Read on to learn more about what we were able to accomplish together in 2021 - and what’s to come for our community in 2022 and beyond.
Front cover, clockwise from top left: The café area and staircase at the new GrubStreet, the stage, and the bookstore.

Back cover, clockwise from top: The outside of GrubStreet’s new home, Boyah Farah reading at Lit Up 2021, a detail shot of the bookstore, and the community lounge.
INTRODUCTION

Just like the writers in our workshops, GrubStreet is an organization committed to getting better with every draft. As we reflect on 2021 and look to the future, we reaffirm our commitment to becoming a more inclusive and connected community where writers from every background get what they need to thrive on their own terms. This means listening to the feedback from our community as we keep building an artistic landscape where many voices can flourish.

We also reaffirm our belief in the power of writing and storytelling to shape our understandings of ourselves, our local communities, and the world. We know that art can help move us all toward a future that is more free, more democratic, and more just.

Your support of GrubStreet has been an essential part of allowing more writers to delve into their experiences and imaginations – and to reach wider audiences. Together, with your support in 2021, we expanded programming in all genres and increased scholarships and fellowships. We introduced new classes, held our first-ever virtual conference, and helped more writers craft and share their essays, op-eds, poems, memoirs, stories, and novels. And we did all that while wrapping up a capital campaign and launching our brand-new center for the literary arts.

In this report, you’ll learn more about what we learned and accomplished together in 2021, with your support and your important feedback. And you’ll hear about what we hope to do together in 2022.

Thank you again for doing your part to help sustain this community and the expansive and democratic storytelling we need.

Eve Bridburg  
Founder and Executive Director

Stephanie Poggi  
Director of Development

Kathryn Fenneman  
Director of Operations and Administration

Dariel Suarez  
Education Director

Ian Jude Chio  
Chief Financial and Operating Officer
Early in 2021, GrubStreet embarked on an ambitious 9-month strategic planning process. Led by an external firm, the process was designed to be inclusive and was informed by community input and stakeholder interviews. Like all healthy strategic plans, it is a dynamic one, serving as the foundation for our work moving forward and continually informed by our collective learning along the way. The plan is designed to align around the mission, values, and goals that will define our next chapter as we bring GrubStreet’s new Center for Creative Writing to life while reaching writers throughout Boston, the country, and the world.

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### Our Mission

*GrubStreet works to remove social, cultural, and institutional barriers in order to facilitate and support an expansive and equitable artistic ecosystem where all voices thrive and where storytelling flourishes. This mission is essential because our collective voices have the power to shape a more just and connected world by revealing truths, transforming lives, and deepening human understanding.*

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### 2021 by the Numbers

8,994 mi

The distance from Boston to Auckland, New Zealand/Aotearoa, the furthest a Grubbie Zoomed in from! We also had writers join GrubStreet programs from Zimbabwe, Croatia, Brazil, India, Japan, The Philippines, and more!

529

The total number of community successes celebrated in our newsletters in 2021! Some of the exciting news shared by community members included published stories, poems, novels, and essays – and also news about finding an agent or presenting at a writing conference!
Since the onset of the pandemic in March 2020, GrubStreet has been meeting an increased need and demand for programming by delivering workshops through Zoom video conference. From three-hour seminars to year-long intensives, teens and adults from all over the country (and even the world!) have been able to join GrubStreet workshops to learn from our amazing instructors and connect with other writers in a way that wasn’t possible before.

And it’s not just Zoom. For teens and adults who did not have access to online classes or whose schedules do not allow them to take live video conference workshops, we mailed and delivered writing kit care packages and email writing prompts and other resources. For more information on programs serving Teen Writers in 2021, please see page 8.

## Our Core Values

- **Accessibility**
- **Community**
- **Literary Excellence**

### Remote Learning

- **719** The number of workshops offered over Zoom.
- **97** The number of asynchronous online workshops offered through Wet.Ink.
- **9** The number of classes offered in-person in our new home – with MANY more to come in 2022!
- **2,400** The total number of new students in 2021.
- **5,582** The total number of students in 2021.
- **20** The total number of new teaching artist instructors brought onboard in 2021.
After years of dreaming, advocating, planning, designing, and building, we finally launched our new center for creative writing in 2021. And with your generous support, we officially reached (and surpassed!) our $8 million campaign goal.

Featuring seven beautiful classrooms, a literary stage, a bookstore, and ample community space, the new GrubStreet is designed to be an expanded, accessible home for writers of all ages and backgrounds.

Funds raised through the capital campaign have made it possible to build and launch this new home. In addition to construction costs, the campaign is also funding expanded scholarships, a transportation fund, and free programming for teens and adults. Campaign gifts also fund a new website that will make it easier for students to apply for scholarships and enroll in payment plans and will allow GrubStreet to pilot and implement sliding scale payments for workshops.

Classrooms

The seven classrooms in our new space all feature equipment to support a flexible learning experience for both students who are physically in the classroom as well as those joining remotely. The advanced screens, audio systems, and cameras in the classrooms make it possible for hybrid classes to offer a high-quality learning experience to all students, fostering engaging and equitable workshops.
In October 2021, our partner Porter Square Books opened its doors at GrubStreet’s creative writing center. The expertly curated bookstore is located on the first floor of the new space and is operating regular business hours, seven days a week from 10am-6pm. GrubStreet and Porter Square Books have also partnered for the virtual Grubbie Debut Author Series for behind-the-scenes conversations and readings with GrubStreet writers launching their first books. Books by debut authors are available for purchase from Porter Square Books.

