

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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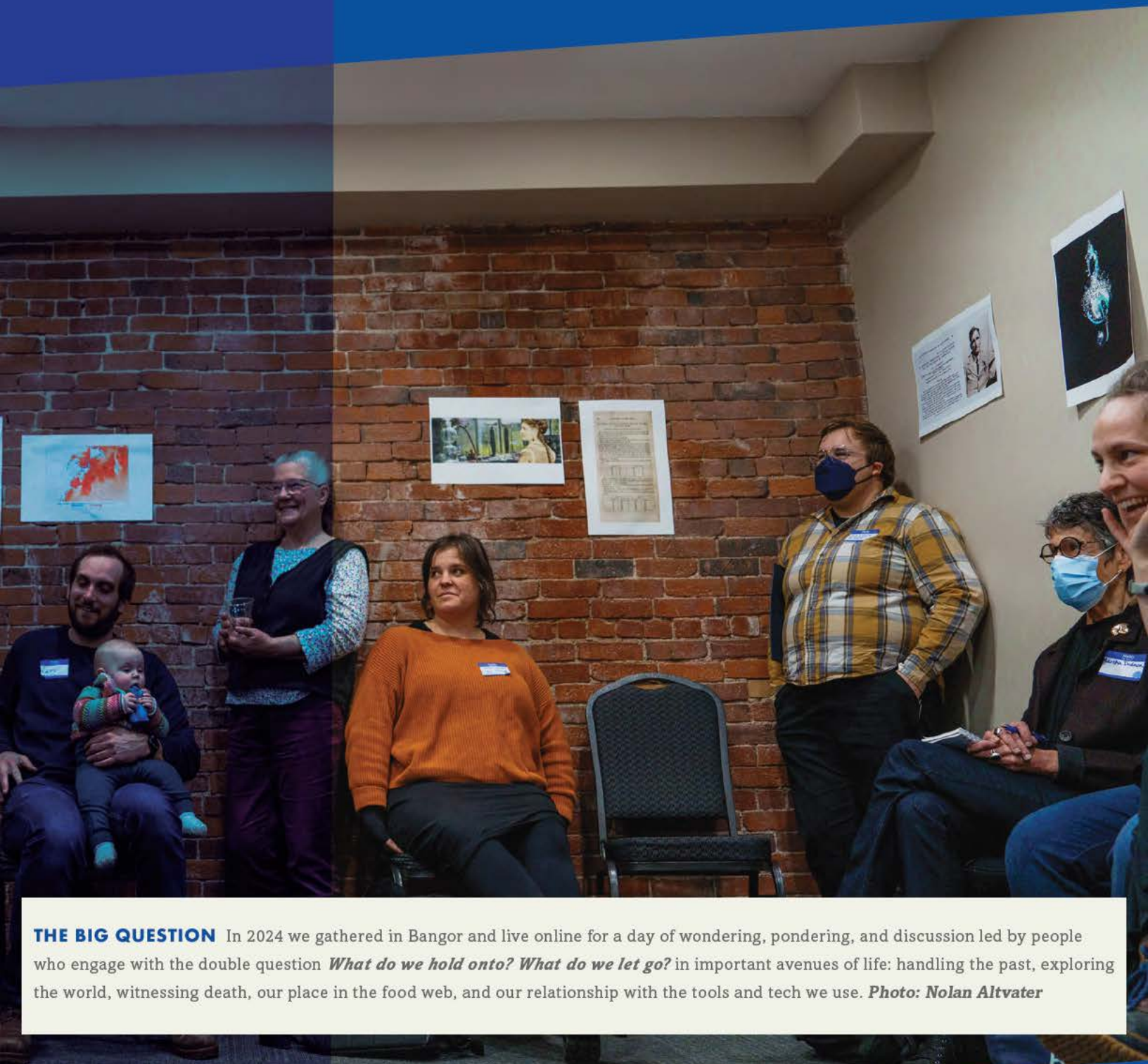


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**2024**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**

# JOIN THE DISCUSSION



**THE BIG QUESTION** In 2024 we gathered in Bangor and live online for a day of wondering, pondering, and discussion led by people who engage with the double question *What do we hold onto? What do we let go?* in important avenues of life: handling the past, exploring the world, witnessing death, our place in the food web, and our relationship with the tools and tech we use. **Photo: Nolan Altvater**



# MAINE HUMANITIES

We connect people with books,  
communities with ideas, and  
strangers with one another.

