



GrubStreet

162 Boylston Street, 5TH Floor
Boston, MA 02116
617.695.0075
GrubStreet.org

February 2, 2018

Dear 50 Liberty LLC and Boston Planning and Development Agency,

GrubStreet, the largest creative writing center in the U.S., currently based in downtown Boston, proposes a Narrative Arts Center for lease at 50 Liberty Drive in the Seaport. We will partner with Harvard Book Store, a successful long-standing bookstore, and Mass Poetry to create a vibrant space with year-round activity, catering to both local residents and workers and a diverse public from every neighborhood of Boston. Our Narrative Arts Center will feature:

First level:

Bookstore, café/wine bar, performance space seating 150 people

Second level:

Creative writing classrooms, community lounge for writing/reading with kitchen, co-working space, performance space for 130 people

While Boston is bursting with storytelling and a hunger to exchange and explore new ideas, it lacks the kind of public space you find in other cities for writers, readers, and thinkers to gather every day to create, collaborate, and perform. This new space we will create will allow GrubStreet to expand its programming, which includes classes in every genre of writing, as well as a major writer's conference, and public storytelling events. We will be able to meet the needs of many more aspiring writers and readers, as well as to accommodate large audiences.

Harvard Book Store will bring a bookstore that is unparalleled in its offerings with a seasoned and knowledgeable staff, adding a valuable resource to the neighborhood. The addition of a café/wine bar will give local residents, students taking classes, visitors from across the country and the globe an affordable place to gather, meet new people, and exchange ideas. Mass Poetry will bring its exciting poetry festivals and performances to the space to inspire and entertain.

In addition to these activities, we will host talks by celebrated authors; readings of new books; multi-media performances that combine literature, music, and visual arts; plays; open mic performances; slam poetry by teens, and much more.

We will also take our storytelling outside to animate the waterfront and collaborate with local partners including the ICA. We will conduct literary Harbor Walks, create poetry Harbor Cruises, and create interactive multi-media on our downstairs glass walls.



GrubStreet currently reaches students of all ages and backgrounds, from every community and walk of life—through classes in our downtown location as well as in many neighborhoods including Dorchester, Roxbury, Mattapan, and soon East Boston. We will bring this diverse student body and audience to a new beautiful location in the Seaport, expanding the opportunities for Bostonians and many others to make connections and explore differences and commonalities.

Our three organizations have been planning a Narrative Arts Center for several years and are delighted to have the opportunity to be considered for the 50 Liberty location. Not only would it perfectly fit our plans but would allow many more people access to our programs. We bring the leadership, financial ability, and determination to make a success of this opportunity. We thank you for considering our application and look forward to next steps.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eve', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Eve Bridburg
Founder and Executive Director
GrubStreet



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February 2, 2018

50 Liberty LLC
c/o The Fallon Company LLC
One Marina Park Drive, Suite 1400
Boston, MA 02210
Attention: Myrna Putziger

Boston Planning and Development Agency
One City Hall Plaza, 9th Floor
Boston, Massachusetts 02201
Attention: Richard McGuinness

Re: Response to RFI for Lease of 50 Liberty Civic/Cultural Space

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The undersigned, being duly authorized to represent and act on behalf of GrubStreet, Inc. (the "Respondent"), and having reviewed and fully understood all of the requirements of that certain Request for Interest for Lease of 50 Liberty Civic/Cultural Space ("RFI") and information provide therein, hereby submits the attached Application and supporting materials and applies for the opportunity to lease and activate the 50 Liberty Civic/Cultural Space. Capitalized terms used herein but not otherwise defined shall have the meanings ascribed to such terms in the RFI.

The Developer, the BPDA and DEP are hereby authorized by the Respondent to conduct any inquiries and investigations to verify the statements, documents, and information submitted in connection with this Application, and to seek clarification from references and other third parties regarding the financial and operating capacity of the Respondent.

If the Developer, the BPDA or the DEP have any questions regarding this Application, please contact the following individual(s):

Eve Bridburg
Executive Director
GrubStreet, Inc.
162 Boylston Street, 5th Floor
Boston, MA 02116
617-695-0075
eve@grubstreet.org



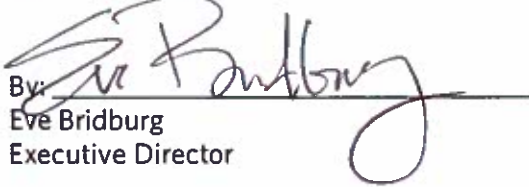
The undersigned confirms and warrants that, except as set forth below, no officer, director, partner, member, manager, or employee of Respondent, nor spouse of any of the foregoing categories of individuals, is:

- An elected official of the City of Boston or an employee of the City of Boston, the BPDA, DEP or the Developer; or
- Related to or has any business or family relationship with any elected official of the City of Boston, or any employee of the City of Boston, the BPDA, DEP or the Developer, such that there would be any conflict of interest or any appearance of conflict of interest in the evaluation or consideration of this Application by the Developer, the BPDA or DEP.

Exceptions: Josué Sakata Jr, the spouse of one of GrubStreet's staff members, part-time Neighborhood Fellow Denise Delgado, is the Assistant Director of Social Studies for the Boston Public Schools, located in the Bruce Bolling Building. Alyssa Mazarella, GrubStreet's Development Manager, was a contract vendor for the Boston Public Schools for freelance work completed in 2016 and 2017.

The undersigned declares that the statements made and the information provided in the duly completed Application are complete, true and correct in all respects.

GrubStreet, Inc.

By: 
Eve Bridburg
Executive Director



GrubStreet

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- GrubStreet Program Images
- Recent Program Partners List
- Letter of Recommendation from Anita Walker
- GrubStreet Press Kit
- 2018 Board Member Bios
- 2018 Senior Staff Bios
- GrubStreet Class Samples
- 2016-2017 Write Down the Street Report
- Write the Future Brochure

Financial Information

- 3-Year Organizational Budget - 50 Liberty
- 2018 Estimated Build Out Budget - 50 Liberty
- 2017 Unaudited Financial Statement
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Organization Information Enclosures

- Certificate of Incorporation
- IRS Tax-Exempt Determination Letter
- Tax-Exempt Certificate
- 2016 Form PC
- Board of Directors List

A NARRATIVE ARTS CENTER for BOSTON at 50 Liberty Drive

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

GrubStreet, Inc.

162 Boylston Street, 5th Floor
Boston, MA 02116

Eve Bridburg
Executive Director
617-695-0075
eve@grubstreet.org
www.grubstreet.org

Enclosures

- Certificate of incorporation
- IRS tax-exempt determination letter
- Tax-exempt certificate
- Organization's last Form PC
- List of the officers and directors of the organization

APPLICATION EVALUATION

Our Vision

Boston has been a city of writers, readers, thinkers and innovators since our earliest days. In the 19th century, as the saying went, you couldn't throw a stone without hitting a writer. We're a city that built one of the country's first public libraries, where Maria Stewart, a black abolitionist, gave the first public talk by a woman on politics and women's rights; where the Old Corner Bookstore – an early literary center – published the likes of Stowe, Thoreau, Emerson and Longfellow; where such storied writers as Phillis Wheatley, Louisa May Alcott, Elizabeth Bishop, and Robert Lowell lived and worked, and where the computer and internet revolutions were born at our great universities, and at the Route 128 technology companies.

