2022/2023 sal



WRITERS IN THE SCHOOLS IMPACT REPORT

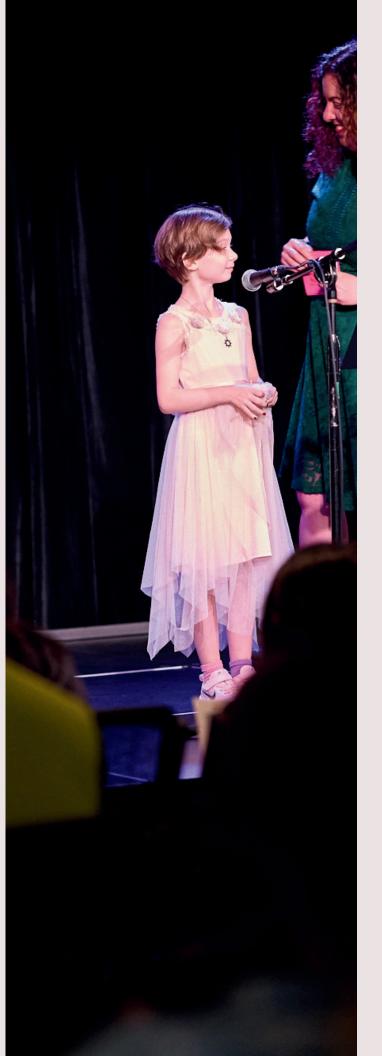


SEATTLE ARTS & LECTURES CULTIVATES TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCES THROUGH STORY AND LANGUAGE WITH READERS AND WRITERS OF ALL GENERATIONS.

Seattle Arts & Lectures (SAL) believes that literacy and a love for writing is a life-long process that starts in our public schools and connects directly to our public stages.

Through our Writers in the Schools (WITS) and Youth Poetry Fellowship programs, SAL connects working professional writers with students and teachers to elevate and amplify the voices of students throughout the Puget Sound region.





EVALUATION DESCRIPTION

Since 2017, SAL has partnered with MEMconsultants, a long-established Seattle-based evaluations firm with expertise in youth development and arts programs, to hone and implement our annual WITS program evaluation process.

Based on our learnings each year, with MEM's guidance we continue to refine our evaluation process to better assess WITS' impact and inform future program decisions.

EVALUATION DATA SOURCES

- Program Statistics
- Student, Teacher & WITS Writer Surveys
- WITS Writer Observations

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Participation Rates: Who participates in WITS?
- Participant Experience: What do students, teachers, schools, and WITS Writers experience during a WITS residency?
- Program Quality: Do WITS Writers deliver a high-quality experience for students?
- Program Outcomes:
 - Do students engage in WITS activities, build skills, and increase confidence in their writing?
 - Do students practice creativity and selfexpression through their writing?
 - Do students share writing with peers and through the process build connections and learn more about their classmates?
 - Do teachers change their teaching practice with new lessons, develop fresh techniques, and/or learn new ways of encouraging students in their writing?





PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

22 WITS Writers-in-Residence worked with...

5,162 students in...

234 classrooms in collaboration with...

141 unique teachers at...

31 K-12 public schools in 6 school districts and in...

2 Seattle Children's Hospital departments.

WITS Writers delivered 2,380 hours of writing instruction...

A total of over 45,059 contact hours with students...

Or an average of **8.7 hours of instruction per student**.

CHANGES

NEW STAFF

In 2022–23, SAL's Youth Programs team faced major staff transitions, with two of the three positions changing.



In August 2022, just before the start of the school year, we welcomed Jennifer Lobsenz as Youth Programs Director to oversee and direct all aspects of WITS as well as our Youth Poetry Fellowship program. Jennifer has spent the last decade in the local community working at the intersection of the arts and social justice.

In January 2023, mid-way through the school year, Garfield Hillson came on board as WITS Program Manager. Garfield believes in the role of arts and education in trauma-informed social justice healing, and has worked in art administration, artist support, and youth development and instruction for eight years.



AND CHALLENGES

HIGH COST OF LIVING

With Seattle's cost of living continuing to rise, WITS Writers are struggling to be able to live and work in the city, so they can bring their best to the classroom. In 2022–23, SAL increased the hourly pay for WITS Writers by 15% (\$90–\$115, based on years with the program) to help provide a more liveable and sustaining wage. We continued to build our corps of talented WITS Writers, as many moved away or changed professions.

