Brilliant Futures for GIRLS
Letter of Introduction from Executive Director Keren Taylor

I was driving to a WriteGirl workshop recently, when it struck me that some of our girls were not even born when WriteGirl began in 2001. WriteGirl was just an idea on a piece of paper back then.

It was the fall of 2001, and I was laid off from my Internet job. I took a few weeks to think about what I might want to do next with my life, and I found myself compelled to launch a writing program and organization for teen girls. Public schools in Los Angeles are large, creative writing programs are rare or nonexistent, and there aren’t enough college counselors to give girls the one-on-one support they need. Girls need to be guided and inspired to find their fire, their individual voices and their personal perspectives. Within just a few weeks, there were 13 of us gathered around a conference table, fine-tuning a proposal to launch what would become WriteGirl.

In that first year, I ran WriteGirl out of my apartment in Los Feliz. We held volunteer training sessions in my living room, we used my landline to call schools and girls, and in the spring of 2002, my inkjet printer cranked out hundreds of pages of draft material for our very first anthology, “THREADS.” I remember waking up in the middle of the night and listening to see if the printer was still printing to know if I had to get up to add more paper or replace an ink cartridge. We held the monthly workshops at a small Community Center in Koreatown, and we were grateful for 30 volunteers who assisted with everything from baking cupcakes to posting flyers.

Today, WriteGirl works with over 350 girls annually, offering mentoring, workshops, public readings, and publishing opportunities. We have an office, a small staff, partnerships, longtime supporters, awards on the walls and over 20 published books. We work with underserved girls (and some boys!) who are facing tremendous challenges such as poverty, overcrowded schools, unstable families, ineffective school counselors, pregnancy, depression, violence and incarceration. Since 2001, we have maintained a 100% success rate in not only helping our seniors in the Core Mentoring Program graduate from high school, but also guiding them to enroll in college! It’s daunting, inspiring, overwhelming and joyous—all at the same time. I go to bed and wake up every day thinking about how to give girls the hope, tools and foundation they need to face where they are, see where they could go, and take the steps to get there. The work will never be done, but I’m glad to be making significant inroads with hundreds of girls every year.

I am most proud of what our girls are doing once they have graduated from college. I didn’t realize that this would be an outcome of participation in WriteGirl, but I’m so thrilled to hear about alums who are pursuing careers in community service, nonprofit management or advocacy for various causes. I know we can’t take all the credit for their success, but I know we influenced them greatly in looking at the world with compassion and critical eyes and having confidence and vision to want to be part of positive social action.

Thank you for supporting “the magic of WriteGirl.”

Warmly,
Keren Taylor
Qualities Girls Gain from being in WriteGirl

**Resilience** to overcome challenges, large and small

**Confidence** to speak up in front of audiences

**Creativity** to approach problems and develop innovative solutions

**Critical Thinking Skills** to respond to the outside world and make informed decisions

**Grit and Determination** to persist despite any obstacles

**Boldness** to seek their own individual paths

**Communication Skills** to pursue incredible opportunities

**Dedication** to their academic success

**Focus** to set and reach both short-term and long-term goals

**Courage** to combat societal limitations of women and become leaders

**Ambition** to take initiative in their day-to-day lives

**Insightfulness** to reflect and plan their ways forward

**Open-mindedness** to venture outside their comfort zone

"America today is a girl destroying place. Everywhere girls are encouraged to sacrifice their true selves."

– Mary Pipher, author of *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls*
On a Mission

The mission of WriteGirl is to promote creativity and self-expression to empower girls, within a community of women writers.

According to Census Bureau reports, many WriteGirl teens live in communities where income is 38% to 46% below poverty level. Established in 2001 with just 30 teen girls and 30 volunteers, WriteGirl has grown into a nationally-recognized creative writing and mentoring organization serving more than 350 underserved teen girls annually, mainly from LA’s high-density, low-income neighborhoods.

WriteGirl envisions a world where girls in our program live, write, and speak boldly as they become inspiring, transformative leaders, driven to effect positive change in their communities.

WriteGirl provides a counterbalance to the enormous challenges teen girls face, including pregnancy, incarceration, and violence. We strive to provide every girl with a mentor who can help her ultimately discover her voice and true aspirations.

As we move forward, we know it’s critical for us to continue to ensure that 100% of our teen girls graduate from high school and enroll in college as they prepare for their bold futures. With your help, we can expand WriteGirl beyond Los Angeles, and see the WriteGirl methodology adapted by schools and community organizations throughout the nation and across the world.
“I love that there are people who are able to express themselves so beautifully. I love that I can be one of those people. WriteGirl is the place where I can learn to embrace that person in me.”

– a WriteGirl teen
“WriteGirl is heroic. We’re all here to write, to bring confidence to each other, and to empower each other. And I’ve never felt that before.”

— a WriteGirl teen

“WriteGirl has made me more confident as a writer and as a girl. I’m more outspoken now, and I have a desire to lead through writing, to be a role model.”

— a WriteGirl teen
In November 2013, WriteGirl was honored at the White House with the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award, the highest national honor awarded to exemplary out-of-school time programs from across the country. WriteGirl was recognized for using engagement in the arts and the humanities to increase academic achievement, graduation rates, and college enrollment.

— Jacqueline Uy, WriteGirl teen

Executive Director and Founder Keren Taylor and WriteGirl teen Jacqueline Uy personally received the award from first lady Michelle Obama.

National Arts & Humanities Youth Program Awards is an initiative of the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH). The President’s Committee partners with the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to administer the program.

“So when WriteGirl was finally called to the stage, I walked shakily to Mrs. Obama, embraced her in a tight hug, and gazed at her through watery eyes. She looked at me and said, ‘Keep writing.’

Through WriteGirl, I learned that if I set my mind to something, the outcome may not always be perfect, but it is something that I can be proud of. WriteGirl has taught me to embrace the uniqueness only I held. I’ve had a whole group of people supporting me, believing in me. I knew I couldn’t, and wouldn’t, let them down.”

