Generous donations from the following individuals, foundations, and businesses helped support MHC’s operations and programs from November 1, 2016–October 31, 2017. Thank you!

**$50,000 +**
Anonymous Foundation
National Endowment for the Humanities
State of Minnesota (Operating Support)
State of Minnesota Arts & Cultural Heritage Fund

**$20,000 – $49,999**
McKnight Foundation
Minnesota Historical Society

**$10,000 – $19,999**
Hardenbergh Foundation
MN Department of Agriculture

**$5,000 – $9,999**
Boss Foundation
Harlan Boss Foundation for the Arts

**$1,000 – $4,999**
Atomic Data
Keith and Mary Bednarowski
Casey DeMarais
JNBA Financial Advisors
Jean King
Lisa Libertia Belas
Rosalyn Johnstone
James Lydon
Kennon and Nina Rothchild
The Allegro Fund of Saint Paul Foundation

**Up to $99**
AFG Fund of Vanguard Charitable
AMVETS Department of Minnesota
Bremer Bank
Friends of the St. Paul Library
Golden Yang
United Veterans Legislature

*Support in full or part for Veterans’ Voices

**Support for We Are Water MN**

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“‘To believe in the power of the humanities is simply to believe in the power of education. The study of history, of languages, of cultures, of civilizations, of the human impulse to make art and literature, to engage the ethical lives, to fashion ways of seeing and believing that are rooted in fundamental values…

These enterprises are called the humanities because they are what makes us human, what makes us creatures of principle rather than circumstance, of honor rather than expediency, of foresight rather than accident and happenstance.”

–1991 Minnesota House Testimony on behalf of MHC

mnhum.org

@TheHumanitiesCenter  @mnhum.org  @humanities

2017 Annual Report
We do it by asking questions, by creating and providing over concerns about which many of us care deeply and feel strongly. We do it by delving deeply into challenges and society. We do this with people and cultures all over the state because it must.

At times, it seems that the foundations of our democratic effort are under attacked: people and cultures demeaned, courts and judges are challenged, elections claimed as fraudulent. Yet the building of democracy goes on—because it must.

Tumultuous as 2017 was, I affirm my faith in America and in its consensual efforts to build democracy. At least, it seems that the foundations of our democratic efforts are under attack: people and cultures demeaned, courts and judges are challenged, elections claimed as fraudulent. Yet the building of democracy goes on—because it must.

For our part here at the Minnesota Humanities Center (MHC), it is our mission to build a thoughtful, literate, and engaged society. We do this with people and cultures all over the state and beyond. We do it by delving deeply into challenges and society about which many of us care deeply and feel strongly. We do this with people and cultures all over the state because it must. We do it by asking questions, by creating and providing over concerns about which many of us care deeply and feel strongly. We do this with people and cultures all over the state because it must.

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2017 was a year of building relationships, learning from and with community, and new ventures for MHC. We look forward to continuing to build a thoughtful, literate, engaged society in 2018 and beyond. We invite you to join us in that effort, and we are grateful for your support.

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"We Are Water MN" (the local accompanying exhibit to Water/Ways) will travel the state in eight new host communities. The war in Vietnam and Southeast Asia, known often as the Vietnam War was a turning point and a crisis. It was 50 years ago. We still don’t understand it fully, but it affects us every day. In 2017, we convened Vietnamese Veterans, Veterans from the Allied Forces (the special guerrilla units that we recruited from Laos and Cambodia and Vietnam to fight on behalf of the United States), and others impacted by the war in Vietnam and Southeast Asia to help build programming that amplifies the silenced stories of that conflict. In 2018 and 2019, in partnership with Twin Cities PBS (WRTM) and school communities, there will be Minnesota Vietnam veterans’ conversations held across the state where the voices and experiences of these people can be heard.

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Our partners have taken action to help build (in relationship with our Dakota and Ojibwe neighbors) a new, informed understanding of water, its uses, our values around it, and our water. Communities included: Detroit Lakes, Sandstone, New Ulm, and more!

