It’s been a transformative year for us at the Maryland Humanities Council. In 2015, we began pursuing our ambitious Vision 2020 plan for the future.

Thanks to the amazing support of our partners, participants, collaborators, and donors, we were able to serve more youth, adults, and elders than ever before with inspiring, high-quality, free humanities activities. We were also able to reach more than 10% of the state’s residents through grant-supported projects, fairs and festivals, online engagement, and our weekly radio program.

Let us be abundantly clear: this is only possible because you believe in the tremendous impact of the humanities and our ability to bring them to communities statewide. Thank you for your commitment.

Please enjoy a few moments savoring what you made possible for the Maryland Humanities Council and hundreds of thousands of your friends, colleagues, and neighbors last year. We think you’ll be touched by the joy you see on the faces here. What a future we have ahead of us. Thank you!

Hon. Stephen J. Sfekas
Chair, Board of Directors

Phoebe Stein
Executive Director

Thanks to your tremendous generosity—our supporters, partners, and friends—we are able to offer substantive, impactful humanities programs throughout Maryland. Here’s a snapshot of our Fiscal Year 2015 (Nov 2014–Oct 2015).

**Volunteer Hours (est.):** 7,211

**Twitter Followers:** 3,570

**Events:** 1,395

**Donors:** 589

**Towns:** 171

**Youth Participants:** 35,993

**Value of Volunteer Hours:** $166,358

**Partners:** 564

**Volunteers:** 679

**Scholars:** 1,483

**Facebook Fans:** 5,658

**Participants:** 53,262

**Video Views:** 10,350

**Audience:** 794,357
Letters About Literature fosters a love of reading while honing students’ creative, analytical, and writing skills. In this national contest, young people pen personal essays to authors whose work has had a profound effect on them. Each spring, Maryland’s finalists and winners are honored, along with an outstanding educator. Among those honored in 2015 was Level I winner Dhruv Pai—pictured above with his proud parents—for his letter to Daniel Handler, aka Lemony Snicket.

One Maryland One Book is a dynamic program for both youth and adults. MHC provides thousands of free copies of the chosen book to schools, libraries, and community partners annually. An estimated 10,000 students are reading, analyzing, and applying themes explored to their own lives. Several hundred Baltimore City and Prince George’s County Public Schools students also met the author during a special event at a local university that includes a campus tour.

Taking part can be transformational for readers. A Baltimore County teacher shared that one of her students—a young man who works a full-time job in fast food in addition to attending high school—wrote her a thank you letter after reading and discussing The Boys in the Boat, stating that it had changed his life. Daniel James Brown’s bestselling account of the underdog University of Washington men’s crew team that shocked the world at the 1936 Berlin Olympics was the extremely popular selection last year.
Maryland History Day gives middle and high school students a solid base in critical thinking, research and analysis, writing, and public speaking. Working solo or in small groups, students create original documentaries, exhibits, performances, research papers, or websites exploring a tremendous breadth of historical topics. Students progress through competitions at the school, district, state, and national levels. A national study found History Day participants outperform peers on state assessments in social studies, as well as reading, science, and math.

Maryland History Day has a profound and lasting effect on participating students, many of whom go on to careers informed by their experiences. Alexandria Ligon, an honoree last year in the senior individual exhibits category, recently spoke to students competing this year in Montgomery County. She shared her reflections on how participation impacted her, some of which are excerpted here.

“My project was an exhibit board about Madame C.J. Walker. As a young black girl, I had a growing interest in learning about my hair and caring for it. So Madame Walker’s story was a perfect fit. I thought that Madame Walker’s legacy was under appreciated, so I felt a responsibility to educate myself and share my knowledge with others.”

Along the journey I acquired so many mentors. For once, I felt that my voice mattered. History Day is more than a school project. It taught me that you can do anything you put your mind to. Believe in your dreams, they are more than just what your parents tell you to feel good about yourself.”