**Maine Humanities Council** is a statewide non-profit organization that uses books, poetry, and big ideas to bring people together to discuss issues of importance. We're a program partner, grantmaker, and connector of people and communities. Our connections strengthen our society and help shape the future of Maine. As Maine's affiliate of the **National Endowment for the Humanities** (NEH), we offer humanities programs and grants for all Mainers.

## STAFF

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**Executive Director**

Nicole Rancourt  
**Program Manager**

Genius Black  
**Digital Media Coordinator**

Meghan Reedy  
**Program Coordinator**

Harper Batsford  
**Program Coordinator**

Lizz Sinclair  
**Program Coordinator**

Karen Brown  
**Office Manager**

Sampson Spadafore  
**Social Media Manager**

Diane Magras  
**Director of Development**

Kyle Volland  
**Program Coordinator**

Marcela Peres  
**Operations Manager &  
Program Specialist**

Ian Watkins  
**Communications Manager**

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Margery Irvine, Brooklin

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Lise Pelletier, Fort Kent

Ayesha Hall, Auburn

Brendon Reay, Blue Hill

Tam Thanh T. Huynh, Augusta

## HARRIET P. HENRY CENTER FOR THE BOOK

The Maine Humanities Council is home to the Harriet P. Henry Center for the Book, Maine's affiliate for the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress. The Library of Congress Center for the Book was established in 1977 to promote books, reading, libraries, and literacy. In 1997 the Maine Humanities Council established the Maine Center for the Book as a state affiliate of that program. It was renamed the Harriet P. Henry Center for the Book in 2003, in honor of Maine's first female judge, a former Board chair of MHC and a longtime supporter of the humanities.

## HOW TO REACH US

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Portland, Maine 04102-1012  
(207) 773-5051  
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@MaineHumanities  
#MaineHumanities

In 2024, Maine Humanities focused on expansion and relationship-building, and we basked in the byproduct of this focus: connection and stories. Our staff stretched out across the state, connecting with new contacts and familiar partners. In the summer, a group of us spent a week in the St. John Valley, where we met long-time supporters and cultural workers. We visited cultural institutions across Northern Aroostook County, including historical societies, adult education centers, and libraries. We also spent time with staff at both the Mi'kmaq and Maliseet Nations, and visited the new Mi'kmaq community space that opened this year just in time for their Mawiomi. We enjoyed spending time in Fort Kent, Saint Agatha, New Sweden, Frenchville, and the other towns we visited. We connected through shared storytelling, learning about the Acadian history in the region and about how cross-border relationships have drastically shifted in recent times.

Our staff also made good connections in Bar Harbor, Chebeague Island, Scarborough, Bath, Trescott, Bangor, Presque Isle, and several towns in Lincoln County. On these visits, we were also graced with stories. We heard stories about how people made their way into humanities work; stories about the emergence of their organizations and how significant their organization has been to the community it serves; stories about the deep community connections in those areas and how people thrive together. With every visit we made, we were reminded about the powerful connective work of the humanities and the pressing need for that work right now and into the unknown future.

In 2025, we'll continue to expand; we'll continue to reach out and draw you all nearer to us. We'll continue to create and deliver accessible programming that shares Maine stories. We'll continue to support Maine's cultural work and economy through our grants programs, and we'll keep working to make easeful and meaningful connections with organizations we fund.



**SAMAA ABDURRAQIB**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Photo: Genius Black

# BOOKS & DISCUSSION

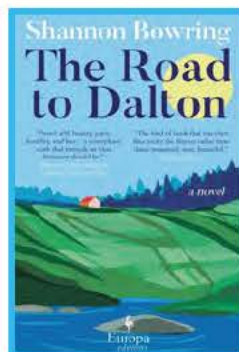
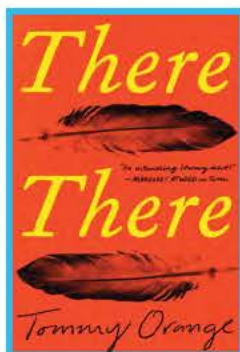
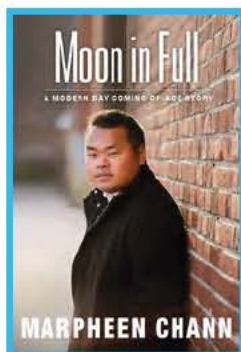
## OVER 6,500 BOOKS READ

Texts of all kinds — stories long and short, poems, essays, illustrated books, and more — are essential for Maine Humanities participants to develop a sense of connection, agency, and engagement in our programs.

