

WRITERSFEST.BC.CA

VANCOUVER
WRITERS
FEST

2025 Annual Report





Our Year-Round Numbers

34,975

Individual Tickets

199

Authors

130

Events

6,500+

Books Sold

14,000+

Subscribers

The Vancouver Writers Fest envisions a world in which the transformative power of books and ideas creates the foundation of an empathetic, inspired, and just society. We connect people to exceptional books, ideas, and dialogue through year-round programming that ignites a passion for words and the world around us. Our flagship Festival is one of the largest and most prestigious in North America; every October, we bring acclaimed, established, and emerging writers from across Canada and the world to Granville Island, where they connect with tens of thousands of enthusiastic readers.

The Vancouver Writers Fest carries out our work on unceded xʷməθkʷəy̍əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) territory.



Our Year in Review

There was a moment on stage at the 38th annual Vancouver Writers Festival when a half-dozen poets from across Canada shared reflections and musings on what inspired and propelled them to write in these tumultuous times. “The sheer act of putting words to human strength and vulnerability, and to its beauty, is an act of resistance, and an act of joy,” said one. “This is no time for throwing in the towel. Grab a pen and be both the court jesters and the leaders of the rebellion!”

This exchange struck us as a beautiful example of what the Vancouver Writers Fest is often known for: introducing audiences to world-expanding conversations that both entertain and inspire. In 2025, we provided several opportunities for this. We launched a new bi-weekly series on Granville Island, **Books & Ideas**, which aimed to bring the magic and intimacy of Festival week to our year-round programming.

Our 2025 year saw growth in the number of attendees across our Special Events, the October Festival, our Writers in the Classroom series, and our Incite events, resulting in a record number of books being sold. This is great news for the Canadian publishing sector, and for the arts in Vancouver!

As an organization, this year we began looking toward the future and our upcoming 40th anniversary in 2027. We used this momentous opportunity to launch strategic planning sessions with our dedicated Board of Directors, resulting in a new plan that will carry us into 2026 and beyond. As we commit to growing and engaging our community, and bringing our vision to life by connecting more people to books and ideas, we will aim to diversify our funding sources and strengthen our operational capacity.

Together with an exceptional team of year-round staff, this past year of successes has buoyed our enthusiasm for the work ahead.

We are looking forward to connecting with patrons, volunteers, authors, publishers, and sponsors to help the Vancouver Writers Fest realize our goals for the coming year. We look forward to deepening our impact, engagement, and the quality of conversations and events we share on our stages. Thank you for being attentive and celebratory of our work and our mission.



Leslie Hurtig
Leslie Hurtig
Artistic Director



Jenn Milley
Jenn Milley
Managing Director



Alma Lee
1940 – 2025



Hal Wake
1952 – 2026

In Memoriam: Alma Lee & Hal Wake

Though the past year has brought much success and celebration, it has also been a time of profound loss for the Vancouver Writers Fest. We grieved the passing of both of our former Artistic Directors: co-founder Alma Lee passed away on March 28, 2025, and Hal Wake passed away on January 7, 2026. Alma and Hal's contributions to the status of the Festival today are immeasurable. After lobbying for many years to bring the inaugural Festival to life in 1988, Alma continued to shepherd it for 17 years, growing it into an internationally recognized and lauded event. Hal took on the reins in 2006, expanding our programming with his keen eye for writers who'd go on to be the next big name in literature. After Leslie Hurtig took on the role in 2018, Alma and Hal continued to be guiding lights to the organization. Their absence is deeply felt, and their enduring impact inspires us.

A Message from Our Board

2025 was a year of thought-provoking programming and organizational reflection for the Vancouver Writers Fest. From the compelling author presentations at the Oh! Canada Festival opening event, to the development of a new strategic plan, the year brought many opportunities for the VWF to reaffirm its vision and renew its mission—to connect people to exceptional books, ideas and dialogue through year-round programming that ignites a passion for words and the world around us.

