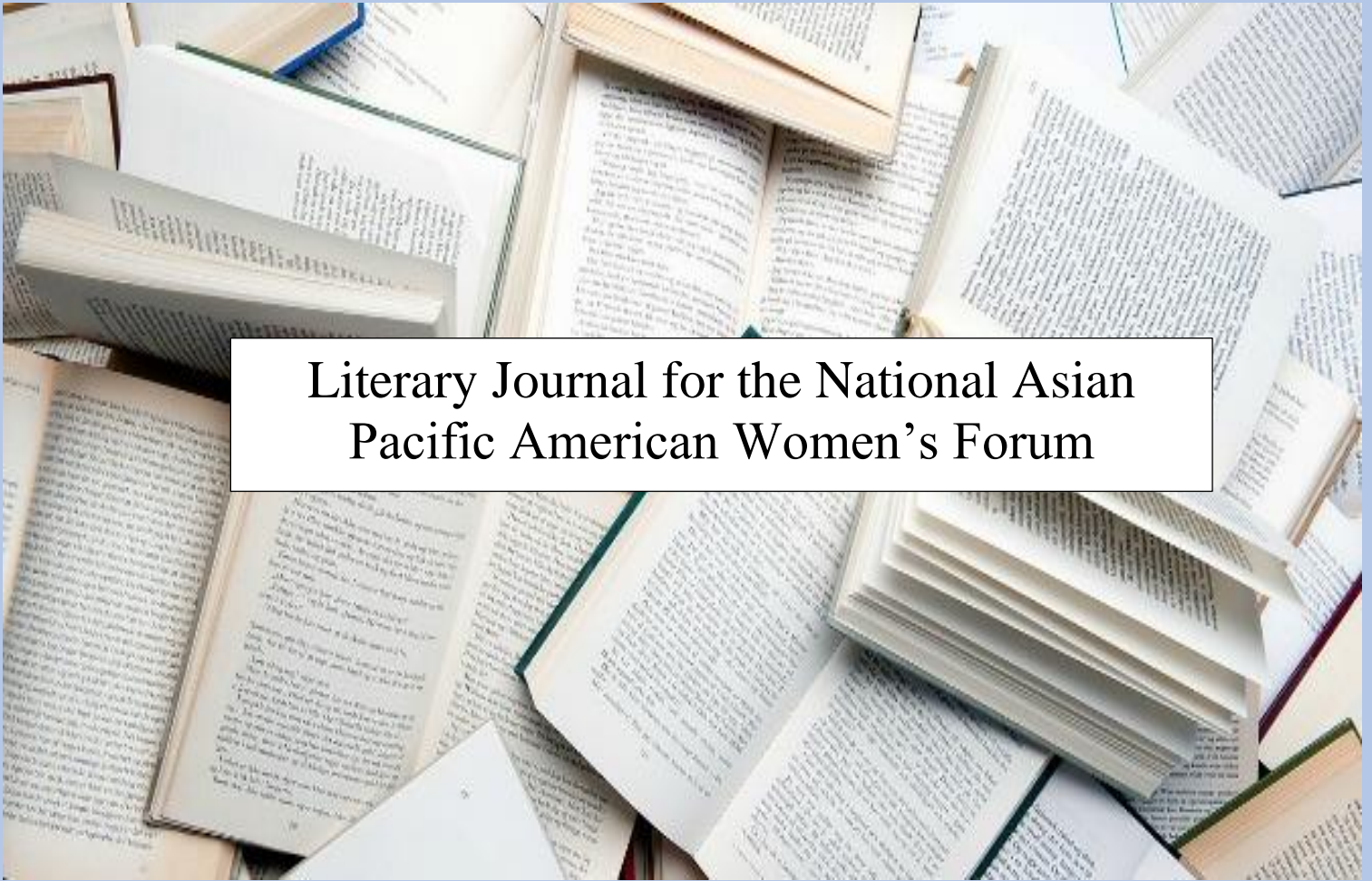


A Grant Requesting Funds from the National Endowment for the Arts



Literary Journal for the National Asian
Pacific American Women's Forum

Written by Vanan Phan

National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
1225 New York Avenue
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December 19, 2019

National Endowment for the Arts
Folk and Traditional Arts Grant Director
Clifford Murphy
400 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20506 USA

Dear Mr. Murphy,

My name is Vanan Phan and I am writing on behalf of the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum. I am writing to respectfully request a grant in the amount of \$80,819.02 to fund the creation of a literary journal that edits and publishes work written by Asian American Pacific Islander Women with the goal to empower other women in the United States.

The National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum is an organization focused on educating and empowering Asian American Pacific Islander women and girls to make important decisions that will impact their lives, in addition to the lives of their families and communities. The organization pushes against negative stereotypes and advocates for policies that will create systemic change in America. The requested grant from the National Endowment for the Arts will be used to create a literary journal that features an all-women's editorial staff, and will publish a variety of written work by Asian American Pacific Islander women and girls, that include but is not limited to essays, short stories, poems, fiction, and interviews. Ultimately, the goal of the literary journal is to create a safe space where writers can share their experiences and connect with others.

The Folk and Traditional Arts Grant believes in embracing and reflecting the cultural life of a community that has been passed down from generation to generation. This grant would allow women and girls to express their previous experiences as members of a minority group in a creative way that promotes change and unity. In addition to preserving tradition and memory, the format of a literary journal makes the topics more comprehensible to a larger audience compared to information typically found in a textbook.

I appreciate your time and consideration. Please contact me or Sung Yeon Choimorrow, the Executive Director of the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum, with any questions.

