS Rewritten. The latter is the same program that we have been offering for 30 years with two evolutions: 1) an eradication of the cost to schools and 2) an organizational commitment to center serving students who have the least access to arts engagement opportunities. In the 2023-24 academic year, we piloted WITS Rewritten at 3 schools (Wing Luke Elementary School, Denny International Middle School, and Rainier Beach High School). In the 2024-25 academic year, we will expand the pilot to serve 3 additional schools for a total of 6 WITS Rewritten schools.
- Implemented Illness and Missed Gig pay for WITS writers. In an attempt to mitigate some of the challenges of being a contract worker (lack of employer-provided health care, lack of stable salary, lack of sick/vacation time, etc.), this year we implemented Illness and Missed Gig pay for our WITS writers. If writers miss a day of WITS work due to illness (or the need to care for a dependent family member who is ill), they do need to make up the in-class time, as SAL has a contract with the school that commits us to providing a set number of WITS service hours. That said, we recognize that, as independent contractors, having to schedule a make-up work day might result in missing other paid work opportunities. With this in mind, if WITS writers need to miss a day of WITS work due to illness, this program allows us to offer them a limited amount of additional compensation.
- Began building/revitalizing relationships with school districts that serve students furthest from educational justice. With an eye towards the hopeful future growth of WITS Rewritten, we have begun building/revitalizing relationships with school districts that serve students who have the least access to the arts. Our initial relationship-building efforts have focused on the following school districts: Tukwila School District, Renton School District, and Highline School District.

Administration

- Added Stipends for Candidate Finalists. In order to address the equity issue of the time and effort put into the candidates process of being a finalist, we are now

compensating all finalists with a \$250 stipend. The final hiring step at SAL can include a two hour interview and preparing some materials for staff review.

- Built out Monthly Racial Caucusing. Starting in FY24, we began holding monthly racial caucus meetings to move forward our equity work. We have been working with our consultants to move our equity work forward using these group meetings as a catalyst for change. We are also using this structure on positional caucusing with the same goal of improving communication opportunities and finding solutions when the caucuses meet together to move forward ideas and proposals.
- Hired SAL's first-ever Administrative Associate. This position was added to directly support the Executive Director and the Finance and Operations Director bringing more capacity to the administrative team and thus the entire team at SAL. Our current strategic plan named that we invest in structure and systems at SAL to ease the often administrative burden on the rest of the SAL staff. Investing in infrastructure as well as programs is important to our collective well-being now and as we grow.

Development

- Broadening pathways to support SAL's work. Learning from community feedback and community-centric fundraising, we expanded how we define "supporters" at SAL. We include community partners, in-kind supporters, and volunteers in our receptions and stewardship efforts; we have introduced tiered ticket levels to attend our annual fundraising gala; and are continuing to redefine how we value and cultivate monetary, cultural, and relational wealth in our fundraising.
- Reimagining how we build mutual support with writers in our community. We have formalized policies to pay teaching artists for their contributions to Development events and campaigns, including our 2024 Back-to-School Skate-a-Thon, annual SAL Gala, email appeals, and more. We actively ask authors for feedback on auction experiences they've facilitated and use their feedback to guide how we partner with local authors in the future. As a result, we have begun formalizing regular stipends for these contributions and working collaboratively with authors to design an experience that is valuable to both the author and guests. This has involved facilitating conversations with writers of color away from re-traumatizing and/or invasive questions towards celebrating an author for their whole self.
- Developing structures to establish a better understanding of who we are reaching. We are formalizing how we track stewardship to show how we are engaging with (or not engaging with) donors and community members of all giving capacities and backgrounds—we began collecting donor demographics data to help identify who we are currently reaching.

Public Programs

- Launching new accessible ticket offerings. We began including free tickets for self-identifying Native individuals and free digital tickets for public school classrooms. We hosted a free event centered around racial equity in the outdoors, co-presented with the Trust for Public Land. We shifted caps on \$10 and \$20 ticket allocations to lower the barriers to access SAL events, and we began offering a Pay What You Can ticket price in the box office at events.
- Building new approaches to data analysis and curation. We began collecting optional race/ethnicity and age data from all ticket holders starting on December 5, 2023, to better understand our current audience and those we are not serving. We additionally created a curation equity rubric to help guide curatorial decision-making and expanded our curatorial team from two to four staff to include more lived experience and expertise in our curation.
- Creating and deepening our approaches to community partnerships. We continued the on-going work of developing our community partnerships with BIPOC and queer-led and serving organizations by creating documentation that more clearly outlines partner parameters upfront, actively requesting partnership and programming ideas from our partners, and attending our partner-hosted events in-person throughout the year.
- Launching a new internship program. We launched a new paid Public Programs Internship program in the Spring of 2024, which seeks to offer professional development opportunities in the nonprofit literary arts sector to applicants from historically underrepresented and under-invited communities.