— Jacqueline Uy, WriteGirl teen
100% of our graduating seniors have entered college, many on full or partial scholarships.

Additional Awards

2017 HALO Award, Carl and Roberta Deutsch Foundation, for WriteGirl and longtime volunteer Clare Sera
2017 Phi Beta Kappa Arts & Sciences City of Distinction Award, as an exemplary local organization in the arts
2016 Creative Economy innOVATION Grant Award, Ovation TV
2010 Humanitas Philanthropy Prize
2009 California Governor and First Lady’s Nonprofit Leader Medal for Service, Finalist

For a list of full awards, go to writegirl.org
**Why Writing?**

At WriteGirl, girls use writing as a transformative tool to discover and raise their voices.

Imagine **200 girls and women writing** song lyrics at the Walt Disney Concert Hall, penning headlines at the *Los Angeles Times* headquarters, or crafting poems in the gardens of The Huntington—heads down, pens scratching on paper. At the end of the day, a mentor encourages her shy mentee to get up on stage and share her work. The girl hesitates, but with reassurance from her mentor, she grabs her writing journal and takes charge of the microphone.

The fourteen-year-old’s words echo through the space, the microphone amplifying them a thousand-fold—words that are powerful, confident, and bold. **Through writing, she learns that her ideas matter.** They matter in her family, in her community, and in the world.

WriteGirl workshops are designed to be “literacy in disguise:” we strive to help our girls become focused, motivated, and confident enough to share their voice with an audience. Girls gain writing and communication skills that help them thrive in any career path.

WriteGirl teens grow **academically, personally, and professionally.**

“When I write, I feel free. It’s just the pen, the paper, and me and I feel in control.”

– a WriteGirl teen
Why Girls?

Young girls are incredibly vulnerable – in Los Angeles, in the U.S., and in the world. WriteGirl empowers young girls in a time when many of them feel like they have no power. For many of our girls, WriteGirl becomes a refuge free from anxieties and judgment, a safe space where they can feel empowered among a community of bright, caring women.

This year...

- 1 in 4 teen girls in the U.S. will be diagnosed with clinical depression, an eating disorder, or another mental/emotional disorder.
- 1 in 4 teen girls in California will become pregnant.
- 1 in 4 teens in the Los Angeles Unified School District will not graduate.
- 94% of incarcerated girls will have experienced one or more forms of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse.
- 1 in 6 teen girls in Los Angeles will attempt suicide.
- 92% girls in California will become pregnant.

WriteGirl Provides:

- Positive women role models
- A nurturing environment
- Caring mentors
- Leadership skills
- Career planning
- A safe place to write
- Publishing opportunities
- Internships
- College guidance
- Critical thinking skills
- Connections to resources
- Encouragement
- Individualized instruction

Our Girls Face:

- Pregnancy
- Incarceration
- Violence
- Probation
- Unstable home environments
- Clinical depression
- Suicide attempts
- Homelessness

WriteGirl
“These women have taught me that being a young female writer is an act of voice—loud, courageous, compassionate, and that my words shouldn’t be written on a page just to stay there. With this message of strength, identity, support, and voice, I was able to believe in myself enough to try to become the LA Youth Poet Laureate, knowing that I always have the loving arms of WriteGirl to fall back on.”

– Amanda Gorman, WriteGirl teen and 2014 Youth Poet Laureate.
Harvard University, Class of 2020
“Being surrounded by a crowd of successful women felt extremely empowering. Knowing that these are women out there actively striving to defy traditional stereotypes placed on them really inspires me to evoke change in my own community and how it views women.”

– a WriteGirl teen
WriteGirl Core Mentoring Program

**Monthly Writing Intensives**
Two hundred women and girls gather one Saturday a month at inspiring civic spaces for full-day creative writing workshops focusing on specific genres including poetry, screenwriting, journalism, songwriting, and more. Workshops include special guests, interactive activities, and one-on-one mentoring.

**Public Readings**
WriteGirl teens read their creative writing at public readings, book festivals, writing conferences and an end-of-season event for members, parents and guests. WriteGirl teens have been invited to read their work at events sponsored by Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti and The Shriver Report LIVE.

**Publications**
WriteGirl has published 13 award-winning anthologies that showcase the work of WriteGirl teens and mentors. For more information, see pages 26-27.

**Mentoring/membership**
WriteGirl matches and supports 70 mentee/mentor pairs each season, providing intensive guidance for weekly mentors through periodic mentoring roundtables and regular communication. WriteGirl mentors are writing professionals working in a wide range of careers, who complete in-depth screening and training in order to be highly effective mentors to our girls. For more information on WriteGirl volunteers, see pages 30-31.

**Bold Futures**
The WriteGirl Bold-Futures Program provides intensive, individualized college entrance guidance for participants and prepares girls for life beyond high school through internships, career awareness activities, and a growing alumnae support network. WriteGirl has maintained a 100% college enrollment rate for all Core Mentoring Program participants. For more information on the Bold Futures Program, see pages 20–21.
Lighting Up Los Angeles County

WriteGirl workshops happen everywhere, all year long, from large groups at museums to smaller gatherings at independent bookstores and coffee shops.
WriteGirl Partner Sites

WriteGirl monthly workshop locations for 200 women and girls (a list of highlights)

- The Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences
- Autry Museum of the American West
- The GRAMMY Museum
- The Huntington Library, Art Collection and Botanical Gardens
- Impact Hub/LA
- Maker City LA
- Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles
- National Center for the Preservation of Democracy
- The Shakespeare Center of Los Angeles
- Walt Disney Concert Hall
- WriteGirl Office

Field Trips:
- 72andSunny
- Claremont McKenna College
- Lions Gate Entertainment Corporation
- Los Angeles Times Headquarters
- Mount St. Mary’s University
- Occidental College
- Wilshire Ebell Theatre

In-Schools Program and Bold Ink Writers Sites:
- Afflerbaugh-Paige Camp School
- Azusa Community Day School
- Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile Hall
- Destiny Girls Academy Community Day School
- Glenn Rockey Camp School
- Road to Success Academy at Camp Scott and Camp Scudder
- Sepulveda Middle School
- Vista Middle School

Public Readings (3-4 annually)
- Skylight Books
- Chevalier’s Books
- Writers Guild Theater
The WriteGirl Method

WriteGirl has created a simple formula for success: use creative writing to build skills and confidence in a thoroughly positive atmosphere. For 15 years, this formula has been the cornerstone of WriteGirl’s success in guiding 100% of participants to college.