Today, we Bostonians are still bursting to write, read, think, and create. It's no accident that GrubStreet, an idea which started with eight students twenty years ago, has grown into the nation's largest and most productive creative writing center, or that bookstores like the Harvard Book Store are at capacity nearly every night, with crowds eager to hear from the fiction writers, poets, and public intellectuals of our day. The narrative arts are on fire in this city. Live spoken word and storytelling events routinely sell out. A new podcast garage in Allston is attracting crowds, and all over town, business leaders, artists, and innovators are practicing their TEDx talks, eager to communicate new ideas.

In the 21st Century, with the rise of digital communication, the writing world is more democratic, alive, and rich than ever. And everyone wants in. It is estimated that between 600,000 and 1,000,000 books are published each year in the United States, with more than half of these self-published. In fact, when asked what one thing Bostonians strive most to create in a recent citywide cultural planning survey, the second most frequent answer was "stories." In cities like New York, Minneapolis, Chicago, and Seattle, there are state-of-the-art presenting spaces for celebrating and creating with words. Not so in Boston. Though we have one of the most robust and lively writing and reading communities in the country, there is no major public venue or large, central place where readers, writers, and thinkers can gather on a daily basis to create and share work.

In a city bursting at the seams with ideas and talent, we propose to build a 21st century narrative arts/storytelling center: a democratic, accessible, active space for people of all ages and backgrounds to connect and to learn from the crafted words of the most famous writers and thinkers of our day, as well as from each other. The partners in creating this dynamic center are GrubStreet, the nation's largest and most inclusive creative writing center, currently based in downtown Boston; Harvard Book Store, one of the country's most venerable and successful bookstores; and Mass Poetry, which organizes major festivals and ensures poetry is part of the daily fabric of the city. Taking up residence in the beautiful new neighborhood on the waterfront, not far from the historic Fort Point district, the new center will be steeped in history, but also imbued with a creative, youthful energy. It will elevate Boston and the waterfront by creating a major new civic and cultural destination. This partnership builds on GrubStreet's ongoing collaboration with the city of Boston in public storytelling and literary

celebration, our steadfast foundation supporters, and our close collaboration with many other organizations in the visual, music, and literary fields.

A Narrative Center

bookstore, cafe/wine bar, writing classes, community writing/reading lounge, and performance space

The heart of our narrative arts center is the facility at 50 Liberty itself. GrubStreet will act as the umbrella organization, housing Harvard Book Store and Mass Poetry as co-anchor organizations. On the ground floor, we envision a beautifully designed bookstore, with a café featuring locally sourced food, coffee by day, and wine by night. There is nothing like a well-curated bookstore and the lure of delicious food to add soul to a neighborhood, and to foster a community of residents, local writers, students, and visitors from near and far. In the center of the bookstore, we imagine an Espresso Book Machine, which creates perfect-bound paperbacks in minutes, visible from the street. People walking by will stop and watch as books, either custom-ordered by the people who live upstairs, or written by a local author, emerge as if by magic, from the machine. There will be an event space for 150 people inside the cafe/bookstore. Walking past us in the evening, you might see teen poets from Mass Poetry or Mass LEAP performing their slam pieces, debut authors reading from their novels and hosting book launch parties, or an expert-driven, interactive roundtable discussing the most pressing topics of the day: racism, the state of our democracy, climate change, and the rise of artificial intelligence. The participants will be as diverse as the city's neighborhoods themselves, as GrubStreet draws on our current work in teaching teens and adults across greater Boston to bring a multi-racial audience. In the warm months, the activity will spread to our sidewalk, where we'll set up tables and chairs for the public to enjoy reading, people watching, socializing, and sipping coffee by the water.

Writing not only connects and intersects people from all walks of life, but also with every other art form. We imagine hosting events featuring music and visual art celebrating authorship and words. Local musicians might interpret a novel or visual artists might illustrate a scene from a short story, hanging their work from walls of the cafe. We imagine hosting readings, spoken word events, and book parties. A couple on a date might "go out to a book" the way you might go out to a movie. A new comic novel might be presented by musicians and actors, the result of an experimental collaboration between writers and performing artists.

Everywhere in this creative space, we will celebrate words in ways that will surprise and delight. A few ideas: stenciling text on the windows of the first floor, visible from the harbor; creating the city's biggest Idea Paint wall, where people can respond to daily prompts with a few words, stories, or poems, which we can archive through social media to create a history of the city's thoughts. We might also install giant magnetic letters on the walls to be arranged and changed daily by staff and visitors, and create pop-up events that capture big moments in the city's life, such as a World Series win, in the words of residents and writers.

Upstairs, we envision a dynamic flexible space featuring classrooms, co-working space, a kitchen, a community lounge, and an assembly space capable of seating 100 people. Anchored by the robust educational offerings at GrubStreet and Mass Poetry – who annually serve thousands of students of all ages, backgrounds, and income levels – the space will be alive with activity, connection, and creativity both day and night. Bostonians will gather in our classrooms for writing and storytelling classes of all genres: fiction, nonfiction, memoir, op-ed, blogging, podcasting, spoken word, playwriting, and screenwriting. Writing classes (some free and some tuition-based) and multi-media performances will take place daily, welcoming a diverse public all year round. The upstairs space will also serve as a performance lab, offering space to rehearse TED talks, rehearse plays, hold student-run open mics, and host conversations about our city.

Why the Seaport?

The Seaport is already becoming an extraordinary focal point for tourism, for the visual arts, and for technological innovation. Our concept adds a key missing component: making the Seaport a destination for intellectual life and creative, diverse literary energy. We imagine a space where people from the Seaport, along with all the city's neighborhoods, will come to create, perform, and enjoy storytelling. But beyond that, we imagine a destination of national significance, drawing tourists and visitors from across the country and globe. In the past year alone, Harvard Book Store has hosted such internationally-renowned cultural icons as Patti Smith, Orhan Pamuk, Salman Rushdie, Karl Ove Knausgaard, Roxane Gay, and many others. The bookstore has presented celebrities such as Khizr Khan, Art Garfunkel, and Alec Baldwin, and such prominent young writers as Chloe Benjamin, Angie Thomas, and Tavi Gevenson. Harvard Book Store will bring this activity to the Seaport, providing extraordinary cultural programming for residents, workers, and attracting thousands from Greater Boston and beyond.

The literary community in Boston is bursting with life and possibility. Given a proper home and venue, the sector will explode with infectious energy, encouraging more and more people to participate. Reading and writing, after all, are for everyone, and we want to radically welcome all comers. From a cultural perspective, the Seaport District boasts two major museums, the ICA and the Children's Museum, a boating center, live/work space for visual artists, and the Society for Arts and Craft. A 21st century narrative arts center, animated by the city's incredible literary talent and the best book curators in the country, will add new dimension, meaning, and soul to Boston's newest neighborhood.

