



How to use this booklet

Volunteers and supporters often ask us how they can help make a really big difference in our participants' lives. Hence, this booklet. Fundraising efforts initiated by people like you are a great way to:

- Share your commitment to Write Around Portland and help make Portland a better place.
- Help us continue to provide free creative writing workshops to those with the least access.
- Have fun and meaningful connections with your family, friends and acquaintances.

Fundraising doesn't have to be too serious. Your efforts will definitely be rewarding. We're here to help make your fundraising experience fun and easy, too.

What you'll find on the following pages

- Need ideas for transforming your passion for our programs into fundraising success?** *Check out pages 2-5 for some great ideas.*
- Having a gathering and wanting a place to keep track of guests?** *Pages 6-9 have guest resources and lists for this very reason.*
- Thinking about having people at your house and want to know how to get them there and how to prepare for them?** *The info on invitations and logistics on pages 10-12 are here to help.*
- You've got an audience—whether in person, on Facebook or via email. Want help planning what to say to them?** *We've got just the thing in "Fundraising Matters" on pages 13-15.*

If you don't see what you're looking for, just give us a call!

EASY & FUN FUNDRAISING IDEAS:

How you can help
change lives
through the power
of writing!



Great ways to support

House Party Classic



Host a house party. You invite friends and family into your home and ask them to bring their checkbooks. We invite the readers from our workshops and help you ask for donations.

Hold a mini-writing workshop in your home and ask for contributions. We'll facilitate or help you facilitate.



Incorporate a short write (and ask) into your next dinner party/backyard gathering/potluck/housewarming.

Getting older, getting hitched or moving to a new home? Any life celebration will do!



Ask friends to donate \$30 for your 30th birthday (any amount/any age works)! Or ask your wedding guests to make gifts to Write Around Portland to honor your big day. Use Facebook Causes, or personalized letters or emails to spread the word.

Ask people to empty their change jars and bring quarters, dimes, nickels and pennies to your next gathering or housewarming. (One person did this and raised \$108!)



Running around for Write Around



Run (or walk) a race for a good cause. We'll help you set up an easy fundraising website. Then ask everyone you know to make a gift to Write Around Portland to support you in your 5K or ultra-marathon.

Write Around Portland!

A little food, a little music



Play a benefit show—or ask your musician friends to do it! Host a show at your house or ask a local coffee shop, bar or other venue about using their space during or after business hours.

Ask your favorite restaurant to host a Write Around Portland night. We'll invite everyone we know to pack the place and the restaurant will donate a percentage of their profits.



The 3 R's: wRiting, Reading, Revenue



Hold your very own Write-a-thon or Read-a-thon. Ask friends to pledge a penny for every page written or read over a specific time period. You increase your writing/reading time and your friends make donations to Write Around Portland!

Invite some of our readers to your next book club meeting. With your help, we'll pass a basket after the reading.

Celebrate a writing accomplishment—getting your MFA, being published, finishing your novel, completing NaNoWriMo—by encouraging gifts made in your honor.



Then there's the outlandish (or keeping Portland weird)



Do something you really don't want to do or something out of character—but only if people contribute enough funds to Write Around! Shave your head, grow a mustache, read the *Twilight* series or do something else you said you'd never do. It's for a good cause, afterall!

Respect. Writing. Community.

Donations that you help raise will cover the costs associated with 10-week writing workshops for people affected by HIV/AIDS, survivors of domestic violence, refugees, teenagers living on the street and others who might not have access to the power of writing in community because of income, isolation or other barriers.

Write Around Portland has unleashed the creative power of more than 3,000 youth and adults by helping them access the literary arts. **With your help we'll inspire 3,000 more participants to complete their GEDs, attend college, stick with treatment programs and break cycles of abuse.**

Every dollar helps! Volunteers and supporters like you have helped raise anywhere from \$100 to \$10,000. Here's what your efforts will make possible:

\$100 provides our professionally-designed anthologies to ten of our published writers.

\$300 provides a new writer with everything it takes to make a workshop possible for someone who otherwise couldn't afford it.

\$1,000 provides 20 writers with writing journals, pens, bus tickets and anthologies.

\$3,000 sponsors an entire ten-week writing workshop for 10-15 new writers.

What people are saying...

Write Around Portland is one of the best community writing programs in the country. I don't know anyone who's doing more important work.

Dave Eggers, National Book Award-winning author

Hosting a Write Around Portland house party was a blast. Our friends loved it, and together we sponsored an entire ten-week writing workshop.

Miriam

I was worried that people wouldn't make it to my house-party, that the torrential rain or schedule conflicts meant my people wouldn't be here. Ha! Nothing stops people from making a difference. Rain isn't more important than poetry. Personal schedules don't always eclipse a sense of community. I stand corrected.

Rachel

For my 57th birthday I wanted to raise money for Write Around Portland. I used Facebook Causes. It was fun, it was easy and it felt like a great way to start a new year!