We have learned that helping girls find their voice and learn to express their ideas through creative writing leads to academic success. As their skills and confidence grow within the WriteGirl community, girls demonstrate improved grades, class participation and school involvement.

WriteGirl works because it combines a comprehensive long-term program of mentoring with a rigorous, yet fun and engaging creative writing curriculum, embedded in a supportive, non-competitive environment.

Twelve Tenets of WriteGirl Workshop Design

1. Give mentee/mentor pairs time to CONNECT
2. Use SENSES in each activity to engage youth and accommodate different kinds of learners
3. Limit “talking head” time to ensure teens are FOCUSED, ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS
4. Incorporate PHYSICAL MOVEMENT to fully engage participants
5. Encourage participants to INTERACT with and LEARN from each other
6. Establish specific learning GOALS with clear OBJECTIVES
7. Create activities that are FRESH, INNOVATIVE, INTERACTIVE, PROVOCATIVE, and PROPRIETARY
8. Feature special guest EXPERTISE
9. Create an environment that is DECORATIVE, LIVELY, and INSPIRING
10. Establish COMFORTABLE SPACE for shy teens to share their work
11. Create a “WOW” factor that ELEVATES and INSPIRES teens
12. Continue WriteGirl TRADITIONS to ensure long-term stability
Meet Courtney, 16, and her mentor Melanie Gasmen

With the help of her mentor and the WriteGirl community, Courtney has become more confident, improved her academic writing, and felt empowered to pursue her dreams of becoming an editor in publishing.

“After participating in WriteGirl, college seems more urgent to me than it did before.”

— Courtney

On Sunday afternoons, Courtney and Melanie, a marketing professional, meet at a spacious Peet’s Coffee. They talk about work/school, their favorite TV shows, and create characters based on the coffee shop customers.

Courtney was at first overwhelmed by WriteGirl workshops and intimidated by the thought of exploring different writing genres, but with Melanie’s support, WriteGirl workshops have become a place where she can thrive. “It’s a really friendly, inviting atmosphere that helped me come out of my shell.” Courtney said. “I used to think of writing as something you had to do on your own, but at WriteGirl, I’ve learned writing is something you can share with other people.”

Since being matched as a mentor/mentee pair by WriteGirl in January 2016, Melanie has noticed an increase in confidence within Courtney. “When I first started mentoring Courtney, she was a bit timid, somewhat quiet, and kept to herself,” Melanie said. “I’ve noticed her really open up to me—on her ideas for writing, her time at school, and her own hobbies.” Courtney has also sought out academic support from Melanie, who has helped her with research paper assignments.

Courtney says her academic writing has improved since she’s spent more time writing creatively.

“Her consistent practice of creative writing will really help her analyze different angles and approaches to problems, and will help her think outside of the box to solve these potential challenges,” Melanie said.

NBC4 reporter Beverly White, who spoke at a WriteGirl journalism workshop about her journey, inspired Courtney to think critically about defying negative stereotypes of women. “WriteGirl helps girls break those stereotypes about women, and shows us that we do have the power to follow our dreams,” Courtney said.

“Looking back at my teen years, I was a shy girl, like Courtney. Having a mentor who supports you and guides you is so important to shed those feelings of inferiority and criticism.”

— Melanie Gasmen
100% of our girls go to college!

The WriteGirl Bold Futures Program prepares girls for life beyond high school, weaving together a full slate of college and job preparedness to truly give young women the confidence, community, and tenacious communication skills they need to thrive in college, the workplace and in life.

Why did we start the Bold Futures program? Because one day, a bright, curious fourteen-year-old girl told us her guidance counselor said she was “Not College Material.”

“I’m considering futures I never thought of until today.”

— a WriteGirl teen

“Without WriteGirl, I would not be receiving a huge scholarship from an amazing college.”

— a WriteGirl alumna
Bold Futures Program

Bold Futures includes an intensive college preparation and attainment program, for both girls and their families. The 20-person all-volunteer Education Support team:

- leads 8 college guidance workshops annually
- develops individualized college plans
- nominates girls for prestigious scholarships
- assists girls and their families with complex FAFSA applications
- facilitates SAT preparation
- provides 24/7 availability during heaviest deadline season
- connects girls with access to a growing alumnae and volunteer support network
- offers career guidance, including fellowships, internships and job opportunities

Many WriteGirl mentees graduate college DEBT-FREE

Many of our girls are granted full and partial scholarships, including nationally-renowned Posse Foundation leadership scholarships and merit scholarships.

Parent and Family Communication

WriteGirl works intensely with parents and family members to help them understand the value of higher education, explain the college admissions process, and guide them through scholarship and financial aid application processes. Many girls are the first in their families to attend college.

Bold Futures Internship Program

Interns in the WriteGirl office learn accountability, time-management, teamwork, goal setting, event planning and implementation, self-care and work/life balance, resume writing and networking—skills they will need for a lifetime.