The presence of a nationally renowned independent bookstore fills an important gap in Boston proper, providing highly curated content, and guaranteeing high-profile visits by authors on tour. The bookstore and cafe/wine bar will also provide a lovely space to browse and spend time with friends, enticing local residents and visitors from all neighborhoods. Apartment residents will take memoir classes, order books, or print rare books on the Espresso Book Machine. Workers in the area will join us for coffee and lunch time pop up events or they might take a writing class after work. Writers of all ages and ethnicities now studying with GrubStreet downtown and in many city neighborhoods will come to the new center to write and share their work. Tourists will be drawn to our installations, public readings, and literary festivals.

Beyond the physical confines of the center, we will create collaborations using many of the locations in the Seaport, both on land and in the water. Poetry and prose readings will add a new, rich, and lively element to Harbor Cruises. A “Seaport Improbable Places Poetry and Story Tour” will bring visitors to surprising locations to hear vivid tales: works about crime and incarceration read at the Court House, poetry about beer at the Harpoon Brewery, stories about children and youth at the Children’s Museum. We imagine collaborating with the colleges of art to create origami flower gardens with poems inside, placing them on the public green or along the harborway; we will hang banners along the waterfront with short poems in calligraphy and vibrant colors. We plan to host readings by famous writers at available larger venues: the ICA and the Seaport World Trade Center. We will also enliven the entire neighborhood by bringing two major writing conferences to the Seaport: GrubStreet’s annual Muse and Marketplace Conference, the number-one rated writing and publishing conference in the country, and Mass Poetry’s Poetry Festival. GrubStreet’s conference hosts well-known literary giants as well as the most exciting emerging talents; recent presenters include Walter Mosley, Isabel Wilkerson, Celeste Ng, Ann Patchett, and Colum McCann. The Mass Poetry Festival creates an intense immersive experience for poets, poetry lovers, and the general public. More than 250 poets do group readings, participate on panels and contribute to performances combining poetry with music, dance, and visual art. During our respective conference seasons, we envision partnering with local business and hotels, putting up tents in the public green, and attracting thousands of people to the Seaport to learn and create. .

Building on the current online community of the participating organizations, we envision a vibrant digital community created around the activities at the center. Collectively, we engage hundreds of thousands of people online. We imagine live-streaming and podcasting readings, with extensive use of social media to display and call attention to activities and to distribute content. Through the creation of the center, Boston will be recognized as the first major city in the world to embrace, house, and present the full lifecycle of literature in the digital age.

FINANCIAL STRENGTH AND CAPABILITY

Organizational Strength

GrubStreet Staff

Since 2010, when founder Eve Bridburg returned to GrubStreet as Executive Director, the organization has grown into the leading and largest creative writing center in the country, hosting 4,000 writing students of all ages and backgrounds per year in our central Boston location, in Boston's Dorchester, Mattapan, and Roxbury neighborhoods, in Providence, RI, and online. Additionally, we host another 700+ writers, agents, editors and publishers at our annual writing and publishing conference. Our revenue has grown by 323% since 2009. In order to properly steward that growth, Bridburg has restructured staffing, reinforced the financial infrastructure and accounting systems, hired a senior leadership team, built marketing and development functions, and recruited business leaders, leading writers, and major philanthropists to the board of directors. In 2016, Ms. Bridburg successfully secured major, multi-year funding support from the Bloomberg Foundation, the Barr Foundation, and the Calderwood Foundation to address issues of equity and inclusion, and to increase participation of diverse communities of all income levels, ages, and cultural backgrounds in the narrative arts. GrubStreet has consistently operated with a surplus, enabling the organization to retain earnings each year, building important reserves necessary for stability, innovation, and making the most of new opportunities. Moreover, we have strong and diverse earned income streams and have proven proficient at raising significant funds to support scholarships and subsidized programs for adults and teens.

GrubStreet's program team consists of talented writers who combine teaching and curating experience with literary accomplishment. The dynamic team is led by Artistic Director Christopher Castellani, a Guggenheim winning novelist whose fourth book will be published in early 2019 by Viking. In addition to writing four critically acclaimed novels, Mr. Castellani is an expert in the craft and pedagogy of creative writing. For Graywolf Press, he wrote "The Art of Perspective: Who Tells the Story." His essays on writing have been published in the following anthologies: *Now Write! Fiction Writing Exercises from Today's Best Writers and Teachers*, Sherry Ellis, ed., Tarcher Books, 2006; *Naming the World: And Other Exercises for the Creative Writer*, Bret Anthony Johnston, ed., Random House, 2008; and *Mentors, Muses & Monsters*, Elizabeth Benedict, ed., Excelsior Editions, 2012.

Mr. Castellani leads an incredible team including (but not limited to) Sonya Larson, curator and director of our major conference, the Muse and the Marketplace. Her short fiction and nonfiction has appeared or is forthcoming in *The Best American Short Stories 2017*, *American Short Fiction*, *The American Literary Review*, *Poets & Writers*, *The Writer's Chronicle*, Audible.com, among other publications. Ms. Larson is a well-known and passionate advocate for writers of color at GrubStreet and in the publishing community at large. Writer Dariel Suarez heads our Faculty and Curriculum, and writer Eson Kim runs our youth programming (see their attached bios).

GrubStreet also boasts a strong senior management team. Our Development team is led by Stephanie Poggi, a seasoned professional who has 30 years of experience raising funds in support of nonprofit missions. Ian Jude Chio, our Director of Finance and Administration, brings over 20 years of financial and business management to our organization. Prior to coming to GrubStreet, Mr. Chio served as Vice President of Finance and Administration at Schneider Associates, a Boston public relations firm, where he worked for almost a decade.

Bios of key staff and board members are included in the attachments.

Board Leadership

GrubStreet's board of directors is made up of leaders with deep expertise in finance, real estate development, business, marketing, consulting, and writing.

Leadership

Kathy Sherbrooke, GrubStreet's board chair, co-founded Circles, a VC-funded \$65M concierge and loyalty marketing company headquartered in Boston, serving as President and then CEO from 1995-2009. Retired from business, she has dedicated her life to writing and to volunteering her time and talents to nonprofits she believes in. Prior to chairing GrubStreet's board, Ms. Sherbrooke was board chair at RAW Art Works and helped shepherd a capital campaign of 2.5 million dollars to help RAW secure a permanent home.

Fundraising

Jeanne Blasberg chairs GrubStreet's Development Committee and sits on our Executive Committee. Ms. Blasberg began her career at the First Boston Corporation as an investment banking analyst and later at Federated Department Stores where she worked on the Plan of Reorganization and a takeover of Macy's. She was a research associate at the Harvard Business School specializing in retailing, and wrote several case studies on retailing companies. Between 2005-2008, Ms. Blasberg was the first female Chair of U.S. Squash, the national governing body for the sport where she oversaw sweeping governance change, a 66% growth in membership, reorganized the investment committee, and began a successful capital campaign. She is the co-chair of the annual fundraising efforts for Squashbusters, an after school program in Boston, which raises \$1.3 million toward the program's annual operating budget. She has co-chaired the annual funds for The Beacon Hill Nursery School, The Brown University Sports Foundation, Milton Academy, Hill House, and the Beacon Hill Circle for Charity.

