

ABOUT 826 NATIONAL 826 National is a nonprofit organization that provides strategic leadership, administration, and other resources to ensure the success of its network of eight writing centers. Co-founded by best-selling author Dave Eggers and award-winning educator Nínive Calegari, 826 centers offer a variety of inventive programs that provide under-resourced students, ages 6-18, with opportunities to explore their creativity and improve their writing skills. 826 also helps teachers get their classes excited about writing. Its mission is based on the understanding that great leaps in learning can happen with one-on-one attention, and that strong writing skills are fundamental to future success.

LOCATIONS Our first center and namesake, 826 Valencia opened in San Francisco in 2002. Since then, additional chapters have opened in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Seattle, Ann Arbor, Boston, and Washington D.C.

BY THE NUMBERS Through its programs — after-school tutoring, field trips, in-schools projects, publishing, and workshops — 826 centers serve more than 24,000 students and produce more than 850 publications. Over 5,000 dedicated volunteers help make this possible.

RESPONSES TO OUR WORK “I think 826 is a great program. We need more and more adults coming in [to help students] before school, after school, weekends, whatever it might be. I would love to have more students engage in programs like (826) across the country.” —United States Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan at an NPR Roundtable with 826DC students on June 13, 2011

“826 helps young people learn that language can be play, that work can be joyful, and that they themselves can be the inventors and caretakers of their world. I have seen it with my own eyes. 826 is a good thing in a world of bad things, and a good place in a world of hard ones.” —Michael Chabon, Pulitzer Prize-winning author and 826 volunteer



“What makes 826 so unique is our ability to inspire young people to unlock the creative writer inside and have fun doing it. The pride a student feels when his or her story or poem or drawing becomes a published piece of work is something that will last forever. The outpouring of interest in 826 programs from educators, parents and students across the globe lets us know we are on to something that will help to foster the next generation of innovative leaders.”

— Gerald Richards, CEO 826 National

826 PROGRAMS HAVE BEEN PROVEN TO:

Strengthen fundamental writing skills among students, ages 6 to 18, focusing on underserved students

- 81% of after-school students surveyed report that their writing skills have improved within the academic year because of our services.
- Over 90% of students we serve are from low-income families.

Increase students' confidence in their work

- 91% of in-schools project students say they are proud of their work at the end of the program.

Improve students' academic performance

- 91% of parents reported that their child is getting better grades upon completing a year of after-school tutoring.
- 96% of parents of after-school tutoring students reported that their child completes all of his/her homework at 826 in comparison to 66% who reported their child completes all homework when not at 826.
- Over 50% of participating students show improved scores on Test of Written Language.

Enhance writing and reading skills

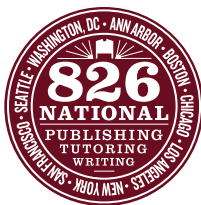
- 92% of parents reported that their child's writing skills had improved with the help of 826 after a year of after-school tutoring.
- 91% of parents reported that their children were enjoying reading more after a year of after-school tutoring.

MEMBERS OF THE PRESS CAN CONTACT US AT PRESS@826NATIONAL.ORG.

FOR GENERAL INQUIRIES, PLEASE READ OUR FAQ PAGE OR CALL US AT 415-864-2098.

44 GOUGH STREET, SUITE 206
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94103

TWITTER: @826NATIONAL
FACEBOOK: [FACEBOOK.COM/826NATIONAL](https://www.facebook.com/826NATIONAL)



HOW DAVE EGGERS IS MAKING LEARNING FUN

Best-selling author Dave Eggers—along with Nínive Calegari, a veteran public school teacher—created a nonprofit that uses superheroes and pirates to get through to kids.

BY KASEY WEHRUM | MAY 2, 2011

Dave Eggers and Nínive Calegari, the co-founders of 826 National, thought they had found the perfect spot for their drop-in writing center. There was just one problem: The storefront space on Valencia Street in San Francisco's Mission District was zoned exclusively for retail. So Eggers, the celebrated writer, and Calegari, a veteran public-school teacher, got creative. They opened their tutoring center—inside a pirate supply store.

Opened in 2002, the pirate store—which stocks antiscurvy medicine, eye patches, and mermaid bait alongside computers, desks, and books—has been followed by Brooklyn Superhero Supply, the Greater Boston Bigfoot Research Institute, and similarly whimsical establishments in five other cities. The organization also provides in-school writing programs, field trips, and other services. All told, it has worked with 24,000 students, many of them from low-income communities, and built a network of 5,000 very passionate volunteers.