We will also be operating a new café on the first floor of the space, which will launch this spring. We plan to serve coffee and espresso, simple and affordable breakfast and lunch items, and snacks. During evenings, we'll serve wine and beer as well as savory snacks.
ANNUAL FUND

Deepening and Expanding Programs Serving Teens and Adults

Donations to the annual fund support scholarships and fellowships for writers of all ages, as well as free programs at our new center, online, and across Boston. Your generosity also funds the comprehensive work that makes our equity work meaningful by making sure that our classrooms and spaces are welcoming to intercultural exchanges of ideas that go beyond a single, centralized story.

Teen Writers at GrubStreet

To meet the needs of our teen writers this year, GrubStreet provided Zoom video classes, in-person sessions, and writing kits. We engaged young people at Boston Public Library branches, Boston Public Schools, and Brookview House transitional housing community. For young writers without consistent high-speed internet access, we assembled physical and email creative kits including writing prompts, notebooks, books, pens, Bluetooth keyboards and resources for food, housing, and internet access. In 2021, we delivered a total of 270 physical writing kits and also sent 51 writing prompt and newsletter emails.

I learnt that my voice is stronger than I thought and that it deserves to be heard.

– A Teen Writer at GrubStreet

I used my skills to write about Black lives that have been lost and what they mean to me and what they should mean to the world.

– A Teen Writer at GrubStreet
The East Boston Memoir Project brought together eight women from the neighborhood to tell their stories and document a landscape that might otherwise be forgotten. Ranging in age from their early 60s to 90, the women worked with GrubStreet fellow Maria Pinto over several months in 2021. Their stories and recordings include: “Getting my first tattoo,” “Denise the Nun with the Gorgeous Blue Eyes,” “Girls don’t go mushroom hunting,” “How we run for our lives during war,” and “Why did you learn Yiddish?”

In partnership with the Boston Public Library (BPL) and the East Boston Social Center, the program allowed the writers to counter isolation during the pandemic. In many cases, they also learned new skills (like using Zoom and an iPad) that allowed them to see and reach other important people in their lives. The deep bonds created through storytelling meant they could and did support each other during the loss of loved ones.

Over the next year, GrubStreet and the BPL will continue memoir workshops in East Boston and also chronicle memories of the Harriet Tubman House by bringing together storytellers from the South End and lower Roxbury.
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiatives

Given the inequity and racism systemically built into every level of society, one of the most direct ways to increase equitable participation in our programs is to remove financial barriers. We’ve greatly increased financial aid over the past five years, but have much more to do to ensure that more writers of all backgrounds can develop their craft and share their work. We also aim to make applications straightforward and non-intrusive and to provide a range of different types of scholarships, fellowships, stipends, and discounts to increase affordability and equity.

With your support in 2021, 519 scholarships and fellowships were provided to teen and adult writers in this community. This included support for all writing classes, advanced programs, scholarships for writers of color, scholarships for low-income writers, scholarships to the Muse writing conference, fellowships for our advanced teen writers, and more.

2021 Annual Fund Philanthropic Allocations

- The Muse and the Marketplace and Tuition-Based Programs 13%
- Programs for Teen Writers 24%
- Neighborhood-based Programs 13%
- Boston Writers of Color Group 11%
- Scholarships and Fellowships for Teens and Adults 19%
- Stage and Events 7%
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiatives 13%
Each day at GrubStreet, writers at every level grab hold of the power of sharing their stories. Then those stories spread beyond our classrooms and change the world.

Thank you for your generosity. Your support is so important to this community.

Thanks to your support, we were able to reach more writers than ever before in 2021 – and we’re so excited for what’s to come in 2022 and beyond.

Thank you for your dedication to GrubStreet.

Activating Our New Home

Although the ongoing pandemic has delayed plans for large events in our new home, we have been able to launch some in-person programming at the new center starting in the fall of 2021, including advanced workshops, seminars, and free writing sessions.

2022 will be full of exciting events on the stage in GrubStreet’s new home – and we’ll highlight the incredible writers in our community, city, and beyond for years to come. From book launches to panel discussions, from Muse-style craft talks to poetry readings, the stage will host events highlighting the incredible writers and storytellers in our community.

New Programs

In 2022, we’ll continue to launch exciting new programming to serve our community of writers. These programs include a brand-new Novel Immersive for LGBTQ+ Writers taught by instructor Milo Todd. This intensive is a nine-month online program for queer writers to complete or make significant progress towards completing a draft of their novel in a supportive community. Says Milo of the program, “The publishing world is a difficult place at the best of times, starting with the individual workshop experience, and I believe information and community support can break down gatekeeping and help queer writers succeed in their goals.”
THANK YOU

Thank you for being an important member of the GrubStreet community. Your support is so important to expanding access to arts education and to storytelling that can change ourselves and the world.

If you’d like to learn more or have a conversation about renewing your support in 2022, please contact Kat Read, Senior Manager for Leadership Giving, at kat@grubstreet.org.