Finance

Sharissa Jones, our treasurer, has fifteen years of experience in finance, most recently as a partner at Capital Z Investments, L.P., a \$2.25 billion private equity firm based in

New York where she focused on the firm's hedge fund investment portfolio. She has been a member of the board of directors of several portfolio companies.

Real Estate and Development Expertise

We have deep real estate development and construction expertise on our board through board members Jill Karp (New England Properties), Christy Cashman (Jay Cashman), and Sondra Levenson, (The Copley Group). We will have access to their feedback and perspective and involvement if we are awarded this opportunity.

Strategy and Design

Augusta Meill is a process and structure expert who loves to think about how and why change happens in complex systems. As Executive Director of the Boston-based non-profit design firm Agncy, she works with government agencies, foundations, non-profits, and other organizations to deliver eco-system impact in spaces such as education and affordable housing. Previously, she spent a decade in a leadership role at a large design and innovation consultancy, where she developed the firm's work in building corporate innovation capabilities, designing services, and social impact design.

Additional Advisors

Elizabeth Whittaker

Ms. Whittaker is founder and principal of MERGE architects, based in Boston since 2003. The work of MERGE architects has been widely published both nationally and internationally and has received multiple awards including eight AIA/BSA awards, a citation for the international Harbor Park Pavilion Competition, and second place for the new AIA/BSA Headquarters in Boston. Elizabeth has lectured extensively within the US and abroad and was just recently nominated for the Young Architect's Award by the National American Institute of Architects..

Lee Moreau

Lee Moreau is a Principal at Continuum, a global design and innovation consultancy. An architect and strategist, Lee combines a unique capacity for complex-systems thinking with a deeply empathic perspective, which he uses to critically engage and re-imagine the contemporary world. Through research, analysis, and imagination, Lee helps Continuum's clients understand their entanglement within their own complex set of cultural, material, and economic circumstances. Lee has led service design projects for a diverse group of clients that blur the boundaries between content and experience.

References for GrubStreet

Anita Walker
Executive Director

Massachusetts Cultural Council
anita.walker@state.ma.us
617-727-3668

Julie Burros
Chief of Arts and Culture
City of Boston
julie.burros@boston.gov
617-635-4445

David Leonard
President, Boston Public Library
dleonard@bpl.org
Office: 617.859.2276
Direct: 617.859.2034

Amy Stolls
Director of Literature
National Endowment for the Arts
stollsa@arts.gov
202-321-1238

Anchor Tenants

Harvard Book Store Staff

Harvard Book Store was founded in 1932 and has been owned by just two families since then. The store was founded by Mark Kramer who passed it on to his son, Frank, in the early 1960s. Jeff Mayersohn, a long-time Internet researcher and entrepreneur, and his wife, Linda Seamonson, a former computer scientist, purchased the store in 2008. Although Harvard Book Store is organized as a subchapter S, it operates as a service to the Harvard, Cambridge, and Greater Boston communities. Despite the fact that sales are approximately \$1000 per square foot of retail space, at the high end of typical book store financials, store operations are designed so that the company operates so as to make a small profit each year, with any profits beyond a certain level redistributed to the staff via a profit-sharing and management bonus program. Harvard Book Store is debt-free.

Harvard Book Store currently has three locations: the store at 1256 Massachusetts Avenue in Cambridge, including 5500 square feet of retail space; offices at 2 Arrow Street in Cambridge

containing 1620 square feet; and a warehouse at 14 Park Street in Somerville, containing 6450 square feet.

Harvard Book Store full-time staff numbers around 36 individuals. There are additional part-time employees who work only events. The store is run by seasoned book industry professionals, almost all of whom have been with the store for at least ten years, several much longer. All store employees report to a General Manager, Carole Horne, who has been at Harvard Book store for more than 43 years. It was recently announced that Carole would soon step down from being GM, but would stay with the store, on a part-time basis, as a senior advisor and buyer. She will be replaced by Alex Meriwether. Alex has been with the store since 2004 and most recently served as our marketing and events manager, where he oversaw the expansion of our events program to 500 events per year and the expansion of our email lists and social media following to at least 80,000 customers. The marketing and events group, currently reporting to Alex, consists of five full-time staffers.

Store operations are under the management of Mark Lamphier, who has been in the book industry since 1984 and has been with Harvard Book Stores for twenty years. There is an assistant manager, Bradford Lennon, reporting to Mark, who joined the bookstore in 2009. All buying activities report to Rachel Cass who has been with Harvard Book Store since 2006. The buying group includes five employees. Our warehouse manager and remainder buyer is Jerry Justin, who joined Harvard Book Store in 1997. Finally, our Print-on-Demand Service is run by Ben Paul, who joined the store in 2017.

Mass Poetry Staff

Mass Poetry has a small but talented staff.

Laurin Macios, the Executive Director, holds an MFA in Poetry from the University of New Hampshire, where she taught on fellowship for three years. Her work appears in *Salamander*, *Green Mountains Review online*, *[PANK]*, *Boxcar Poetry Review*, *The Pinch*, *Third Wednesday*, and elsewhere. She was a finalist for the 2014 Boston Review/92Y Unterberg Poetry Center Discovery Prize and the 2016 Hudson Book Prize and 2016 St Lawrence Prize, both from Black Lawrence Press. She is the former Program Director of the Poetry Society of America (January 2016-June 2017) and Mass Poetry (June 2013-December 2015).

January O'Neil, is the executive director of the Massachusetts Poetry Festival and an assistant professor of English at Salem State University. She is a board of trustee member with the Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP) and Montserrat College of Art. *Misery Islands* was selected for a 2015 Paterson Award for Literary Excellence. Additionally, it was selected by Mass Center for the Book as a Must-Read Book for 2015, and won the 2015 Massachusetts Book Award.

Sara Siegel, the Program Director, is a lifelong writer based in Somerville. After graduating Washington University in St. Louis and working at women's health organizations in NYC, she

moved to Burlington, Vermont to earn a Masters in Public Administration at UVM. While there she worked at Vermont Children's Trust Foundation, a grant-making organization working with prevention programs throughout the state. Sara moved to Boston in 2012, and spent nearly three years as the Development and Alumni Relations Associate with School Year Abroad, a high school study abroad and homestay with campuses in China, France, Spain and Italy. Sara's short stories have been published in *Wild Violet*, *Vantage Point*, *Toasted Cheese Literary Journal* and *Cleaver Magazine*. Her sketch comedy group, Mister Bismuth, regularly performs at ImprovBoston in Cambridge.

Committed, Capable leaders

Eve Bridburg, GrubStreet's founder and executive director, Jeff Mayersohn, owner of Harvard Book Store, and Michael Ansara, entrepreneur and co-founder of Mass Poetry, have been in conversation about collaborating to create a narrative arts or storytelling center for over three years. All three are proven leaders who know what it takes to commit to an idea and see it through to completion. Not only would the beautiful and spacious 50 Liberty location fit our goals to work together to expand programming and increase audiences, but this opportunity would also guarantee that GrubStreet can remain a crucial anchor organization in the city of Boston and continue to animate our city. GrubStreet is at risk of being priced out of the city over the next few years. A long-term secure lease at 50 Liberty would ensure that we have a home here and can continue to expand our literary offerings to the people of Boston and surroundings.

