

# Community-Word Project



Our Voices Change the World

2016-2017 Annual Report

# We Are Grateful For Your Voice

Dear CWP Community,

In the last school year we experienced some difficult times in our country and we are grateful for your ongoing support and dedication. Community-Word Project is committed to making the world a better and brighter place by amplifying voices of those marginalized by society through strong arts education programs.

The arts are a powerful platform for new ideas, innovation and change. You have a voice, your voice is powerful, and your voice can change the world. As we enter our 20th Anniversary, we are doubling down on our commitment to our students, teachers, supporters, and you.

CWP has 20 years of experience listening to the communities we serve, raising the voices of the populations we serve. Through our programs, we empowered over 22,000 students to be strong citizens, critical and creative thinkers, and humans that shine with hope and the creative spark alive inside them. We stand with our creative community and believe in the power of positive change through art expressed by authentic voices.

As we look ahead to the next 20 years, we want to share and celebrate the stories impacted by the work this community has done. Thank you for your support in this collaborative, innovative work. Together, our voices will change the world.

Much Warmth,



Michele Kotler  
Founder + Executive Director



# Mission

Community-Word Project is a New York City based 501(c)(3) arts-in-education organization that inspires children in underserved communities to read, interpret and respond to their world and to become active citizens through collaborative arts residencies and teacher training programs.

## Board of Directors 2016-17

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Sihui Zhu



# Arts Residencies

2,671

Students Served

109

Classrooms

44

Schools & Libraries

45

Teaching Artists

29

Anthologies

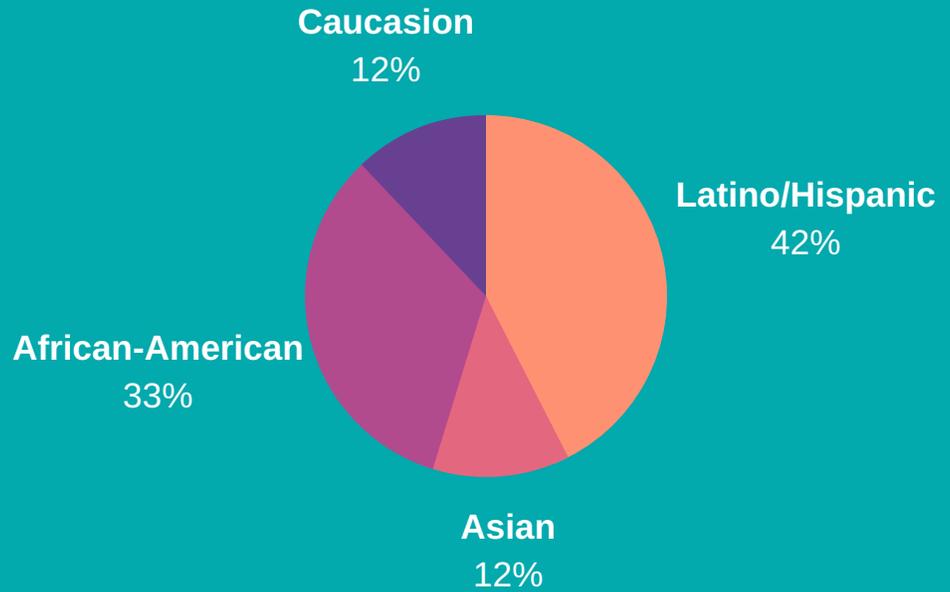
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Murals