***"I always leave feeling better...like I'm understood and not alone."***

**Discussion Project Participant**

2024 included more than 90 facilitated Discussion Projects, over 60 participating Read ME libraries, Readers Retreat, representing Maine at the Library of Congress National Book Festival, and many more examples of a fundamental component of our work: people gathering to discuss a book they have all read.



*Just a few of the titles that connected Maine communities in 2024.*



# READERS RETREAT

FEATURING TOMMY ORANGE'S *THERE THERE*

In Orono, Scarborough, Lubec, and Online

On April 6, 2024, Readers Retreat brought together engaged readers at more locations than ever before—the University of Maine at Orono, Scarborough High School, Cobscook Institute, and live online. Participants had a chance to meet each other and to hear from and talk with guest speakers about Tommy Orange's *There There*, including indigenous writers Julian Brave NoiseCat, Morgan Talty, and Brendan Shay Basham.

*"It was interesting to hear people from very different parts of the state talk about their admiration of this book."* - Participant



Scarborough High School Civil Rights Club members facilitate group discussions on Tommy Orange's *There There*. Photo: Michelle Shupp

## MAINE SPEAKS

HOSTED IN 42 COMMUNITIES STATEWIDE

*"The talk was a unique shared experience and helped show our community the importance of asking, listening, and taking the time to get to know one another more sincerely."*

- Maine Speaks Host



Photo: Ashely Conti

# GRANTS

Supporting humanities programs that engage Maine communities

Over **\$187,000**

in support to Maine nonprofits and communities

**32** towns represented

**24** grantees awarded an MHC grant for the first time



# FEATURED GRANTEE

## 19 TOWNS, 19 STORIES

*Beyond Addiction in Lincoln County*

**MAJOR GRANT - \$7,500**

A project of Studio B, "19 Towns, 19 Stories" provided a platform for Lincoln County residents grappling with the impact of addiction, overdose, and death to share their untold stories. Using a community-led process, Studio B identified storytellers and worked with local organizations to host programs in every town in Lincoln County. These 19 events allowed members of every town to share personal stories and discuss the effects of Substance Use Disorder on individuals, families, and communities. The narratives and photographs of each person sharing their story will be included in an upcoming book and traveling and on-line exhibitions.

*"Dozens participated, hundreds attended, and thousands were touched, bringing a sense of visibility and belonging to an often disenfranchised population."*

- Studio B



Sharon Bailey of Jefferson, who leads the Grieving Hearts of Lincoln County support group, holding a photograph of her son, Matthew. Photo: Hannah Latham

**LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS MAINE HUMANITIES FUNDED PROJECT**



*Myron M. Beasley, PhD.*



*Maya Williams*

## Constance H. Carlson PUBLIC HUMANITIES PRIZE

**MYRON M. BEASLEY, PhD.  
MAYA WILLIAMS**

Last year Maine Humanities awarded the 10th Constance H. Carlson Public Humanities Prize to Maya Williams and Myron M. Beasley, PhD. Maya Williams, Portland's seventh Poet Laureate, was awarded the prize for their creation of safe spaces for discussion and art, ensuring that people engage with empathy, community, and understanding. Myron M. Beasley, Ph.D., Associate Professor of American Studies and Gender and Sexuality Studies at Bates College, was awarded the prize for his innovative leadership in conversations around art, his care in connecting audiences, and the breadth and depth he brings to his creative projects.

Named for the first female president of a public university in Maine, the Constance H. Carlson Public Humanities Prize was first awarded in 1998. Prize recipients are chosen in alignment with the Maine Humanities Council's Prize Criteria, Equity Statement, and Strategic Plan. 2024's prizes were awarded during a ceremony on Wednesday, May 8 at the Equality Community Center in Portland.



# BRINGING US TOGETHER

*Books, discussion, and big ideas have the power of creating community throughout Maine — and accomplish even more.*

## Supporters of the Maine Humanities Council

believe in the power of the humanities to bring us together, foster ideas, and inspire us to explore. They believe in the opportunity that books, presentations, films, or pieces of art, theater, history, and music give in spurring discovery and enriching lives. And they know that when we are together in a meeting space (in person or on Zoom), we can accomplish great things — for ourselves and our communities.

