



— THE BUREAU OF —
FEARLESS
WRITING · STORYTELLING · COMMUNITY
IDEAS

Annual Impact Report
July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

Mission

A non-profit organization dedicated to creating equitable learning communities that encourage youth to reimagine our world through writing and storytelling.

Board and Staff

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jamie Campbell, President
Aurora Parrish, Vice President
Rekha Bhatt, Secretary
Jeff Lindstrom
Kate Newman
Sheryl Rothmuller

STAFF

Program Managers:
Roberto Ascalon
Matt Gano

With deep gratitude to former staff who invested their time and talents in the 2023-24 year:

Matt Kingston (Interim Executive Director)
Grace Robinson (Director of Development)
Bryan Wilson (Program Manager)



"My biggest piece of advice is to not be so selective with your writing. I tend to try to produce as much work as I can and then filter through it later. So sometimes I must remind myself to write just what emerges from my mind immediately rather than thinking too much about how I want my writing to be perceived."

— Amira, age 16



Our story

The Greater Seattle Bureau of Fearless Ideas is a corps of youth and adults, staff and volunteers, families, and local citizens who believe that the power of storytelling promotes deeper community connection and important opportunities for growth and development. Our programs prepare young people, ages 6 to 18, for a successful future by promoting strong writing skills, supporting socio-emotional learning, and encouraging youth to boldly share their stories. Programs at each Fearless Ideas location work in collaboration with their surrounding neighborhoods to involve local schools and businesses in helping our youth become engaged citizens and confident leaders.

Working with like-minded, community-focused Seattleites, Teri Hein started The Greater Seattle Bureau of Fearless Ideas, originally incorporated as Pencilhead, in 2004. In early 2005, they were invited to become a chapter of 826 National, the brainchild of acclaimed author and philanthropist Dave Eggers. By 2014 with long waiting lists for all programs and an impressive list of awards, including the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award presented by First Lady Michelle Obama, 826 Seattle decided to expand its offerings and locations and to rebrand under its new name: The Greater Seattle Bureau of Fearless Ideas.

Our Community & Impact

BFI is more than just a place to write—we're building a community where students **find their voice** through storytelling, art, and mentorship. Our programs are open to all, with a special focus on **students from marginalized communities** and **Tier 1 & 2 schools** across King County.

Through creative partnerships with organizations like **Fred Hutch, REWA, and Seattle Public Libraries**, we offer:

- **After-school programs** at Yesler Terrace and Greenwood
 - **25 in-school partnerships** with local schools, publishing student work in unique chapbooks
 - **Online Writers Lab (O.W.L.)**, connecting students across the country
 - **Teacher workshops** to inspire creativity in classrooms
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Our Programming Has Evolved

Over the past few years, BFI has evolved from a **tutoring and writing center** into a **creative storytelling hub** that embraces all forms of expression. From cartoons to drumming to screen printing, we help young people tell their stories in ways that feel right to them.

At the heart of our work is **Social Emotional Learning (SEL)**—because students need more than academic support. They need space to connect with others, process their feelings, and build resilience.

Our key programs and impacts in the 2023-24 year include:

- **Classroom partnerships** in 2023-24, serving 25 classrooms and 531 students, with 20 classroom publications created. Schools included Bailey Gatzert Elementary, West Seattle Elementary, McDonald International School; community partners included Refugee Womens Alliance (ReWA).
- **After School programs at Greenwood**, serving 70 participants through programming including Idea Lounge, Storytelling Magic, and O.W.L. (Online Writers Lab)
- **Summer workshops at Greenwood**, serving 26 participants
 - **3rd-6th grades:** Fearless Adventure Club (Woodland Creatures Edition), Campfire Stories at Fearless Ideas, Field Guide to Imaginary Creatures
 - **6th-9th grades:** Write Here, Write Now
- **Yesler Terrace:** 120 youth participants across school-year and summer programming (“My Summer Self” workshop)
- **Teacher Training Workshops:** We’ve started offering professional development to help teachers bring creative storytelling into their classrooms.



“At age 10, I hadn’t been part of a tight-knit community outside of my family or church. It felt so sweet to be welcomed with open arms.”