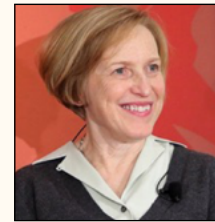
As ever, VWF audiences participated in relevant and engaging conversations. The flagship Festival saw more than 18,000 in-person attendees, with several thousand more youth attending via livestream from classrooms around the province. Special events with featured authors sold out in record time, including R. F. Kuang, Arundhati Roy, and the inimitable Margaret Atwood. Outreach programming, such as our free Incite events at the VPL Central Branch,

Writers in the Classroom visits, and the My Roots workshop, were likewise hot tickets. VWF's new series, Books & Ideas, highlighted various literary genres—journalism, short stories, poetry, and more—and projected the energy of the Festival year-round. For all this, the Board of Directors wishes to recognize the tremendous efforts of the VWF staff in executing such an ambitious year of programming, and to acknowledge the many artistic and financial successes of 2025.

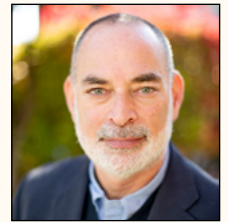
As the VWF prepares for its landmark 40th festival in 2027, the Board and staff worked together to articulate a vision for the next 40 years. Strategy 2030 lays the groundwork for VWF's future, setting the stage to connect even more people to the power of storytelling, and realize its vision of a more empathetic, inspired and just society. It identifies the strength of the VWF's relationships with authors, patrons, donors, and partners, and how the organization might extend its welcome to an ever-broader community. As a

Board, we are proud to support this strategic plan and look forward to sharing more about it in the coming months.

As the readers of this annual report, you are essential partners of the Vancouver Writers Fest. On behalf of the Board, we offer our thanks to you: donors, sponsors, patrons, members, volunteers, and authors. It is because of you that 2025 was such a success, and the future looks bright. We hope to see you at a Writers Fest event very soon!



Jillian Stirk
Jillian Stirk
Co-Chair



Daniel M. Getz
Daniel Getz
Co-Chair

Our 2025 Board of Directors

Daniel Getz
Co-Chair

Avalon Bourne
Vice Chair

Sanika Bhurke

Julie Iannacone

Jillian Stirk
Co-Chair

Benita Loughlin
Treasurer

Anna Panzo

Steve Tornes

Sonia Wong

Pat Cumming
Secretary

**Welcome to our newest
Board Members!**

Lucille Pacey

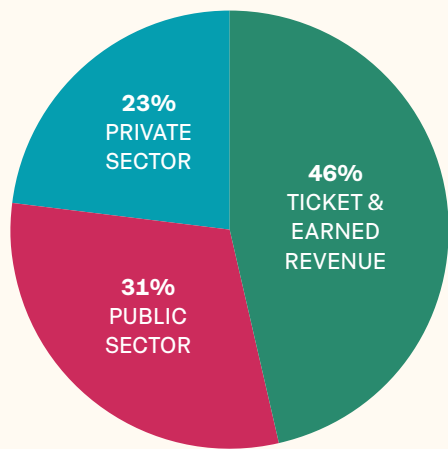
Andrew Forshner

Our 2025 Finances

Despite an overall (sector-wide) decrease in public funding in 2025, VWF closed out the financial year in a very favourable position, thanks to a well-attended Festival, your generous donations, and some sold out Special Events. Thank you so much for your support, and for working with us to advocate for more and sustained arts funding in an increasingly challenging economic climate. The Vancouver Writers Fest is well-positioned for 2026, and we are excited to be preparing for our 40th year, and beyond.