Starting with a relationship with the Smithsonian Institution in 2014, MHC has convened experts, historians, writers, and storytellers to examine their own understanding and stewardship of water. MHC’s award-winning exhibit, “Why Treaties Matter: Self-Government in the Dakota and Ojibwe Nations” is now a permanent display at the Minnesota State Capitol. The exhibit (a partnership with the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council) explores relationships between Dakota and Ojibwe Indian Nations and the U.S. government in this place we now call Minnesota. It is a significant piece of Minnesota’s history and greatness that we are honored to have helped bring to such an important space.

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Viet Thanh Nguyen and Kao Kalia Yang hosted by MHC, I felt the rare experience of being reflected as a Vietnamese refugee and immigrant, an Asian woman, a poet, artist, scholar, activist, and human. I felt sharing, with a captivated audience their thoughts and theories about the complexity of constructed memories, cultural and economic conflict in war, the need to confront our own capacity for inhumane acts in order to prevent future harm, and the role of the artist to create change. They gave validity to ghosts and voices, and voice and value to the unseen, the unheard and the forgotten. Viet and Kao Kalia generously shared their gifts of genius with vulnerability, courage, and tremendous vision.

In gratitude for their words and wisdom, I no longer feel alone. Anh-Hoa Thi Nguyen is a poet, community artist, writer, and educator. She was born in Sagon, Vietnam and grew up in St. Paul, Minnesota. She holds an MFA in Creative Writing (from Minneapolis College of Art and Design, California) where she was awarded the Mary Margaret Henry Prize in Poetry and the Adolph Milt Library Composition Prize in Creative Nonfiction. She is the Founder of A man in Paradise, completed a residency at Hedgebrook, a Wells of Our Nations Foundation (2010) Residency, and is a Minnesota State Arts Board Artist Initiative Grant Winner.
Tumultuous as 2017 was, I affirm my faith in America and in its constant efforts to build democracy. In times like these, it seems that the foundations of our democratic efforts are under attack: people and cultures demeaned, courts and judges are challenged, elections called fraud—establishment democracy gone—skepticism it has.

For our part here at the Minnesota Humanities Center (MHC), it’s our mission to build a thoughtful, literate, engaged society. We do it with people and cultures all over the state and beyond. We do it by delving deeply into challenges and concerns about which many of us care deeply and feel strongly. We do it by asking questions, by creating and providing over 1,000 original resources that build understanding and broaden views.

Here are a few highlights of our work in 2017:

1. Last fall Pulitzer Prize-winning author of “The Sympathizer,” Viet Thanh Nguyen, joined MHC and St. Catherine University to explore the reality that war lives on in memory and in our communities across the state in a multiyear project (a partnership with the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council) that launched our new Community Conversations program. The exhibit explores relationships between Dakota and Ojibwe Indian nations, the U.S. government and the state of Minnesota. It is now a permanent display at the Minnesota State Capitol. The exhibit (a partnership with the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council) explores relationships between Dakota and Ojibwe Indian Nations and the U.S. government in a way we call "Minnesota Mosaic," a significant piece of Minnesota history and heritage that we are honored to have brought to such an important space.

2. 2017 was a year of building relationships learning from and with community and new ventures for MHC. We look forward to continuing to build a thoughtful, literate, engaged society in 2018 and beyond. We invite you to join us in that effort, and we thank you for your support.

David O’Fallon, PhD
President & CEO

$2M
Government Grants
$1,000,000
Expenditures 24 grants
557
557 resources distributed
9,644
9,644 Event Center guests at 307 events
109
109 Total MHC events
21,501
Participants in our programs, exhibits, and events.