Deb

I was honored to be invited to share in the lives, experiences and remarkable gifts of the Write Around Portland community.

Write Around Portland House Party Guest

Write Around Portland is my favorite Portland non-profit. I wanted to do what I could to help ensure they stick around for a very long time. Turns out, I had fun in the process!

Kate

Fundraising Gatherings

To Do	Weeks Before Party	Your Actual Deadlines
Choose party date* Date: Time:		<u>Work backward from your date</u>
Brainstorm guest list	6	
Set goals (guest numbers & funds raised)	6	
Personalize our invitations, make your own, or use our Evite template	5	
Mail (or email) invitations	3	
Follow-up calls to guests who haven't responded	1-2	
Plan menu	2	
Write first draft of your pitch	2	
Buy drinks, food, plates, and napkins.	1	
Practice and finalize pitch with Write Around Portland staff	1-2 Days before	
Prep foods (as necessary), set-up food and wine station(s)	Day Before	
Set out food, serving utensils, pop the corks	Party Day	
Slip into your favorite party clothes, greet guests, have fun	Party Day	

* We have found that the best days to hold house parties are Thursday evenings and Sundays in the late afternoon/early evening. Of course, you should choose dates and times that work best for you and the people in your social circles.

Your Guest List

We've provided the forms on the following four pages to help you track your guest list.

You might want to consider co-hosting your party with a friend, thereby increasing your potential invite list and sharing the party planning and hosting duties!



Think of people with whom you would like to share your passion for Write Around Portland. Which of your friends, family, neighbors and colleagues are interested in the populations we serve, the creative arts in general, or writing specifically? Don't be afraid to ask, your guests will be honored to be invited.

Here's some advice from a previous house party host: *"I was nervous, so I only invited my closest friends. After the party I realized how many of the people I know would have loved to have been there. Next time, I'll be inviting EVERYONE I know!"*

We've found that 15-20 people is a good goal for guests. Some people will decline because of prior engagements. A good guess is that 1/3 of the people you invite will show up. If you think your home (or backyard) could accommodate more people and you would like to host more, expand your invitation list.



If your guests have friends who might be interested in Write Around Portland, make sure it is clear on the invitation that additional guests are invited and must RSVP.

Sample Guest List

	Name	Address
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		

	Phone/Email	Follow-Up Call	RSVP	Thanked
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				

This is a sample. We'll send you an Excel or Word document with room for more invitees. You'll be able to use a print version, an electronic version or both.

Invitations

Paper Invitations

We have a nice invitation we can personalize and print out for you. Whether you use our template or make your own, all invites should include the same basic information: your name, your address, date and time. Also include a line asking people to bring their checkbooks so they understand that the event is a fundraiser.

Handwriting notes to your guests leads to better turn out!

Email Invitations

Many hosts don't have home addresses for everyone they would like to invite. Email invitations work well in this case. We have a sample jpeg with an image as well as text about house parties. We can modify this invitation for your use.

Email invitations have been known to go unread, be filtered to junk mail folders, or get lost in the ethernet. Phone follow-up will be particularly important with email invitations.

Online Invitations

Evites (www.evite.com) can be a fun way to send your party invitation. The party information will be available online. There is a quick and easy RSVP mechanism built into the invitation. And, reminders are just a click away.

Follow-up

No matter how you invite people, reminder phone calls are the best way to get people there. Schedule some time in the week before your house party to call folks who have said that they are coming and those who haven't gotten back to you yet. If you get someone on the phone who can't attend your party, be ready to ask them to make a gift anyway.

Party Logistics

Activities

We can invite two or three Write Around Portland participants to read. The power of their voices speaks to our mission like nothing else.



We can also facilitate a short free write with sharing for your guests to experience firsthand what happens in our workshops. We'll make it fun and inspiring.



Either of these activities provide an introduction to Write Around Portland and set the stage for a fundraising ask.

Food & Drinks

Finger foods are best, then you can avoid having to worry about forks and knives. There is no need to buy expensive food or spend a lot of time preparing fancy dishes. Past house party hosts have provided hummus and veggies, cookies, brownies and/or cheese and crackers for their guests. These types of foods are perfect for this type of event.

Standard hosting wisdom says that a bottle of wine for every three people is plenty. An afternoon party and evening party will have different requirements. Be sure to provide non-alcoholic drinks, too.

You may need platters, cheese knives, cocktail napkins, cocktail plates, and wine glasses. Setting up food on one table and wine on another creates a flow of people in your space and facilitates mingling.

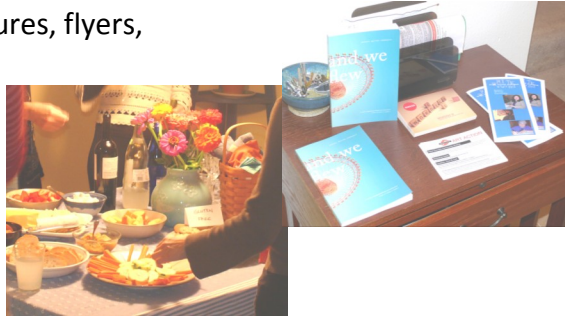


Party Logistics, continued

Organizing Your Space

Think about seating. What's the best place for the reading? Avoid solitary chairs. Seating in clusters facilitates conversation .