I simply want to encourage you all to take this journey seriously, as it can change your future for the better. Take pride in your work, speak up – and you will reap the benefits.”

The program experienced its highest participation level last year among students since its launch. Among the dozens of student competitors who advanced to the national competition was Alayna Stepp, senior group website category honoree from Frederick County, pictured at left with Amanda Conn from the Maryland State Department of Education.

Students who progress to the national contest trade state pins. Grady Fort, junior individual website honoree from Calvert County, was especially successful in this cherished tradition.

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I simply want to encourage you all to take this journey seriously, as it can change your future for the better. Take pride in your work, speak up – and you will reap the benefits.”
Gathering with friends and strangers, classmates and coworkers. Sharing our stories with one another. Examining history to give context to our current moment. Spurring conversations across cultural, economic, and generational divides. Providing crucial grants for educational and cultural projects. These are just some of the ways in which the Maryland Humanities Council brings Marylanders together to enrich their communities.

**CHAUTAUQUA**

- 3 historical figures
- 6 counties
- 18 performances
- 1,831 participants

Clockwise from top: Museum on Main Street, Federalsburg; Chautauqua, Catonsville; Museum on Main Street, Cumberland; Grants, Baltimore; Veterans Standing Together, Harwood

**Got Stories and Memories?**

Discuss and map memories of living and working in Baltimore’s historic industrial communities.

Baybrook Mapping Dialogue

Sparrows Point Mapping Dialogue
DONOR SPOTLIGHT
Glennor Shirley • Columbia • Donor since 2010

Why is MHC’s work important to you?
MHC is important to me because of its programs of inclusive community engagement, its use of various educational media to help open minds, and the willingness of staff to travel across Maryland to ensure this. The book donations to the Correctional Libraries resulted in many lively book discussions among prisoners.

What would you tell others to inspire them to support MHC?
MHC reaches out to all communities resulting in “something for everyone.” Your financial contribution, no matter how small, will help to ensure the continuation and expansion of their educational programs, visits, book discussions, and displays.

Shirley pictured with 2011 One Maryland One Book author Sherman Alexie
The Maryland Humanities Council is able to serve every corner of the state thanks to our amazing local partners. The following is just a partial list of the hundreds of cultural, educational, government, historical, and social service organizations that help bring the humanities to your community.

**Statewide**
- Maryland Public Television
- Maryland State Arts Council

** Allegany County**
- Allegany College of Maryland
- Allegany County Library
- Allegany County Public Schools
- Allegany Museum
- Bishop Walsh School
- C. William Gilchrist Museum of the Arts
- Frostburg Museum
- Frostburg State University
- Gorden Roberts House
- Main Street Books
- Mountain City Traditional Arts
- North Branch Correctional Institution Library

**Anne Arundel County**
- AIA Maryland Gallery
- Annapolis Bookstore & Café
- Anne Arundel County Cultural Resources Division of the Office of Planning and Zoning
- Anne Arundel County Public Library
- Anne Arundel County Public Schools
- Anne Arundel County Reading Council
- Banneker-Douglass Museum
- Galesville Community Center
- James Brice House
- The Key School
- Kunta Kinte Resource Center, Sojourner Douglass College
- St. Anne’s School of Annapolis
- Wiley H. Bates Legacy Center

**Baltimore City**
- Bais Yaakov of Baltimore High School
- Baltimore Book Festival
- Baltimore City Public Schools
- Baltimore Rowing & Resource Center
- Baltimore Rowing Club
- Bryn Mawr School
- Civic Works
- Enoch Pratt Free Library
- Frederick Douglass Isaac Maritime Park
- Friendship Academy of Engineering and Technology
- Gilman School
- Good Samaritan Hospital
- Institute of Notre Dame
- Jer尼gan Institute at the National Federation of the Blind
- Jewish Museum of Maryland
- Kreiger Schechter Day School
- Loyola University Maryland
- Lubavitch Homeschool Umbrella Group
- Maryland Historical Society
- Maryland Library for the Blind & Physically Handicapped
- Mercy Medical Center
- Mount Clare Museum House
- Mount Saint Joseph High School
- Notre Dame of Maryland University
- Painted Screen Society of Baltimore
- St. Joseph School, Fullerton
- The Seton Keough School
- University of Baltimore Bob Parsons Veterans Center
- Wide Angle Youth Media
- WYPR 88.1 FM