By the Numbers

Support & Revenue

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<th>Support &amp; Revenue</th>
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<td>Earned &amp; Other Revenue</td>
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<td>Total Support &amp; Revenue</td>
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Expenses

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<td>Management &amp; General</td>
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Net Income from Operations

$1,027,726

What does it feel like to be invisible? What does it feel like to be alone? What does it mean to be a refugee and immigrant? What does it mean to be a Vietnamese person? These are some questions that Ha-Hoa Thi Nguyen has been answering for years, even before she heard the stories of the people that structures of power refuse to see? How do we break the cycle of violence towards people that are different from themselves? These are questions that Nguyen has been struggling with for years, even before she heard the stories of the people that structures of power refuse to see? How do we break the cycle of violence towards people that are different from themselves? These are questions that Nguyen has been struggling with since the day she fled from Vietnam.

Growing up, no one else seemed to want to talk about the Vietnam War. None of the kids in class knew what it was, and I never felt like I could speak about it. Even with this book, I think that hearing this lesson must lead to more conversations about this war in order to understand my parents and my own identity and history as a Vietnamese person. I didn’t make it then, but the tools I used to unravel this past were the tools of the humanities. I sought out Vietnamese history books and Vietnamese American literature, war documentaries and Vietnamese art and artists. I travelled to Vietnam to visit the American war museum and to see and touch the land that riotously fell like home. And, standing in the swirling sea of Saigon traffic, I felt, for the first time in my life, as if I were whole.

Bearing witness to the conversation between Viet Thanh Nguyen and Kao Kalia Yang hosted by MHC, I felt the rare experience of being reflected as a Vietnamese refugee and immigrant, an Asian woman, a poet, artist, scholar, activist, and human. I found myself sharing with a captivated audience their thoughts and theories about the complexity of constructed memories, cultural and economic complexity in war. I felt a connection with the communities of power, with the voices and experiences of these people could be heard, with the tools of the humanities. I sought out Vietnamese history books and Vietnamese American literature, war documentaries and Vietnamese art and artists. I travelled to Vietnam to visit the American war museum and to see and touch the land that riotously fell like home. And, standing in the swirling sea of Saigon traffic, I felt, for the first time in my life, as if I were whole.

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In gratitude for their words and wisdom, I no longer feel alone.
K–12 Education
by Sung Ja Shin & Eden Bart, Program Officers

One educator at a time leads to transformed school culture and systemic change. In 2017, MHC held the third annual Educator Institute, an intensive weeklong experience that led 40 educators to deeply examine their practices and take action to increase student engagement. They joined a network of 120 educators who completed this program and are leading relationship-based educational change throughout the state. As a direct follow up, many of these educators invited MHC into their communities—including Winona, St. Cloud, Moorhead, and Osseo—to provide additional resources and training.

MHC supports educators throughout the state to integrate stories that are typically missing into their classrooms through foundational workshops like Increase Engagement Through Absent Narratives and Learning from Place: Bdote, as well as the Absent Narratives Resource Collection. Through 52 presentations, conferences, and workshops, over 1,550 educators learned how to bring these resources into their classrooms.

Veterans’ Voices
by Blake Rondeau, Program Officer

Veterans’ Voices programming had an exciting year of change and collaboration in 2017. A key feature of this year’s work was a partnership with Twin Cities PBS (TPT) surrounding the war in Vietnam and Southeast Asia and the epic documentary from Ken Burns and Lynn Novick “The Vietnam War.” This work kicked off with a series of four community listening sessions that shaped the direction of our Minnesota Remembers Vietnam work with TPT, and culminated in grants to six community organizations around the state to support dialogue and understanding around a complex, traumatic part of our shared history.

This year also brought exciting growth and new connections to our Veterans’ Voices network thanks to 21 new recipients of the Veterans’ Voices Award, 11 participants in our storytelling training, and 15 new Echoes of War discussion leaders.
Community Conversations
by Kirk MacKinnon Morrow, Program Officer

Community Conversations programming experienced a year of growth and development in 2017. From our Common Place events in partnership with Sweet Potato Comfort Pie to the launch of our War and Memory dialogue series, this was a time of new activities, new audiences, and new connections!