Eve Bridburg founded GrubStreet with eight students in Brookline in 1997 and has grown it into the largest creative writing center in the country. Under her leadership, GrubStreet continually creates three to five year plans with measurable goals. We have consistently delivered on those goals, usually surpassing expectations.

An active partner with the city, Eve was the driving force behind establishing the country's first Literary Cultural District in downtown Boston, in partnership with the Boston Public Library, the Boston Athenaeum, Emerson, Suffolk University, the Boston Book Festival, and other partners. The Literary Cultural District is creating exciting collaborative programming including the annual Lit Crawl, creative placemaking projects, a curated calendar of events, and a map of important literary assets in downtown Boston. Now tourists and locals can visit a website to find a map of historic literary sites, their history and importance. Or they can walk through the district following a "women in letters" tour to learn just how incredible Boston's women writers, book designers, critics, editors, publishers, reporters, and transcendentalists were.

Ms. Bridburg's work has been recognized by *Boston Magazine*, who named her one of Boston's 50 most powerful women in 2010, and by *BostInno Magazine* who gave her their 2014 Arts and Entertainment Award for driving innovation in Boston.

GrubStreet's board of directors is convinced that partnering to create a literary destination and increasing the visibility of and audience for the narrative arts is the next chapter in GrubStreet's story. 50 Liberty gives us just that opportunity.

Michael Ansara is the co-founder of Mass Poetry, and has played a key role in conceiving and launching its innovative approach to bring poetry to large numbers of people. The Raining Poetry Initiative in Boston stencils poems in public places with a spray that makes the poem appear only once it rains. A video on that project went viral and has had over 24 million views on the internet. Michael worked with Boston Properties to launch a series of innovative installations of poetry, such as a flower garden with paper flowers containing poems. Under his leadership, Mass Poetry built a partnership with the MBTA that places hundreds of posters of poems on the busses and trolleys in unsold ad spaces. He conceived of Common Threads an annual selection of poems with a guide to group reading and discussions now used by hundreds of Councils on Aging, book clubs, church groups and classes. He first designed the heart of Mass Poetry's programming, the Mass Poetry Festival, and the Student Days of poetry in 2008 and since then more than 20,000 students and poetry lovers have attended these events.

Michael brought to Mass Poetry a long history in community organizing and in business. He was the Executive Director of Mass Fair Share. Following Fair Share, he was a consultant to the Democratic Party, many campaigns, foundations and nonprofits. He founded and was the CEO of the Share Group, the premier phone fundraising and related services company for American non-profit organizations building it to \$23,000,000 in revenues and 700 employees before selling the company. He then founded UpSource, a high quality, North American based customer service provider that he once again he took from scratch to \$12,000,000 in revenues before selling it. Michael served 10 years on the Board of Echo Ditto, a digital services company and 4 years on the board of Tupelo Press. Currently retired, he remains on the Board of Mass Poetry, and serves on Community Servings Capital Campaign Steering Committee as well as being a founder of Indivisible MA. His poetry has appeared in numerous literary magazines.

Jeff Mayersohn, along with his wife, Linda Seamonson, has owned Harvard Book Store since 2008. Originally trained as a particle physicist, he got involved in the development of the Internet in the late seventies, working at Internet pioneer Bolt Beranek and Newman, where he eventually served as vice president in the Communications and Internet subsidiaries. From BBN, he moved to an early stage start-up, Sonus Networks, which provided Internet technology to such major carriers as Verizon and ATT. Upon retiring from the tech sector, he pursued a life-long dream and bought Harvard Book Store in 2008. Jeff is involved in a number of non-profit and philanthropic efforts. He and his wife have been supporters of the Gynecologic Oncology group at Yale, and have funded a scholarship for teachers at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. In addition to GrubStreet, he serves on the boards of several other literary-themed non-profits: 826 Boston, which runs youth writing centers in Roxbury and several Boston public schools; the Boston Book Festival; and Boston Review.

Financial Capability

Preparing 50 Liberty Space for Use:

GrubStreet feels confident that we have the ability to prepare the 50 Liberty Civic/Cultural Space for use, to meet all obligations under the Lease, and to sustain robust programming.

Provisionally, we estimate that the build-out of 50 Liberty will cost \$1.2 million dollars. (See attached budget for details.)

We anticipate raising needed capital through individual philanthropy and foundation funding. We know we can do this successfully. We have an established and ambitious fundraising team, a proven track record of raising significant funds from both major donors and foundations, and a committed and engaged board.

In addition, our donors are eager to help us make this move so that we can gain the security provided by a long-term lease. They are committed to helping us secure a larger and stable location within the city, one which will also serve to catapult programming to new heights. As noted, without such a home, there is a real possibility that GrubStreet would need to relocate over the next few years to another city. Last year, we launched a major three million dollar, 20th anniversary fundraising campaign. The early stages have proven to be a very successful and we have so far exceeded our goals. This opportunity dovetails perfectly with the groundwork already laid as we continue to secure significant multi-year pledges.

In addition to our committed, generous major donors, we also are fortunate to have strong backing from foundations; we will reach out to them immediately to discuss increased support toward our expansion at the Seaport.

Foundation supporters we will reach out to for investment in our new Center at 50 Liberty include: The Barr Foundation, which has been supporting GrubStreet for several years, including a \$675,000 three-year grant awarded in 2016, and the Calderwood Charitable Foundation, which provided a \$225,000 grant to GrubStreet to support increasing access to creative writing classes through scholarships and free programming for underserved teens. We will also reach out to new foundation sources for capital funds. Such foundations include the Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation, which provides capital grants to mid-sized non-profits undertaking projects that enhance cultural vitality for greater Boston, improve the quality of life and well-being of individuals and families, and provide for the benefit of entire neighborhoods and communities. Another source we will pursue is the Fidelity Foundation, which provides capital grants to large-scale projects central to the overall health and sustainability of cultural organizations, such as new construction, renovations, expansions, and other initiatives that support an organization's strategic vision.

Ongoing Operations

GrubStreet currently generates \$1.7 million in tuition and registration revenue from its robust

and dynamic educational programming. We have an exceptional track record of growth, and have a proven ability to capitalize upon our operational success to offer scholarships across our student populations. The resources of our funders serve to augment these efforts. With a current annual operating budget of \$3 million, GrubStreet demonstrates its expertise in managing a complex organization. GrubStreet therefore feels very confident that we can meet our obligations under the lease and continue to expand excellent programming.

GrubStreet believes that a move to 50 Liberty has the potential to accelerate our financial growth. While we are budgeting to expect modest top-line increases, we believe the additional classroom space will allow us to expand our offerings. In our current location, GrubStreet's revenue growth is not limited by lack of demand, but rather by our ability to supply the classroom space to meet such demand. GrubStreet has long discussed the synergies and revenue generation possibilities of having an onsite bookstore and cafe. With the number of students who attend classes, these ventures will have access to an endlessly thirsty demographic.

GrubStreet anticipates reinvesting our cost savings from rent in increasing the size and capability of our team. We expect to hire staff to provide the additional marketing, programming, and event support this opportunity demands. To undertake these efforts properly, the team expansion costs may outpace our rent savings. They will, however, be somewhat offset by the revenues generated from Harvard Book Store and the cafe. Further, these GrubStreet staffers will be able to leverage the current Mass Poetry and Harvard Book Store teams to ensure 50 Liberty maintains a vibrant environment every day and night of the week.