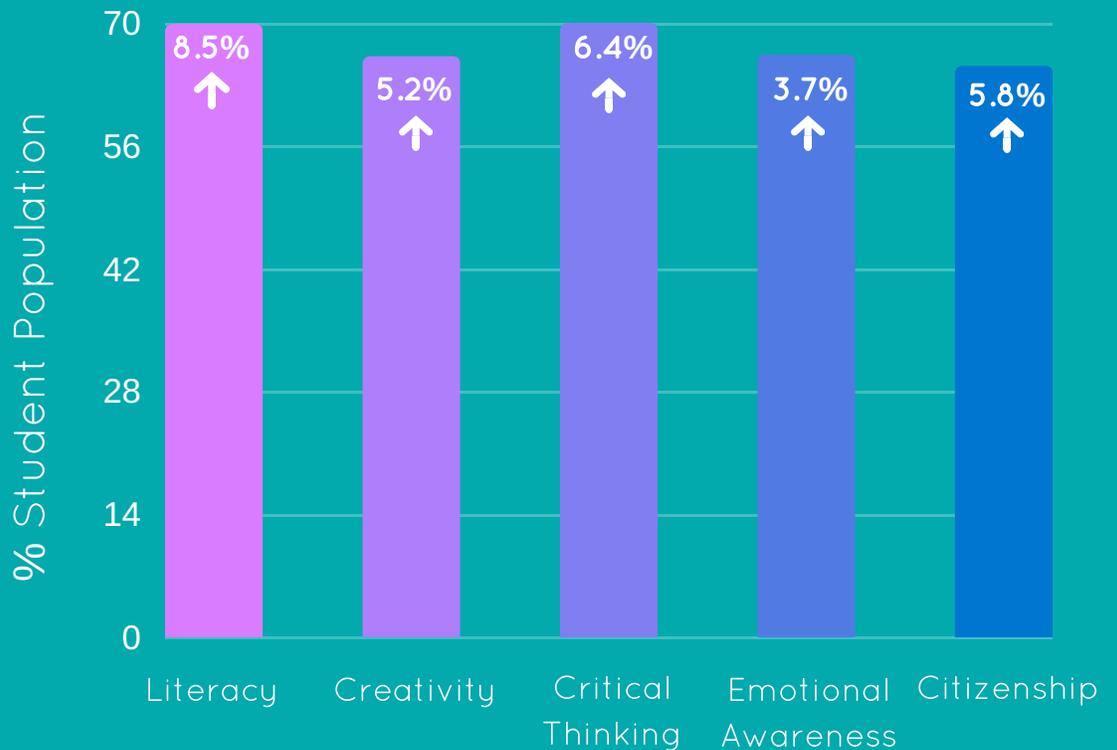
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Culminating Events