WriteGirl alumnae have graduated from colleges including:
WriteGirl Alumnae Go Global

WriteGirl has helped hundreds of girls write their ways to bold futures. Here are a few snapshots of some of their journeys:

- Ariel Edwards-Levy, a USC graduate, is a **political journalist** for the *Huffington Post* in Washington D.C.
- Lovely Umayam, a Reed College graduate, studied abroad in China, and is a **fellow at the U.S. Department of Energy**, focusing on nuclear nonproliferation.
- Glenda Garcia, a Dickinson College graduate, studied abroad in Venezuela and India, and was a **Fulbright Fellow** in Thailand.
- Fahiya Rashid, UC Irvine graduate, studied abroad in Jordan and Bangladesh, and is now in **grad school studying counterterrorism**.
- Janel Pineda, a Dickinson College student, is spending her junior year at the **University of Oxford**, after also studying abroad in Brazil and Chile.
- Jamilah Mena, a **Dartmouth College** graduate, studied abroad in China and Mexico, and is now a student at **UC Hastings College of the Law**.
- Jacqueline Uy is a sophomore at the **University of Pennsylvania**.
- Jennifer Gottesfeld, a UCLA graduate, studied abroad in Australia, has worked in Zambia, Malawi, and is now the **National Social Protection and Ebola Survivor Manager** for Partners in Health in Sierra Leone.
Letter from WriteGirl Alumna Janel Pineda

Janel Pineda, 19, grew up in South Gate, CA. She was mentored in WriteGirl by screenwriter Andrea King for three years. She is a Posse Scholar at Dickinson College, majoring in English with a minor in Creative Writing. Janel will be spending her junior year studying at the University of Oxford.

Before joining WriteGirl, I’d never been able to think of myself as a leader. The thought of reading my creative work aloud in front of an audience terrified me. I’d always loved writing, but the thought of becoming a published author seemed like a far-off dream.

Three years of WriteGirl programming later, I had been awarded a prestigious Posse Foundation leadership scholarship, invited to perform at a women’s empowerment luncheon hosted by Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, and published in three of WriteGirl’s award-winning anthologies.

In my early teen years, my self-esteem plummeted as a result of school pressures and my struggle to articulate myself. As a young Latina with little access to the kinds of resources necessary to fuel my growth, I was fortunate to find WriteGirl, which ultimately helped me see myself as a confident, capable leader. Upon joining in high school, WriteGirl became my refuge. Away from school, where the pressure for perfect grades overrode creative intentions, I could focus on expressing myself without restraint. WriteGirl validated my love of writing as a real, concrete skill and taught me to use writing not only as a tool for self-expression, but also for self-empowerment. In being surrounded by so many incredible professional women writers, I began to expand the limits I’d placed on my own potential.

When I stepped into a WriteGirl workshop, all the pressures I felt faded away. I would spring out of bed on a Saturday morning to escape my world of self-doubt and enter a world that encouraged me to be confident. My weekly mentor, Andrea, played an important role in drawing me back into the work that I love. An accomplished screenwriter and journalist, she focused on my strengths as both a writer and a person, and supported me immensely throughout the college applications process.

In college, I’ve applied the skills and values I gained at WriteGirl to pursue leadership in a poetry performance collective, speak out about causes I care about, and seek opportunities abroad studying social inequality in Brazil and environmental issues in Chile. I will be spending my junior year at the University of Oxford, funded by a prestigious Gilman scholarship.

Without WriteGirl, I wouldn’t have had the bravery or confidence to pursue the incredible opportunities I’ve had access to in college. WriteGirl empowered me in a time when I thought I had no power, and that has allowed me to succeed in ways I never would have thought imaginable.
Meet WriteGirl Alumna Jamilah Mena

Jamilah grew up in South Los Angeles and was mentored by poet Trina Gaynon for 3 and a half years.

“I really am a product of mentorship. Having those role models and having people telling me I could succeed has been very pivotal in my career.”

As the daughter of immigrants, Jamilah is not only the first in her family to attend college, she is, as her father told us, the “first in her tribe” to attend. Jamilah says she wouldn’t have considered applying to Dartmouth if it weren’t for her WriteGirl mentor: “Trina motivated me to believe college was possible.” During Jamilah’s weekly mentoring sessions, she received feedback from her mentor on the novel she was writing about a young Afro-Latina teen girl who travels to Montana.

Jamilah vividly remembers a WriteGirl songwriting workshop in which a professional songwriter made her lyrics come alive: “It really impacted me because it allowed me to visualize what my words could look like.”

Jamilah says that WriteGirl helped her gain a basic foundation for writing that has benefited her throughout school and in her career.

WriteGirl instilled in her a lifelong value for women’s empowerment: “It’s WriteGirl for a reason,” Jamilah says, “It really helped build confidence in me. The program recognizes that women are told to be seen and not heard. Reading work aloud helped me get out of my shell.”

Excerpts from her novel and other short fiction are published in three award-winning WriteGirl anthologies.

Jamilah graduated from Dartmouth College, with a major in geography and a minor in Mandarin, and she studied abroad in Mexico and China. In Mexico, Jamilah taught English classes, and in China, she helped increase environmental awareness while interning at the Jane Goodall Institute. Upon graduation, she returned to China to work as an English teacher through Education First. She is currently a student at the UC Hastings College of the Law, and works at Nixon Peabody, a global law firm. She will be back in China in the fall for her third semester of law school.
"Through WriteGirl I have watched my daughter evolve into an extremely confident young woman.

The WriteGirl experience has infused her with the belief she can do anything. I SO thank Ms. Keren and her vision; Ms. Allison and her energy, she was always there to share advice; last but not least, a person I called in Woodland Hills one Sunday morning to cancel the mentor session because of the torrential rain. She responded, “I won’t let the rain stop what must be done.” 12 o’clock she was in our meeting spot in Inglewood. Sometimes she would show with a cold. She would put her personal plans on hold, until after my daughter goes to college. This person is Mrs. Trina Gaynon and her husband Mr. David. Words cannot describe my gratitude.

Thanks to the effort of so many, my daughter was able to say no to Scripps College, USC, UCLA (Alumni Scholar), Cal (Chancellor Scholar), and Cornell, among others. Jamilah has decided to spend her next four years at Dartmouth College.