Total 2025 Income*
\$1,794,508

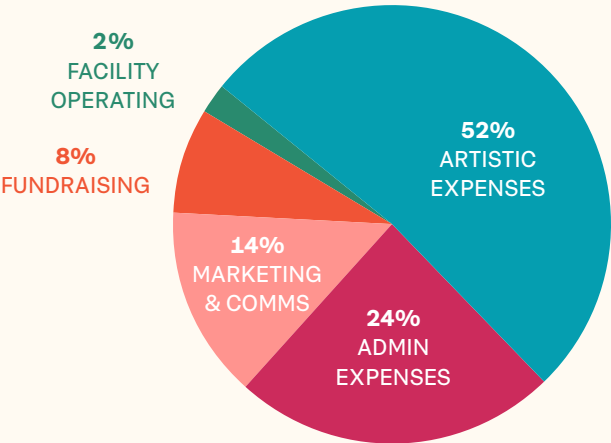
Ticket & Earned Revenue	\$834,358
Public Sector Revenue	\$550,626
Private Sector Revenue	\$409,524



*These figures are provisional. Externally audited financial statements will be available in May 2026.

Total 2025 Expenses*
\$1,711,032

Artistic Expenses	\$891,737
Administrative Expenses	\$403,045
Marketing & Communications	\$241,756
Fundraising Expenses	\$137,817
Facility Operating Expense (Box Office)	\$36,677



Net 2025 Profit*
\$83,475

The Festival

Every October, Granville Island comes alive with the energy of engaged readers, visiting and local authors, and exemplary new books across every genre at our flagship Festival. The 2025 Festival offered 87 events over one week of transformative conversations and literary wonder; it also saw bountiful book sales, a record number of attendees, and nearly a third of the lineup sold out.

We were honoured to welcome Canisia Lubrin—the award-winning Canadian author of *Code Noir* and *The World After Rain*—as our annual Guest Curator, alongside an awe-inspiring lineup of 146 authors, including Mona Awad, Timothy Snyder, Miriam Toews, Kate Beaton, Chloe Dalton, Kiran Desai, Saeed Teebi, Cory Doctorow, Madeleine Thien, Emma Donoghue, Niigaan Sinclair, Dennis Lee, Silvia Moreno-Garcia, Susan Orlean, and many more.



**From our 2025 Guest
Curator, Canisia Lubrin**



What I'm calling Cycling and Renewal for the Earth is a willingness to risk the book, the gesture, and the voice as important tools for transformational thinking about the world. Such co-visioning engages writers, thinkers, students, and artists—collaborators who come to the page from their different vantage points and ultimately reveal little understood things about the same world, from the personal to the social to the political and the ecologic. In that way our particularly unstable present world—with all that moves us to awe and that infuriates—is given refreshing perspective. Here we gain chances to more clearly see forward. Naturally, through the power of transformational literature and the writers who dare to take up courageous questions, I hope Festival guests will leave these events with a renewed sense of the vast range and possibility of our-very-selves.



Festival Snapshot

87 Festival Events
in 2025

146 Authors &
Participants

26,191

Individual
Tickets

NEW RECORD!

5,984

Books Sold

13,283

K-12 Students Inspired:

5,122

In-Person

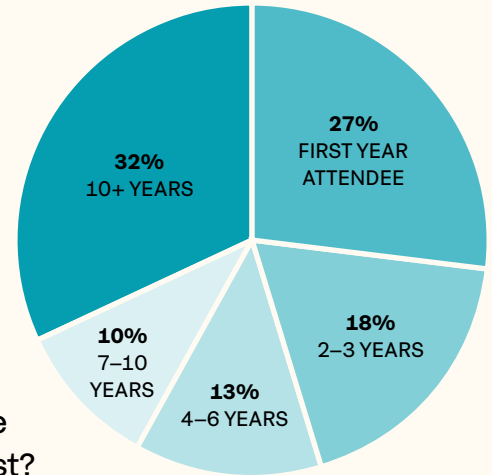
8,161

Online Across BC

NEW & RETURNING FANS

*How
many
years*

have you attended the
Vancouver Writers Fest?



90% of patrons said that attending a Festival event caused them to think differently about an issue or topic

49% of patrons attended three or more events

94% of patrons are “extremely” or “very” likely to recommend future VWF events to their friends and family

This data was collected from survey results. In 2025, we made a concentrated effort to communicate the importance of the survey to our audience members, and we were thrilled to receive an 80% increase in responses to our Festival Feedback Survey over the previous year. The feedback we receive makes a world of difference in the continuous improvement of our events, and the data is crucial to understanding who is in our audience, and for reporting back to our funders and supporters.