## Students Served



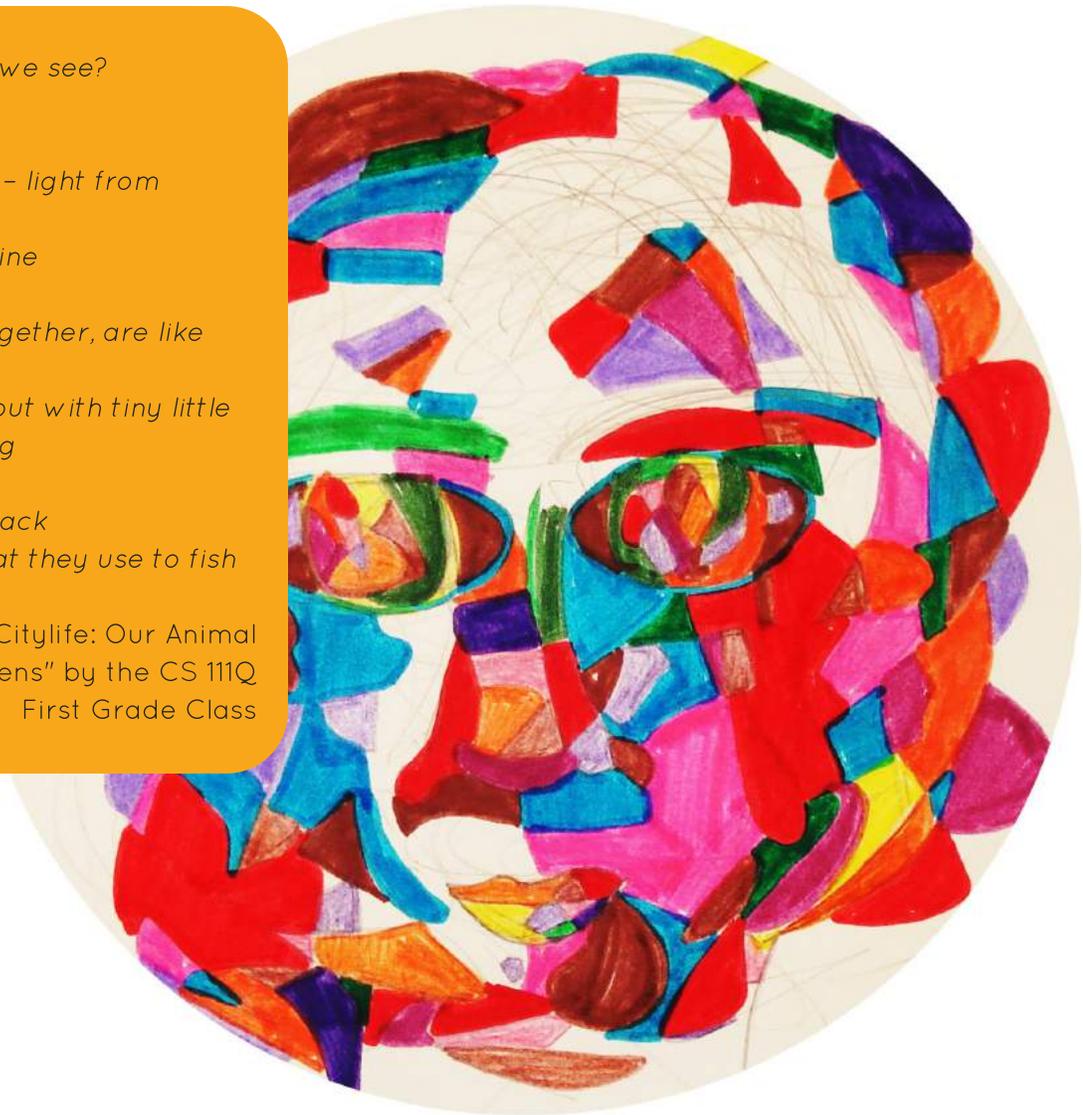
## End of Year Evaluations



# Arts Residencies

*What do we hear? What do we see?  
We fly underground  
Go into the dark  
We see light from the trains – light from  
below and light from above  
The subway is like a submarine  
Descending in the ocean  
The train cars, connected together, are like  
an aquarium underground!  
People are like fish peering out with tiny little  
eyes, arms like fins swimming  
Puffy coats of many colors.  
The taxi-fish is yellow and black  
The whole world is water that they use to fish  
for cars.*

From "Wildlife/Citylife: Our Animal  
Kingdom of Queens" by the CS 111Q  
First Grade Class



In the 2016-2017 school year Community-Word Project used creative writing, visual arts, music, theatre, dance, and media arts to teach **2,671 New York City students** creative and critical thinking skills, citizenship, emotional intelligence, and the power of collaboration and community.

CWP achieved an **11% growth in service**, reaching over **250 more students** than last year. We expanded our school partnerships by six schools, reaching students in first through twelfth grades in all five boroughs of New York City.

CWP's students are largely from immigrant communities, so the 2016 election was on their minds when our Teaching Artists entered the classrooms. Students needed to address the hopes and fears in their communities with the change in national leadership. CWP normally faces challenges because of the high-need schools in which we operate, but current events made some of our students' fears visceral. Fortunately, our programming has teaching tools to meet these challenges. CWP adapted by focusing on community, emotional intelligence, and critical thinking to help students process their thoughts and feelings, and transform their ideas into writing. In English Language Learner classrooms, we created a safe space, closing each session with our signature intention: "I have a voice. My voice is powerful. My voice can change the world," in multiple languages. Finally, we were able to use our Community Poems as reflections on what it means to be inclusive in one's community and with one's peers.

# MEET ISABELLE

CWP is dedicated to positively impacting communities at every level, from city council to the classroom. That means, not only working with the students, but providing outlets for that impact to carry into their family lives and communities.