The idea, says Calegari, is to create an environment in which students can get the individual attention that is not available in overcrowded classrooms, while providing them with fun projects that can spark an interest in creative writing. “We see 826 as an opportunity to support teachers by bringing in the community to help them,” she says. “Even with the best teachers, there’s a huge gap between how much attention they would like to give their students and how much attention they are actually able to.” Gerald Richards, who joined 826 National as CEO in 2010 after leading the Bay Area Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship, puts it another way: “What kid can pass up a superhero supply shop or a pirate store?”

Each of the eight chapters is run independently but receives fundraising support from and follows the overall model of the national organization. Most of the funding comes through corporate donations, grants, and a slew of fundraising events. Retail sales also bring in a small amount of revenue. In 2010, the organization ran on a budget of about \$5 million.

In a recent study of three centers, 826 found that 51 percent of students who had completed the program improved their scores on a standardized written-language assessment. 826 has also published dozens of anthologies of student work, including *Thanks and Have Fun Running the Country*, a selection of kids' letters to President Obama. The group has received requests from organizations throughout the U.S. looking to start a chapter in their cities. Richards would eventually like to see 826 open one or two chapters per year. “I think the need is huge right now,” he says, “so the sky’s the limit.”

ONLINE AT: <http://www.inc.com/magazine/20110501/social-entrepreneurs-how-dave-eggert-is-making-learning-fun.html>



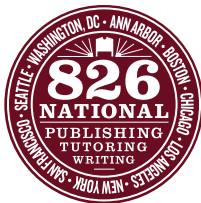
students can get the individual attention that is not available in overcrowded classrooms, while providing them with fun projects that can spark an interest in creative writing. “We see 826 as an opportunity to support teachers by bringing in the community to help them,” she says. “Even with the best teachers, there’s a huge gap between how much attention they would like to give their students and how much attention they are actually able to.” Gerald Richards, who joined 826 National as CEO in 2010 after leading the Bay Area Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship, puts it another way: “What kid can pass up a superhero supply shop or a pirate store?”

Each of the eight chapters is run independently but receives fundraising support from and follows the overall model of the national organization. Most of the funding comes through corporate donations, grants, and a slew of fundraising events. Retail sales also bring in a small amount of revenue. In 2010, the organization ran on a budget of about \$5 million.

In a recent study of three centers, 826 found that 51 percent of students who had completed the program improved their scores on a standardized written-language assessment. 826 has also published dozens of anthologies of student work, including *Thanks and Have Fun Running the Country*, a selection of kids' letters to President Obama. The group has received requests from organizations throughout the U.S. looking to start a chapter in their cities. Richards would eventually like to see 826 open one or two chapters per year. “I think the need is huge right now,” he says, “so the sky’s the limit.” —Kasey Wehrum

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARTIN CAMPBELL

MAY 2011 | INC. 83



826 NATIONAL'S UNNATURAL MARKETING STRATEGY

BY DELPHINE HIRASUNA |
NOVEMBER 24, 2010

ONLINE AT: <http://www.atissuejournal.com/2010/11/24/826-national%E2%80%99s-unnatural-marketing-strategy/>

Bear with me. This is hard to explain. We got interested in this story because we loved the graphics and packaging for the new Museum of Unnatural History in Washington D.C., which isn't a museum and not a real store either. It's the Washington D.C. location for 826 National, a nonprofit tutoring, writing and publishing organization founded to assist kids aged six to 18 with their writing skills. It got its start at 826 Valencia Street (hence the name), a storefront location in San Francisco's Mission District. To make the place seem "cooler" to kids, the 826 founders decided to disguise it as a "Pirate Store" and stocked it with pirate supplies like peg legs, message bottles and hooks. Kids loved it and sales helped support the tutoring programs.

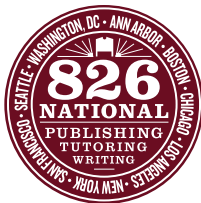
As the 826 concept spread to other parts of the United States, the idea of creating a tutoring place within a wacky "store" continued. This explains the existence of the Space Travel Supply Co. in Seattle for spaceship accessories, ray guns and the like; the Superhero Supply Co. in Brooklyn, fully equipped with masks, caps and suction cups; The Boring Store for spies in Chicago, with disguises, trenchcoats and night goggles; the Robot Repair and Supply Store in Ann Arbor for robot emotion upgrades; the Big-foot Research Institute in Boston for Yeti hairballs; the Time Travel Mart in Los Angeles for dinosaur eggs and time-machine fuel, and now the Museum of Unnatural History in America's capital.