Our Year-Round Programming

We program major **Special Events** all throughout the year, connecting Vancouver audiences with the highly anticipated latest works by world renowned writers. From intimate discussions in cozy theatres to cathedrals full of lifelong fans, these year-round events take place on stages across the city, and nearly every Special Event sells out the house.

Special Events in 2025



Naomi Klein & Seth Klein

In conversation with Elamin Abdelmahmoud

Madeleine Thien

In conversation with David Chariandy

R. F. Kuang

In conversation with Michelle Cyca

Arundhati Roy

In conversation with Naomi Klein

Chris Hadfield

In conversation with André Picard

Margaret Atwood

In conversation with Carol Off

Books & Ideas



“ *Very high calibre, timely event. It’s such a pleasure to listen to intelligent, articulate people, and all 3 were outstanding.* ”

—2025 Books & Ideas Attendee

In 2025, we were thrilled to inaugurate a brand new program at the Vancouver Writers Fest: **Books & Ideas** was launched in January, extending the literary atmosphere and thought-provoking conversations for which the October Festival is so cherished, into the rest of the year. With an intimate theatre venue and a pop-up bar for socializing, attendees are invited to connect more deeply with other members of the local literary community—and meet the esteemed authors who grace the stage.

Running from January until June, the first season of *Books & Ideas* was an instant success, drawing to Vancouver bestselling fiction authors like Scott Turow and André Alexis; visionary thinkers such as environmentalist Robert Macfarlane and Canada Research Chair Timothy Caulfield; and acclaimed multi-disciplinary artists, including musician Neko Case and filmmaker Barry Sonnenfeld.



In the First Year of *Books & Ideas*



9	15	5	86%
Events	Featured Authors	Sold Out Shows	Total Venue Capacity Booked

Our Year-Round Programming (Continued)



Garth Mullins signs books at Incite.

Incite

We are proud to continue our longstanding partnership with the Vancouver Public Library in presenting Incite, a free event series that is open to all, in-person at VPL's Central Library as well as online. In 2025, Incite was reimagined as a quarterly series, running all year long and featuring some of the most anticipated new releases and pressing issues of each season. The 2025 lineup offered events with David A. Robertson, Garth Mullins, Bob Joseph, and finalists of the BC and Yukon Book Prizes.



Digital Festival screenshot:
Eleanor Wachtel interviews Kiran Desai.

Digital Festival

Virtual programming allows us to reach audience members who live outside of Vancouver, or are otherwise unable to attend in-person. The fourth annual Digital Festival featured a curated selection of 27 professionally filmed, fully captioned events from our flagship October Festival. Audiences from across the province and beyond tune in for these events, which are available for viewing over the winter holidays. This popular program is also an accessibility offering, with sliding scale pricing available.



2025 My Roots workshop led by Evelyn Lau.

My Roots

My Roots is our popular one-day writing workshop for immigrants to Canada, offered for free to writers with origins from across the globe. In 2025, we offered a poetry workshop with Evelyn Lau, former Poet Laureate for the City of Vancouver and the author of fourteen books. Polished pieces submitted by the participants were later published on the Vancouver Writers Fest website and newsletter.

Inspiring Youth

The Vancouver Writers Fest is committed to increasing youth access to free or low cost, high-quality educational programming which expands perspectives and creates space for critical thinking in our venues, online, and in the classroom.

Festival Youth Programming

Nearly one third of our Annual Festival Programming consists of events for youth, which brings classrooms to Granville Island and are also livestreamed for free across the province and beyond. A new record of 13,283 students participated in-person and online in youth events at our 2025 Festival, with 1,102 students supported through Festival ticket and bus subsidies.

Youth Writing Contest

Every spring, the Vancouver Writers Fest launches two writing contests: an Elementary School Writing Contest for grades 5–7, and a High School Writing Contest for grades 8–12. Cash prizes and online publication are awarded to the winners, encouraging aspiring writers to explore their creativity. Yet again, our judges commended the remarkable quality of the stories that were submitted.