LINGERING EFFECTS OF PANDEMIC

We are still dealing with the impacts of the pandemic in the classroom. Teachers are overwhelmed and students are struggling to learn while managing their mental health and well-being. WITS Writers continued to work with teachers to create residencies focused on joy, belonging, and community building in the classroom.





PROGRAM EXPERIENCE

Teacher Satisfaction with WITS

100% of teachers strongly agree or agree that they enjoyed working with their WITS Writer and would like to participate in WITS again.

87% strongly agree or agree that WITS met or exceeded their expectations.

"In school and classroom, we encourage students to be brave and try and WITS did a great job bringing the best in our students. I was absolutely thrilled with the results."

"WITS supported a creative and collaborative student climate. I enjoyed how much the students got to share their work and practice listening and supporting peers."

"I loved how [our WITS Writer] was able to connect with each of my students in different ways than I do."



Student Satisfaction with WITS

91% of older students liked working with their WITS Writer; 87% of younger students liked their WITS writing time.

91% of students reported that their WITS Writer listened to them; **86% of students** reported that that their WITS Writer told them what they liked about their writing.

"My favorite part about WITS was drawing/writing. I like everything and showing the work to my parents!" – younger WITS Student

"I loved how I could write about anything I wanted to; the freedom made me feel strong. Writing the poem, I feel as if it unlocked a part of my soul." - older WITS Student

"I've always liked writing and I've kind of drifted from writing, but [our WITS Writer] made me enjoy writing again." – older WITS Student

"[WITS] is one of the best parts of my week!" - younger WITS Student

Closing Opportunity Gaps

40% of total WITS students served historically have had the least access to arts education and enrichment in the classroom.

- 40% of total WITS students were low-income, based on school Free and Reduced Lunch rates. (As a comparison, FRL rate in Seattle Public Schools is 35%.)
- 248 youth served were patients in extended hospital stays at Seattle Children's.
- Over 50% of WITS students were BIPOC youth.

60% of partnering K-12 public schools were underresourced with high populations of underserved students: 50%-85% of students qualified for FRL; 50%-95% of students were youth of color.

All schools received subsidized residency rates at least 70% of the actual cost to bring a WITS Writer into the classroom. Under-resourced high needs schools received significantly greater reduced residency rates up to 95% of actual cost.

Writer Satisfaction with WITS

100% of WITS Writers reported an extremely or mostly satisfying overall experience with WITS.

90% of WITS Writers reported extremely or mostly satisfying relationships with the WITS cohort.

100% of WITS Writers expressed high levels of satisfaction with their relationships with both classroom teachers and students.

87% of WITS Writers were extremely or mostly satisfied with the support they received from SAL staff.

87% of WITS Writers were extremely or mostly satisfied with their compensation from SAL.

"I really feel staff paying attention to WITS Writers and honoring our needs and feedback. Thank you!"

"I feel like I'm paid very generously and I'm grateful to have WITS as my anchor gig. I'm also intensely aware of how precarious it is to rely on contract work!"

"So grateful for this team! Thank you for everything and creating an opportunity for such meaningful labor, connection, and exchange."



100%

of teachers reported a high level of student engagement during their WITS partnership.

97%

of teachers reported that WITS Writers brought new and diverse mentor texts into the classroom.

82%

of students felt acknowledged and accepted in their WITS class.

67%

of younger students and 52% of older students felt more connected to their classmates.

SENSE OF BELONGING

"[My favorite part was]

learning together as a
group and forming new
communities through
poetry and exploration." older WITS Student

"My favorite part was the end where we did a massive show and tell and how it **connected the class**." – younger WITS Student

"[My favorite part was] **not being judged** for what I
wrote." - older WITS
Student

"WITS pushed our students to get to know each other, listen closely to their classmates, and helped students share more of themselves in the classroom." - Classroom Teacher



"I enjoyed writing a variety of poem types. It was relaxing, and a nice break from normal LA class. I also enjoyed reading other students' poems at the end of the program." – older WITS Student

"[My favorite part was] making poems and expressing myself." - younger WITS Student

"I enjoyed having time to write poetry and just not having to worry about school pressure." older WITS Student

"I love that **students could be creative and vulnerable**, and then learn about one another" - Classroom Teacher

CREATIVE HABITS

93% of teachers reported that most or many students practiced creativity through writing.

75% of older students reported that they shared their writing with classmates; 69% reported that they shared their thoughts and feelings through writing.

Two-thirds of younger students reported sharing their writing with classmates.