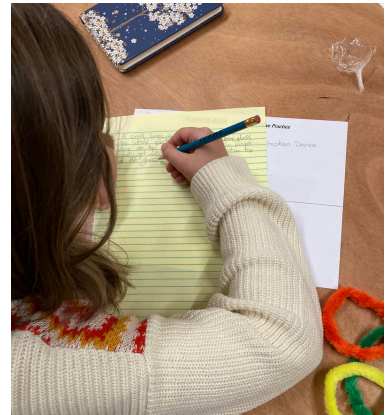
—Leeah M., BFI alum, now at Stanford University



Program Service Accomplishments

School Programs: Expanding Reach and Impact

- **Broadening Horizons:** This year, BFI hosted writing and storytelling workshops across a range of schools from West Seattle to Lake Stevens, reaching over 130 students. These workshops empowered students to explore their creativity through various mediums like graphic novelization and narrative storytelling.
- **Community Collaboration:** We strengthened long-term partnerships with schools such as West Seattle Elementary and initiated new collaborations with community organizations like the Refugee Women's Alliance (REWA), enriching our curriculum and expanding our reach.
- **Student Publications:** Seven books were published, showcasing the diverse voices of students who participated in our programs. These publications have become cherished artifacts for the students and their families.



Yesler Terrace Programs: Building Community and Fostering Growth

- **Enhanced Communication:** Significant improvements in team communication and leadership at Yesler Terrace have led to more regulated and effective after-school sessions. Regular team meetings and volunteer support have fostered a collaborative environment that enhances program delivery.
 - **Volunteer Engagement:** Consistent volunteer participation has been pivotal in maintaining a stable and supportive workshop environment, directly contributing to the success of our programs and the emotional well-being of the students.
 - **Thematic Curriculum:** The introduction of thematic units like "Tiny Worlds" and "Metamorphosis" has provided a structured and engaging framework for students, making learning both fun and impactful. These themes allowed us to delve deeper into topics of transformation and personal growth, resonating with the students' experiences.
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Program Spotlight: Student-Led Programs at Yesler Terrace

When students told us they needed help with college applications, we launched **College Crash Course**—a program designed **with students, for students**. The first cohort included **first-generation college students from immigrant families and African American students**. They took the lead—organizing meetings, supporting each other, and even delivering a heartfelt address to **150 philanthropists** at our annual gala.

Our **Yesler Education Training Initiative (YETI)** also empowers youth as mentors and leaders. High school interns earn **\$1,700** over the summer, gaining valuable skills and supporting their families along the way. These stipends not only help students financially, but also spark real change—locally and globally—as many families send resources back home to relatives abroad.

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"Mr. Roberto and the YETI program showed me how much I want to work with students. I know funders usually look for problems to solve, but these kids are full of joy—they just need opportunities."

—Lottie, YETI

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"Without BFI, I wouldn't be where I am. As an immigrant, BFI was my access to free additional learning. They supported me and my family all the way through high school."

—Melat Assefa, BFI alum and University of Washington student

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BFI Student Profile: Etta J., 4th Grade



Etta arrived at the Bureau of Fearless Ideas in Greenwood as a 3rd grader in winter 2023. She developed a stutter in kindergarten that worsened in 1st and 2nd grade, leading to bullying and affecting her confidence. Her family felt she wasn't getting the support she needed in school, and she became more withdrawn.

Looking for a different environment to help Etta with her self-esteem, confidence, and ability to read and write, her mom, Morgana, enrolled her in our programs. After joining, Morgana noticed an immediate change. Etta, once shy and timid, transformed by the end of the spring semester, becoming more confident both at Fearless Ideas and in school. ○

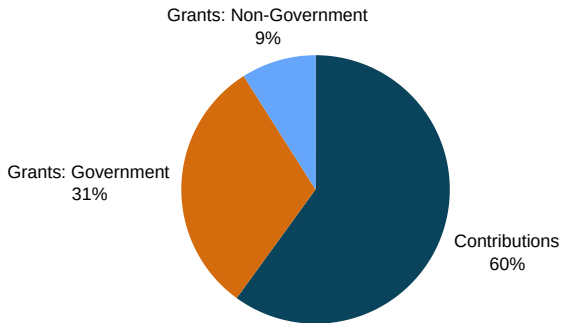
At our end-of-year reading event, Etta was the first to stand up and read to the group, with her stutter nearly gone. Her parents were thrilled by her progress.

This year, Etta wrote and delivered her own speech to run for Vice President at the Boys & Girls Club, a significant step her parents never imagined.