CWP has partnered with The Young Women's Leadership School in Jamaica, Queens for six years. In 2015, we met a young woman named Isabelle, a happy, sociable student who believed she couldn't write anything of merit. Yet, after an intense identity and social justice-driven residency, Isabelle found out she had a lot to say and created a poem titled, #SayHerName.



**#SayHerName won a Silver Key Award in the Scholastic Art Awards 2017. Isabelle is now actively pursuing internships in writing, as well as serving on the school paper.**

*“#SayHerName” by Isabelle*

*But do you remember it?*

*#SayHerName*

*How many black women can*

*you name that's been a*

*victim*

*of the system?*

*#SayHerName*

*28-years-old*

*arrested for not using her*

*turn signal*

*three days later she was*

*found dead in her jail cell*

*#SayHerName*

*do you remember her?*

*#SayHerName*

*a black transgender woman*

*took the wrong turn into NSA*

*property*

*and was killed by police*

*officers*

*#SayHerName*

*in the back of the police*

*cruiser*

*she was shot by officers*

*#SayHerName*

*a young woman*

*mother of three*

*killed by the police*

*say her name*

*#SandraBland*

*#MyaHall*

*#AlexiaChristian*

*#MeganHockaday*

*#Me*

*a possible victim*

*#you*

*because you never know*

*when it's going to be your*

*turn.*

# MEET SONNIE

In the fall of 2016, we met Isabelle's younger sister, Sonnie. Although the young women are close, they are opposites in all regards. Sonnie is a very shy girl on the outside, but fearless in her writing. Emboldened by her sister's poetic risk-taking, Sonnie challenged herself to share her voice with her community. Although she found it difficult, she performed her poetry in front of large audiences at Bryant Park's Annual Poem in Your Pocket Day, as well as at CWP's Annual Writing Our Future Benefit. At both events, she performed a piece titled, "Little Black Girl," a poem that showcases the prejudices she experiences daily. Isabelle and Sonnie continue to write and share their work with their mother and brother, who have proudly attended the events where the sisters have performed.



# *Little Black Girl*

by Sonnie Duval

Society will always perceive me  
as an uneducated, unkept, nappy-  
headed, loudmouth,  
little black girl.

But that's not who I am.  
That's just a painted  
picture someone  
covered me with.

Me? I'm a female getting  
her education. Going to school.  
Working for a diploma.

I have curly hair that can  
be styled in many ways, two  
buns swirling around my head.

I do not look  
nor sound  
like a monkey.

I do not need  
a perm  
to get a job, to feel  
happy.

People see what  
they want to see and I  
see their faces. Their thoughts  
written in all the cracks  
of their skin.

They clutch their  
bags close to body, avert  
their eyes, run away, while  
we are tazed,  
killed  
for crimes we  
didn't commit.

But me, I'm not  
that. I'm an  
educated, curly-  
headed, sunny,  
little black  
girl.

*"Community-Word Project made me realize how bad I wanted to be a writer. They helped me unlock my full potential by coming up with writing topics that I could relate to."*

-Isabelle, 10th Grade

*"My experience with Community-Word Project was pure fun and made me a better writer. CWP gave me confidence with public speaking, because they gave tremendous support in my work."*