From the jungles of Honduras where I grew up walking barefoot with torn garments, to sitting here thanking you for helping my daughter achieve a first, not only in her family but in a tribe called Garifunas. I am the luckiest of them all. Only in America! I so, so thank you!!"

—Jaime Mena, Parent of Jamilah Mena
Since 2001, WriteGirl Publications has produced over 20 multi-award winning anthologies that showcase the bold voices and imaginative insights of women and girls. Unique in both design and content, WriteGirl anthologies present a wide range of personal stories, poetry, essays, scenes and lyrics. WriteGirl inspires readers to find their own creative voices through innovative writing experiments and writing tips from both teens and their mentors. Edited by a team of volunteers, WriteGirl anthologies are a concrete testament to each girl’s participation in the program.

WriteGirl’s critically-acclaimed anthologies have received 81 national and international book awards and recognition by prominent writers, including best-selling author Meg Cabot, who wrote the foreword to the WriteGirl anthology No Character Limit.

“In this book, what these girls have to say makes us laugh at times, and other times, makes us want to cry. But their words always make us believe. These girls understand the power of words. I believe these girls will go on to use that power wisely and well for years to come.”

– Meg Cabot, author of The Princess Diaries

“Captivating and emotional from the first entry to the last... The level of writing by both the young adult and adult contributors is astounding... This collection merits placement in school and public libraries alike and should be promoted to girls everywhere.”

– School Library Journal
Nights Like This
by Isabelle Lara, age 16

It's nights like this where the house is sound asleep. Everything is silent except for the sound of a pen writing within the lines of a journal.

It's nights like this where questions run freely. You wonder who you are, who do you love at the end of every ordinary day?

It's nights like this where you look deeper into the eyes of the ones you love. The 2 a.m. conversations evoking emotionally packed words and crawling into the ears of your beloved.

It's nights like this when the whispering wind sings a lullaby of tranquility.

Excerpted from Emotional Map of Los Angeles, winner of 10 book awards

81 Book Awards for WriteGirl Publications


2015 Winner, National Indie Excellence Awards, Anthology: Emotional Map of Los Angeles

2015 Finalist, Next Generation Indie Book Awards, Anthology: Emotional Map of Los Angeles

2015 Winner, Beverly Hills Book Awards, Anthology: Emotional Map of Los Angeles

2015 Runner Up, Great Southwest Book Festival, Young Adult: Emotional Map of Los Angeles

2015 Honorable Mention, Los Angeles Book Festival, Young Adult: Emotional Map of Los Angeles

2015 Finalist, Foreword Reviews’ INDIEFAB Book of the Year Award, Anthologies: Emotional Map of Los Angeles

2015 Finalist, USA Best Book Awards: Young Adult: Non-Fiction: Emotional Map of Los Angeles

2015 Runner Up, Southern California Book Festival, Compilations/Athologies, Emotional Map of Los Angeles

2015 Winner, Pinnacle Book Achievement Award, Young Adult: Emotional Map of Los Angeles

2014 Honorable Mention, Hollywood Book Festival: You Are Here

2014 Finalist, USA Best Book Awards, Compilations/Athologies: You Are Here

2014 Winner, The Great Midwest Book Festival, Compilations/Athologies: You Are Here

2014 Winner, International Book Awards, Young Adult: You Are Here

2014 Winner, Beverly Hills Book Awards, Anthologies: You Are Here

2014 Runner Up, Great Northeast Book Festival: You Are Here

For the full list of WriteGirl book awards, go to:

www.writegirl.org/publications
School-based Programs

WriteGirl has embarked on fee-for-service partnerships that allow the organization to reach some of the community’s most critically at-risk youth. The youth that we serve often start out unenthusiastic—and more often fearful—of writing. Our volunteer teams develop lesson plans that can light up even the most reluctant writers, engaging them in writing topics that speak to their interests, experiences, and ambitions. After a year of programming, mentors, teachers, administrators, and parents all acknowledge dramatic improvements in teens’ ability to write, think critically, set goals and speak up. The WriteGirl In-Schools & Bold Ink Writers programs offer:

- 12 to 25 weeks of progressive, standards-based arts curriculum
- workshops facilitated by trained writing mentors
- a printed anthology
- a culminating event to share their work with friends, family and the community

Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE)

In 2004, following an invitation from the LACOE, WriteGirl took up the challenge to develop a volunteer-led weekly In-Schools program that would go on to inspire pregnant, parenting, incarcerated and other critically at-risk teen girls to express their ideas and emotions on paper. WriteGirl’s In-Schools Program currently serves Azusa Community Day School, Destiny Girls Academy, and Road to Success Academy, serving Camp Scott and Camp Scudder, adjacent juvenile detention facilities in Santa Clarita.

An in-schools success story

Recently a teen girl at Camp Scott made such a strong connection with a WriteGirl mentor that she joined the WriteGirl Core Mentoring Program upon her release. Six months later, she was accepted to college.

AIYN

WriteGirl is a founding member of the newly formed Arts for Incarcerated Youth Network, which connects L.A. area organizations providing arts programming for incarcerated youth. In the summer of 2015, we recruited and trained men writers for the first time to be mentors in what we call the Bold Ink Writers program. WriteGirl is committed to partnering with AIYN to transform the juvenile justice system via trauma-informed educational approaches and strategic arts programming.

