



2023-2024

**826**  
BOSTON

**A Year in Review**

# LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Dear friends,

Earlier this year, I had the opportunity to tutor a senior with her college application essay. At first, she was unsure what to write about. After getting to know one another, she mentioned that she had one idea but didn't think people would want to hear about it.

She shared a very personal story about the worst day of her life: the day she tragically lost her brother. While sharing, she allowed me to peek at a school notebook with the haunting details from that day, including how it all made her stronger.

Her experience was an unforgettable story of compassion, fortitude, and resilience—all characteristics that any college would be lucky to have in a student. It was a story that hit home for me: I also experienced the death of a brother when I was younger. Our tutoring session became a powerful moment of building trust and finding strength in our experiences. I cared about her story. By the end of our session, she believed others would, too.

I hope that college essay lands her in her dream school. But, even if it doesn't, that day reminded us that our stories deserve to be shared with the world. That is the work of 826 Boston every day. Our programs are spaces of connection, belonging, and sharing that allow youth to use their experiences to influence others and create the life of their dreams.

This year's annual report spotlights 826 Boston's remarkable programs and illustrates our impact in amplifying youth voices and developing the next generation of leaders. We also share summaries of publishing projects, a recap of events, and our financial statement.

In the coming year, we will continue to create a future deserving of the brilliant 826 Boston students we work with daily.

Gratefully,

Corey Yarbrough

826 Boston Executive Director

**826 Boston is a nonprofit writing, tutoring, and publishing organization where students in grades K-12 and beyond can share their stories, amplify their voices, and develop as leaders in school and in life.**

# GOVERNANCE

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## Executive Committee

Janet Tiampo, Board President  
David Bagnani, Board Secretary  
Mimi Curran, Board Treasurer  
Jill Harrison Berg  
Kate Taylor, Independent Coach and Consultant

## Board of Directors

Andrew Cohn  
Harvey Cotton, Legal Counsel  
Donna Cowan  
Gillian Kohli, Wellesley Books  
Sonali Shah  
Benielle Sims, Liberty Mutual Insurance  
Rosann Tung  
April Bo Wang, Little Tiger Strategic Storytelling

## Literary Board

M. T. Anderson  
Neema Avashia  
Richard Blanco  
Christopher Castellani  
Jennifer De Leon  
Anita Diamant  
Andre Dubus III  
Henry Louis Gates, Jr.  
Julia Glass  
Meredith Goldstein  
Jeff Kinney  
Helen Elaine Lee  
Tom Perrotta  
Heidi Pitlor  
Annie Weatherwax

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## New appointments to the 826 Boston Board of Directors



### **Al Campbell, Beth Israel Lahey Health-Winchester Hospital**

With more than 20 years of clinical and executive experience, Al Campbell is the President of Beth Israel Lahey Health-Winchester Hospital. He has served on the Advisory Boards for the University of Maryland's School of Healthcare Administration Program and School of Nursing-Nurse Leadership Institute, and Imagine Hope Community Charter Schools. He is a Fellow with the American College of Healthcare Executives (FACHE). Originally from Guyana, Al enjoys traveling in his spare time as well as following politics in the Caribbean diaspora.



### **Dr. Shannon Fairley-Pittman, Northeastern University**

Dr. Shannon Fairley-Pittman is a committed organizational leader who works to inspire a world of good. His award winning research from NADOHE (National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education), named "2021 Outstanding Dissertation," examines the motivational factors toward the success of low-income first generation college students. He provides mentorship to a cohort of national scholars from The Boston Foundation. Shannon is thrilled to join 826 Boston after being an advocate for the organization's College Essay Boot Camp for several years.



### **Javier Juarez, The Boston Foundation**

Javier Juarez is the Director of the Latino Equity Fund at the Boston Foundation. Besides leading the first and only fund dedicated to the Latino community in Greater Boston, Javier is a frequent speaker and organizer on topics related to philanthropy, immigration policy, and DACA. Through his personal story as a first-generation immigrant, Javier has become an outspoken advocate for his community. Javier is a TEDx speaker, a graduate of the Community College of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, and holds a master's degree from Brown University.