*The list below includes people, funds, and agencies that helped the Maine Humanities Council accomplish great things between November 1, 2023, and October 31, 2024 (our 2024 fiscal year). Support made after that period will appear in our 2025 Annual Report. If you'd like to join this amazing group of kind, generous, and deeply thoughtful people with a gift of any size, please go to [mainehumanities.org/donate](https://mainehumanities.org/donate).*

Photo: Nolan Altvater

## ANNUAL GIVING – FISCAL YEAR 2024

Anonymous (5)

Anonymous,

in honor of the Constance H. Carlson Public Humanities Prize winners Maya Williams and Myron M. Beasley. Bravo!

C.L. Abbott

in honor and memory of Patricia A. Onion

Friends of the Albion Public Library

Douglas Allen

Meredith Anderson

Ruth Anderson

in memory of Hayden Anderson

Robert Arnold

in memory of Patricia Onion

Tenney and Newell Augur

Jo Baldwin

Peter C. and Danuta M. Barnard Fund

Richard E. Barnes

Paul and Cathleen Bauschatz

Stephen P. Beale

Carol M. Beaumier

Berman & Simmons

Maureen Bien

Libby Bischof

Patricia and Eric Bixel

in memory of Hayden Anderson

Victoria and Erno Bonebakker

Jim and Sarah Bowie

Peter Bowman

Marjorie A. Boyd, MD

Dr. Lawrence A. Boyle and Victoria Russell

Emily and Norman Breitner

Joan Bromage

Brooks Family Foundation

in honor of Myron Beasley receiving the

Constance H. Carlson Public Humanities Prize

Rick and Anne Brown

Paul E. Brunelle

Elizabeth A. Burdick

in memory of Hayden Anderson

Michael D. Burke, in honor of Patricia Onion

Margaret E. Burnham Charitable Trust

Midge and John Burns

Susan and Franklin Burroughs

Joan Bussiere

Corley Anne Byras

Helen Cafferty and Otto Emersleben

Mary Cacciatore

in memory of Sean Mulcahy

Marcia Carter

William L. Case III

in memory of Betsey Brewster Case of

Bangor, Maine

Douglas Chamberlain

Paulette Chernack

Joseph A. Conforti

Claire Connor

Anthony Corrado

Brad and Anita Coupe

in honor of Joe Boyle's Board service

Nancy E. Crowell

Margaret Cruikshank

Allan and Linda Currie

Cynthia Freeman Cyr

Sally J. Daggett

Judy and Chuck Danielson

Jay Davis

Glen Porter and Jean Deighan

Craig and Sherry Dietrich

Diversified Communications

Linda J. Docherty

Paul Doiron

Eva Downs

Martha Tod Dudman

Tina and Caleb Elfenbein

John and Beverly Emerson

Susan Emmet

Greg and Deborah Fahy

Greg Feero

in honor of Pat Onion

Lisa Feldman

Robert and Kathleen Flory

Donald and Elizabeth Fox

in memory of Harriet P. Henry

Ed Friedman

Gisela Gamper

in memory of Dorothy Schwartz

Noel J. Genova

Mary C. Gillies

Phyllis and Bernard Givertz

James and Jette Glazer

in memory of Pat Onion

Carolyn Gontoski

Jayne Gordon

Landis Green and Bruce Norelius

Wayne and Gerry Gregersen

Charlie and Sue Grosjean

Ann Armstrong Guild

Catharine W. Guiles

Joe and Merna Guttentag

Dr. Emily A. Haddad

Linda Hafford

Judy Hakola

Marilyn M. Hall

in memory of Harriet Henry

Joe Hall and Melissa Sundell

James Hall

in memory of Patricia Onion

Ruth Hannan

Melinda and Ralph Harder

Haste Family Fund

in loving memory of Harriet Passerman

Ann Havener

Stephen Hayes and Carol McCarthy

Joyce and Wesley Hedlund

Janet Henry and Vernon Moore

Leslie Hill

Erica Hirshler

in memory of Eric and Marilyn Hirshler

William and Mary Jean Holt

Helaire and D. Brock Hornby

Mazie Hough

Stanley R. Howe, Ph.D

Marcia Howell

in memory of Deedee Schwartz

Margery Y. Irvine

Jamie Isaacson