-Sonnie, 9th Grade

# Teaching Artist Project

55

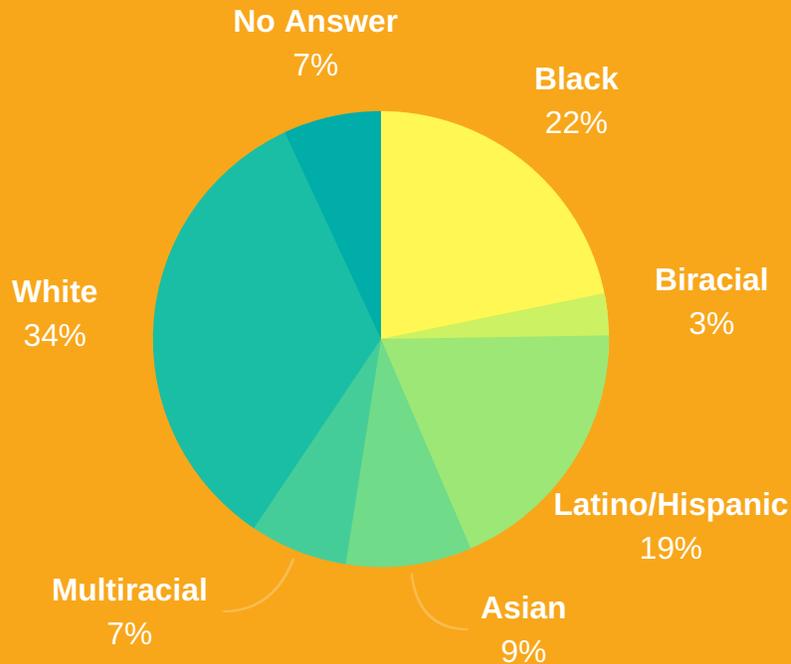
Teaching Artists  
Trained

250,000+

Students Reached

750+

Teaching Artists  
Trained

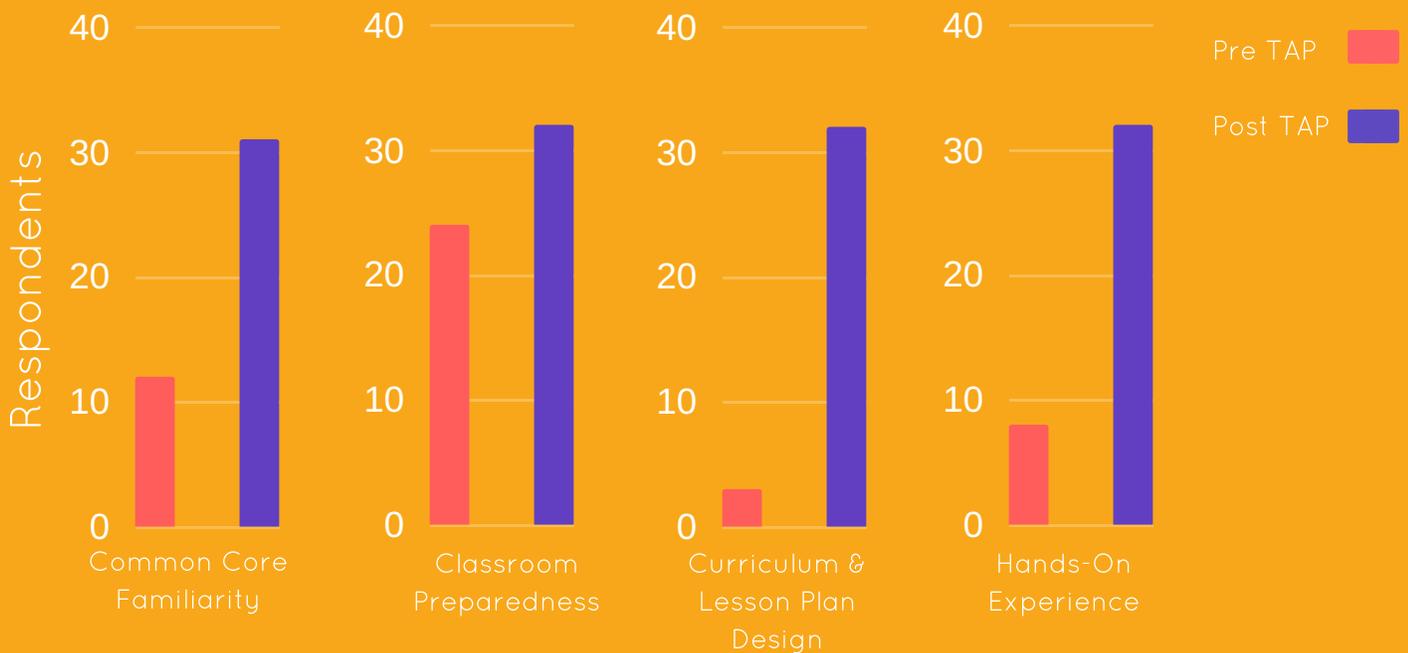


94%

say TAP was critical  
to their teaching

89%

report they were highly  
prepared to enter  
field of arts education.



