

## GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

**FUNDS:** Hire part- or full-time writers-in-residence; hire part-time program assistants to reduce staff-student ratio; hire full-time program staff for an after-school program at Ballou High School; provide transportation for field trips to museums and performances.

**TIME:** Energetic adults and university students to serve as after-school mentors; audience members to attend student readings and plays.

**GOODS:** Gift cards to bookstores, laptop computer (Pentium III or higher), 3-in-1 color printer (print-scan-copy), digital camera, fine art books, art supplies for bookmaking, printmaking, collage, and textile painting. Pick-up for smaller goods can be arranged.

## CONTACT

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Operating budget:  
\$162,159



YOUNG WORDSMITHS UNLOCK THEIR TALENT AND CREATIVITY AT D.C. CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP

## D.C. CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP

At a time when the arts are disappearing from curricula across the country, fiction, poetry and drama are flourishing among Hart Middle School students in Southeast Washington. Six years ago, Nancy Schwalb, a writer whose work has appeared in *Vanity Fair*, founded the D.C. Creative Writing Workshop in order to extend students' passion for the written word beyond the boundaries of school walls and school hours.

In D.C. Creative Writing Workshop's after-school fiction and poetry program, experienced writers-in-residence lead classes at Hart three times a week. The publication of a literary magazine, *hArtworks*, gives all of the students an opportunity to see their work in print, and it is a rare opportunity indeed: *hArtworks* is the only magazine of its kind in the country. Each issue is celebrated with student readings at partner bookstores Borders, Barnes & Noble and Karibu Books. In the after-school drama program, students work together to write an adaptation of a classical Greek play, applying the work's enduring themes to their own time and concerns. A professional director guides rehearsals and teaches acting skills. Students also attend at least six productions at Arena Stage and the Shakespeare Theatre — an entirely new experience for most participants, who largely come from low-income households.

Last year, 217 African American youth at Hart Middle School took part in Workshop programs, which also have expanded to serve Hart's feeder schools, Simon Elementary and Ballou Senior High. Each year's enrollment pointedly includes students who have lost family members to violence. "It is very important to us that students connect to writing and use it as a means of reflecting on their own lives," says Executive Director Jamila Wade. A recent survey conducted by the program indicates an achievement beyond this high goal: more than 70 percent of students reported that they had sometimes turned to writing to "relieve stress" or to avoid negative activities.



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