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# THE YEAR BY THE NUMBERS

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826 Boston provided **3,712** unique students and a total of **23,401** hours of individualized writing support.

Among them, **628** students received college essay support, accumulating more than **2,047** program hours.

Additionally, **569** students received STEM literacy support, accounting for a total of **1,912** program hours.

We also collaborated with **110** partner teachers across **15** partner schools.

This year, we published **37** publications in which **711** students were featured.



**We surveyed 1,116 students. Here's what they reported:**

96% felt safe and supported

96% felt their thoughts and opinions were valued

94% felt 826 Boston improved their writing/project/work

92% felt more confident in their writing

89% reported they better understood themselves when they write



# 826 BOSTON AND BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

“When the opportunity emerged to bring the 826 Boston Writers’ Room program to the Margarita Muñiz Academy, we were thrilled. Students and teachers at the Muñiz Academy have worked on meaningful and highly impactful projects with 826 Boston for ten years, including student publications, college essays, and classroom project support.



We choose our partners carefully based on criteria that include commitment to culturally relevant, two-way bilingual education and alignment with our core value of social justice through authentic connections to the community. Our ongoing experiences with 826 Boston have made it clear that as an organization, they bring tangible resources to a partnership that leads directly to significant student outcomes. We look forward to our expanded collaboration.”

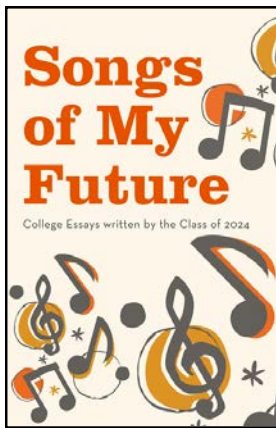
–Dr. Dania Vázquez, Head of School, the Margarita Muñiz Academy



**We surveyed Boston public school teachers who work with 826 Boston. Here’s what they reported:**

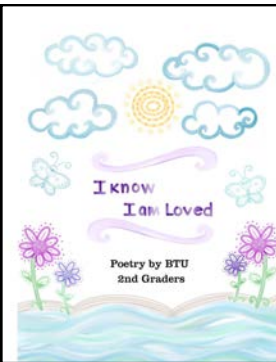
- 96% believe 826 Boston is a highly valuable resource for teachers
- 96% agree that 826 Boston supported their curriculum and instructional goals

# FEATURED BOOKS

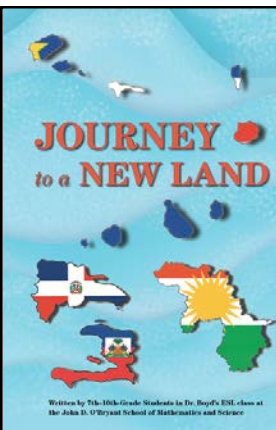


From small-class zines to widely-shared anthologies, 826 Boston students created 37 publications this year.

Writers' Rooms produced a variety of work, including heartfelt personal narratives, multilingual poetry, and imaginative explorations of the future.

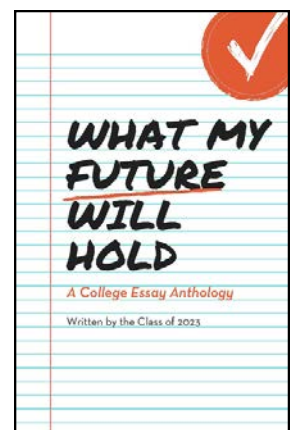
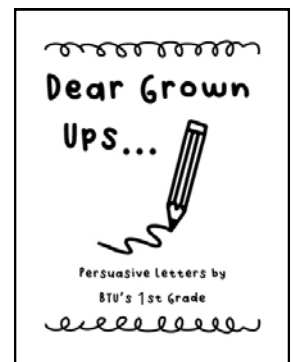
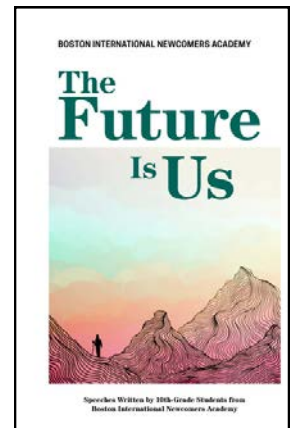


Writing workshops sparked creativity with projects that built brand new characters, encouraged collaborative storytelling, and invited readers into the exciting world of choose-your-own-adventure tales.