**Baltimore County**
- Baltimore County Public Library
- Baltimore County Public Schools
- Boys’ Latin School of Maryland
- Calvert Hall College High School
- City County Discerning Readers
- Community College of Baltimore County
- Maryland School for the Blind
- Notre Dame Preparatory School
- University of Maryland, Baltimore County

**Calvert County**
- American Chestnut Land Trust
- Warrior’s Rest Sanctuary
- Calvert County Public Schools
- Calvert Library
- End Hunger Warehouse
- Jefferson Patterson Park & Museum

**Caroline County**
- Caroline County Public Library
- Caroline County Public Schools
- Federalsburg Historical Society Museum

**Carroll County**
- Carroll County Public Library
- Carroll County Public Schools
- Carroll County Youth Services Bureau
- Fairhaven
- Mount Airy Senior Center

**Cecil County**
- Cecil College Elkton Station
- Cecil County Public Library
- Cecil County Public Schools
- Immaculate Conception School
- St. Mary’s High School

**Charles County**
- Alpha Delta Kappa - Maryland Alpha Beta Chapter
- Charles County Public Library
- Charles County Public Schools
- Clark Senior Center
- College Of Southern Maryland
- Father Andrew White School
- Grace Lutheran School
- Indian Head Senior Center
- Leonard Hall Junior Naval Academy
- St. Mary’s Bryantown School

**Dorchester County**
- Dorchester County Public Schools
- Nanticoke Historic Preservation Alliance
- Win Transport

**Frederick County**
- Frederick Community College
- Frederick County Public Libraries
- Frederick County Public Schools
- Frederick Homeschoolers
- Maryland School for the Deaf
- St. Johns Catholic Prep
- Private High School

**Garrett County**
- Garrett College
- Garrett County Public Schools
- Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County

**Harford County**
- Harford Community College

**Howard County**
- Avaya
- EZ Readers Book Club
- Howard County Historical Society
- Howard County Public Schools
- Howard County Recreation and Parks
- Howard County Tourism and Promotion
- Jo Orser Bookclub
- St. Andrew’s Episcopal School
- St. Augustine School

**Kent County**
- Kent County Public Library
- Kent County Public Schools
- Radcliffe Creek School

**Montgomery County**
- Barrie School
- Bullis School
- Community Mediation Maryland
- Gathersburg Book Festival
- Green Acres School
- Montgomery College
- Montgomery County Historical Society
- Montgomery County Public Libraries
- Montgomery County Public Schools
- Primary Readers Book Club
- Retired Teachers Book Club
- Rockville Senior Center Book Club
- School For Tomorrow
- St. John the Baptist
- Washington Episcopal School

**Prince George’s County**
- Accokeek Academy
- Accokeek Foundation
- Afro American Historical & Genealogical Society, Prince George’s County Maryland Chapter
- ArtsTi Riverdale
- Chesapeake Math & IT Academy
- College Park Academy
- From the Heart Christian School
- Montpelier Arts Center
- Prince George’s Arts & Humanities Council
- Prince George’s County Memorial Library System
- Prince George’s County Public Schools
- Riverdale Presbyterian Church and University Park
- St. Ambrose School

**Queen Anne’s County**
- Chesapeake College
- Queen Anne’s County Library
- Queen Anne’s County Public Schools

**Somerset County**
- Maryland Correctional Library
- Somerset County Library
- Somerset County Public Schools
- University of Maryland, Eastern Shore

