

## **Beyond the Statement: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Literary Organizations**

### **Description:**

Literary organizations must reflect the growing call for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in their workshops, events, readings, and outreach. Adopting a statement is the first step, but how do we create socially relevant and diverse programming, while ensuring equity and inclusive access to all? Join the leaders of several literary organizations to discuss creating their own statements and how through increasing and supporting DEI, the reach of the literary arts exponentially expands.

### **Category:**

Writers Conference & Centers Events

### **Event Organizer and Moderator:**

**Michael Khandelwal** (moderator) is the Executive Director of The Muse Writers Center, a nationally recognized literary center in Norfolk, Virginia. An award-winning writer and teacher, he writes poetry, fiction, editorials, profiles, and feature articles, which have appeared in *Rattle*, *Coastal Virginia Magazine*, *Alt Daily*, and elsewhere. Michael teaches poetry and fiction workshops for The Muse, and is the current Secretary of the Norfolk Electoral Board and a member of the Norfolk Commission on the Arts and Humanities. A graduate of the University of Southern California (BA & MPW), he is a past web content management specialist for The American Council on Education and the past President of the 2008 Electoral College of Virginia. [michael@the-muse.org](mailto:michael@the-muse.org), [the-muse.org](http://the-muse.org)

## Event Participants:

**Rob Arnold** is a Chamoru poet, editor, and Interim Executive Director of Hugo House, Seattle's independent writing center. His poems have appeared in *Ploughshares*, *Hyphen*, *Gettysburg Review*, *Poetry Northwest*, *RED INK*, *Yes Poetry*, *The Ocean State Review*, and *The Volta*, among others.

**Jerod Santek** is the Artistic Director at Write On, Door County, a nonprofit writing center and writers' residency program he helped found in 2013. From 1994 to 2013, he served as the Program Director at the Loft Literary Center in Minneapolis. [jerod@writeondoorcounty.org](mailto:jerod@writeondoorcounty.org)

**Peter E. Murphy** is the founder of Murphy Writing of Stockton University, which has been sponsoring The Winter Poetry & Prose Getaway and other conferences, workshops and courses in the United States and Europe since 1994. [Peter.Murphy@stockton.edu](mailto:Peter.Murphy@stockton.edu), [www.murphywriting.com](http://www.murphywriting.com)

**Carla Du Pree** is a state arts advocate, executive director of CityLit Project, and writes fiction. She's received fiction fellowships from Hedgebrook, Rhode Island Writers Colony for Writers of Color, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, among others. She was awarded the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies' inaugural Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Individual Award for her work leading the charge to address and advance diversity, equity and inclusion in the arts in Maryland, and was the Maryland State Department of Education's Arts Leader for April 2020. She holds a Masters from Johns Hopkins University. [crdupree@gmail.com](mailto:crdupree@gmail.com)

## Opening Remarks and Housekeeping Announcements:

Welcome to Beyond the Statement: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Literary Organizations. A few reminders before we begin:

- For those needing or wishing to follow along to a written text, please let the moderator of the panel, Michael Khandelwal, know, and a printed copy will be delivered to you.
- Please make sure that spaces marked for wheelchairs remain clear of chairs or other barriers.
- Treat service animals as working animals and do not attempt to distract or pet them.
- Be aware of those with chemical sensitivities and refrain from wearing scented products.
- Please be aware that your fellow attendees may have invisible disabilities. Do not question anyone's use of an accommodation while at the conference, including for chairs reserved for those with disabilities.

## **Let's Begin**

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is more than posting a statement on a website, it's a way of redefining the reach and scope of the literary community, ensuring the literary arts are accessible to all, no matter their circumstance or background.

I am excited to introduce our panelists this morning, Rob Arnold from Hugo House in Seattle, Jerod Santek from Write On Door County in Wisconsin, Peter Murphy from Murphy Writing of Stockton University in New Jersey, and Carla Du Pree from Baltimore's CityLit Project. I am Michael Khandelwal from The Muse Writers Center in Norfolk, Virginia, and I will be your moderator.

Instead of reading everyone's biographies, I'll leave it to you to read them on your own. And we'd like to present this panel a little differently than most at AWP. To us, this less of a panel and more of a resource to you and a conversation about diversity, equity, and inclusion... in statements

adopted by organizations, yes, but also in the daily practice of DEI in our organizations.

Adopting statements and policies help prevent discrimination, but they also create an even larger and more diverse literary community, which is what we all want to do.

**Here's what we are going to discuss, via roundtable today:**

- How did our organizations develop and write our DEI statements?
- How have we created programming to reflect DEI in our organizations?
- How do we ensure equitable and inclusive access to our communities?
- What has been the benefit to our local literary communities from our adoption of DEI statements and programming? How has our reach expanded?
- What does authenticity look like to you when adopting the principles of DEI?

But before we say anything else, we'd like to ask you, the audience, if there was anything else you wanted to make sure we discussed? This is your time.

We will make sure to try to cover everything, but also leave 15-20 minutes at the end for questions and discussion.

Let's tackle the moderator questions now. We understand this portion of the event may be more spontaneous than what can be planned for in a written document. But we hope this discussion will be enlightening and useful to you and your literary communities going forward.