"[Our WITS Writer] empowered students that their stories are important, and encouraged them each to share their writing, and increase their confidence as writers with something important to share." – Classroom Teacher

"I did a poem about music, and I am VERY proud of it. Every time I read it, it makes me a little happier." – older WITS Student

"[My favorite part about WITS is] getting to share my work and the nice **feeling of confidence** when I find a good idea." – younger WITS Student

WRITING SKILLS AND MINDSETS

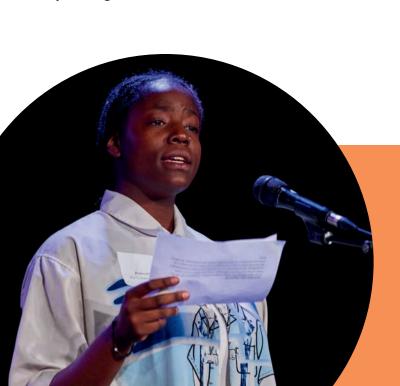
81% of teachers reported that most or many students developed a greater enjoyment of writing.

94% of teachers reported that most or many students improved as writers.

84% of younger students and **79%** of older students are proud of the work they put into their writing.

88% of younger students believe they will keep getting better at writing; **70%** of older students will continue to use the new writing skills they learned from WITS in the future.

Over two-thirds of older students feel more confident about their writing because of WITS.



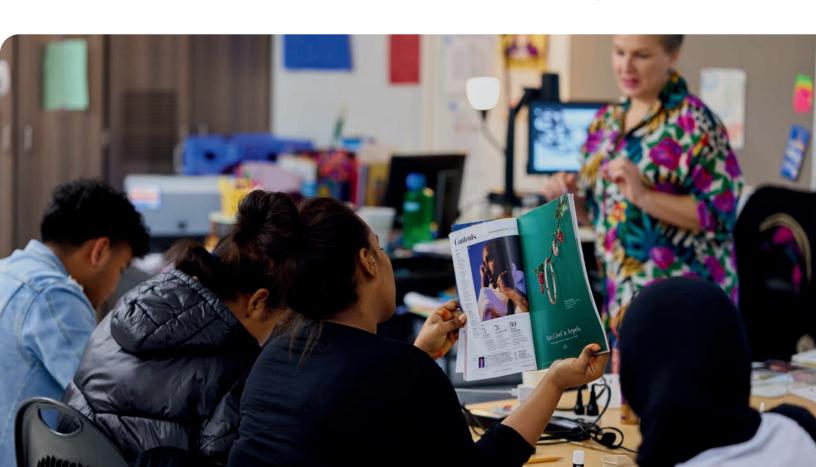
"Our WITS experience provided students with hands-on opportunities to try a range of styles of writing poetry....
The result of their work was impressive!"

"[Our WITS Writer] really fit in well with the timing of our writing curriculum. It was wonderful to step aside and observe the students go through the writing process with a different instructor."

TEACHER SKILL DEVELOPMENT

90% of teachers stated that they have or will apply things they learned from the WITS Writer to their teaching practice.

94% of teachers strongly agree or agree that WITS supported them to meet their classroom goals.



Blessing Mom and Dad and Brother

By Noi Suzuki 3rd Grade, BF Day Elementary School



YEE

J'zaeli Padillo

Dearborn Park International Elementary School, 4th Grade

As soon as you say the word yee

a burst of laughter spills out of quietness.

Quietness is the key
to unlock impatience
Impatience goes to the level of
chaos

Chaos is the right word for yee The word yee tastes like fresh mint

Fresh mint is like a breeze of cold air.

The breeze of fresh air is like a cold word for yee.