GrubStreet has already completed much of the financial preparation for an expected increase in occupancy expenses. While we very much need a situation of below-market rent, we have planned for the contingency and expenses of moving. GrubStreet is consequently well-positioned to assume the increased costs associated with the ancillary expenses at 50 Liberty.

In year one, we assume our revenue will remain the same as our current budget to allow for a transitional period. Thereafter, we will grow our top-line at 5%. This is quite modest when compared to our most recent year-over-year growth of 16%. In year one at 50 Liberty, we have budgeted revenue from the bookstore occupancy, only while we seek a cafe partner. In later years, we are anticipating income from a cafe that will contribute at least as much as the bookstore.

Employment: Enhancement of employment opportunities and local procurement in the community.

- GrubStreet will grow its marketing, programming, and events staff. The bookstore and cafe will hire significant staff. Local authors will have more opportunity to launch their own ventures, meet with students, promote their work, and consult on our premises.

- The cafe will source food materials locally as much as possible
- GrubStreet students are significant contributors to the dining and drinking establishments in our local community. Classes frequently meet during mealtimes resulting in the need for students to patronize both take-out cafes and sit-down restaurants. Further, writing workshops are inherently social enterprises and many classes continue their conversations in local coffee shops and bars.
- The GrubStreet community operates a number of community events, many of which we would anticipate moving to the area. Grub writers launch books and conduct writing events throughout the city. Alumni groups are constantly seeking space for their community craft discussions. We are excited about the prospect of uniting these efforts at 50 Liberty.
- We anticipate significant economic impact of day to day programming at the center. Students and bookstore patrons will want to stay in the neighborhood for lunch and dinner.

Synergy: Capability to find opportunities to work with other civic and cultural institutions at Fan Pier and the adjacent Pier 4 development, including the ICA, BCB, Society of Arts & Crafts, and with existing South Boston Waterfront uses and businesses.

- Bringing the Muse Conference and Mass Poetry Festival to the Seaport will draw thousands to restaurants and bars, poetry Harbor cruises, and more.
- Conferences and festivals will bring businesses to the hotels and catering companies and tent renting companies.
- As per this proposal, there are huge opportunities to tie our work to all the other cultural institutions at Fan Pier and the adjacent Pier 4 development. With our neighbors at the ICA, we'd love to deepen our partnership with youth, bring major authors and thinkers to their theater, and more. GrubStreet and Mass Poetry teens would love the idea of combining writing with boating in creative new ways, and we can imagine a great collaboration with the Society of Art & Crafts around bookmaking.
- Collaboration is in our DNA (see attachment on partnerships). We'll be open, enthusiastic, and joyful partners with as many local cultural organizations as we can.

Our proposed timeline

We feel confident that we can raise needed buildout funds within two months of being awarded 50 Liberty lease.

April - June of 2018

Hire Architect

Further define cafe concept, interview potential partners

Conduct proposed usage interviews with:

Anchor Partners: Harvard Book Store, Mass Poetry and GrubStreet.

Literary and nonprofit Community partners

Seaport neighbors and workers
Design space
Raise needed capital

July - September
Buildout

October
Move-in and begin to activate space

Lease term

We are proposing a ten-year lease, with 3 five-year extensions at tenant's will. In total, we are asking for a lease covering 25 years. Given significant investments we will be making, we feel we need to assure our funders that we will be able to operate in this new space on a long term basis.

GrubStreet will be the lease holder. We will collect payments from Harvard Book Store, TBD cafe/wine bar operator, and Mass Poetry to help us sustain the space. Though some of our partners will be technically "for profit businesses," all invited anchor partners share financial models which value community engagement, employment, affordability, and sustainability over profits. We expect to define a profit sharing model which will ensure that increased business revenues directly benefit non-profit artistic activity in the space.

We are open to other ways of partnering if this arrangement isn't agreeable to developer or city.

Hours of operation

We have work to do to coordinate hours and create a design which works for differences in our hours of operation, but provisionally:

GrubStreet

Grub Office: Monday - Friday: 10 am - 6 PM

Classroom activity and community space: Sunday - Thursday, 10am - 9pm

Classroom activity and community space: Friday- Saturday, 10am - 10pm

Harvard Book Store

Sunday - Thursdays: 10 am - 9 pm

Friday - Saturday: 10am - 10 pm

Cafe/winebar

TBD, but we imagine:

Monday - Friday: 8 am - 9pm

Saturday - Sunday: 9 am - 10 pm

Event Usage:

Events may go later, until midnight on weekend nights, 11PM on weeknights.

For purposes of lease, our minimum stated minimum days and hours of operation are:

Monday - Friday: 10 am - 9 pm

Saturday - Sunday: 10am - 10 pm

We will be closed for major holidays, snow emergencies

ORGANIZATIONAL MISSION – PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

GrubStreet

GrubStreet was founded in 1997 on the principle of “literary access,” the belief that everyone with a desire to write should be taken seriously, taught the craft at a high level, and pushed to produce their best work. With this belief as our North Star, GrubStreet has grown into a national leader in the fast-growing field of independent creative writing centers. We are widely known for innovative programming, the eye-popping publishing success of our students, and thought-leadership in publishing and the emerging role of creative writing centers. We have created the nation’s most comprehensive creative writing course catalogue, and were the first center to launch year-long graduate-level programs. GrubStreet also serves as an important anchor in Boston’s cultural landscape by not only being a keen partner to the City and other arts nonprofits, but also by employing over a hundred local writers each year to run workshops, consult with students, and present at the annual Muse and the Marketplace literary conference. Now in its 20th year, GrubStreet has grown into the most inclusive, influential, and productive writing center in the country. In addition, GrubStreet is affordable, offering hundreds of scholarships and free programs each year in our current downtown location, as well as in neighborhoods across the city to reach and welcome aspiring writers of every age, income level, race, ethnicity, and community. We will bring this diverse student body and audience to the Seaport. And we will continue our work to increase our scholarship program each year.

GrubStreet’s mission emphasizes our commitment to access for all and the diversity of our participants, as well as to the power of writing and reading:

Narrative transforms lives, builds bridges, and produces empathy. By rigorously developing voices of every type and talent and by removing barriers to entry, GrubStreet fosters the creation of meaningful stories and ensures that excellent writing remains vital and relevant.

GrubStreet accomplishes this mission by offering the highest quality classes and services for teen and adult writers at all stages of development; guiding them through the entire writing process from inspiration to publication and promotion; putting a premium on teaching excellence; making economic and racial diversity in our community a priority through outreach, scholarships, and free programming; connecting people and ideas through writing; and empowering writers to fully embrace the new opportunities ushered in by the digital age.

Our innovative, multi-generational model inhabits a unique and vibrant space between adult education and universities. We are more artistic, demanding, and focused than adult education; more flexible, dynamic, community-based, and affordable than universities. Today’s programs serve the entire writing journey from idea to publication. We host over 500 workshops and seminars yearly, on topics that cover short fiction, the novel, nonfiction, poetry, screenwriting, young adult fiction, publishing, the writer’s life, and digital opportunities. Over 4,000 students participate in programs annually, including more than 500 high school students.