Graphic designer Oliver Munday took the lead on designing a brand identity and packaging for the Museum of Unnatural History and its merchandise line, and was supported in this effort by Oliver Uberti and Minh Le. The project was entirely a volunteer effort.

Yes, the products are really for sale and the proceeds will go toward supporting the educational programs offered by 826 National. All for a good cause.

V.01 THE ONLINE JOURNAL OF BUSINESS & DESIGN
@issue:





HIDDEN TUTORING CENTERS PROVIDE 'UNNATURAL' EDUCATION

BY SALLY HOLLAND | DECEMBER 7, 2011

Washington (CNN) -- At first glance, it's a hoax: a storefront for a Museum of Unnatural History, complete with a bizarre animal skeleton visible through the front window and unicorn tears for sale. It's perfect for luring in curious children.

But when volunteers get kids past the upside-down coyote hanging from the ceiling and the owl with an elephant trunk, they shape young minds with after-school tutoring, writing workshops and books written by kids.

"I think the kids are tricked in and then, as they are talking to the person at the front desk, they are learning about what's going on in the tutoring center," said Gerald Richards, the chief executive of 826 National, the nonprofit network of tutoring centers that look nothing like classrooms. The Washington "museum," which set up shop in the Columbia Heights neighborhood in October, was the latest branch to open.

Each of the eight centers has an imaginative storefront that helps raise money and encourage creativity among students.

In Seattle, kids are lured into the writing lab by the Greenwood Space Travel Supply Co., which sells intergalactic peace treaties and travel cups.

In Ann Arbor, Michigan, Liberty Street Robot Supply & Repair sells robot emotion upgrades, fruit powered clocks and robodentures.

The original chapter opened eight years ago at 826 Valencia St. in San Francisco's Mission District. (As it spread, the original address inspired the name 826 National.) It was co-founded by Dave Eggers, author of "A Heart-breaking Work of Staggering Genius," and founder of the publishing house, McSweeney's.

Early on, organizers at 826 Valencia St. learned the space they'd rented was zoned for retail, so they needed to come up with something to sell. The space looked a bit like an old pirate ship.

"Someone thought, 'Why don't we sell pirate gear and see what happens?'" Richards said.

Since then, it has been fronted by The Pirate Supply Store, where shoppers can purchase hooks, peg legs and plank-by-the-foot.

ONLINE AT: <http://www.cnn.com/2010/LIVING/12/02/826.tutor.washington/index.html>



Now, Richards said, profits from stores account for 20 percent of the teaching that goes on in the writing center. And the imagination enticements work. 826 National is on track to serve 24,000 students this year through its tutoring centers and school outreach programs.

Sisters Teah and Janea Green have been visiting 826DC most afternoons since it opened.

"This place is awesome," said Janea, 10, as she worked on her multiplication homework with volunteer Matt Lemanski. "I really, really need help with my homework and my parents are busy sometimes."

"Sometimes we do poetry, sometimes we do math," said Teah, 9. When she doesn't have homework, she works on the story she is writing about a mermaid named Katopia.

Writing is the primary focus at 826 centers, which also work with middle school and high school students.

It also publishes books written by students. Their latest, "I Live Real Close to Where You Used to Live," is a collection of student letters to First Lady Michelle Obama. It will be in bookstores on December 15.

The letters run the gamut from asking if Obama

cooks with an Easy-Bake Oven at the White House, to a suggestion that she use robots to keep drugs off the streets. The book is a companion to one that came out last year that contains letters to President Barack Obama, "Thanks and Have Fun Running the Country."

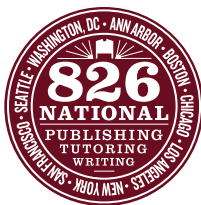
Profits from the book sales are used to support the tutoring centers.

Kathleen Yancey, an English professor at Florida State University, said the 826 National centers complement the learning that goes on in classrooms. Schools are about college and job readiness, and tests that prove it, Yancey said. Those demands don't leave much time for playful reading or imaginative writing, even if it could help some students learn.

"If you want people to engage in activity, you find a way for them to have fun with it. 826 is a genius at that," said Yancey, a past president of the National Council of Teachers of English. "If [students] don't take any pleasure in it, they won't actually practice it. When they have fun, they won't quit on you."

Fun is what draws students in, too.

"It's OK to be strange," said Richards, the 826 leader. "It's OK to be magical, it's OK to be whimsical."



INNOVATION OF THE WEEK COLUMN FROM THE AUGUST 27, 2010 NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 27, 2010

ONLINE AT: <http://www.leadertoleader.org/newsletters/iow/2010/August27.html>

San Francisco's only independent Pirate Supply store -- offering eye patches, flags, mops, and glass eyes -- is actually the home of 826 Valencia, founded by author Dave Eggers and educator Nínive Calegari, and is the first chapter of what has become a national movement of writing centers for neighborhood children run by volunteer tutors.

