



WRITING IS MIGHTY!

2023

IMPACT REPORT

Celebrating 15 Years



MIGHTY WRITERS



Back in 2009, Mighty Writers launched as a free writing nonprofit for kids 7 to 17 in a Philadelphia storefront space that had recently served as an Obama for President headquarters.

“You’ll be all set, open for business,” nonprofit veterans told us. “But it takes

time to establish a nonprofit — especially one that focuses on writing — so don’t be disappointed.”

No problem. We measured our expectations and spent our time designing and decorating our space (which, FYI, had been provided by music impresario Kenny Gamble — ever grateful, sir!) with superhero art: Spider-Man, Maya Angelou, Marvel Comic covers, James Baldwin, Beyoncé.

As day one approached, we sat back and waited to see if maybe a few kids would trickle in out of curiosity. By day’s end, we were scrambling to adjust. Soon, our numbers were growing with no end in sight.

We adjusted our expectations upwards those first few years — and we’ve been adjusting upwards ever since.

When we received our first-year grant from the late Gerry Lenfest, the generous Philadelphia philanthropist, he offered this: “Don’t sit on that corner storefront in South Philadelphia long. If you believe in what you’re doing, grow — reach more kids, be unafraid.”

Today, as we celebrate our 15-year anniversary, we have nine Mighty centers in Greater Philadelphia and New Jersey. We’re also in the midst of launching a program in El Paso, Texas, both for kids who have been residents for some time and for those who have recently crossed the border.

Our elevator pitch hasn’t changed in 15 years: We teach kids to write. Nor has our mission statement: **We teach kids to think clearly and write with clarity so that they can achieve success.**

Writing gets kids to focus, to contemplate, to assess, to think clearly and write with clarity.

Given that, how can we possibly not keep growing?

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Tim Whitaker'.

Tim Whitaker, Executive Director
twhitaker@mightywriters.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Board Chair

Mustafa Rashed

Treasurer

James Kindya

Secretary

Shelli Thomas

Directors

Anjela Alvarado

Cheryl-Lyn Bentley

Michael Epstein

Corinne Green

Lyn Groome

Raúl Diego Rivera
Hernández

Anne Kringel

Alysea McDonald

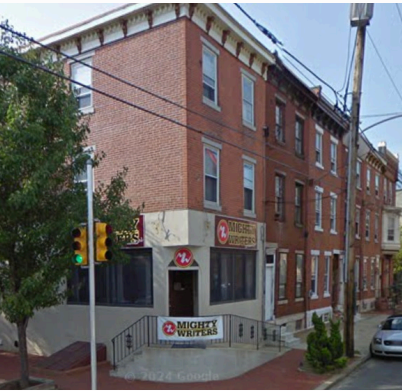
Executive Director

Tim Whitaker



**MIGHTY
WRITERS**

2009



- Mighty Writers opens its first location at **1501 Christian Street** in Philadelphia.
- The full-time staff consists of two: Education Director **Rachel Loeper** and Executive Director **Tim Whitaker**.
- **75 kids** sign up for the first workshops.



The first online description of Mighty Writers:

“Mighty Writers is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit with plans to open free-to-all writing centers in the city’s neighborhoods. Teaching kids to write in cool storefront settings.”



2010-2011

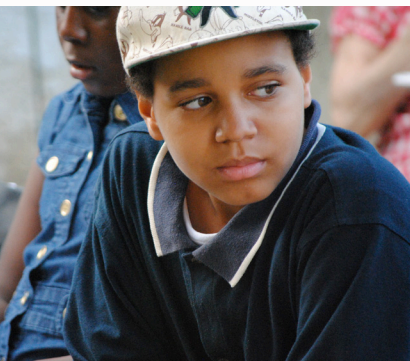
- MW opens **Mighty Vision**, a storefront pop-up at 641 South Street, dedicated to comic-book writing and new media ventures.
- Locations are decorated with superhero art, to remind kids of their **superpowers**.
- High school students take MW's **first college prep** class.



- MW is named a **Champion in Action** by Citizens Bank.
- MW implements MY Access, a quantitative assessment tool to **measure literacy proficiency**.
- Mighty students launch **The Mighty Post**, a kid-run digital magazine.
- The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation awards MW a large grant to create a **multimedia history of Black radio in Philadelphia**.



2012-2013



- **Mighty Teen Scholars** teaches high schoolers critical thinking and different styles of writing.
- **The Phillies Charities** honors Mighty Writers.
- MW launches its flagship **Academy**, transforming from a drop-in approach to a consistent homework and writing program.
- PRX broadcasts **Mighty Radio**, a student-run Internet radio station honoring the legacy of Philadelphia's early Black broadcasters.



