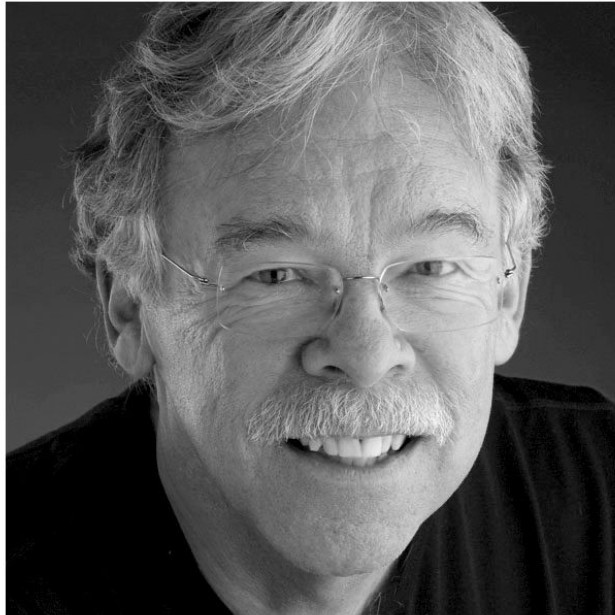


What's your story? Find your voice. Tell it.



## Fall Newsletter 2024

### A Letter From Richard Dresser



**Greetings,**

I hope that you are all taking care of yourselves, and those around you. The past few weeks have been incredibly difficult to process and understand. We are living in uncertain – and unprecedented times. Now, more than ever, we must lean into our community for strength and support.

During this season of giving and reflection, we are incredibly grateful to our committed network of mentors who selflessly give their time and expertise; all of the workshop participants who provide us with endless inspiration and purpose; and the countless donors and friends who believe in our work and help to sustain it year after year.

Members of our community are hurting, but together, we are resilient.

Here at WGI, we will continue to do what we do best – provide the opportunity for those from the most marginalized communities to participate in our writing workshops. Over the past 15 years, we have helped more than 2,000 people tell their stories and express themselves openly in a safe, encouraging space.

Despite efforts to oppress and suppress the voices of some of the very communities we work with – immigrant youth, LGBTQ asylum seekers, and librarians fighting book bans across the country – this year, WGI is poised to offer the most writing workshops ever in our history.

To do so, we need your support. Please consider making a year-end donation to WGI so that we can make the art of storytelling accessible to all, regardless of who tries to silence us.

As one of our participants so poignantly shared, "It was a great experience. The workshop brought joy, distraction, empathy, and hope to my day."

May we all find strength and hope from one another in the days ahead.

All the best,

**Richard Dresser**  
President, WGI

[DONATE](#)

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## WGI PROGRAM UPDATES

### The Helen Deutsch Writing Workshops



These incredible workshops had LGBTQ Catholic participants as far away as New Zealand and Uganda joining in our writing workshops. In these powerful sessions, our mentors guided these writers through exercises to strengthen their writing.

*"It has opened up my life in ways I could never have anticipated. It has opened up creative thinking that will impact nearly every important aspect of my life." — Outreach Participant*



# WOUNDED WARRIOR PROJECT®

We are always so thrilled and honored to work with our longstanding partner Wounded Warrior Project. First in May, and again in September, we joined WWP for two rounds of creative writing workshops with their extraordinary veterans.

*“It was AMAZING. I loved the small groups and intimate nature of it. It's made me more open to BEING open.”*  
— Wounded Warrior Project Participant

In the fall, we continued our work with #MEAction Network for those suffering from myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome and long covid. This was our third partnership with this talented community of writers.



*“Incredible! I never imagined what incredible mentors we'd have. They just know how to support us, encourage us, and challenge us.”*  
— #MEAction Participant



In September, we had our second round of workshops with Footsteps. During these sessions, our mentors guided writers transitioning away from ultra-Orthodox communities through creative writing exercises. These writers will be sharing their work in the coming weeks.

*“I was amazed by the amount of time dedicated to each of us. It told me that I can do this and there's a world of possibilities for me to explore.”*  
— Footsteps Participant

# WITNESS TO INNOCENCE

We are particularly thrilled to partner once again with Witness to Innocence, an organization that is devoted to helping those who have been exonerated from death row and their family members. Over two weeks in November, our mentors led participants through writing exercises and helped them craft work based on their experience. They will have an opportunity to share their writing at an upcoming WTI event.

*“It was wonderful! Wish there were more sessions! I was kind of stuck – now I’ve got tools and exercises to help me move forward.”*  
— *Witness To Innocence Participant*

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## The Michael Collyer Memorial Fellowship in Screenwriting



The Collyer Fellowship is a one-year fellowship that is awarded to an emerging screenwriter who intends to pursue a career in screenwriting. The winner receives a \$10,000 stipend to write an original screenplay (not the script used to opt into the fellowship) and is mentored during the fellowship

year by a prominent screenwriter.

This program, now in its 17th year, is a partnership between the [Writers Guild Initiative](#) and the King Family Foundation. We are in our ninth year of being hosted on [The Black List](#).

Please note this fellowship is for screenwriters between the ages of 18-25 who will be no older than 25 years of age as of December 31, 2024.

Find the link to [submit here](#) and the [FAQ here](#)!

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## SUMMER INVITE TO WRITE CHALLENGE



As a part of our effort to support our participants in their writing, every summer we host a writing challenge to encourage them to write and submit work based on a theme. Then throughout the fall, we feature their writing on our blog and socials. This year, we asked them to write about their fantasy worlds. Click below to read them!

[Read the work from our participants!](#)

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Writers Guild Initiative programs are made possible by your generous contributions. [Your donation](#) enables us to provide transformative writing workshops to underserved populations with powerful stories to tell.

Thank you for your support!

# **NYC**® **Cultural Affairs**

This program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City  
Department of Cultural Affairs.

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**Writers Guild Initiative | [writersguildinitiative.org](http://writersguildinitiative.org)**