David A. Robertson (L) and Melanie Watt (R) at the 2025 Festival.

Writers in the Classroom

Supported in 2025 by the Government of BC, Modo, and Bonnie Mah.

Our popular Writers in the Classroom series brings writers into BC classrooms to engage directly with students, with two installments offered annually in the spring and fall. In 2025, WITC brought 25 authors to nearly 800 students, covering topics such as the influence of social media on youth, how STEM and historical events relate to storytelling, the development of graphic novels and comics, biodiversity and ecosystems, how books get made, and more. Many writers also conducted writing exercises with students on topics like worldbuilding, character creation, and pitch writing. Authors included Tawahum Bige, Kirsten Pendreigh, Loghan Paylor, Wesley King, Kim Spencer, Sabina Khan, Donna Seto, and Rachel Hartman.

Accessibility

The Vancouver Writers Fest is committed to the ongoing work of making our events low-barrier, accessible experiences for our community. We're grateful to the members of our Accessibility Round Table, which we worked with from 2022–2024 to audit the accessibility of our programming, and discuss additional practices that could be implemented to further support diverse members of our community in feeling welcome at our events.

We offer free and/or discounted tickets for students and youth under 25, to encourage a lifelong belief in the power of books and storytelling.

Supporting the *Next Generation*

Of Readers, Writers, & Thinkers

- 1,102 students supported by **ticket and bus subsidies**.
- **\$15 Festival tickets** for youth under 25.
- Recipients of **free Festival tickets** included Capilano University, Douglas College, Langara, SFU, North Shore Writers' Association, Federation of BC Writers, Vancouver Historical Society, and Arts Umbrella.

3,895

people supported by partially and fully subsidized tickets.

Some of the accessibility supports we offered in 2025 included:

- **New in 2025:** Accessibly priced tickets available for our new *Books & Ideas* series.
- **ASL interpretation** at four Festival events, chosen in consultation with the d/Deaf community.
- **Auto-generated captions** at five events, and **human-edited captions** for all 27 Digital Festival events.
- **Accessibility training** for volunteers at two volunteer orientation events.
- Additional **accessibility training** session for volunteers facilitated by members of our Accessibility Roundtable.
- **Audio guides and visual stories** for each venue, and an **annotated map** with accessibility information.
- **Simple text versions** of our Festival Program Guide that can be read by a screen reader.
- **Reserved seats** for audience members with mobility issues or other seating needs.
- **Discounted tickets** for youth under 25 and seniors, and sliding scale tickets available on request.
- **Free livestream access** for school-aged youth events, and \$12 tickets to attend in-person.
- **Free tickets** provided to select community organizations, colleges, and universities.
- Recordings of Festival events available online through the **Digital Festival** from December–January.

Our Reach

By the Numbers

15,900+ Instagram Followers
9,800+ Facebook Followers
1,400+ Bluesky Followers **NEW!**
1,300+ TikTok Followers **NEW!**
14,000+ Email Subscribers
25,000 Program Guides Distributed
72 Media Hits for the 2025 Festival
3.4 Million+ Social Media Impressions in 2025

Digital Platforms

We share anticipated releases, literary news, and important conversations with a wider audience through our weekly **Books & Ideas** newsletter. It has become a trusted resource for educators, librarians, and book lovers across British Columbia.

The **Books & Ideas Audio** podcast is a diverse selection of some of our most compelling conversations, released once a month on major podcast platforms. And in December, the **Digital Festival** makes a curated selection of our video-recorded events available to an international audience.

Championing the extraordinary work of authors and publishers is at the very heart of what we do. Every book and author we feature is part of an extensive marketing campaign, and publishers have grown to depend on VWF as a reliable partner and platform for elevating the profiles of their authors. Festival participants are spotlighted in our digital **Summer Reading List**, and our eye-catching **Program Guide** that is distributed to bookstores, coffee shops, arts organizations, and other venues across Metro Vancouver.