We will provide the basics about Write Around Portland, including brochures, flyers, anthologies (to display and sell) and remittance envelopes. Consider having a space to display our anthologies and information.



Hosting

Write Around Portland staff are available to attend your party. Volunteers and/or workshop participants may also attend. We are all there to help. Put us to use.



As host, we rely on you to introduce your guests to staff and participants. An introduction from you can lead to more personal connections and make the party more successful.

Fundraising Matters

Your Pitch: Inviting your friends to join you in supporting Write Around Portland

Your guests will be aware that the party is a fundraiser (you told them in the invitations). They know you're going to ask them to make a donation, so plan some thoughtful, personal words about Write Around Portland and your connection to our organization to inspire them. Consider making the first donation, announcing it, and asking your guests to join you. Since you've already contributed money and time to Write Around Portland, you're the best inspiration for their donation.

Because your guests know you, your enthusiasm for Write Around Portland will be infectious! That's why you're the best person to ask your friends and family to contribute.

The most successful asks include the host:

- 1) telling a story about why they are involved with Write Around
- 2) explaining why they personally contribute and
- 3) ending with a very specific ask for guests to make donations.

We're happy to help you plan your pitch and can share with you examples of past successful houseparty pitches as models.

*We also **strongly** recommend that you write out your pitch at least a few days in advance and practice it out loud.* Past hosts who have practiced their pitch in advance have found that it helped them to refine their wording and also made them feel more comfortable and less nervous when the time came to speak to their guests.

After you have made the ask, we will pass around envelopes and remit materials we will prepare specifically for your party so your guests are aware that this is the appropriate time to pull out their checkbooks.

Setting a Fundraising Goal

We will work with you to set a fundraising goal for your house party. Having an amount in mind will help you inspire guests to give.

Here is what your house party can help make possible:

- **\$500** Sponsors one new writer for a ten week workshop, including publication in our anthology and opportunity to share her words at our reading
- **\$1,000** Hosts a community reading for 200 people
- **\$3,000** Underwrites a full ten-week workshop

When setting a goal you should think through the following:

- Number of guests invited
- Number of guests likely to attend
- The likely gift amounts of the people you have invited
- The amount of your gift

Sample Presentation Agenda

1. The host welcomes everyone, briefly introduces Write Around Portland
2. Write Around Portland staff person talks about workshops, readings, anthologies
3. Staff introduces writers. Writers read 1-2 pieces and talk briefly about what our program has meant to them.
4. Staff introduces host.
5. Hosts talks about why s/he supports Write Around Portland and makes pitch.
6. Staff facilitates Q & A with guests and readers while guests make donations.

Welcome. Thank you for being here. I invited you here to share with you my excitement about Write Around Portland.

Write Around Portland offers ten-week writing workshops in partnership with social service agencies. In the course of a workshop people write together, share their stories and offer feedback. People's lives are changed when they discover in themselves their own voice, their own creativity and their own worth as writers and as people.

Rather than just tell you how amazing Write Around Portland writers are, I will let you experience it for yourself.

—SHORT READING—

Right now there are workshops for (people living with HIV, veterans including those living with post-traumatic stress disorder, girls in a group home in Washington county, a group in downtown Portland for chronically ill low-income adults and many others.)

Write Around Portland makes sure that everyone has access to writing in community, regardless of income or other barriers by providing our workshops, including journals, pens, bus tickets, child care, and snacks all free of charge.

As you know I am hoping that you will join me in supporting Write Around Portland with a gift this evening. You probably came here with an amount in mind. To change lives and save community I hope that you will consider stretching and giving even more than you planned. The gift of writing is truly a life-changing gift.

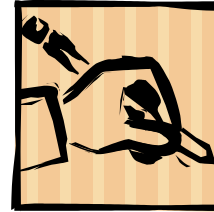
Post-Party Follow-Up: Thank You

After the house party, we will provide you with a list of your guests who made donations to Write Around Portland.

Gifts to Write Around Portland are tax-deductible. Everyone who donates at your house party will receive a thank you letter from us with appropriate tax information. Of course, we would love it if you would also follow up with your guests with a personal thank you note.

Follow-Up: Non-Attendees

We like to follow up with a letter to everyone who was invited but unable to attend. A typical letter includes a reference to the success of your house party, a copy of a piece of writing that was shared at your event and a return envelope in which people can send a gift. Anyone who responds to this letter with a gift will also receive a thank you letter and tax acknowledgement. We will inform you of any gifts that come in after the party, so that you can personally thank your invitees.



Contact our Development Director with your own ideas or for help with hosting a fundraiser:

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