- **MW West** opens at 39th and Lancaster.
- **Philadelphia 76ers** names MW a "Hometown Hero."
- Students get individualized support through the launch of MW's **one-on-one mentorships**.
- MW's volunteer enlistment reaches **300**.



Karen Heller: Mighty Writers spread love of books to the young

Tsaira Rodgers has a sweet sparrow of a voice but knows how to make herself heard in print. "I feel like some adults think, 'Oh... they're just kids, they don't know anything,' but that's not true," she wrote. "I'm a Philadelphian, I know what goes on here. I understand that if one person suffers, we all can suffer. If one person succeeds we all can succeed."

The Philadelphia Inquirer

2014-2015



- President Obama's Committee on the Arts and Humanities names MW one of **50 top arts and humanities-based programs** in the U.S.
- MW receives a Knight ArtsChallenge grant to **open a bilingual center** geared toward Mexican families.
- The Barra Foundation honors MW as an **"exemplary nonprofit** that demonstrates leadership, performance and adaptability."
- **College prep** becomes part of MW's core programs.



- **MW North** opens in North Philadelphia.
- **MW El Futuro**, the first of MW's bilingual centers, opens in the 9th Street Market.
- Philebrity names MW **Nonprofit of the Year**.
- MW wins an **Edward R. Murrow Award** for Audio News Documentary for its history of Black radio.
- MW enrolls **2,500 students**.

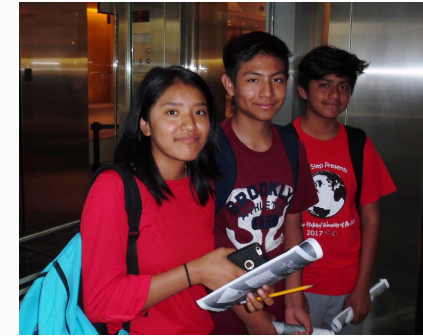


2016-2017

- MW sets a world record for simultaneous writing by gathering **3,000 students** on the steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art to write on the theme "If I Were President."
- Number of **volunteers** climbs to **400**.

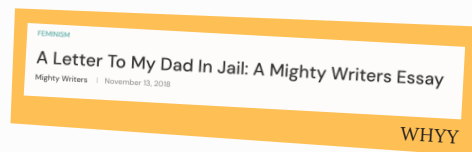


- **NBC/Telemundo** chooses MW El Futuro as the winner of its 21st Century Solutions Grant.
- Philadelphia Magazine names MW its **"After-School All Star."**
- Kids showcase their writing at the first annual **MightyFest**, a celebration of student voices.
- Budget reaches **\$1 million**.
- MW teaches **3,000 kids**.



2018-2019

- MW **expands programs** into Philadelphia rec centers and public schools.
- Mighty high schooler **Richard Jenkins is celebrated nationally** for getting a full ride to Harvard.
- **MW Camden** opens in New Jersey.
- MW eighth grader Saviyah Campbell publishes **“A Letter to My Dad in Jail”** in Bust magazine.
- MW **donates books to children** held at the Berks ICE detention center.



- MW students present a booklet to city and state lawmakers with **writing about how violence affects them.**



- Chester County kids get bilingual programming with the launch of **MW El Futuro Kennett.**
- **The City of Philadelphia** recognizes MW for “outstanding after-school literacy programs.”
- MW hires a dedicated mindfulness director to focus on **social-emotional learning.**

2020



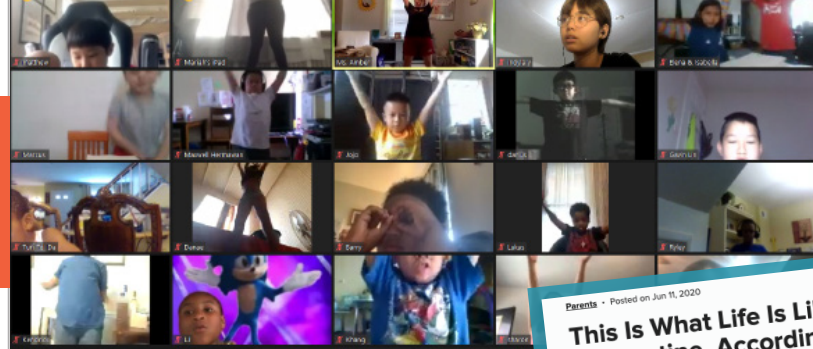
- In response to the pandemic, MW pivots and starts its **Food and Literacy Distribution Program**, offering free lunches and groceries to kids and families in need.