These books exemplify the transformative power of writing.

Students' vibrant creativity offers wisdom, humor, and unique perspectives, inviting readers everywhere to connect with and learn from their stories.



Discover a world where wisdom and whimsy collide in *What if the World Needs You?* (May 2024). In this captivating anthology, young writers offer advice and life lessons in unexpected ways. From reimagined myths to advice columns, these stories push the boundaries of storytelling with wisdom, humor, and originality. Featuring 91 student authors across all 826 Boston programs, this book is our biggest yet!



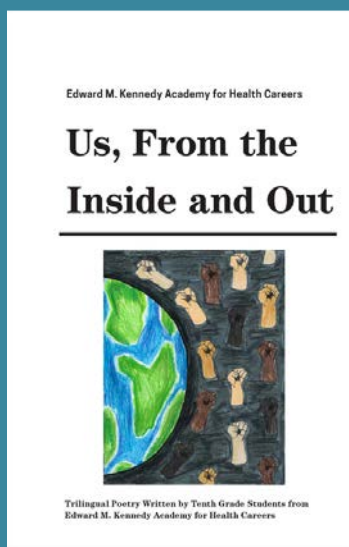
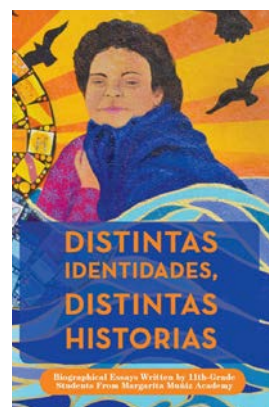
# FEATURED BOOKS



“We wish we had *What if the World Needs You?* when we were younger. We know that life is hard, and sometimes you need to get advice...keep in mind that not everything is entirely perfect in life. That’s alright, that makes us human. So don’t be so hard on yourself, the world needs you.”

—Student Editorial Board for *What if the World Needs You?*

*Distintas Identidades, Distintas Historias* (September 2023) is a bilingual collection of personal narratives by 11th graders at the Margarita Muñiz Academy. In partnership with I Learn America, this book celebrates cultural identity, featuring a cover inspired by the mural students painted of Margarita Muñiz herself.



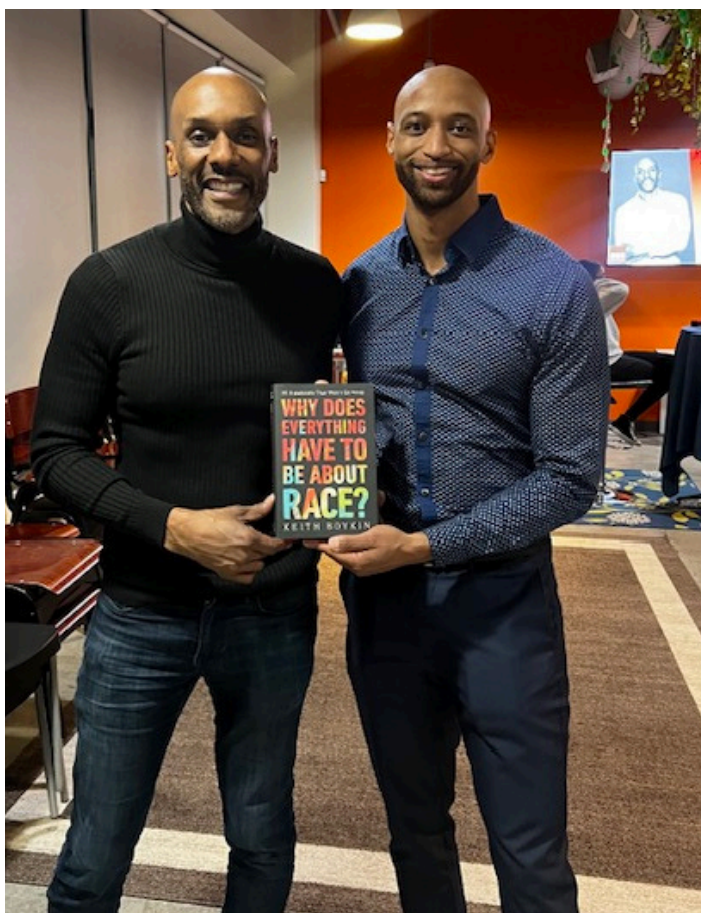
*Us, From the Inside Out* (June 2024) marks a milestone as our first-ever trilingual publication, featuring poems in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole. This collection, written by the 10th graders at Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers, delves into personal experiences and cultural reflections. Whether through family challenges, personal loss, or stories of self-discovery, these young poets embrace their identities to craft heartfelt and compelling pieces that resonate across languages and communities.