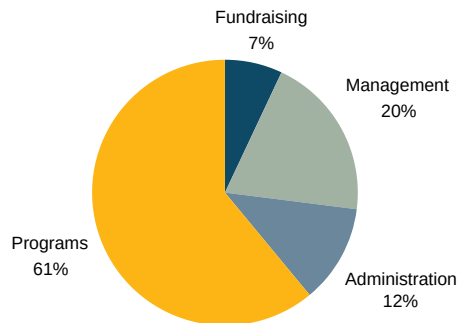
Returning to our programs this fall, Etta has become a mentor to younger students, helping them with assignments and showing kindness, compassion, and empathy. She even volunteered to be on stage at our Fearless Ideas Gala this year, doing an amazing job drawing winners for the raffle.

2023-24 Fiscal Year (7/1/23-6/30/24)

INCOME: \$441,400

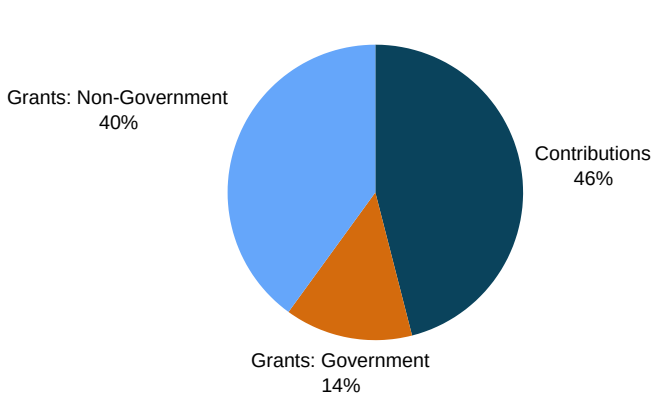


EXPENSES: \$629,400

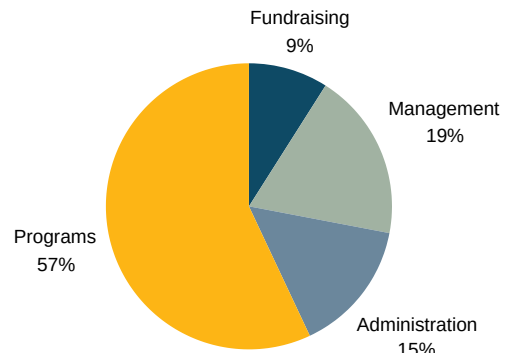


2022-23 Fiscal Year (7/1/22-6/30/23)

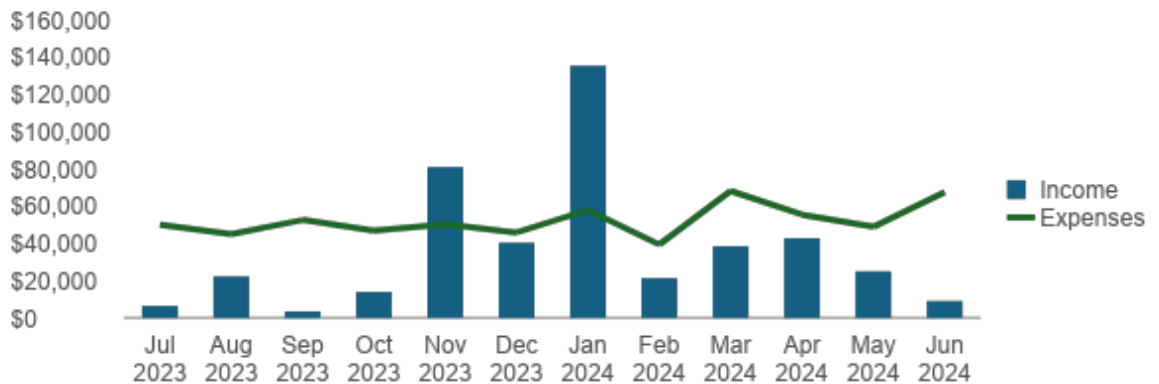
INCOME: \$505,248



EXPENSES: \$601,145



2023-24 Income vs Expenses by Month





Thank you to all of our volunteers, donors, sponsors, foundation partners, corporate partners, and in-kind donors who have helped support BFI. If you would like a tax receipt or record of your donation, please email info@fearlessideas.org and we will provide one. With your support, we can continue to fuel the creativity and imaginations of Seattle's young storytellers; empowering them to share their voices with the world!

BFI deeply appreciates the dedicated volunteers who complement our staff's impacts with participants. Throughout the school year and summer, across multiple sessions, 11 volunteers worked alongside young people to enhance the creative process, offer one-on-one coaching, and provide a connection to the larger community.

The Bureau of Fearless Ideas
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The Bureau of Fearless Ideas is a 501(c)(3)
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