



Iowa City was designated as a UNESCO City of Literature in November 2008. It was the first City of Literature in the United States and the third in the world. Today, we are one of 42 Cities of Literature, and part of the 295-member Creative Cities Network with cities in 90 countries.

This independent nonprofit organization formed to manage the designation on behalf of the city is supported by the cities of Iowa City, Coralville, and North Liberty; the University of Iowa, Johnson County, and Think Iowa City.

MISSION: To build and support diverse communities of writers and audiences through the transformative power of story.

VISION: We foster collaborations with the goal of enriching local literary programs and expanding our global engagement.

VALUES: Collaboration - The City of Literature engages in complementary and cooperative work; **Community** - The City of Literature fosters inclusive engagement to create connection locally and globally; **Creativity** - The City of Literature seeks, engages, and supports innovation.

STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION: The City of Literature encourages, supports, and celebrates diversity, equity, and inclusiveness in its operations and programming. We seek to create a welcoming environment where people with different backgrounds and experiences are treated with respect.

2022-23 Annual Report

The City of Literature continued to evolve and elevate programming in the 2022-2023 fiscal year, successfully blending in-person and virtual elements, while also building on the strength of longstanding events such as the Iowa City Book Festival, the One Book Two Book Children's Literature Festival, and MusicIC. Generous contributions from institutional partners, dedicated volunteers, and individual donors strengthened our endeavors to foster a love for literature among people of all ages and backgrounds in our community. In doing so, we create opportunities for both readers and writers.

We are heartened by the Department of State's decision to renew participation in UNESCO, reaffirming the importance of international cooperation, cultural exchange, and our shared passion for literature that unites us all. While political winds may change, our identity as a City of Literature remains steadfast. Through a mix of advocacy, networking, and programming, we continue to encourage families, businesses, and community organizations to discover and promote Iowa as a place that invited people - both locally and globally - to share in our many literary resources and opportunities.

The 2022 Iowa City Book Festival was one to remember.

Two weeks of programming, 40 events created in collaboration with 18 community organizations, and more than 70 authors, poets, translators, and



booksellers. Community partnerships played a pivotal role in the success of One Book Two Book in 2023 as we relocated to FilmScene at the Chauncey, allowing us to introduce fresh opportunities for children and families to embrace literature. And MusicIC delved into the connections between music and literature in its spring program, spotlighting a myriad of contemporary female composers, incorporating perspectives from a collection of Western and non-Western musical traditions through engaging conversations, thought-provoking lectures, and innovative musical performances.

Several of our programs have expanded to have a county and statewide reach. Poetry in Public, which celebrates our rich literary tradition and local writing talent, is now open to anyone in Johnson County, regardless of age or writing experience. With help from ACT, we've opened "Write Out Loud," our annual celebration of writing by children, to anyone in grades 1-8 in Iowa City-Cedar Rapids Corridor area.

Space Shuttle

A free child I am
Books lifting me from this world
Like a space shuttle

VIVIANA ESTRADA-MARTINEZ

Poetry in Public 2023
Student Submission



And our "Glory of the Senses: Paul Engle High School Essay Contest" has become a key element in our statewide outreach initiatives, annually soliciting essays centered on a distinct "Iowa experience," and encouraging young writers to vividly depict the sensory details – from sights and sounds to smells, tastes, and touches – of their memorable moments.

Globally, we actively participated in World Poetry and World Translation Day celebrations in collaboration with fellow Cities of Literature. The Iowa City-led project, #17Booksfor17SDGs, which spotlights books related to the United Nations' 2030 Strategic Development Goals (SDGs), gained international recognition. Our director, John Kenyon, maintains a central role as coordinator for the Cities of Literature network, fostering strong connections with UNESCO and partner cities. Additionally, Anna Barker's Classics Reading Series drew enthusiastic readers from dozens of countries, attracting thousands of participants worldwide.

Our office has consistently provided volunteer and internship opportunities for University of Iowa students, with many of them securing part-time employment within our organization. Furthermore, our partnership with the UI's MFA in Literary Translation program continues to thrive, providing graduate-level internships that improve our ability to communicate residencies and international opportunities to the Writing University. This initiative also serves to connect our organization with non-native English-speaking and immigrant populations in the area.

The City of Literature is guided by an enthusiastic board, with representation from the University of Iowa, the City of Iowa City, Coralville, North Liberty, Johnson County, and Think Iowa City. We also maintain at-large members representing various constituencies in the community, including business, cultural affairs, and writers. Members have completed a comprehensive review and revision of our bylaws, established a robust committee structure overseeing governance, fundraising, and outreach, and implemented strong financial controls to ensure the ongoing stability of the City of Literature. These efforts have continued to shape the foundation of our organization in 2023.

2023 - 2024 Upcoming Events

October 8-15 **Iowa City Book Festival**

October 19 **Paul Engle Award Ceremony**

February 24-25 **One Book Two Book Children's Literature Festival**

April 23 **World Book & Copyright Day**

June 2024 **MusicIC: Where Music and Literature Meet**