YPI

In September of 2015, WriteGirl and the Bold Ink Writers program began a partnership with Youth Policy Institute to provide co-ed after school creative writing workshops at Vista and Sepulveda: two Los Angeles Unified School District middle schools.
“Writing makes me feel like I can escape bad things that have happened, or (say) things that I am afraid to say out loud.”
- Bold Ink Writers teen boy

“The very heart of what we’re doing is giving them a blank page to work out and process all their uncertainty.”
- Kerry McPherson, Bold Ink Writers Program Associate

“Because of this program, now I feel like I can write myself out of anything.”
- a teen girl

“We still have a lot of work to do. There are far more young people who aren’t connected to WriteGirl [and] AIYN, who don’t have positive role models. There’s a lot that needs to be done to dismantle the system of juvenile justice.”
- Alex Johnson, Executive Director of the Children’s Defense Fund-California

To learn more about the Bold Ink Writers Program, visit: www.writegirl.org/bold-ink-writers
Volunteer Spotlight

Reparata Mazzola, an accomplished screenwriter, producer, and editor, has mentored four girls individually over her 10 years of volunteering with WriteGirl. Pictured here with Quran, one of her mentees.

Meet Our Volunteers

WriteGirl Volunteers:

- Work one-on-one with teens
- Plan and lead group workshops
- Develop curriculum and writing experiments
- Reach out to teens’ parents through our Mentee Communications team
- Meet with their mentees weekly at places convenient to their mentees
- Assist with fundraising, public relations, event planning and more
- Guide girls to college through the WriteGirl Education Support team
- Review and edit submissions for WriteGirl anthologies
- Help WriteGirl develop partnerships within the community

Undeniable Commitment

150 volunteers help WriteGirl annually

Volunteers collectively donate 2,000 hours monthly

WriteGirl maintains a target ratio of 3:1 mentees per mentor at workshops

Dozens of volunteers have been helping for more than a decade

Many volunteers continue relationships with mentees through college and beyond

150 volunteers help WriteGirl annually

Volunteers collectively donate 2,000 hours monthly

WriteGirl maintains a target ratio of 3:1 mentees per mentor at workshops

Dozens of volunteers have been helping for more than a decade

Many volunteers continue relationships with mentees through college and beyond
Accomplished Industry Professionals
Each year, WriteGirl enrolls diverse journalists, novelists, poets, editors, TV and film writers, songwriters, marketing professionals, bloggers, business writers and teachers. Volunteers come to WriteGirl through a variety of pathways: professional writing organizations, such as the Writers Guild of America; graduate writing programs; book festivals; special events and referrals.

Intensive Selection and Training
WriteGirl provides comprehensive training to all volunteers, preparing them to navigate the complicated and often challenging life circumstances that many teen girls face: poverty, mental health concerns, unstable home situations, neighborhood or family violence. We provide support for volunteers, including: quarterly mentor roundtables, an annual volunteer retreat, regular surveys, and an open-door policy for checking in on concerns.

“I came to WriteGirl to help, but it has helped me more than I ever expected.”
– Jennifer, a WriteGirl mentor

To apply to become a WriteGirl volunteer, visit:
www.writegirl.org/join-us

150 Volunteers Support WriteGirl Annually.
The WriteGirl Journey

2001
WriteGirl began with just 30 teen girls and 30 women writers

2004
WriteGirl expanded to work with students in LACOE Community Day Schools, beginning with the Destiny Girls Academy in South Los Angeles

2006
WriteGirl moved into an office

2010
WriteGirl was honored by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and first lady Maria Shriver with the 2010-11 California Nonprofit of the Year Award and Medal for Service

2013
WriteGirl was recognized by first lady Michelle Obama at the White House with the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Awards, for its success inspiring thousands of at-risk teens enroll in college

2014
WriteGirl founder and Exec. Dir. Keren Taylor was named a CNN Hero for her decades of work inspiring girls

2016
WriteGirl expanded to serve co-ed groups and teen boys for the first time under the name Bold Ink Writers

2016
WriteGirl won its 81st book award! (WriteGirl has published 22 anthologies of creative writing by teens!)
In June 2016, California State Senator Holly J. Mitchell attended the WriteGirl 15th Anniversary Celebration and read a highly personal piece, “Letter to My Fifteen-Year-Old Self,” that she wrote just for this occasion. Her letter was well-received by WriteGirl teens, parents, and guests at the Writers Guild Theater.

Excerpt from Senator Holly J. Mitchell’s letter:

...Your love of writing (and gift of gab) will serve you well throughout your career, so don’t stop. Keep writing! You will have the privilege to write laws that govern the most populous state in the nation...

“The opportunity to gain confidence, learn poise, and find your voice is what WriteGirl does for young women. Those are all critically important, life-long qualities.”

- California State Senator Holly J. Mitchell
Star Power

Lights, Camera, WriteGirl!

Once a year, we roll out a red carpet for our annual evening benefit, which features performances by acclaimed actors. The day begins with a Character & Dialogue Workshop at the Linwood Dunn Theater in Hollywood, where mentors and acclaimed screenwriters guide teen girls to craft original characters and scenes. Celebrated actors bring the girls’ writing to life on stage, and a special guest panel of television writers and screenwriters discuss the scene after each performance.

Guest actors have included:
- Angela Bassett (What’s Love Got to Do with It?)
- Wendi McLendon-Covey (The Goldbergs)
- Wayne Brady (Whose Line Is It Anyway?)
- Lorraine Toussaint (Orange is the New Black)
- Keiko Agena (Gilmore Girls)
- Aasha Davis (Friday Night Lights)
- Trevor St. John (Containment)
- Dana Delany (Desperate Housewives)

Guest screenwriters have included:
- Jill Weinberger (Chicago Fire)
- Liz Kruger (Necessary Roughness)
- Clare Sera (Blended)
- Jane Anderson (Olive Kitteridge)
- Josann McGibbon (Descendants)
- Jessica Goldstein (Telenovela)
- Maiya Williams (Haunted Hathaways)
- Rachel Feldman (Beyond the Break)

To learn more about Lights, Camera, WriteGirl!, visit: www.writegirl.org/lights-camera-writegirl
Bold Ink Awards

The WriteGirl Bold Ink Awards celebrate creativity and landmark achievements by women writers in various creative writing genres. This benefit supports the creative writing programs of WriteGirl. The Bold Ink Awards were created to honor the women writers who inspire our girls, our mentors, and audiences around the world. Their achievements mark the degree of excellence we all strive for.