**St. Mary’s County**
- St. Mary’s County Library
- St. Mary’s County Public Schools
- St. Mary’s Ryken High School

**Talbot County**
- Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum
- Londonderry Book Club
- Talbot County Public Schools
- Talbot County Free Library

**Washington County**
- Barbara Ingram School for the Arts
- Knob Hall Winery
- Maryland Correctional Institute
- Maryland Correctional Training Facility
- Roxbury Correctional Institute
- Washington County Detention Center
- Washington County Free Library
- Washington County Public Schools

**Wicomico County**
- Bosserman Center for Conflict Resolution
- Eastern Correctional Institution
- Migrant Clinicians Network
- Poplar Hill
- Salisbury University
- Wicomico County Public Schools
- Wicomico Public Library
- Wor-Wic Community College

**Worcester County**
- Worcester County Library
- Worcester County Public Schools

**District of Columbia**
- Federation of State Humanities Councils
- Library of Congress
- National Book Festival
- National Humanities Alliance
- PEN/Faulkner Foundation

Below: Museum on Main Street, Annapolis
Last year, our collaboration with the Galesville Community Center was honored with the Federation of State Humanities Council’s Schwartz Prize, a national award for outstanding public humanities programming. A host site for our Museum on Main Street program, the Galesville Community Center and its local partners presented the Smithsonian’s Hometown Teams traveling exhibition and a multi-faceted companion project, “Field of Dreams: Home Grown History,” preserving and celebrating the vital history of this small Anne Arundel County town. Among the many activities that galvanized local residents were the sewing of a community quilt, a reunion of the Hot Sox Negro League baseball team, and an oral history project conducted by South River High School students in dialogue with community elders.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT
Greg Sesek • Baltimore • Donor Since 2012

Why is MHC’s work important to you? What impact has it had on your community?
I am a Marylander, a lifelong late thirtysomething Baltimore City resident, and have worked in the arts and community development my entire career. I know the transformative power that comes from speaking and being heard. Too many people in our communities feel invisible, and as a social worker, I see this on a daily basis. Individuals communicate with us however they can. MHC creates opportunities for us to speak and be heard through their wonderful programs and the skills they teach. I hope you will participate.

What would you tell others to inspire them to support MHC?
MHC creates opportunities to engage people across our diverse state, children and adults, leaders in our communities and new Americans. I am inspired when I see young people recognized for their elegant self-revelations at the Letters About Literature program. Bright minds have to be encouraged and developed. The humanities are the tools for creating atmospheres of mutual respect and societies capable of recognizing the dignity of each voice. You will experience this if you participate in MHC programs, plus you will have some fun. I can’t think of a better place to meet new friends.
MHC supports innovative humanities projects with grants of up to $10,000. During Fiscal Year 2015, we awarded 17 grants totaling $87,600. Recipient organizations came from five Maryland counties and Baltimore City, as well as the District of Columbia. All grants were leveraged to secure additional community supporting funds, totaling $837,005 for all recipients.

**Allegany County**
Frostburg State University
Humanities, History and Social Ethics in Appalachia
$1,200

**Anne Arundel County**
Annapolis Community Foundation
Treaty of Paris Center
$1,200

**Historic Annapolis Foundation**
Teacher Workshops on 18th Century Slavery and African American History
$1,200

**Lost Towns Project**
Four Rivers Heritage Area in 40 Artifacts: Accessing the County’s Archaeological Collections
$3,400

**Baltimore City**
American Institute of Architects, Baltimore
Uncovering the History of Past Women Architects
$2,500

**Arts Every Day**
A Walk through Shakespeare
$3,400

**City Neighbors Foundation**
Does History Matter?: A Student Exploration and Documentary
$1,200

**Fells Point Creative Alliance**
Después de la Frontera/After the Border
$10,000

**The Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African-American History & Culture**
$6,750

**The Walters Art Museum**
Humanities Programming for “Pearls on a String: Art in the Age of Great Islamic Empires”
$10,000