Book Sales Festival + Year-Round



The Festival Bookstore was open from October 21–26 in The Fishbowl on Granville Island, managed by our official bookseller Book Warehouse (a division of Black Bond Books). Vigorously promoted in the Program Guide, online, and in the introductory notes of every event, the Festival Bookstore is a key component of the Festival, moving thousands of new and backlisted titles by featured authors. We sell books by featured authors at all of our year-round events, with sales managed by Book Warehouse and other local, independent bookstores, including Upstart & Crow on Granville Island, and Massy Books.

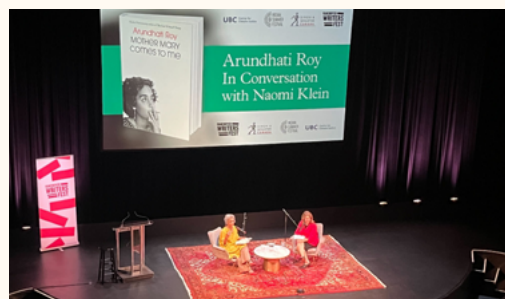
Our 2025 Book Sales

6,500+ books sold
& \$200,000 in book sales

Our Community



In the vibrant cultural landscape of Vancouver, we take immense pride in being part of an interconnected community that thrives on collaboration and shared creativity. Our partnerships are a testament to this spirit. In 2025, we continued to work with esteemed organizations including the Vancouver International Film Festival (VIFF), Indian Summer Festival, Talking Stick Festival, Vancouver Indigenous Fashion Week, Vancouver Latin American Cultural Centre, Chinatown Storytelling Centre, and Vancouver Queer Film Festival. These connections not only amplify our outreach and accessibility efforts, but also support the work of other non-profit organizations, enriching our collective mission.



Each event offers an opportunity to partner with a specialized organization that supports a unique cause or community. In 2025, a few of the partners we were honoured to work with included Pacific Salmon Foundation on a talk with author and environmentalist Robert Macfarlane; Indian Summer Festival and UBC Centre for Climate Justice on an event with author and political activist Arundhati Roy; and local arts and culture media organization Stir on our Festival opening night event, which asked Canadian authors of various backgrounds to share their perspective on what it means to be a Canadian now.



As proud members of the Canadian Association of Literary Festivals, we remain committed to fostering a culture that celebrates literature and the arts.

Celebrating Canadian Writing

We work with multiple literary awards that spotlight the best of local and Canadian writing. Award ceremonies and other affiliated events in 2025 included:

- Canada Reads event featuring finalist Jamie Chai Yun Liew and her champion, Saïd M'Dahoma.
- Free Incite event featuring all five finalists for the BC and Yukon Book Prizes' Jim Deva Prize for Writing That Provokes.
- A Festival event with Canadian literary icon Miriam Toews, organized in collaboration with the Canada Council for the Arts to celebrate the finalists and winners of the Governor General's Literary Awards.
- Presentation of the Max Wyman Award in Critical Writing, conferred by Max Wyman to Elamin Abdelmahmoud at a Festival event.

Our Home on Granville Island

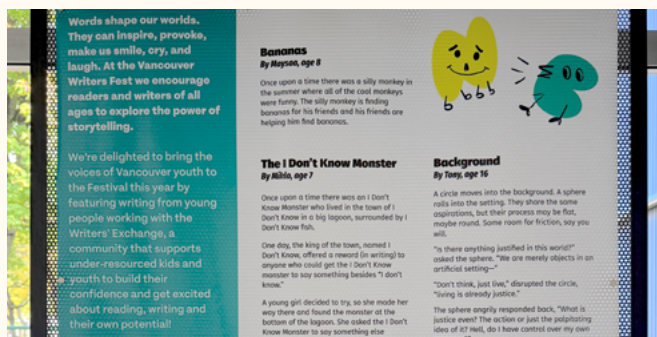
Granville Island remains a cornerstone of our cultural partnerships. We contribute to the vibrancy of this hub through strategic collaborations with local businesses and organizations. Our partners on the Island, including the Granville Island Hotel, Dockside Restaurant, JJ Bean, and many others, engage in cross-promotions that support our fundraising efforts and enhance the Festival experience. These relationships are essential, providing raffle and giveaway prizes, and various forms of support to both our authors and volunteers. Among the Granville Island based non-profits we work with are Coastal Jazz and the Vancouver Fringe Festival, with whom we share a particularly close relationship. This collaboration allows us to make the most of the available space in Festival House and streamline production logistics, benefiting all festivals involved, including the Vancouver International Children's Festival, PuSh Festival, and Carousel Theatre for Young People.