Partnering with Harvard Book Store and Mass Poetry to activate an exciting Narrative Arts Center at 50 Liberty would catapult Grubstreet's artistic, civic, and community impact to new heights.

Target users: Adults interested in writing, living in greater Boston and beyond.

Classes cover the full range of narrative arts—short stories, novels, memoirs, poetry, screenwriting, storytelling, and publishing—all taught with rigor, support, and community. For advanced writers, we offer four competitive, application-based year-long programs. Students complete a first draft of their books in our Novel and Memoir Generators, and focus on deep revision and finishing work in our Novel and Memoir Incubators. We envision headquartering these classes at the Seaport and serving adults of all ages, background and income levels. Our strong commitment to offering generous scholarships breaks down barriers and invites all interested students in. Offerings range in length from three hours, to one day, to six weeks, to a year. There is truly something for everyone. Our current adult student body ranges in age from 20 to 87. Some have never written before; others have more experience. We are radically open and welcoming.

Target users: Young Writers, ages 13- 18.

Free four-hour Saturday Sessions are held each month during the school year and cover fiction, poetry, memoir, graphic novel, songwriting, screenwriting, and more. Teen Writing Camps, our more intensive workshop experience for teens, are held during school vacation weeks and summer break. We also offer students the opportunity to audition for our competitive Slam Poetry Team. The Summer Writer's Fellowship, our most advanced teen offering, offers a \$500 stipend to 18 young writers who successfully complete a free three-week creative writing. They are selected based on their excellence, drive, and our intention to create a cohort that includes at least 50% youth of color and equal gender representation. We envision moving all of this programming to the Seaport, and would look forward to partnering with the ICA – a current partner – among other cultural organizations to engage our teens. We also look forward to the ability to host more open mics for teens.

Target Users: Writers, authors, experts with trade book ideas

We host the country's premier literary conference, The Muse and the Marketplace, a weekend symposium curated to educate writers about craft and publishing while providing meaningful networking opportunities. Program highlights in the last few years include: Journalist Porter Anderson leading a Town Hall discussion about the fate of serious narrative in the digital age with representatives from Amazon, Tumblr, Electric Literature, Vook, and others; Walter Mosley and Aminatta Forna delivering stirring keynote talks; "Authors in the House," hosted by author and diversity expert Debbie Plummer, a first-of-its-kind showcase and national competition for self-published authors; and a keynote conversation led by literary agent Regina Brooks aimed at producing a new manifesto of inclusion for publishing. The conference convenes 500 aspiring writers, and over 150 established writers, editors, publishers, and literary

agents. We envision bringing this conference to the Seaport District and expanding access to the incredible talent coming to Boston by hosting conversations and events open to the general public and not limited to conference attendees.

Target Users: Diverse Boston audiences, giving the writing community, small literary organizations, and all people of Boston a stage.

GrubStreet is an active and creative partner to the City of Boston, The Boston Public Library (BPL), and many nonprofit and cultural organizations in the city (see listing of all partners in appendix). Through our partnership with the Boston Public Library, we offer free Spanish/English bilingual writing workshops for both teens and adults in Dorchester, Roxbury, Mattapan, and soon East Boston. We've also partnered with the City of Boston on two signature programs including the creation of the nation's first Literary Cultural District in downtown Boston and The Memoir Project, which has engaged seniors in every city neighborhood and published five anthologies that document Boston's living history. We look forward to deepening our work with the city and the BPL and sharing our presenting spaces at 50 Liberty with participants in these programs.

We also look forward to sharing presenting space with the city's many literary and storytelling organizations, as well as individual artists and writers who are doing incredible work now but are limited by lack of venue.

Other partners we work closely with include community-based groups like Sociedad Latina in Mission Hill/Roxbury and Brookview House transitional housing; museums like the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum; partners in promoting literary works like WBUR; other Boston city offices like the Office of Resilience and Racial Equity and the Office of Immigrant Advancement; anti-bias groups like Facing History and Ourselves; storytelling and writing organizations like The Drum, Write Boston, and 826 Boston; groups that work with immigrants, including the International Institute of New England.

Target Users: Writing groups, book groups, professional networks

Twenty years in and 30,000 students later, there are many book groups, writing groups, and publishing networking groups which have formed and continue to meet and connect over the written word. We can't currently host them. In this new space, we imagine making room for book groups, writing groups and professional meet-ups. Monthly, we host a 200 person and growing Writers of Color Group to build a space where writers of color can connect, share their experiences, and discuss important issues. We plan on hosting this group in the Seaport and leveraging the new space to continue to expand this programming.

Target Users: All of us – tourists, Bostonians young and old.

We believe that the intersection of narrative arts and civic life is vital. There's nothing like the written word – democratically produced and shared – to help us understand one

another, build consensus, and shape the future. It's no wonder that, in an interview last year, President Obama stated that he will spend time training the next generation of leaders on key issues like climate change, while also connecting them "with their peers who see fiction and nonfiction as an important part of that [training] process." He went on to point out that "the role of stories to unify – as opposed to divide, to engage rather than to marginalize – is more important than ever."

Last year, we hosted a city-wide "Write-In" on the steps of the Boston Public Library in support of recent immigrants and refugees. We invited immigrants and others to write and share their personal stories and to share their ideas about immigration. We also hosted a public conversation at our Muse Conference called "The Black Experience in Boston." We are committed to building on this work, highlighting the role of authors and narrative in tackling the pressing issues of our day, sharing new ideas, and building bridges with an eye toward making the city and the country more equitable and just.

Harvard Book Store

Harvard Book Store is Harvard Square's landmark independent book store. Founded in 1932, the store is known for the extraordinary selection of new, used and remaindered books, carefully curated by buyers with nearly a century of experience in the book trade. Harvard Book Store has also been an innovator. It was among the first bookstores to have a computerized inventory and among the first to be on the web (with the domain name harvard.com). It has an award-winning website, where customers select their books from virtual shelves. In addition, it is one of the few bookstores in the world with an Espresso Book Machine, which allows patrons to print their own work or one of millions of previously published books in just a few minutes.

Harvard Book Store is dedicated to the written word and to building a community of writers and readers, allowing them to engage with each other within its walls. The store is best known for its Best of Boston author reading series, that features major novelists and poets, renowned historians, leading public intellectuals, and celebrities from many different fields, making it and, by extension, Greater Boston, a nationally-known destination for literature. Celebrities who have spoken in the last few years include: Ethan Hawke, and B.J. Novak; political leaders Hillary Clinton, Elizabeth Warren, Bernie Sanders, and Joe Biden; Gold Star father Khizr Khan; historians Doris Kearns Goodwin, David McCullough, and Walter Isaacson; provocative thinkers Zlavož Zizek, Roxane Gay, and Noam Chomsky; popular academic writers Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Stephen Greenblatt, Stephen Pinker, James Wood and Jill Lepore; pundits E.J. Dionne, Lawrence O'Donnell, and Chris Hayes.