WE THANK YOU

FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT



Craig & Nancy Abramson, Eric Acosta, Monica Adams, Ruth & Terry Adams, Carolyn & Tim Ainslie, Robert & Sarah Alsdorf, Christian Amott & Sarah Burns, Susan Anawalt, Virginia Anderson, Anonymous WITS Anthology Donors, Kimberly & Scott Armstrong, Lea Aromin, Marc Auerbach, Ross & Linda Baarslag-Benson, David Barthold, Lynn & Howard Behar, Laura Bentley, Eric Berg & Rebecca Staffel, Cathy Besmar, Stesha Brandon & Micah Skilling, Shira & Matt Brewer, Toby Bright & Nancy Lee Ward, John & Patsy Burgess, Mark Butler, Peter Byers & Virginia Sybert, Craig, David & Sharon Campbell, Chris Capossela & Leigh Toner, Jennifer Cast & Liffy Franklin, Tony Cavalieri & Ellen Look, Paul Hlava Ceballos, Elizabeth Choy & James Lobsenz, Barbara Joan Christoffersen, Sheri Cohen, Lauri Conner & Leja Wright, Amy & Larry Corey, Kathy Cowles, Alicia Craven, Debra Dahlen & Bob Fries, Indira Dahlstrom & Emily Rigsby, Randy Dixon & Deborah Haensli, Nancy Dorn & Carol Verga, Jennifér Duffy, Gaylee & Jim Duncan, Natalie Dupille, Michael Dussert, Sasha Duttchoudhury, Deborah Dwyer & Jay Field, Suzanne Edison, Lori Eickelberg, Kate Elias & Brick Maier, Candace Espeseth, Diana Falchuk, Chris Fassel & Alice MacCuish, Bruce & Michele Fischer, Kathleen & Steve Flenniken, Gabriela Frank, Betsey Brock & Eric Fredericksen, Pam Fredericksen, Phyllis Friedman, Betti Fujikado, Laura Gamache, Susan Gamache, Carrie George & Ditman Johnson, Steve Goldstein & Mary Casey-Goldstein, Andrew & Cristin Gordon-Maclean, Graham Graham, Leah Graham, Carla Granat, K Alicia Graves, Kip Robinson Greenthal & Stanley Greenthal, Jordan Griffith, Tim Griffith & Kirsten Murray, Chelsea Grimmer, Don Guthrie & Candace Tkachuck, Lindsay Hastings, Pamela Gray & Ross Hays, Kathleen Heiman, Kayla Higgins, Lori Hirayama, Sunny Hong, Thomas Hoque, Jack & Pam Jolley, Chaya & Brad Keefe, Richard Kenney & Carol Light, Patricia Kiyono & Gregory Traxler, Keiko Koizumi, Mary Kollar, Denéise Kopetzky, Annabelle Larner, Marilyn Smith Layton, Harrison Lee, Wei-Wei Lee, Christine Lessard & Ricardo Ruiz, Diana Knauf-Levidow & Bjorn Levidow, Alix Madigan, Mark Madsen, Karen Maeda Allman & Elizabeth Wales, Trish Maharam, Erin Malone, Victoria Mann, Kelli Martin & Darius Cayetano, Kristin Martin, Anne McDuffie & Tim Wood, Kathleen Mclaughlin, Barbara Meyer & Terry Ellard, Liliana Moreno, Caitlin Morley, Anne & Shirish Mulherkar, Julie Myers, Kathleen Myers, Jane W. Nelson & James Oswald, Sierra Nelson & Chris Weber, Mái Lynn Miller Ngúyen, Chris Nishiwaki, Nancy Nordquist, Jim & Mariette O'Donnell, Ámy Olsson, Ďáwn Marie Pares, Bridget Perry, Janet Pliske, Abigail Pollokoff, Anne Pound, Sherry Prowda, Paula & Jeff Pyatt, Joan Rabinowitz, Carol Raitt, Susan Rasch, Eileen Rhee, Mary Richardson, Gene Robertson, Mae J Rosok, Liz & Steve Rummage, Renee Russak & Marci Pliskin, Genya Scharks, Anne Schopf, Kim Brown Seely & Jeff Seely, Julia Sensenbrenner, Nancy Sesmundo, Stefanie Shank, Jeannine & Ron Sielinski, Ann Speckman, Barbara Stampfl, Joannie Stangeland, Linda Stone, Sheehan Sullivan & Peter Sullivan-Finch, Jacqueline Tabor, Ken & Mary Ellen Talley, Ann Teplick, Louise Tollefson, Marc & Nancy Tollefson, Ginny Trethewey, Laura Trimingham & William Hicks, Molly & Dirk van der Burch, Sam & Lisa Howe Verhovek, Andrea Voytko & David Glazer, Jenny Wilkson, Jennifer & Tracy Wong, Gloria Woo, and Julie Zunker

2022/23 WITS SUPPORTERS

AMAZON
ARTSFUND
MANNIX CANBY FOUNDATION
MEDINA FOUNDATION
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS
NORMAN RAAB FOUNDATION
THE GLASER FOUNDATION
TULALIP TRIBES CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS



WITS elevates the expressions of all students as they discover and develop their authentic writing and performance voices. Through WITS, students become authors of their own lives.



Seattle Arts & Lectures 340 15th Ave E #301 | Seattle, WA 98112 206.621.2230 | salelectures.org

Seattle Arts & Lectures is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, tax ID number 91-1384964. Contributions tax-deductible as allowable by law.