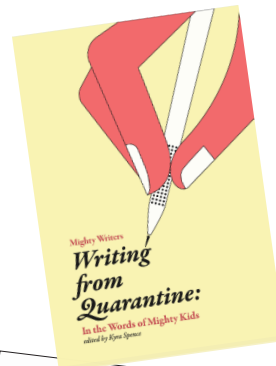
- MW hires a full-time **director of distribution** to supervise the expanding program.

LOCAL NEWS
Mighty Writers After-School Program Altering Mission In Order To Help Philadelphia Families Impacted By Pandemic

CBS News



Parents • Posted on Jun 11, 2020
This Is What Life Is Like In Quarantine, According To Kids
See the world through the eyes of kids.
by Mike Spehr
BuzzFeed Staff
Buzzfeed



- During lockdown, MW transitions to **MW At Home**, its virtual learning program.
- MW students write about their pandemic experience in **"Writing from Quarantine."**
- **The Library of Congress** names MW a Best Practice Honoree.
- Jewel, Jason Isbell, Marcus Roberts and other prominent songwriters participate in the **Mighty Song Project**, a joint project with LitHub.



Students Respond to Reopening of Schools During Pandemic: 'Better Safe Than Sorry'
"I feel happy I get to meet my friends again -- I also feel sad because people have higher chances to get COVID-19," said 10-year-old Aaron Chandra
By Morgan Smith • Published on August 20, 2020 04:26PM EDT
People

2021-2022



- **Distribution efforts expand** with the addition of pop-up sites.

- **Katie Couric** celebrates Mighty Writers with a large donation and a shout-out at a Philly event.



- MW **Atlantic City** opens.

- MW **Newark** opens.

- Students and families come to MW locations to get **COVID vaccines** and health screenings.



- MW wins **Best Pandemic Pivot** from Billy Penn.



- MW **Germantown** opens.

- MW gets its **first transit van** for distribution.



- As part of its broader Whole Child Approach, MW releases a **mental health resource guide** for Philadelphia County.



- **Lady Gaga's Born This Way Foundation** awards a Kindness in Community Fund grant to support MW's community-led mental health efforts.

- **Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney** makes a World Series bet with the City of Houston — with donations to go to "beloved local youth program Mighty Writers."

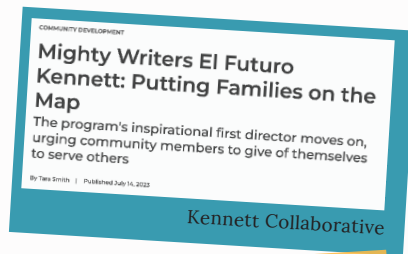


2023



- MW has **42 full-time** and **21 part-time** employees.
- Our Mighty fleet consists of **six vans** for distribution.

- **MW Executive Director Tim Whitaker** is named one of 12 Gucci Changemakers nationwide.
- MW **Camden East** opens at Ablett Village.
- Students in the border town of **El Paso, Texas**, get Mighty Bags of toys and treats to help them on their journey in the U.S.
- **MW El Paso** begins pilot programming.
- MW Senior Writer Maureen Boland launches **The Mighty Writers Podcast**.



Distribution

- 29,450** books
- 3 million+** lbs. of food
- 55,200** lunches
- 47,400** produce boxes
- 224,200** boxes of groceries
- 2 million+** diapers
- 296,000** period products
- 4,240** packs of baby wipes
- 3,850** cans of baby formula

Education

- 237** programs
- 4,697** kids
- Nine** MW locations
- 1,432** hours of mentorship
- 544** volunteers

2023 Program Outcomes

Academy

~ **65%** of students achieved grade-level literacy proficiency.

~ **85%** of parents believe that MW improved their child's grades.

~ **100%** of parents saw their child's relationship with writing improve.

Mentorships

~ **91%** of mentees said their mentor helped them achieve their goals.

~ **96%** of mentees said their mentor helped them become a better thinker and/or writer.

~ **91%** of mentees said they felt supported.

Social-Emotional Learning

~ **70%** agreed with: "Because of MW, my confidence and self-esteem have improved."

~ **75%** agreed with: "Because of MW, I am learning how to focus better."

~ **65%** agreed with: "Because of MW, I can stay calm in difficult situations."

Workshops

~ **95%** of students said they would re-enroll at MW.

~ **86%** of students overcame writing challenges.

~ **77%** of students increased their ability to think critically.

Teens

~ **100%** of high school students graduated.

