

9 Bridges State of the Organization – 2017

2017 was another great year for 9 Bridges. We saw a number of successes this year, some substantial growth and some wonderful opportunities for the future. At the same time, we also experienced some hurdles and setbacks along the way. But overall, 9 Bridges continues to thrive and grow as a community dedicated to supporting writers on their individual journeys in pursuit of their craft.

Much of our energy this year was spent on putting on the Annual NW Book Festival, held in Pioneer Courthouse Square at the end of July. In keeping with our mission to provide opportunities for authors to promote their work, this event is one of the few low-cost venues for independent authors and publishers to sell their publications in Portland.

I'm happy to report that the event was a success. The 2017 NW Book Festival had a few bumps along the way and we, as an organization were challenged by ongoing construction in Pioneer Square during the festival. But in spite of this, the 2017 NW Book Festival was well-attended and we received some amazing feedback from the authors and vendors that took part in the event. A huge thanks goes out to everyone involved - from the folks who helped set up to those who delivered bottled water around to all of the participants during what turned out to be a hot sunny day. We streamlined processes for registration and setup/ breakdown and it made a real difference.

The second main focus of 9 Bridges this year was in publishing our first poetry anthology – “Over Land and Rising,” edited by Vargus Pike and Caroline Ruel. Poets from all of our chapters submitted poetry and the final selection reflects voices from Pasadena, Missoula and Portland chapters. While this project had a few hurdles along the way, we're grateful to everyone involved for putting out a lovely finished product. It is available on Amazon by clicking [here](#).

In addition, our organization was awarded a small grant from the Oregon Arts and Humanities Foundation which will allow us to plan and execute a training series for our event host here in Oregon. The training is currently still in the planning phases, but it will enable our event hosts with skills that will set them up for success while facilitating our weekly write-ins and critique meetings. We're expecting to run the first series in the second half of 2018.

Formalizing our processes and strengthening our organization was our other main area of focus this year. We reviewed our organizational documentation and made a few adjustments to make sure we are fully in compliance with state and federal laws governing non-profits. We made some adjustments to board structure and reviewed our mission. A shout out goes to our Board Members who worked so hard to make sure all of our ducks are in a row.

Finally, I'm excited to report that we've started our fifth chapter in Lehi, Utah. Led by long-time 9 Bridges member and Tuesday Night Beaverton Critique Group regular, Josh Wilcox, the group has successfully launched a regular critique group and is growing steadily.

Our goal for 2017 was to provide a haven for writers to find their voices and continue improving their craft. Our hope is that by doing this we can help bring writers from different communities together through focusing on a similar love of writing instead of

ideological differences. I'm thrilled to report that 9 Bridges continues to be a safe harbor for writers in these stormy times.

Keep Writing!

Elizabyth Harrington,
Executive Director, 9 Bridges