826 National is the umbrella organization that coordinates the adaptation of 826's tutoring and mentorship model in other cities and includes a family of eight chapter writing centers across the country dedicated to helping students, ages 6-18, with expository and creative writing.

Each 826 chapter offers after-school tutoring, workshops, field trips and in-schools programs, all free of charge, for local children, classes, and schools.

Most students, of all skill levels and interests, live within walking distance from their local writing center and like 826 Valencia, each center is accompanied by a unique retail storefront, which draw in locals and give passersby a reason to walk in and see what's going on.

The Brooklyn Superhero Supply Co. in New York sells capes and grappling hooks. The Greenwood Space Travel Supply Company in Seattle outfits adventurers and rocket scientists, and in Chicago, The Boring Store sells espionage miscellany. All proceeds go directly to each chapter and the curious contents for sale are attributed to sparking the creative spirits of each student.

Most recently, 826 National named Gerald Richards as its new Chief Executive Officer. "Gerald's experience and expertise is an

eerily perfect fit for 826," says co-founder Dave Eggers. "He not only has done major fundraising and planning at other major nonprofits, but he has an MFA in fiction."

According to Richards, "I think the most innovative aspect of 826 National is our publications. We allow students to express themselves and then have a takeaway example of their creativity in print."

Each program is aimed to help students express their ideas creatively, effectively, and confidently in his or her own creative voice, and because 826 believes that the quality of student work is greatly enhanced when it's shared with an authentic audience, each year 826 publishes anthologies of student writing which are professionally produced.

Other publications include 826 Quarterly, student newspapers and 'zines. One project compiled student letters written to president Obama and are now part of the published book called Thanks and Have Fun Running the Country. Annually, 826 orchestrates the Young Authors' Books series in which 826 partners with local public high schools. With student and teacher input, a theme for the series is agreed on and the students begin to write on that topic. After eight, nine, or ten drafts, volunteers say, student writing improves dramatically. Each piece is reviewed by a student editori-

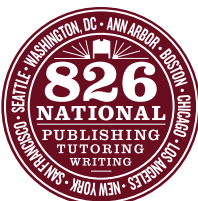
al board and finally, the writing culminates in high-quality hardback and paperback books that the students can call their own. Research has proven that 35-40 hours per year of directed, one-on-one, student-to-volunteer mentoring can raise a student's grade one letter higher. In some cases, volunteers are working for two hours with a student who has never in their life spent two hours focusing on their writing on a one-on-one basis. 826 National's work is based on the understanding that great leaps in learning can happen with one-on-one attention, and that strong writing skills are fundamental to future success.

Annually, 22,000 students are served by a growing number of 4,000 volunteers.

"Our volunteers are essential to the success of 826. Volunteering allows adults the opportunity to mentor, to become the person in a student's life for whom they gather support from and learn from. Engaging in the lives of the young provides a transformative and circular experience," says Richards.

Educators have joined 826 National to pursue the same goals in their local classrooms and volunteer tutors come from all fields—they are college students, published authors, law professors, documentary filmmakers, magazine founders—but all have one thing in common: they love to help students learn.

Innovation *of the week*



DEAR SIR OBAMA: PRESIDENTIAL ADVICE

ONLINE AT: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/16/opinion/16lettersintro.html>