Fostering Local Talent

Our commitment to supporting emerging writers extends well beyond our own programming. In 2025, we partnered with Peliplat, a community for film fans and storytellers, on the inaugural Original Short Story Writing Challenge. Four winners received cash prizes—the winner of the Editor's Pick award also happened to be a graduate of the Vancouver Writers Fest's My Roots writing workshop with Evelyn Lau.

We were also delighted to continue and expand our partnership with The Writers' Exchange, a Vancouver-based community that supports under-resourced kids and youth to build their confidence and get excited about reading, writing, and their own potential. Stories written by their mentees were spotlighted in all the Festival venues and various other points around Granville Island.

We are proud to partner with a number of post-secondary arts departments to support emerging writers, including Langara, BCIT, SFU Creative Writing, SFU Department of World Languages and Literatures, and UBC Creative Writing.



Thank You to Our Donors



The Vancouver Writers Fest serves as a vital space where literature meets community. Rising operational costs and diminishing support from corporate and government funders have led to significant financial challenges recently across the arts, culture, and events sector in BC. We are more grateful than ever for the support of our donors, who help ensure that Vancouver readers can continue to engage with authors, books, and ideas that transform our world. Learn more at writersfest.bc.ca/support-us.

Alexandra Addison
Al Roadburg
Foundation
Andrew And
Yasmeen Strang
Foundation
Deborah Armour
Margaret Atwood
(Donation in Kind)
John Bechhoefer
Mary Beck
Cathleen Boyle
Lindy Bremner
Holly Brinton
Alison Broddle
Jeff Charpentier
CHH Foundation
Ramona Chu
Jude Coffin
Wanda Costuros
Clare Crosthwait

Pat & Brian
Cumming
Janice Dalzell
Charlene de Faye
Marian Dodds
Mary Doherty
Sharon Dos
Remedios
Katherine Doyle
Cathryn Duerksen
Brian Duncan &
Rebecca Kenedy
Anne Elliott
Asha Fraser
Sandra Garossino
Daniel Getz
Karen Gilmore
Vicki Hamill
Sarah Hamilton
Colin Harris
(Donation in Kind)

Sazz Harrison
Alison Hart
Karin Hartner
Ian Hay
Stephen Heatley
Julia Hedley
Margaret Hewlett
Stephanie Hollis
Hotfusion
Communications
Inc.
Howe Family
Foundation, held
at Vancouver
Foundation
Valerie Hunter
Leslie Hurtig
Julie Iannacone
Sandra Jakab
Valerie Jerome
Richard Johnston
& Kathryn Fowler

Alexia Jones
Karuna Fund
Leigh-Ann Kask
Anna Kerr
Fiona Lam
Heather Lawrence
Shirley Lew
Lew Murray Private
Giving Fund
Benita Loughlin
Moh Faris, Reema
Faris, Ramona Chu
& Yasmeen Strang
in loving memory
of Yolanda Faris
Marlene Mackenzie
Mago Charitable
Foundation
Bonnie Mah
Marsha Mah Poy
Rita Manzo
Margaret McCuaig

Harvey McKinnon
Neal McLennan
Angela McWhirter
in memory of Alma
Lee
George McWhirter
in memory of Alma
Lee
Cameron Mitchell
Tom Morton
Kari Negrey
Neijens Family
Charitable Fund
Carol Newson
Susin Nielsen
Caroline North
Lucille Pacey
Katherine Paton
Carolyn Pederson
Kirstie Pirie
The Pitfield Family
Susan Pollock