**Baltimore County**
Historic Hampton
Historic Hampton: Where Maryland History Inspires Art and Innovation
$5,000

**Stevenson University**
New Roots
$8,800

**Towson University**
Visions of Place: Complex Geographies in Contemporary Israeli Art
$6,000

**University of Maryland, Baltimore County**
Mapping Dialogues: Deindustrialization in Baltimore
$10,000

**Dorchester County**
Nanticoke Historic Preservation Alliance
2015 Nanticoke River Jamboree: “Fire!”
$1,200

**Harford County**
Harford Community College Foundation
Voices of Change: Social Protest through the Arts & Humanities
$9,750

**District of Columbia**
The Ciesla Foundation
Rosenwald Documentary
$6,000

**Volunteer Spotlight**

Keith Stone
Baltimore
Volunteer since 2014

**Why is MHC’s work important to you?**
My mom was a Montessori teacher so I’ve been around the humanities most of my life. Looking back, I have no doubt that the opportunities I had to engage with the humanities in a variety of different ways (e.g., libraries, museums, etc.) played a pivotal role in shaping who I am today. I really connect with MHC’s mission of lifelong learning, and I’m excited to be a part of an organization that is so dedicated to making sure that all Marylanders have the opportunity to engage with the humanities.

**What is your favorite MHC experience or memory?**
As a Board Member, I’ve been fortunate to attend a lot of the great programming supported by MHC. I’m probably the most proud of the organization’s response to the protests that swept Baltimore following the death of Freddie Gray. In the fall of 2015, MHC established a new special grant program called the Humanities Fund for Baltimore and recently has started funding the first slate of applicants. I had the privilege of reviewing grant proposals, and I continue to be amazed by the number of groups that are using the humanities to help move this city forward. Unfortunately, we aren’t able to fund every applicant, but I’m thrilled that we were able to step up and help support some of the fantastic organizations that are using the humanities to address the deep-rooted problems facing the city of Baltimore. [Please see page 15, “Looking Ahead,” for more information.—Ed.]

**What would you tell others to inspire them to support MHC?**
Often times, we don’t realize how much of our everyday experience is influenced by the humanities. Reading your favorite book. Going to an art or history museum. Admiring the architecture that surrounds you. Each of these experiences is an exploration of the humanities. MHC is inspired by these daily interactions, and we strive to enable the continued exploration of humanities content for all Marylanders, regardless of age, economic status, race, location, or any other factor. The work of MHC is not possible without your support.
**Elisabeth Dahl**
Baltimore
Volunteer since 2014

*What is your favorite MHC memory?*
In 2014, the Maryland Center for the Book selected my debut children’s novel, *Genie Wishes* (Abrams 2013), to represent the state on the [National Book] Festival’s *Great Reads About Great Places* list. That alone was exciting. But spending a few hours at the Maryland table in the Festival’s Pavilion of the States was a whole different sort of exciting. Andrea Lewis, director of the Center, had told me ahead of time—*It’ll be a madhouse.* She wasn’t exaggerating. It was a sea of people! People wanting their US maps stamped with the Maryland crab, people browsing through pamphlets, people requesting signed bookmarks, people just wanting to talk books and writing. It was an excellent few hours. The kind of hubbub usually associated with rock concerts, World Cup soccer matches, and Black Friday sales was happening because of books. How great is that?

*What would you tell others to inspire them to support MHC?*
MHC is run by people with the talent and inspiration to turn your support into great humanities-related programming. Their efforts really do—as the MHC tagline says—help to open Marylanders’ eyes, ears, and minds.

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**Robert Forloney**
St. Michaels
Volunteer since 2009

*Why is MHC’s work important to you?*
For almost a decade, I have been involved with MHC in diverse ways—from serving as a partner to participating in public programs to volunteering. MHC has helped to enrich me as well as those in my community. My aspiration is to use a dialogue-centered approach to encourage respectful engagement, facilitate listening, and generate better public understanding when developing educational programming. These aims are also at the center of MHC’s mission. The objective is to directly engage with others who think, feel, and believe differently as we, together, look beneath the surface of complex issues.