One highlight of a busy year came in September when we hosted An Evening with Viet Thanh Nguyen with St. Catherine University as the first installment of our War and Memory series. This event drew 300 people to the campus of St. Kate’s to hear Minnesota’s own Kao Kalia Yang in dialogue with Nguyen, author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, “The Sympathizer.” The event touched on topics of war, justice, and collective memory. MHC’s Community Conversations programming will draw on the lessons learned and connections made in 2017 as we chart the course for the future.

We Are Water MN
by Jennifer Tonko, Program Officer

In 2017, we completed the last half of the Water/Ways and “We Are Water MN” tour, with stops in Red Wing, Sandstone, Lanesboro, and Detroit Lakes. Each of these communities hosted the exhibitions in their own way, creating complementary exhibits, engaging students and children, and bringing together local artists, scientists, academics and educators, public servants, and the business community.

These communities examined how water influences the culture, history, and economy of the places where they live and work. Over the summer, we spent a lot of time on the road, finding new host communities to partner with, and in the fall, we were able to bring them together in St. Paul to begin work with our new cohort of communities: Minneapolis/St. Paul, Bemidji, Crookston, Fond du Lac/Duluth, Austin, Northfield, Grand Rapids, and Mille Lacs/Onamia.

Event Center
by Nicole McMahon, Event Center Director

We had a great 2017 in the Event Center, hosting hundreds of events and introducing thousands of people to MHC! Over 9,000 people visited our center throughout the year hosting a variety of events including healing retreats, art of hosting trainings, strategic planning retreats, school graduations, board retreats, and weddings.

The MHC program staff had the chance to partner with multiple Event Center clients to bring our educational programs to their organizations while meeting here. Event Center staff have worked hard to ensure everyone who walks through our doors is welcomed to our center and has a great experience. We look forward to another successful year.
“Why Treaties Matter: Self-Government in the Dakota and Ojibwe Nation” is a nationally recognized, award-winning, traveling exhibit made in partnership with the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, Minnesota Humanities Center, and the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian. This exhibit explores relationships between Dakota and Ojibwe Indian Nations and the U.S. government in this place we now call Minnesota, focusing on how treaties affected the lands and lifeways of the indigenous peoples of this place, and why these binding agreements between nations still matter today.

Within our time to create, there always seemed to be an even more profound time to silently reflect and think — time to stretch our minds beyond why we were creating a project with ongoing deep reflection to envision exactly what we were trying to portray to our audience. What was our goal? We wanted to change Minnesota’s dismal understanding of our American Indian communities and create a hunger to learn more while perhaps creating new relationships in a way never accomplished before. With this goal in mind, the greatest collaboration I’ve ever participated in—the “Why Treaties Matter” exhibit—was born.

From start to the finish, the “Why Treaties Matter” collaboration and exhibit run, several members of the development team—consisting of me and a core group of outstanding Humanities Center program directors and administrators—spent endless hours of vision-building time together. Time spent sitting around a table, coffee or some beverage and snacks nearby, papers strewn about, where we pondered the simplest or the most complex ideas or thoughts, or, just ripped apart raw details in an agenda for an upcoming program. This was far more than just your everyday nine-to-five working group. It was a group on a mission; a mission that we often proclaimed was “to change the world.” This team of inspiring leaders seemed the perfect group of individuals whose eyes, when mixed together, could see far beyond what most people are capable of envisioning. And as we gathered, it became clear to me that this magnetic force drawing our visions together was truly one that would lead to great success.

The “Why Treaties Matter” exhibit success wasn’t due to any one person’s academic or intellectual abilities or because we were equipped with greater administrative capacity or even money to turn out such a successful exhibit and programming. It was truly a recipe with healthy doses of eager world changers coming together to contribute their collective knowledge and stories. Most importantly, we were not necessarily the masters of the knowledge but more like the gatherers of it. The true master creators and voices of this project were the cultural leaders, elders, and community members who led this initiative. They came together with us, to sit around the table and helped create a tangible, truth-filled exhibit that has successfully moved towards changing how treaties and the history around them are viewed by both native and non-native people.