~ **95%** of high school graduates matriculated into post-secondary education.

~ **83%** agreed with: "MW is a safe place for me to spend time."



Quotes From Our Mighty Kids

"Mighty Writers is one of the best places to go when your mother does not want to deal with you."

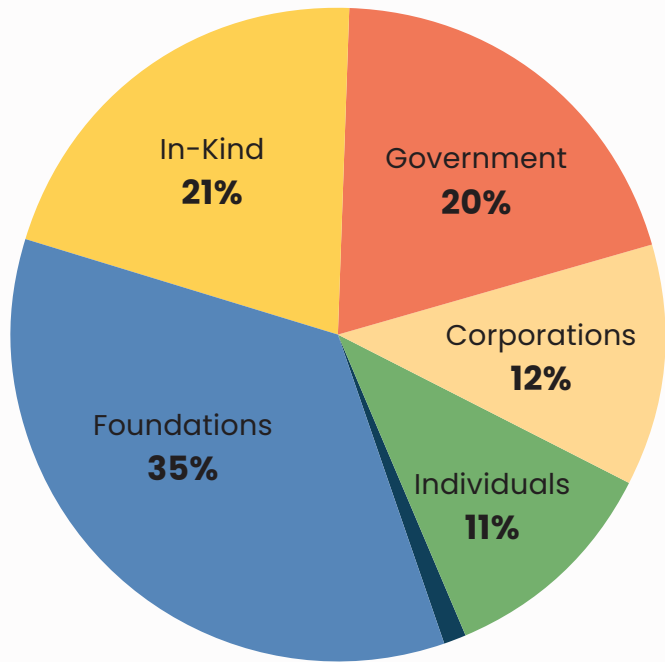
"I love Mighty Writers because we have someone to help us with our homework and we do fun projects. I want to live at Mighty Writers."

"My mom likes this place, because if we are running out of food then we can go there."



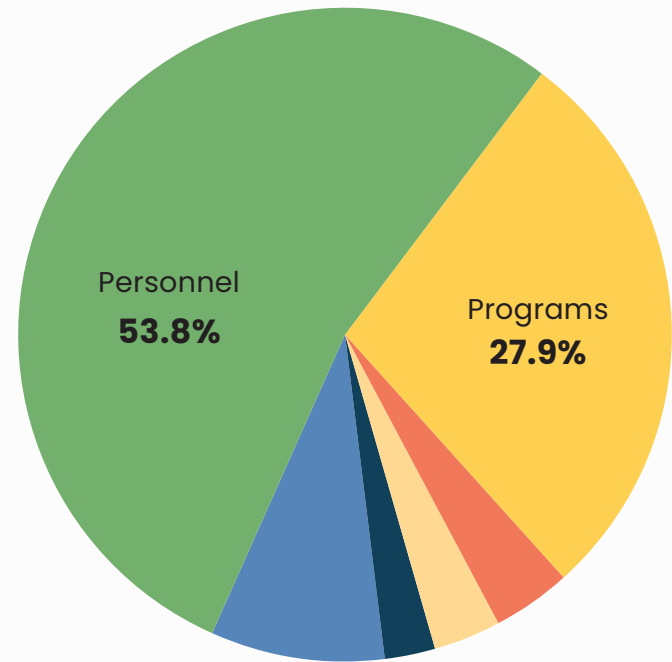
2023 Financials

Income



Other **1%**

Expenses



Rent **4%**

Program Contractors **3.5%**

Marketing & PR **2.4%**

Other **8.4%**

A Mighty thanks to all our supporters for helping us make the last 15 years so special. We couldn't have done it without you.

Here's to another 15!



MW Locations

MW Germantown

12 E. Church Lane
Philadelphia, PA 19144

MW West

3520 Fairmount Ave.
Philadelphia, PA 19104

MW North

Vaux Family Center
2300 Master St.
Philadelphia, PA 19121

MW El Futuro

1025 S. Ninth St.
Philadelphia, PA 19147

MW El Futuro Kennett

121 Willow St.
Toughkenamon, PA 19374

MW Atlantic City

15 N. California Ave.
Atlantic City, NJ 08401

MW Newark

59 Lincoln Park
Newark, NJ 07102

MW Camden

1801 Broadway
Camden, NJ 08104

MW Camden East

307 Ablett Village
Camden, NJ 08105

Stay in Touch



mightywriters.org



hello@mightywriters.org



[@mightywriters](https://www.instagram.com/mightywriters)

Donate

Mighty Writers

1901 S. Ninth St., #622
Philadelphia, PA 19148



mightywriters.org/donate