

Kitchen Table Literary Arts Annual Report:  
*Focus, Intention, and Teamwork*



Kitchen Table Literary Arts  
January 2016

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## Executive Summary

In 1980, activist, feminist, writer, and scholar Barbara Smith started a press "to make visible the writing, culture, and history of women of color." (Smith, 1989).

At Kitchen Table Literary Arts, we honor this tradition with more than our name. The work of increasing the visibility for women writers, poets, and artists of color is still extremely necessary, and our center's mission reflects our dedication to this very important work.

Our first year is a testament to patient, thoughtful foundation-building and reflects our service-oriented approach to showcasing the stories and experiences of our community through focus, intention, and teamwork.



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## Message from the Director

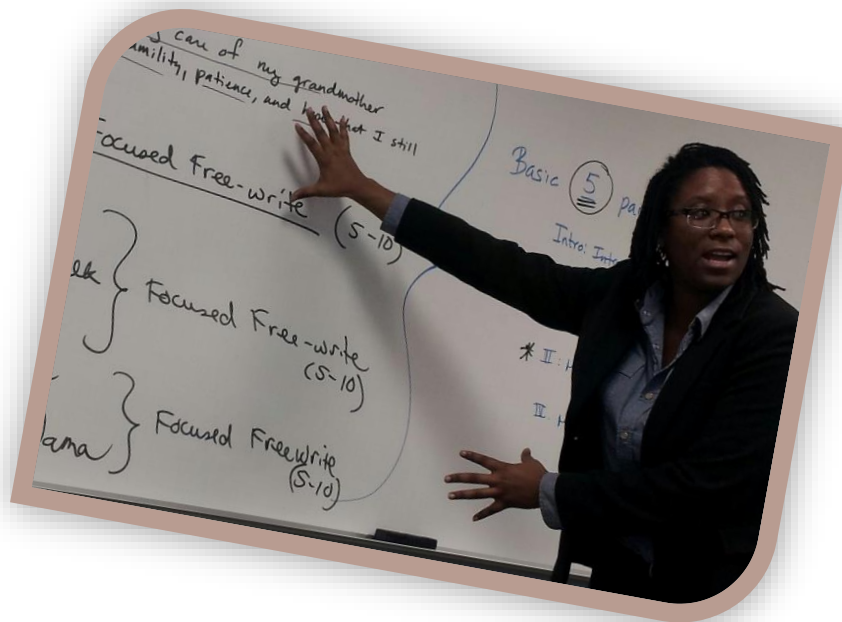
### *Getting and Staying F.I.T. as a New Nonprofit*

Kitchen Table Literary Arts is a dream realized through the vision, dedication, and collaboration of creative, energetic writers and professionals who understand the power of arts education and appreciate the magic of words.

We have spent the better part of our first year **focused** on understanding who we are as an organization, who we wish to serve, and how best to serve them. With that focus, we set our **intentions** -- dynamic programming, interactive workshops, and community-building. As a **team**, we find strength in shared responsibility and goal-setting, mutual respect and support across tasks and projects. It hasn't been easy, and we still have a lot of work to do. But, if year one is any indication, we are on the right track and we are making all the right moves!

- Sheree L. Greer, Founder and Director

**"WE FIND STRENGTH IN SHARED RESPONSIBILITY AND GOAL-SETTING, MUTUAL RESPECT AND SUPPORT ACROSS TASKS AND PROJECTS."**



## Focus: Organizational Overview

Our organizational structure is simple. Our dedicated, all-volunteer staff includes director **Sheree Greer**, financial director **Jasmine Smith**, and outreach director **Slam Anderson**. Operations management is cross-functional, which each director working side-by-side with the others to fully-realize plans and initiatives, strategic directions and best practices. The team of directors is supported by its board association members and other unpaid volunteer staff, who contribute their research expertise, as well as administrative and public relations-media support.

Direct support included press releases from **Tiffany Wilson**, research from **L.B. Jones**, and administrative and social media support from summer intern **Dharma Gilbert-Greer**.



Toward the very end of the 2014-2015 programming year, Kitchen Table Literary Arts Center was fortunate enough to work closely with nonprofit strategic planning consultant, **Lisa Marie Pickens**, whose experience, coaching, and support allowed us to design a comprehensive Three-Year Strategic Planning initiative that resulted in more focused, deliberate, and comprehensive organizational goal-setting and operational direction.

A direct result of engaged, focused strategic planning is illustrated in the clearly-defined organizational overview below, which details the three-prong operations that guide Kitchen Table Literary Arts Center's important work.

### **I. Public Programs**

Literature and Writing-based programs and events presented to general audiences. Examples include Women's History Month, Black Heritage/Black History Month events, election season, etc.

### **II. Community Partnerships**

Literature and Writing-based programming and arts education workshops presented through partnerships with other nonprofits, group homes, charter and alternative schools

### **III. Writing Institute**

College-level writing and literature courses available online and face-to-face with programs leading to certificate in Creative Writing. Complete curriculum for certificate and ad hoc courses available. Enrollment for women of color writers only.

## Intention: Public Programs

In November 2014, we introduced ourselves to the community with **Raise Your Voice**, a program that illuminated the brilliant, challenging poetry and prose written through moments of our greatest civil and social unrest. We also discussed the importance of midterm elections. In March 2015, in celebration of *Women's History Month*, we presented **At Our Grandmothers' Feet**, an event that introduced participants to the work of elder and ancestor women writers of color. Both programs encouraged participants to discover the work of Black women poets and writers then crafting and sharing their own reflective stories and poems.