Lindy Pratch
Prentice Pauls
Family Foundation
Euan Ramsay
Ian Rankin
(Donation in Kind)
Roberta Rich
Carol Roberts
Ian Robertson
Mary Robertson
Martin Roland
Amanda Ross
Melanie Rupp
Leonard Schein
Ben Shneiderman
Donald Shumka
Lisa Slater
Colleen Smith
Linda Solomon
Wood
Irwin Nathanson
and Joanie
McEwen
Jillian Stirk
Kristin Stockley
Ian and Jane
Strang
Wayne Sutherland
Adrienne Tanner
Jeanne Taylor

Urban Impact
Recycling Ltd.
Vancouver Odd
Fellows Lodge No
90
Beverley Watt
Jennifer Webb
Jan Whitford
David Stephanie &
David Williams
Stephanie Williams
Kelleen Wiseman
Thomas Woods
Yosef Wosk Family
Foundation
Sam Znaimer

*And all those who
wish to remain
anonymous, or who
donate through
Canada Helps,
Benevity, United
Way, and other
giving platforms.

We are grateful for every donor, no matter the amount. Donors
who gave \$450 and above in 2025 are included in this list.

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this list.
Please get in touch with us to make any corrections.



Who We Are

Our Year-Round Staff in 2025

Leslie Hurtig

Artistic Director

Jennifer Milley

Managing Director

Celeste

Cadieux-Rey

Senior Operations
Coordinator

Chelsee Damen

Operations Manager

Leena Desai

Senior Education and
Development Coordinator

Joyce Wan

Marketing & Digital
Production Manager

Sarah Wang*

Programming Coordinator

Ashleigh Withall

Development Manager

*Sarah Wang left her role at the end of 2025. We bid her a fond farewell, and welcomed Ruth Ormiston as our new Programming Coordinator in April 2026.



The Vancouver Writers Fest is proud to be a certified Living Wage Employer.

Our Festival family grows each year in the months leading up to the October Festival. We are thrilled to regularly welcome back valued team members like Festival Marketing and PR Director Ariel Hudnall and her team at Serif, Production Manager Eduardo Ottoni and his team at EventLAB, Catering Manager Elizabeth Glancy, and many more important collaborators. Volunteer Co-Managers Mikaela Asfour and Deanna Overland oversaw our extensive volunteer operations. Longtime volunteer Melanie Clark stepped into the role of Festival Hospitality Manager with aplomb, supported by James Tyler Irvine, who has hosted our esteemed guests in the hospitality suite for many years.

Our Volunteers

The Vancouver Writers Fest is powered by the time, energy, and expertise of our extraordinary volunteers. Our 2025 volunteer team numbered **408 invaluable volunteers**, 60% returning and 40% of whom were new.

Vancouver Writers Fest volunteers are high school students, retirees, and everything in between. They represent a diverse and impressive range of skills and backgrounds. Together, they contributed a total of **4,962 hours** in 2025.



408

volunteers
in 2025

97%

of volunteers surveyed
were satisfied with their
volunteer experience

Our Partners

TITLE SPONSOR		COLLECTOR'S EDITION SPONSOR		BESTSELLER SPONSOR	
		 		  	
LIMITED EDITION SPONSOR		SPECIAL EDITION SPONSOR			
   		  			
   					
GOVERNMENT SUPPORT					
           					
COMMUNITY PARTNER				MEDIA PARTNERS	
           					
          					
FESTIVAL SUPPORTER					
         					

We'd like to thank all of the artisans and vendors of Granville Island who donate food, goods, and services to us during Festival Week and throughout the year.

We hope you will be inspired to join our celebration of books, storytelling, ideas—and the possibilities they infuse.

Please contact us to learn more.

Main Office: 604.681.6330

Email: info@writersfest.bc.ca

Sponsorship Opportunities

Ashleigh Withall

Development Manager

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604.262.1190

Programming Inquiries

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Artistic Director

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