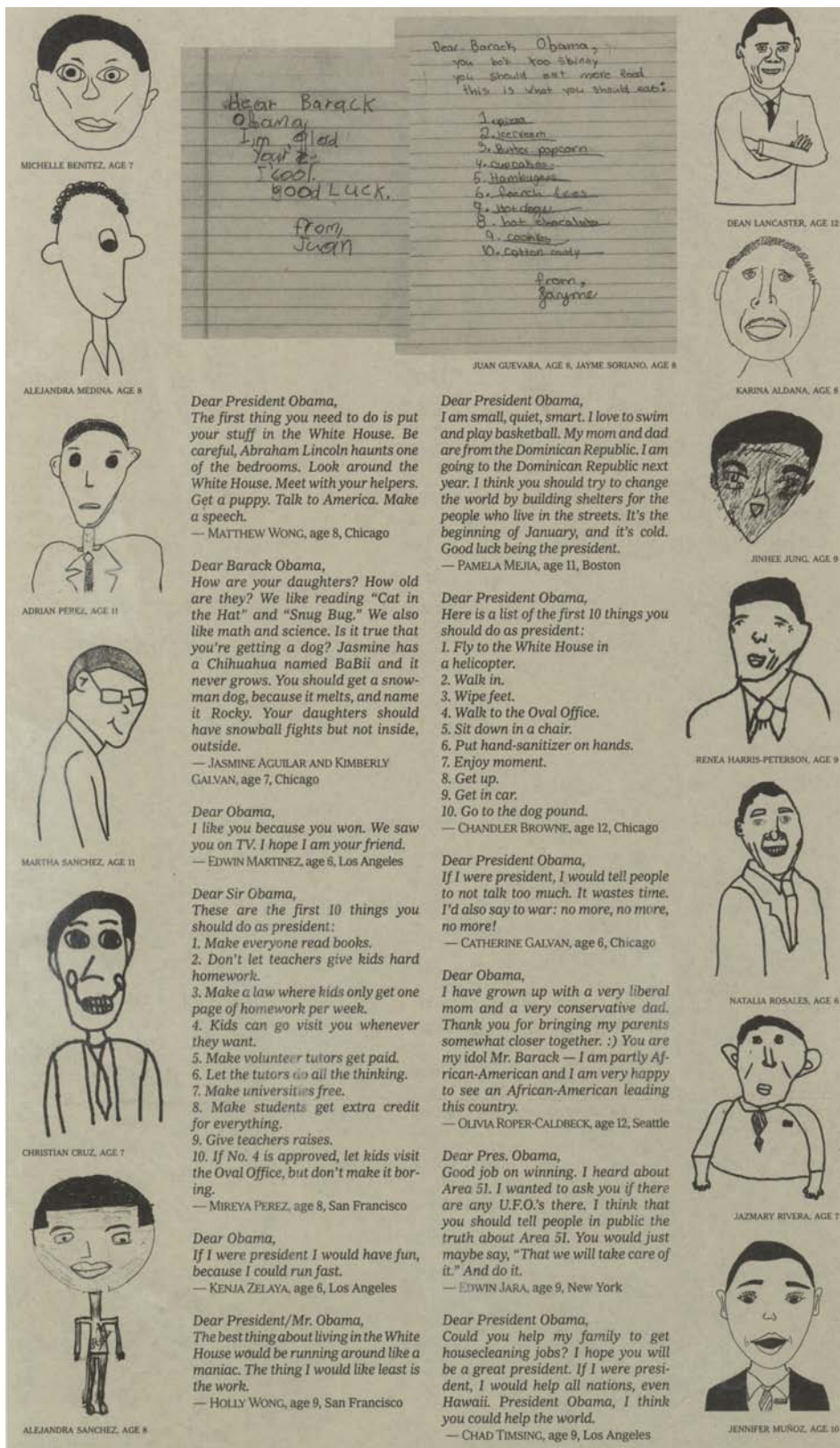
The New York Times

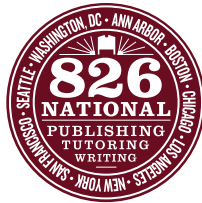
BY JORY JOHN | JANUARY 16, 2009

Every day after school about 65 children come to our center to get help with their homework. The place is always vibrant, but on Nov. 5, 2008, the 20 tutors in the room essentially played zone defense to keep things in order. For the students, the election of Barack Obama had overturned their world.

The children had been interested in the election all year but few of them, truth be told, really thought Mr. Obama would be elected. When he won, their talk quickly and excitedly turned to what would happen next.

We decided to channel this energy into a writing assignment. We asked our students — not just those in San Francisco, but ones in Ann Arbor, Mich.; Boston; Chicago; Los Angeles; New York; and Seattle — to offer their thoughts, hopes and advice to Mr. Obama in handwritten letters (many of which came with drawings). Here is the result of their work; some letters have been edited for space.





DEAR FIRST LADY MICHELLE,

ONLINE AT: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/28/opinion/28letterstomichelle.html>

The New York Times

BY LAUREN HALL | NOVEMBER 27, 2010

EVER since Barack Obama's inauguration, the staff members and tutors at our non-profit writing programs have marveled at how this presidency has percolated through student essays, stories and poems.

And it's not just the president who has captured their attention — his wife, Michelle, has, too. From our students' perspective, Mrs. Obama is glamorous but accessible, maternal but cool. They trust her.

So, earlier this fall, 826 National hosted a series of workshops inviting students to write to the first lady. The results were collected in the book "I Live Real Close to Where You Used to Live: Kids' Letters to Michelle Obama (and to Sasha, Malia and Bo)."

Here is a sampling of what they came up with; some letters have been edited for space.