# Teaching Artist Project



**In 2017 CWP rebranded our Teaching Artist training program as Teaching Artist Project. Check out the new site: [www.teachingartistproject.org](http://www.teachingartistproject.org)**

CWP's comprehensive, eight-month Teaching Artist Project taught 32 new and experienced Teaching Artists the techniques for bringing their creative processes to the classroom. Teaching Artist Project, based in rich, social justice pedagogy, challenged these artists to expand their teaching through experiential learning and three months of hands-on classroom experience.

In the summer of 2016, 23 advanced Teaching Artists joined CWP staff for Summer Institute held at Sarah Lawrence College and the LeRoy Neiman Art Center in Harlem, a three-day intensive on teaching for social justice.

*"The Teaching Artist Project was an absolutely transformative experience. I truly feel I am not only so much more prepared in my field, but that I am part of a very special community that will have my back throughout my journey as a Teaching Artist. Thank you."*

-Jessica Mortellaro  
2017 TAP Graduate

# MEET BADU



**"I feel closer to a community of artists working toward the goal of giving back."**

Badu's parents sent him from Ghana, West Africa, to the Bronx for a better life at the age of 5. Badu struggled to learn English in the 1st grade. On days when language failed him, he would draw.

In 2008 Badu entered Ms. Thompson's 7th grade classroom at P.S./M.S. 279 where Community-Word Project conducted a 25-week arts program. Badu thrived. Ms. Thompson and CWP's Teaching Artists nurtured his voice. Badu was inspired to express his hopes and fears through poetry and drawing, sharing his art with peers and community.

When Badu graduated from high school he attended college for digital design and animation. Inspired to give back, he returned as a teaching assistant to P.S./M.S. 279 and entered the Teaching Artist Project. He has risen from one of the most underserved neighborhoods in NYC. Badu followed his passion, found his voice, and is passionately giving back to his community.



*When I joined TAP, I was already working with students in my former middle school as a para-professional, which had its similarities to the work of a Teaching Artist, but still differed greatly. Through TAP, I learned a lot about the educational system. With art lacking in the schools and many corners of the world, there is a great need for TAP. As a former student and now a Teaching Artist, I see the value of working with others - such as other teachers within the schools - to form a greater team, aligning our interests to help students become the best they can be through arts education.*

- Badu Boakye, 2017 TAP Graduate

# Teaching Artist Project Cohort

TAP Cohort is a network of Arts in Education organizations collaborating on a series of Teaching Artist professional development seminars and internships as a part of Community-Word Project's Teaching Artist Project. These seminars and workshops are available to Teaching Artists, currently working at a Cohort member organization. In 2016-17, the TAP Cohort served over 750 Teaching Artists through 13 professional developments, The Business of Teaching Artistry: A Panel on Professionalism, and the 2017 Arts in Education Job Fair.

Arts for All | Brooklyn Arts Council | Carnegie Hall  
The Center for Arts Education | City Lore  
Community-Word Project | DreamYard Project  
Marquis Studios | National Dance Institute  
Opening Act | Teachers & Writers Collaborative  
Wingspan Arts