The “Why Treaties Matter” exhibit has touched over 84,000 lives since 2011. For an exhibit that existed well beyond its imagined time to tour various venues across Minnesota for six total years, that’s some spectacular record. What is even more profound is that out of the countless pairs of eyes and minds that gathered information from this rich visual and personal learning experience, most had likely never seen or heard any of this before. Although we knew this was the case, the responses were still overwhelming to us. Email after email proclaimed, “Why haven’t I heard this history before?” Think about that. The real history and story of the lives of our American Indian/indigenous people to this land and most people have never heard anything of it before. This is why we so steadfastly held to our claim that we would “change the world.” As we embark on the seventh year of this remarkable journey, I like to think in a small but profound way that we did.

Annamarie Gutsch is the former Executive Director of the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, and a Government Relations Director for the Red Lake Nation. She has also worked for the Minnesota Department of Human Rights, for Veterans Affairs, and at the Office of the Revisor of Statutes. Annamarie serves on the Minnesota Humanities Center’s Board of Directors and was instrumental in creating the traveling exhibit Why Treaties Matter: Self-Government in the Dakota and Ojibwe Nation.
Hush.
Stop talking.
I’m not interested.
Talk to the hand.

And so it is, when our voices are silenced, our stories cut short, our contribution squashed.

The Minnesota Humanities Center offers a course, the Veterans’ Voices Workshop for Educators, which I was honored and pleased to take, on giving place to a too often neglected voice—namely, the voice of the Veteran. We in the social studies discipline study wars and war plans; we count the number of fatalities and clearly communicate the final outcomes of the battles waged on the field. But the voices of the Veterans we too often overlook.

Our class was held at Camp Ripley in central Minnesota. I have driven past this area many times, and had no idea of the vast resource for military training here in my backyard. I checked in at the gate with the slightest twinge of fear and trepidation. I certainly did not know quite what to expect. My first real inclination that I was in a different world was when we came out of our first plenary and went to the dining hall. Everywhere were uniforms and insignia that I did not understand and could not interpret. The Veterans in our group were quite familiar, and told me that though I felt like a thousand eyes were on these non-uniformed civilians, I was underestimating the truth! Many eyes were on us, but it turned out the vast majority were friendly eyes. Many conversations took place with women and men on active or reserve duty, and the narratives that had long been absent were already being spoken in a sense of honesty and frankness that I greatly appreciated.

We toured the facilities of Camp Ripley, and the Veterans in our midst were quite entertaining as they told of their own experiences at camp and in service. I rather expected a monolithic sharing of the same old, same old. I think my first major learning was that there is not one Veteran’s voice, but a wide variety of Veterans’ voices. I certainly knew that multiple sources and multiple attestations of a narrative give that narrative verifiability, but I also learned with new confidence that no voice accounts for all voices. Hearing the highly individualized and significant narratives of a wide variety of Veterans brought a vitality and personal representation to the truth.

The plenaries themselves were filled with extraordinary bursts of insight. I will never forget the passion in the story of an officer speaking about the Minnesota First in the battle of Gettysburg. I wanted to thank him for what felt like his personal presence at the battle! We were all visibly moved. The resources I received from the experience were also tremendously valuable and immediately applicable when teaching about the behind-the-scenes experiences of war. The extraordinary resource, Standing Down: From Warrior to Civilian by Donald H. Whitfield, ed., contained short readings I could use to examine a wide range of reporting on the Veterans’ experience. Each reading contains a brief introduction and discussion questions that provided ample material for use in my seventh grade classroom. Interestingly, the History Theater in St. Paul recently staged a show, “The Things They Carried,” which is represented in this anthology with a nice excerpt.