in memory of Patricia Onion

Sheila Jans

Erik C. Jorgensen and Tamara M. Risser

Theodora J. Kalikow

Susan A. Kaplan

Sheldon T. Katz

Janet Kehl

James and Beth Kilbreth

Cornelia Kittredge

Karen Stathoplos and Kim Krauss



Gloria Williams Ladd  
in memory of Lincoln Ladd  
Neil and Cathy Lamb  
Kristin Langelier  
Catherine and Gary Larkin  
Alice Larrea  
William H. Laubenstein III  
Theodate Lawlor  
Richard and Sandra Lawrence  
Suzanne Leibowitz  
Dawn M. Leland  
Dale and Rich Lewis  
Tom and Leslie Lizotte  
Ryan Lolar and Julia Endicott  
Linda Lord  
Dr. Ben and Barbara Lounsbury  
Mary Sue and John Love  
Kit Lunney and Rick Barton  
Nancy M. MacKnight  
Robert and Marlene Mailloux  
The Racial Equity Strategic Goal Fund of the  
Maine Community Foundation  
Peggy and Roger Marchand  
Ray Marcotte  
Karen Massey and Jeff Thaler  
Elizabeth Mayberry  
Audrey Maynard  
in honor of my mother, Pamela S. Lord,  
on her 80th birthday  
Bob and Doris McAfee  
Blainor McGough and Brian Arlet  
Alan McIlhenny and Elizabeth Ackerson  
James McKenna and Jane Orbeton  
Sarah F. McMahon  
Jean McManamy  
Sarah S. Meacham  
Abbott and Nancy Meader  
Patricia Messler  
Linda Michaels  
The Honorable Rebecca Millett  
Luis Millones  
Márcia Minter  
in honor of Pat Onion

Becky Hunt and John Monroe  
in memory of James C. Hunt  
Holley and Terry Moran  
in memory of Patricia Arnold Onion  
Joanne and Earl Morse  
Morton-Kelly Charitable Trust  
Peggy Mower  
Linda Mulcahy,  
in memory of Sean Mulcahy  
Dave Musser and Valerie Sherman  
National Endowment for the Humanities  
Mouhamédou Niang  
Sally and Ted Oldham  
John R. Opperman  
Edward A. Barrett and Nancy H. Orr  
D. Suzi Osher Foundation Trust  
Ruby Parker  
Carol Parks  
Rosalie Tyler Paul  
David Pence  
Dennis Grafflin and Jan Phillips  
Lynne Priest  
Frances Prinn  
Jo Radner  
Rebecca Robbins Raines  
Brendon Reay & Caroline Bicks  
Jamie Rey  
in memory of Sean Mulcahy  
Janice Rey  
in memory of Sean Mulcahy  
David Richards  
Timothy J. Richardson  
Marta Rieman  
Liam Riordan and Susan Thibedeau  
James and Loretta Risner  
Winfield and Victoria Robinson  
Mary Jane and Howard Rosenfield  
Fred C. Rummel Foundation  
Thomas Rumpf  
Jean Sanborn  
in honor of Patricia Onion  
Patricia Sanborn

John Ryan and Jenny Scheu  
Ted and Sharon Sharp  
Julie Sheehan  
Bonnie Shulman  
Linda Silka and Laurence Smith  
Simmons Foundation  
Douglas B. Sinclair  
Lizz Sinclair  
Bethany K. Smart  
Stephen Sokol and Gerda Neu-Sokol  
Rick Speer and Judy Frost  
Kenneth S. Spierer and Joan Leitzer  
State of Maine  
Phoebe Stein  
Didi Stockly  
Lucy Strobe  
Sara Margaret and Mark Stuart Fund  
in memory of Hayden Anderson  
The Sussman Family  
Joe Frazer and Susan Tananbaum  
Linda Tatelbaum  
Deborah Taylor  
Pamela Taylor  
Alalia Thaler  
Tam Huynh  
Linden Thigpen Pavloff  
Barbara and Richard Trafton  
in memory of Pat Onion  
Miriam Kellogg Truslow  
Emily Vail  
Drs. Diane Vatne & Martin Yates  
Yolanda Theunissen and Richard C. Veit  
Mary Vekasi  
Julia Walkling  
Edward Walworth  
John and Maryanne Ward  
Peter and Margie Webster  
in memory of Hayden Anderson  
Susan Wegner and John Fischer  
Roberta and Gordon Weil  
Beth Wiemann  
Carol Wishcamper  
Nancy Ziegler and Kermit Lipez

## REVENUES AND EXPENSES 2024



**MAINE  
HUMANITIES  
COUNCIL**

**Harriet P. Henry  
Center for the Book**

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