"EDUCATIONAL AND ENTERTAINING. I LOVED IT!" – AT OUR GRANDMOTHER'S FEET PARTICIPANT





## Message from our Financial Director

As a young organization, we carefully leveraged our resources and community network to create meaningful and manageable programs to introduce ourselves to the community. We presented two small public programs during our first operating year, and the scope of the programs, conservative but effective, allowed us to keep the costs low. The support of unpaid volunteers filled gaps between our to-do list and our small staff.

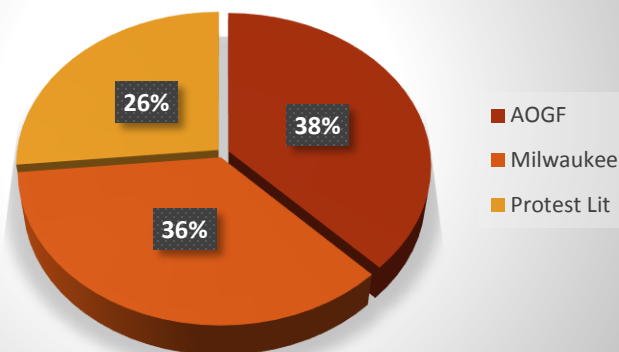
“WE CAREFULLY LEVERAGED OUR RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY NETWORK TO CREATE MEANINGFUL AND MANAGEABLE PROGRAMS TO INTRODUCE OURSELVES TO THE COMMUNITY.”

While we enjoyed our 2014-15 year of programming, we endeavor to grow as an organization, increasing both our community partnerships and public programs. Clearly, fundraising will take on a more crucial role in our organizational operations. We are up for the challenge and have already begun strategizing how to best expand our reach and bolster our vitality for the coming year.

- Jasmine Smith, Financial Director



### Program Costs Overall



## Teamwork: Partnerships

The 2014-15 year of building community partnerships proved successful for Kitchen Table Literary Arts. We piloted a program at *Milwaukee Academy Behavioral and Emotional Health Treatment Center*, a Milwaukee, Wisconsin-based organization with which our director has a longstanding relationship. The two-week workshop, **A Future, Imagined**

encourages girls to acknowledge their past but not let it define them, creating a space to imagine themselves in a successful, empowered futures. The young women of *Milwaukee Academy* wrote imaginative, forward thinking stories and poems about becoming entrepreneurs and nurses, published authors and foster mothers, scientists and farmers.



"I REALLY ENJOYED BEING ABLE TO FREE WRITE AND HAVE MY OWN STORY." – WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT



"I HAD A GOOD TIME SHARING AND TELLING YOU ABOUT MY DREAMS AND GOALS." – WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT



## From the Outreach Director

Building partnerships through the Kitchen Table has been a rewarding and educational experience. As the Outreach Director, one of my main focuses is networking in and out of my community to find reliable and like-minded organizations and institutions that can benefit from the programs we offer. Through successful partnership building the Kitchen Table has been able to coordinate and execute several workshops both locally and out of state at charter schools, detention centers, public libraries, and community centers.

As an organization we try to stay open-minded when seeking out new partnerships but we remain firm on our mission and uncompromising towards our values. We appreciated the ability to introduce (incorporate) our custom designed curriculum into all programs that offers us an invitation but at the same time we stay mindful to the benefits and impacts that certain organizations will have on us. Since we are still a fairly new organization building

**“BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS IS ONE OF OUR CORE GOALS. IT IS HOW WE EXPAND OUR KNOWLEDGE, INCREASE AWARENESS, AND FULFILL OUR VISION.”**



partnerships is one of our core goals. It is how we expand our knowledge, increase awareness, and fulfill our vision, which is to build an appreciation and support for women of color literary artists and their work both past and present.

- Slam Anderson, Outreach Director and Instructor

## Our Board Members

The Kitchen Table Literary Arts Center is pleased to work with the following board association members:

**Adella S. Deacon, DPT, JD**, is a forward-thinking, energetic, general practice attorney with experience in real estate, landlord/tenant, social security, and estate planning. She has an extensive, interdisciplinary-focused educational background having earned her Doctorate of Physical Therapy from Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and her Juris Doctorate from Chicago-Kent College of Law in Chicago, Illinois. She has more than 10 years of experience as a healthcare professional and runs her own property management company and private practice in Chicago, Illinois.

**Donald Gordon** is an enthusiastic, professionally-savvy human resource professional who specializes in branding, re-branding, and image consulting. He has extensive experience in Human Resource management, including recruitment and hiring, conflict resolution and relationship management. He has worked as a recruitment manager across industries, including retail stores, healthcare providers, and financial firms. A graduate of Roosevelt University, he currently manages human resources for a number of high profile clients at HKP Payroll Services in Dubuque, Iowa.

**Orlando Pizana** is a professor and community activist. He teaches composition and literature for St. Petersburg College and maintains an active and self-less dedication to community development and youth empowerment. He works with his fraternity, Omega Psi Phi, in addition to partnering with his church family, to lead and develop community-centered programs that relate to education, physical health, and professional development. He is currently working on his PhD at University of South Florida with a focus on enriching the educational, personal, and professional development of college athletes through service learning and specialized curriculums.

Their enthusiastic support during this first year made much of our work possible, and we look forward to strengthening our network, building our programming, and expanding our reach with their continued support and direction.

## Our Mission

Kitchen Table Literary Arts Center builds awareness, appreciation, and support for women of color writers, poets, and their work.