But equally important is our commitment to providing a platform for diverse issues, voices and for the next generation of writers. During the week of January 21st, for example, we featured Chloe Benjamin, a young novelist whose second book has become a *New York Times* bestseller; former activist Bill Ayers speaking about public education; Professors Patrick Sharkey and William Julius Wilson discussing the sociology of crime in the inner city; former Stanford Dean Julie Lythcott Haims reading from her memoir of growing up as a biracial woman in America;

Tiffany, an 8th grader from the Boston Teachers Union School reading her poetry; and philosopher Catherine Elgin talking about truth. In partnership with GrubStreet, we have launched a “New Voices in Fiction Series” that highlights emerging literary talent.

The author series now comprises 500 events per year. Many of these are sponsored by the store; an equal number are the result of partnerships with other organizations who are either co-sponsors or primary sponsors. These organizations include the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research; the Roxbury-based youth writing center, 826 Boston; Mass Humanities; and the Boston Athenaeum. We have a partnership with the Forum Network, a joint venture of WGBH and the Lowell Institute, that records many of our lectures for broadcast on the web. We work with WBUR so that on-air celebrities, such as Meghna Chakrabarti, Robin Young, Anthony Brooks, and Chris Lydon, are able to serve as interlocutors at many of our events.

Our author series brings tens of thousands of people to the store and larger venues every year. We believe that such a series can be truly transformative for any neighborhood, providing a center for the discussion of works of ideas, of imagination, and of societal and historical significance.

Mass Poetry

Mass Poetry was founded in 2008 after Mass Humanities and the Mass Cultural Council supported an effort to investigate the “state of poetry” in Massachusetts. It was found that the Commonwealth had many talented poets, but there was neither recognition nor support for their efforts, and a huge disconnect between the larger public and the wealth of poetic talent. The effort involved soliciting the input of hundreds of poets representing all schools and demographics.

Mass Poetry was the result of this effort. It was founded upon a few core principles: diversity of styles of poetry, of languages, and of ethnicities; collaboration among and with poets and various cultural organizations; and the idea that people should be paid for their creative work.

Mass Poetry’s programs are intended to broaden the audience of poetry readers and transform people’s lives through inspiring verse. The largest single program is the Massachusetts Poetry Festival, occurring annually in Salem and featuring more than 150 poets including many of today’s top poets. Mass Poetry also organizes a Student Day of Poetry, an annual field trip for more than 1,000 middle and high school students, who engage in generative workshops with the region’s top poets and educators, and who participate in poetry readings, performances, and open mics. Also oriented toward younger poets is the “U35 Reading Series” for poets under the age of 35, held every other month. Annually, we publish *Common Threads*, consisting of 7-10 poems by Massachusetts poets, with a guide to reading and discussing the poems, as well as videos of the poems being read. The *Common Threads* program includes outreach to libraries, schools, senior citizen centers, and book clubs, in all more than 350 groups to discuss the included poems.

Mass Poetry activities are woven deeply into the fabric of Boston. It organizes Poetry on the T, where poems are placed on the MBTA in place of ads, Raining Poetry, where poems are written on the city's sidewalks with biodegradable, water-repellent spray so that they are visible only when it rains; and The Evening of Inspired Leaders, a fundraising event that brings leaders from diverse fields together to read poems that are meaningful to them and have influenced their lives and work.

With access to a narrative arts center in the Seaport, Mass Poetry will be able to launch new programming. We have long sought a space to hold Master Classes with such poets as former U.S. Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky, but have been unable to do so because we lack the appropriate space. We would create a Boston Harbor Poetry Cruise, contests for student and adult poets with the Harbor as a theme; partner with local institutions such as the MFA and Children's Museum to mount joint programming; do ocean and harbor themed Raining Poetry in approved Harbor Walk locations; and move our annual Festival to the Seaport.

CONTRIBUTION TO COMMUNITY

As noted above, The Center will provide year-round storytelling programming, with events every day, stretching into the evening hours, within the physical walls and extending into the surrounding neighborhood. Multi-faceted programming will:

- attract a multi-racial public of all ages and communities, including Seaport residents and workers, people across the city of Boston and across the state, and tourists – through the bookstore and cafe/wine bar, public readings and performances, writing classes of all kinds for writers at all stages, and community writing and co-working spaces;
- offer a vibrant and popular destination year-round through the activities noted above, and through bringing celebrated authors, noted speakers on the issues of the day, musicians collaborating with authors; as well as through multi-media collaborations with other arts groups;
- provide synergy with the sea and waterfront through literary tours of the Harbor Walk, Harbor Cruises featuring poetry and prose, and multi-media displays on the first floor glass walls and outside our doors; attract artists in need of inspiring landscape minutes away from the clutter of the city
- continue the growth of the Seaport as a civic and cultural destination by offering Boston and the nation an unparalleled center for intellectual and creative exploration and entertainment;
- serve as a neighborhood resource by offering a renowned bookstore, easy access to writing classes of all kinds, and the chance to participate in creative expression and storytelling, a cafe/wine bar and community space to meet diverse people from across the state and around the world, and to enjoy acclaimed performers producing innovative work.

Constituencies

The Center will have many constituencies, consisting of multiple, diverse, and overlapping groups of people. These include the people who live and work in the immediate neighborhood and those who live and work in the many neighborhoods of Greater Boston. These include the writers and other artists who will learn their craft and share their works through the programs of the Center. There are also the readers who will enjoy the fruits of all of this creative activity and will, perhaps, be motivated to share their own stories. And finally, there are the thousands of tourists, both local and remote, visiting the Seaport and viewing the Narrative Arts Center as an important cultural destination.

It is vitally important that the center's programs meet the needs of these multiple constituencies as articulated by the groups themselves. GrubStreet, a dynamic and fast-moving organization known for innovation, is already serving many thousands of aspiring and accomplished story-tellers in the Boston area. In launching the center, we would meet with the people living and working in the Seaport to understand their interests so that we could adapt or extend our offerings to ensure relevance to our surroundings. While the specific development of these offerings will depend on the results of these meetings, we have developed many ideas that represent the spirit of what we anticipate happening. Many of these potential uses have been described above, but from the perspective of the participants, we would include a few more.

We imagine creating Writer's Office Hours in which we invite Vertex and Goodwin Procter employees to seek advice from professionals about how to animate a presentation or tell the story of their company. After work, Seaport residents and workers could join us for Happy Hour with the city's emerging writers and experts published by nearby Beacon Press.

We'd also convene the dynamic and diverse organizations and individuals who make up this city's unique and bustling writing community to find out what constituents need in a new large and exciting space in the Seaport and we'd invite them to activate this center with us. We imagine writing groups and book groups occupying the common areas or signing up for a classroom, organizations such as First Literacy leading immigrants through ESL and job skills, TEDx Beacon Street using our classrooms to develop and practice their talks. GrubStreet has a strong track record of working with community partners and diverse neighborhood constituencies to ensure that we are meeting needs and open to exploring new options.

A wonderful cross-pollination will happen when GrubStreet, Mass Poetry, Harvard Book Store, and affiliated arts and writing organizations are housed together, able to learn from each other, more easily collaborate to produce new stories and multi-disciplinary works, and to reach larger audiences on a daily basis. At this center, we imagine all stages of the literary process taking place as vividly as we imagine a new center for essential civic conversation and idea generation.