I left the professional development with a profoundly greater appreciation for the sacrifices and accomplishments of all who engaged in military service. On a more personal note, it also gave me the opportunity to talk to my 100-year-old father about his service in World War II and hear his response to the lectures I heard and the articles I had read. This was a tremendous workshop offered by the Humanities Center, and I encourage anyone who is able to take part in the Veterans’ Voices Workshop for Educators. I am confident in stating that no one will leave without their professional and personal sensitivities engaged and enlarged.

Dr. Bradley Sidle teaches 7th Grade U. S. Studies at Folwell School (Performing Arts Magnet) in Minneapolis, MN. The student body at Folwell is urban, diverse, and committed to learning in and through the arts.
We do it by asking questions, by creating and providing over the theater, ethics, law, history – whatever is needed and helpful. Concerns about which many of us care deeply and feel strongly. It is our mission “to build a thoughtful, literate, and engaged society.” We do this with people and cultures all over the state and in its constant efforts to build democracy.

Tumultuous as 2017 was, I affirm my faith in America and in its constant efforts to build democracy. In 2018 and 2019, “We Are One” explored relationships between Dakota and Ojibwe Indian Nations “a new, informed view of the United States”, and others impacted by the war in Vietnam and Southeast Asia to help build programming that amplifies the absent stories of that conflict. In 2018 and 2019 in partnership with Twin Cities PBS (mn) and school communities, there will be Minnesota Vietnam veteran conversations held across the state where the voices and experiences of these people can be heard.

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What does it feel like to be invisible? What does it mean to learn about one’s own history when it appears not to have been accounted for? How do we break the cycle of violence towards other people and other places? What does it feel like to have our stories and histories amplified by others? What does it feel like to be part of a conversation with writers, artists, activists, and others who have lived through the impact of war?

Viet Thanh Nguyen, joined MHC and St. Catherine University’s President, Kalia generously shared their gifts of genius with vulnerability, courage, and tremendous vision. In gratitude for their words and wisdom, I no longer feel alone.

Anh-Hoa Thi Nguyen is a poet, community artist, teacher, and writer. She was born in Saigon, Vietnam and grew up in St. Paul, Minnesota. She holds an MA in Creative Writing from Mills College in Oakland, California where she was awarded the Mary Henry Prize in Poetry and the Arts/MLK Literary Composition Prize in Creative Nonfiction. She is the founder of Atila Press, completed a residency at Hedgebrook, a member of Our Native Arts Foundation (ONA), founder of the Elizabeth George Foundation, and a Minnesota State Arts Board Artist Initiative Grant Winner.

Bearing witness to the conversation between Viet Thanh Nguyen and Kao Kalia Yang hosted by MHC. I felt the rare experience of being reflected as a Vietnamese refugee and immigrant, an Asian woman, a poet, artist, scholar, activist, and human. Both Viet and Kao Kalia spoke to the heart of those that feel invisible, sharing with a captivated audience their thoughts and theories about the complexity of constructed memories, cultural and economic complicity in war, the need to confront one’s own capacity for inhumanity in order to prevent future harm, and the role of the artist to create change. They gave validity to ghosts and voices, and voice and value to the unseen, the unheard and the forgotten. Viet and Kao Kalia generously shared their gifts of genius with vulnerability, courage, and tremendous vision. In gratitude for their words and wisdom, I no longer feel alone.

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“To believe in the power of the humanities is simply to believe in the power of education. The study of history, of languages, of cultures, of civilizations, of the human impulses to make art and literature, to organize ethical lives, to fashion ways of seeing and believing that are rooted in fundamental values… These enterprises are called the humanities because they are what makes us human, what makes us creatures of principle rather than circumstance, of honor rather than expedience, of foresight rather than accident and happenstance.”

—1991 Minnesota House Testimony on behalf of MHC

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Generous donations from the following individuals, foundations, and businesses helped support MHC’s operations and programs from November 1, 2016–October 31, 2017. Thank you!

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