# SIGNATURE EVENTS

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Books for Breakfast was held on Wednesday, October 25, 2023 at Goodwin Procter, featuring acclaimed local author of Pomegranate, Helen Elaine Lee, remarks from State Senator Liz Miranda, and a reading from 826 Boston student Alyssa. The event paid homage to the tenth anniversary of the Writers' Room at the John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics & Science.



826 Boston welcomed CNN political commentator Keith Boykin to our writing and tutoring center on February 6 for a book release event for his new publication, *Why Does Everything Have To Be About Race?* The event included a youth-led discussion on tackling modern racial arguments that threaten racial progress and social justice. Boykin, a former White House aide to President Bill Clinton and Harvard Law School graduate, mixed personal experience, reportage, and extensive research to dissect 25 of the most widespread deceptions about race, including arguments targeting affirmative action, critical race theory, and the purpose of the Civil War.



# SIGNATURE EVENTS

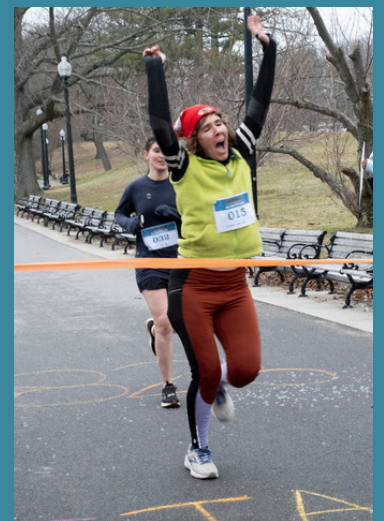


We hosted seven house parties all across the greater Boston area.

826 Boston students shared the stage with Claire Messud, Ben Mezrich, Adrian Walker, Ellen Goodman, Kate Fussner, Avi Loeb, and Brian McGrory.

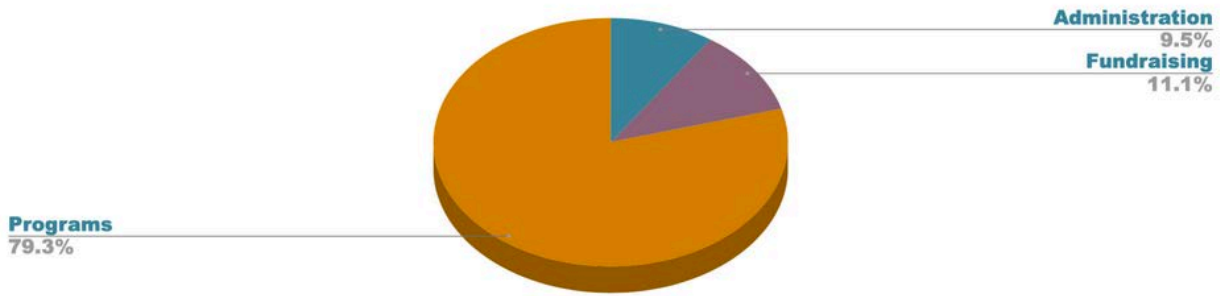


More than 75 participants showed up to Boston's greatest, shortest race—the **Half Half Half Half Half Marathon**—on April 11, 2024. This fun, fast, and family-friendly 0.826-mile race at Jamaica Pond raised more than \$22,000.