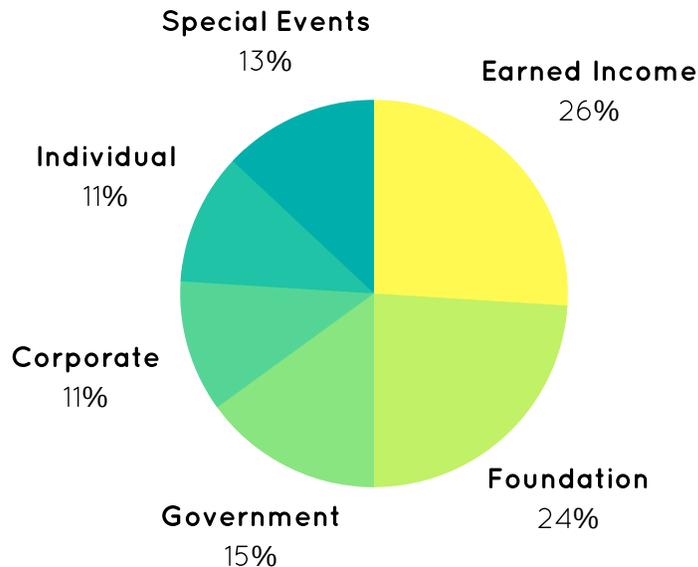


*"I've found the TAP Cohort to be a group of arts educators who are dedicated to providing the best learning experiences and environments possible. I'm impressed by their dedication, their thoughtfulness, and their openness. They pose challenging questions for themselves and create a wonderful space to explore those questions. I think everyone walks out of a TAP Cohort experience feeling challenged, refreshed and inspired!"*

*-Phil Alexander, Brooklyn Arts Council*

# By the Numbers

## 2016-2017 Revenue



### CWP IS SUPPORTED BY PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDS PROVIDED BY:

**Foundation:** Axe-Houghton Foundation, Barbara Forst Charitable Trust, Bay and Paul Foundations, Blessing Way Foundation, Birkhofer Family Charitable Fund, The Clara & Kurt Hellmuth Foundation, Countess Moira Charitable Foundation, DanPaul Foundation, Harman Family Foundation, The Heckscher Foundation for Children, Henry E. Niles Foundation, John N. Blackman Sr. Foundation, The Laura B. Vogler Foundation, Lily Auchincloss Foundation, Metzger-Price Fund, Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation, The New Yankee Stadium Community Benefits Fund, The Nora Roberts Foundation, Prescott Fund for Children and Youth, The Richard Davoud Donchian Foundation, Seth Sprague Educational and Charitable Foundation, Sills Family Foundation, The Smart Family Foundation, Stavros Niarchos Foundation

**Government:** National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, Office of the Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, New York City Councilmember Fernando Cabrera, New York City Councilmember Costa

Constantinides, New York City Councilmember Vanessa Gibson, New York City Councilmember Antonio Reynoso, New York City Councilmember Ydanis Rodriguez

**Corporate:** AllianceBernstein, Amazon Literary Partnership, Assurant Foundation, BlackRock Foundation, Broadway Stages, Colgate-Palmolive Company, ConEdison, Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP, Goldman Sachs, Google, Greenblatt Law LLC, HBO, HSBC, Investors Foundation, JP Morgan Chase, Kinder Morgan Foundation, Linklaters, The M&T Charitable Foundation, Massey Knakal Charitable Foundation, MUFG Foundation, Newmark Grubb Knight Frank, PepsiCo, Proskauer, Pzena Investment Charitable Fund, Red Jacket Orchards, Soros Fund Charitable Foundation, TD Bank, TD Charitable Foundation, Time Warner

# GET INVOLVED

How else can you get involved? There are a number of ways to do more in our community:

- **Donate:** Consider a one-time or monthly, recurring donation to help fund our anthologies, mural projects, and arts residencies
- **Stay Updated:** Sign up for our newsletter and get monthly updates on what's happening in our classrooms and communities
- **Volunteer:** CWP offers multiple opportunities throughout the year for volunteers to work with our students
- **Share:** Get social with us and share our work on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.

Find out more at [www.communitywordproject.org](http://www.communitywordproject.org)



*“CWP allowed our second graders to experience creative writing about their communities and themselves. This really allowed them to critically think about the work around them both collaboratively and individually.”* -Arlene Ramos, Principal  
PS 1, Brooklyn



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[www.communitywordproject.org](http://www.communitywordproject.org)