*What would you tell others to inspire them to support MHC?*
I would encourage others to support MHC in order to create a robust community that is informed as well as directly engaged in significant local issues. The work that MHC makes possible acts as a catalyst for open and civil dialogue about topics important to the community as a whole. There is no other organization that actively takes on this responsibility.

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**HUMANITIES CONNECTION**

Did you know that MHC offers a weekly humanities essay on public radio?

Thanks to the incredible generosity of WYPR 88.1fm, we are able to bring you humanist perspectives on history, culture, and current events from local scholars, community leaders, grantees, and members of our Board of Directors. The series, *Humanities Connection*, has aired more than 130 segments since 2013, each one introduced by Executive Director Phoebe Stein.

Broadcast every Thursday afternoon at 4:44 p.m. on 88.1fm in Baltimore and Frederick and 106.9fm in Ocean City—to a weekly listenership of 14,000—the series explores the intersection of the humanities and our daily lives. Each installment is also available for subsequent free download at both mdhc.org and wypr.org.

We hope you’ll tune in and share with us your reactions via Facebook and Twitter.

Interested in being featured? Contact Communications Officer and *Humanities Connection* producer Jessica Wichmann at (410) 685-4186 to discuss this opportunity.

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RaeLynne Snyder, Social Studies Coordinator for Baltimore City Public Schools, records a segment on Maryland History Day.
Thanks to our generous donors, we are able to keep hundreds of annual program activities free and accessible to all. Contributors to the annual fund of $1,000 or more are members of our Leadership Circle.

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- Baltimore City Foundation

**Leadership Circle: Platinum**
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- Thomas F. & Francine G. Brady Foundation
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- Columbia Gas of Maryland
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Anne & John Elsbree*
Robin Emrich
Ralph & Evelyne Eshelman
Douglas & Ann Foard
Megan Foley
Sharon & Eugene Friedman
Joyce & Bradley Frost
Martin Gallagher
Sandra & James Gangaware
Barbara & Robert Garner
Joe & Sue Garzonik
Jacqueline Pearce Garrett
Tyler & Cathy Gearhart
Auni & Timmy Gelles

Why is supporting the work of the Maryland Humanities Council important to you?

MHC always offers opportunities for bringing friends and strangers together in learning. As a former chairperson of the MHC Board of Directors, I had many opportunities to both shape and experience the council's work. But my most meaningful MHC memories came in helping to realize the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: Remembrance and Reconciliation initiative. Nearly all of the council's programs drew thematically on this special initiative for several years. As a result, many frank and necessary community dialogues on race were held throughout the state. These challenged everyone to walk in another's shoes, providing vital moments of discovery. The Music of the Movement culminating event—with the amazing performances by Sweet Honey in the Rock founder Bernice Johnson Reagon and the Bowie State University Gospel Choir and remarks from Congressman John Lewis—remains a treasured memory.
WHO WE ARE

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Dr. Phoebe Stein
Executive Director

Jessica Baldwin
Program Assistant

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Maryland History Day Outreach Coordinator

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Program Officer

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Grace Leatherman
Maryland History Day Outreach Coordinator

Andrea Lewis
Program Officer

Susan Millard
Office Manager

Jessica Wichmann
Communications Officer

Theresa Worden
Program Coordinator

Contributed: Private
$253,327
19%

Contributed: State of Maryland
$259,457
20%

Other Income & Interest
$19,745
3%

Change in Net Assets ($15,481)

Fundraising
$199,506
15%

Program Services
$765,940
57%

Management
$177,626
8%

Grants to Organizations
$196,898
15%

EXPENSES
Total $1,339,970

Contributed: National Endowment for the Humanities
$791,960
60%

REVENUES
Total $1,324,489

Statements of Financial Position: FY14

Assets
Cash $592,283
Receivables $165,075
Prepaid Expenses $16,853
Property & Equipment $151,321
Security Deposits $2,500
Total $928,032