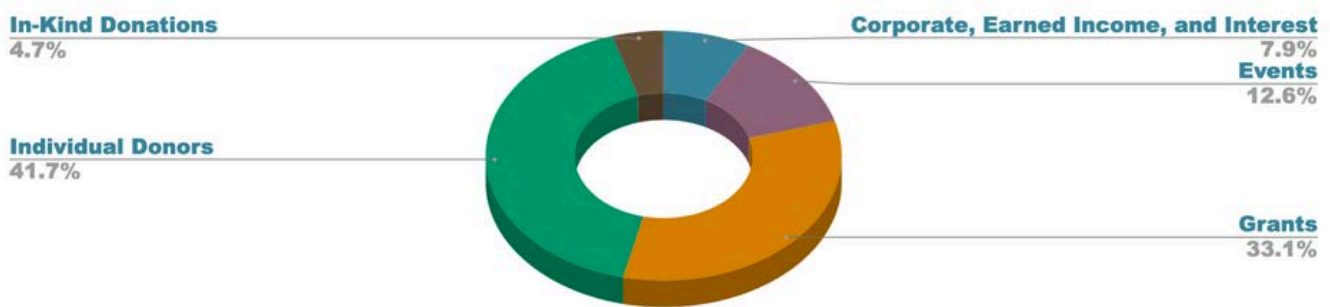


# FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Expenses: \$3,318,600



Revenue: \$2,696,200



\* Shortly after the close of the fiscal year, 826 Boston received additional funding that established a robust reserve fund.

## THE 826 BOSTON TEAM



The 826 Boston team at the Greater Boston Bigfoot Research Institute, August 2024

# MORE STORIES, PLEASE

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Here are a few more highlights from the 826 Boston team this year:

- The Writers' Room at the Boston Teachers Union K-8 Pilot School hosted its inaugural Dia De Los Muertos workshop. The students had the opportunity to learn about a traditional Latin American cultural celebration, write their own messages to their loved ones, and build community.
- For the second year, students in our After-School Writing and Tutoring Program crafted stories featuring Betty the Yeti. Their work was showcased in a digital storybook published by the Seaport neighborhood for December holidays.
- The John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science launched a middle school creative writing club that met weekly and created space for 7th and 8th grade students to get to know the Writers' Room and explore their creative voice. Students were published in Rubix and What If the World Needs You?
- Twenty seven high school seniors in Boston were named winners of the Social Justice Scholarship, awarded in collaboration with the Hard Candy & Fruit Snacks Podcast. The scholarships ranged from \$1,000 to \$5,000.



# MORE STORIES, PLEASE

- Ninety 826 Boston students created original Imaginary Friends—IFs—and had their character sketches published in The Big Book of IFs. This opportunity came to us through 826 National’s partnership with Paramount Pictures, and included an advanced screening of the film and a special message to all our authors from director John Krasinski.
- The Writers' Room at the Dr. Albert D. Holland High School of Technology collaborated with the school's ABA program to host students on a weekly basis. Students worked on writing-related tasks and socialized while playing games and coloring, allowing a group that is typically separate from most of the school and geared more towards vocational pathways to develop interpersonal and literacy skills in a mainstream setting.
- The Writers’ Room at Boston International Newcomers Academy hosted its fifth annual Bridging Borders celebration in collaboration with the school’s Student Government and nine different clubs. Last year’s event was the biggest yet, featuring educational presentations by all culture clubs as well as a fashion show, dancing, singing, and poetry readings.