Bold Ink honorees have included:

Melissa Rosenberg (Screenwriter/Producer, Twilight series, Dexter)
Lisa Cholodenko (Screenwriter/Director, The Kids Are All Right)
Sarah Silverman (Writer/Actress/Producer, The Sarah Silverman Program)
Aline Brosh-McKenna (Screenwriter, The Devil Wears Prada)
Gina Prince-Bythewood (Screenwriter/Director, The Secret Life of Bees)
Margaret Stohl and Kami Garcia (Authors of the Beautiful Creatures series)
Nancy Meyers (Screenwriter, The Parent Trap)
Diablo Cody (Screenwriter, Juno)
Janet Fitch (Author, White Oleander)
Robin Swicord (Writer, The Curious Case of Benjamin Button)
Jill Soloway (Producer, Six Feet Under)

To learn more about the Bold Ink Awards, visit: www.boldinkawards.com
89.3 KPCC: “Lights, Camera, WriteGirl! event brings stories of at-risk teens to life on stage.”
Interview with Keren and mentor Josann McGibbon about upcoming Lights, Camera, WriteGirl!

NBC Latino: “After-school programs that change Latino students’ lives receive national award”
News article about WriteGirl as a recipient of the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award

CNN: “Helping teen girls get on the ‘write’ path”
Feature announcing WriteGirl Executive Director Keren Taylor as a CNN Hero

Positively Filipino: “Doing the Write Thing”
Written by WriteGirl mentee Jacqueline Uy, age 16, about representing WriteGirl when she accepted the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award from Michelle Obama

Edutopia: “How Creative WritingBoosts Students Academically”
WriteGirl featured for helping girls’ academics; Included personal essays from three mentees

Article about reintegration programs for incarcerated youth, featuring our program at RTS

KCET: “Mentoring the Next Generation of L.A. Writers”
An article featuring local organizations mentoring young writers, including WriteGirl

Women You Should Know: “Buy a Poem, Help a Girl”
National and International Media Coverage
An article featuring a WriteGirl mentee who wrote a poem for Women’s Equality Day

Departures Magazine: “Departures’ Hosts the First Annual Philanthropy Honors Gala”
Departures Magazine Honors WriteGirl at Philanthropy Honors in New York
WriteGirl Leadership

Key Staff Leadership:

Executive Director: Keren Taylor
Associate Director: Allison Deegan
Curriculum Director/Workshops: Kirsten Giles
Communications Manager: Katie Geyer
Development Associate: Cindy Collins
Bold Futures Associate: Leslie Awender
Bold Ink Writers & In-School Program Associates:
Hazel Rose and Sharone Williams

WriteGirl Core Board

While the board of Community Partners serves as the legal board of WriteGirl, the information below reflects the WriteGirl board. The WriteGirl board meets seven times per year, and 100% of Core Board members give financially to WriteGirl, as well as raise funds.

John Marshall
Allison Deegan
Marc Hernandez
Diane Manuel
Keren Taylor
Sydney Zhang

WriteGirl Advisory Board

Barbara Abercrombie
Shelley Berger
Susie Coelho
Mark E. Cull
Paul Cummins
Maria del Pilar O’Cadiz
Kai EL’ Zabar
Elizabeth Forsythe Hailey
Mollie Gregory
Caroline Heldman
Diana Means
Vickie Nam
Nandita Patel
Joy Picus
Debbie Reber
Aleida Rodriguez
Diane Siegel
Key WriteGirl Financial Supporters:

ASCAP Foundation Irving Caesar Fund
Barbara Abercrombie
Adams Family Foundation
Stephanie Allen
Amazon Literary Partnership
Jane Anderson and Tess Ayers
Annenberg Foundation
Arts for Incarcerated Youth Network
ASD Aims for a Better World
AT&T
Austin & Lauren Fite Foundation
Bank of America
Bouchercon World Mystery Convention 2014
Bouchercon Women Mystery Writers
Shelley Berger
Maisha Brown
California Community Foundation
California Foundation for Stronger Communities
Paquita Calva
Capital Group
Capital Group Companies Charitable Foundation
Carolina Herrera HTD
Lucy Chen
Chong Entertainment, LLC
Chromatic
City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs
Conrad N. Hilton Foundation
Creative Arts Agency
Jennifer Crittenden
Cynthia Comsky
Courtside Residents’ Association
Danielle LaPorte, Inc.
Allison Deegan
Departures Magazine
Dermalogica
Susan Dickes
Brad Dobson, Path to Profit
Dream Team Directors
Dwight Stuart Youth Fund
Eagle Rock Yacht Club
Ebell Rest Cottage Association
EILEEN FISHER, Inc.
Elizabeth George Foundation
First Giving
Fresco Community Foundation
Stephanie Fein
Jennah Ferrer-Foronda
Cameron Foster-Keddie
Fox Group
Frog Crossing Foundation
FX Networks
Gap Inc.
Wade Gentz
Harry Gerst
Terry Gilman, Mysterious Galaxy Bookstore
Global Girls Rising
Good News Foundation
Goodwill Community Enrichment Center
Good Works Foundation
Toni Graphia
Sheila Grether
Greystone Investment Associates II
Pamela Guest
HBK Investments, LLC
Kita Hutchins
Herb Alpert Foundation
Jennifer Hoppe
Rita Hsiao
Hyde Family Foundation
Margaret Hyde
Erica Jamieson
Jinhee and Danny Kim
Journey of the Heart Poetry Project
Joyce Green Family Foundation
Barbara Katz
KCON
Devon Kelly
Kind LLC
Rebecca Kirsch
Kroger
Elise Kroll
Elizabeth Kruger
Cindy Lanza
Lauren Levine
Tembi Locke
Barbara Lodge
Los Angeles County Arts Commission
Los Angeles County Department of Cultural Affairs
Los Angeles County Office of Education
Los Angeles County Probation Department
Lykke Li
Christina Lynch
Diane Manuel
Corinne Marrinan
Key WriteGirl Financial Supporters:

John Marshall
Marlborough School Girls on Film Club
Josann McGibbon
Wendi McLendon-Covey
Carol Meadors
Diana Means
Elizabeth Meriwether
Nancy Meyers
Diana Milich
Lauren Miller
Lynne Miller
Thomas Miller
Terri Miller
Olivia Mitchell
Mount Saint Mary’s University
Nancy Murphy
Lex Nakashima
National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award
Neptunian Woman’s Club of Manhattan Beach
North Hollywood Church of Religion
Oder Family Foundation
Oshkosh Community Foundation
Pasadena Arts Council
Nandita Patel
NikkieAma Onyeagocha-Okuwa
Shivangi Patel
Petersen Automotive Museum
Joy Picus
Amy Lynn Pot
Pulse Music Group
Marni Rader
Ilene Resnick and Daniel Weiss
Resnick Foundation
Susan Revell
Alejandra Reynoso
Minette Riordan, Path to Profit
Lindy Robbins
Seth Rogen
Roll Giving
Rosco Production Company
Melissa Rosenberg and Lev L. Shapiro
Andrea Rosenblum
Roth Family Foundation
RR Donnelley
Ruby Family Foundation
RSUI Group, Inc.
Helenna Santos, Ms. In the Biz, LLC
Satterberg Foundation
Clare Sera
SheBrand Inc
Shezilla
Shift in Gravity play
Sisters-In-Crime
Bonnie Sloane
Francesca Smithwick-Driver
Southern California Edison
Skylight Books
Pamela Snowden
Soroptimist International of Alhambra-San Gabriel-San Marino
Larry Spence
State Farm
TEDxPasadenaWomen
The Ahmanson Foundation
The ASCAP Foundation Irving Caesar Fund
The Astoria Bookshop
The Capital Group Companies Charitable Foundation
The Eisner Foundation
The Good Works Foundation
The Green Foundation
The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation
The SAGE Program
The Simon and Diana Raab Foundation
Lisa Trahan
Nadria Tucker
Marie Unini
Union Bank
Unique USA
United Latino Fund
United Methodist Church
United Way
Andrade Vibiana
Violets’ Giving Circle, Women’s Foundation of California
Wallflower Design LLC
Walt Disney Company
Walt Disney Company Ears to You Fund
Sophia Welch, John F. Welch Jr. Foundation
Weingart Foundation
Westchester Buddhist Center
Women Helping Youth
Stefanie Jane Woodburn
Youth Policy Institute/Charter Schools Inc.
Sydney Zhang
Audited Financials
Fiscal Year 2015

Statement of Activities

Revenues and Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributions—Individual</td>
<td>$57,923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions—Board</td>
<td>$4,660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporation grants</td>
<td>$46,425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation grants</td>
<td>$263,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government revenue</td>
<td>$98,026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special events</td>
<td>$18,315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-kind revenue</td>
<td>$2,073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other income</td>
<td>$2,201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total revenue and support</strong></td>
<td><strong>$496,175</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program services</td>
<td>$450,578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project administration fees</td>
<td>$44,630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$495,208</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FY 2015 Breakdown of Revenue Sources:

- 53% Foundation
- 16% Corporation
- 20% Government
- 1% Other
- 9% Individuals

FY 2015 Breakdown of Expenses by Categories:

- 85% Program
- 15% Administrative
Projected Organization Budget by Program 2016-2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization Expenses</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Writing Intensives (8 full day workshops)</td>
<td>$116,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Readings (6 events including season-end gala for 400 invited guests)</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publications (2,000 copies of Core Mentoring Program anthology; newsletter; other)</td>
<td>$58,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring/Membership (Case management for mentoring pairs; mentor training)</td>
<td>$80,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bold Futures (Outreach Initiatives; college preparation, internships, alumni network, website)</td>
<td>$101,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bold Ink Writers and In-Schools Program</td>
<td>$133,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Development &amp; Training</td>
<td>$13,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Organization Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$542,000</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve (for start of 2017-2018 Season)</td>
<td>$75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Budget for 2016–2017 Season</strong></td>
<td><strong>$617,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“My company’s philanthropic mission has been to support youth and the written word. It’s been exciting to see the growth and impact of WriteGirl since the beginning. I have been and will continue to be a financial supporter of WriteGirl personally and professionally.”

- John Marshall, WriteGirl Board Chair
In-Kind Donors

A growing number of local, regional and national entities provide journals, venue space, printing, food, beverages, and season-end gifts for WriteGirl teens and volunteers. WriteGirl also receives financial support from a variety of foundations, government entities and corporations in varying amounts.


**Printing and Copy Services:** Chromatic Inc., FedEx Office, RR Donnelley
Writing Activity

It’s a WriteGirl tradition that everyone writes with us at our events. We want you to experience the WriteGirl magic and try your hand at one of our signature writing activities!

What is one of the oldest things you own and why do you still have it?

Now it’s your turn!
Who supported you when you were a teen?

We invite you to make an investment in brilliant futures for teenage girls.
WriteGirl
WriteGirl is a project of nonprofit organization Community Partners

To Donate
BY MAIL: Make checks payable to “Community Partners FBO (For the Benefit Of) WriteGirl.”
Mail donations to:
WriteGirl, 1330 Factory Place, #F104
Los Angeles, CA 90013

BY PHONE: call us at (213) 253-2655
to make a donation over the phone.

ONLINE: Visit www.writegirl.org/donate

Phone: (213) 253-2655
Fax: (213) 253-2618
Email: info@writegirl.org
Twitter/Instagram: @writegirlla
Facebook: Facebook.com/WriteGirlOrganization

www.writegirl.org
Never underestimate the power of a girl and her pen!

writegirl
www.writegirl.org

BOLD INK WRITERS