Liabilities and Fund Balances

Liabilities
Accounts Payable & Accrued Expenses $65,387
Refundable Advances $33,750
Capital Lease $19,712
Regrants Payable $8,459
Loans Payable -
Subtotal $127,308

Fund Balances
Net Assets - Unrestricted $657,640
Net Assets - Temporarily Restricted $142,984
Subtotal $800,724
Total $928,032

*Gubernatorial appointee
LOOKING AHEAD

Now that you’ve had a look at some of the highlights of 2015, please enjoy this overview of some exciting new developments in store for you and the rest of Maryland this year.

The Pulitzer Prizes Centennial Campfires Initiative

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Pulitzer Prizes, awarded annually and honoring outstanding American works in a variety of arts and humanities disciplines. MHC—along with 45 of our partner councils across the nation and territories—will offer programming throughout the year spotlighting different genres and their relevance and impact on our daily lives.

Our public programming will include:

- **Journalism & Its Power to Inform**—a series of panel discussions featuring Pulitzer-winning journalists. Sponsored in part and hosted by The Baltimore Sun, moderated by Editorial Page Editor Andrew Green. March 8 through May 10.

- **Pulitzer at Play**—a series of dramatic readings featuring A Streetcar Named Desire, The Gin Game, Water by the Spoonful, and others to be determined, along with a new adaptation of Thornton Wilder’s Pulitzer-winning novel, The Bridge of San Luis Rey. Produced in collaboration with and hosted by Olney Theatre Center. September 30 through October 2.

For their generous support for the Campfires Initiative, we thank the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Ford Foundation, Carnegie Corporation of New York, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Pulitzer Prizes Board, and Columbia University.

Two of MHC’s existing programs will complement the Campfires Initiative this year as well. This summer’s Chautauqua series will feature living history performances of three honored artists: poet Gwendolyn Brooks, musician Duke Ellington, and author Ernest Hemingway. One Maryland One Book’s 2016 theme is “the 21st-century Great American Novel,” as embodied by the selected book, All American Boys by Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely.

The Humanities Fund for Baltimore

Both the peaceful protests and the violence in Baltimore that followed the death of Freddie Gray in police custody in April 2015 were in response to decades of structural racism and inequity in housing, education, and economic opportunities in predominantly African American communities. MHC believes that the equity that needs to be created both in Baltimore and across much of the nation can begin with the humanities.

The humanities—especially history, the law, ethics, and philosophy—can give us the contexts for understanding and addressing these entrenched problems. The humanities can facilitate the conversations that will ultimately contribute to solutions. These conversations are—at their foundation—about fostering democracy at a difficult and painful time of polarization, fear, and animosity locally and in our nation.

To that end, MHC has launched a special grants initiative supporting projects by community organizations that utilize the humanities to examine these issues and envision possible solutions to them. Ten grants of up to $5,000 will ultimately be awarded. Projects already funded include:

- A documentary film made by youth and incorporating youth perspectives that investigates the public housing crisis in Baltimore and gives a historic perspective on how housing inequity and segregation began in the city. Grantee: Afrikan Youth Alchemy

- The “Seeds of Promise Book Club” after-school book club for 80 high school students and young adults who reside in West Baltimore. Participating youth and adult mentors will read Monster by Walter Dean Myers and The Other Wes Moore by Wes Moore to explore the environment that leads to the current conditions that impact boys and men of color, such as racial inequality, the justice system, and mass incarceration. Grantee: Promise Heights and the University of Maryland, Baltimore School of Social Work

A list of all Humanities Fund for Baltimore grantees and supported projects can be found on our website. In addition, related public events will be featured on our online calendar of events and in our monthly eNewsletter. If you don’t already receive it, subscribe today at mdhc.org.

We hope you are as excited as we are for what’s to come in 2016 and hope to see you at many of these events and others in future. Again, your support is what makes all of this possible!