Best,

Vanana Phan

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Statement of the Problem

Model Minority Myth

Throughout the course of human history, the creation, modification, and rejection of stereotypes in various scenarios have impacted the way people view themselves and others. As society evolves, our perception of traditional stereotypes has changed as well. Many reject the tight mold stereotypes force upon individuals, but the messages have embedded themselves into our subconscious. The definition of a stereotype is: “A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing” (lexico). While there have been arguments that certain stereotypes are positive, forcing a certain person, group, race, or class into a specific mold or set of expectations limits self-expression, and can lead to negative consequences for the individual or group.

One of the most well-known examples of a positive stereotypes created by society is that all Asian American Pacific Islanders are good, hardworking, honest individuals. The term “model minority” was first coined during the Civil Rights Movement in 1966. The term argues that if Asian-Americans can work hard without complaining, why couldn't other racial groups do the same? (Lim, 2015). At the time, the term was used as evidence by the white leaders and the media to show that there was no inequality happening in America. The main argument claims that Asian Americans and Asian immigrants are able to succeed in America due to “hard work, strong families and passion for education.” (Lim, 2015). While it was not clearly stated, the undertone implied that the reason other minority groups, such as African Americans, were unable to succeed was because they lacked those skills. The term “Model Minority” quickly circulated through America as leaders struggled to maintain white dominance in the country.

Problems and Limitations

Many things have changed since 1966, but the stereotype of the “Model Minority” still causes numerous problems in Asian American Pacific Islander communities. The Model Minority stereotype focuses mostly on an individual’s work ethic and passion, but it does not take into account the various socioeconomic and education disparities in the United States: “Southeast Asian-Americans drop out of high school at an alarming rate; nearly 40 percent of Hmong-Americans, 38 percent of Laotian-Americans, and 35 percent of Cambodian-Americans do not finish high school. These Asian-American subgroups, along with Vietnamese-Americans, earn below the national average” (Lim, 2015). Due to the harmful effects of the “Model Minority” stereotype, individuals from these communities are seen as lazy, ungrateful, troubled, and unintelligent.

In addition to being seen as a model citizen, another common stereotype is that Asian American Pacific Islanders are good at math and science, as portrayed through American pop culture and media for decades (Williams, Multhaup, Korn, *The Atlantic*). Due to the wide reach that media outlets have, many of the stereotypes have affected Asian Americans in the professional field. The Atlantic reports: “At work, white men generally have more leeway in their behavior: They can shout and scream when they’re angry; they can brag when they’ve accomplished something. For women and people of color, a narrower range of behavior is often accepted” (2018). The limitations that women face in the workplace show that while certain stereotypes might not be visibly apparent, the treatment they receive shows that the beliefs are still very much ingrained in the minds of their male coworkers. While Asian Americans are viewed as intelligent and hardworking, it is important to note that Asian American men and Asian American women are viewed differently. Asian American women are seen as more feminine, so when they assert

dominance in any way, their behavior is seen as out of order (Williams, Multhaup, Korn, *The Atlantic*). The harmful stereotypes that have been viewed in a positive light for many years have forced Asian American Pacific Islanders into a mold that limits their self-expression and sense of identity.

Tiger Moms and the Dangers of Generalization

In 2011, Amy Chua, a Yale law professor, published *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*, where she discusses her Chinese heritage and how it influenced her parenting choices. Her strict and authoritative parenting style, in which she forbade her two daughters access to any forms of entertainment or get any grades below an A, made many critics believe that “her parenting methods will not lead to optimal developmental outcomes in children” (Kim, APA). The strict and sometimes brutal methods Chua detailed in her book made some readers wonder if that form of parenting was common in all Asian American households.

As a result of the widespread media coverage that Chua’s book received, many believed that a large reason why Asian Americans excelled was due to their parents’ strict rules. The concept of the Tiger Mom portrays and generalizes Asian parents in a negative light. In doing so, it creates a harmful idea that Asian parents abuse or mistreat their children. Amy Chua’s book and parenting is just one example of bad parenting, but due to the pre-existing belief that Asian Americans are supposed to be docile, the contents in Chua’s book sparked shock everywhere, and as a result, one incident stood to represent an entire community of people. Chua’s book and parenting style is an example of how dangerous generalization can be, as many believed in the Tiger Mom stereotype, the exact opposite was true: “Despite the popular perception of Asian American parents as ‘tiger’ parents, we found that supportive parents made up the largest percentage of

parents at each data collection wave” (Kim, APA). The belief that all Asian parents are Tiger parents symbolizes the harmful effects generalization can have on a community of people.

Statement of Request

The National Endowment for the Arts: Folk and Traditional Arts grant is rooted in and reflective of the cultural life of a community. The artistic traditions are shaped by the values and standards of excellence that are passed down within a community or family, from generation to generation. In addition, the Folk and Traditional Arts grant supports organizations that seek to foster a mutual respect for the diverse beliefs and values of all persons and groups. In doing so, individuals will expand their understanding of themselves and the society in which they exist in. The grant encourages applications from but is not limited to historically Black colleges and universities, Tribal colleges and universities, Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, and organizations that support the independence and lifelong inclusion of people with disabilities (arts.gov).

The National Endowment for the Arts has previously funded similar projects such as Asian American Writer's Workshop, which is a national nonprofit organization devoted to creating, publishing, developing and disseminating the creative pieces by Asian American writers.

Given the National Endowment for the Arts previous support for similar projects in the past, the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum is seeking funds to create a literary journal that will publish essays, short stories, poems, fiction, interviews, etc. written by Asian American Pacific Islander women and girls. The journal will serve as a space for individuals to connect and share their personal experiences in the hopes of creating systemic change.

Description of Proposed Work

Objectives and Goals:

- Acknowledge and encourage AAPI women and girls to share their personal experiences as members of a marginalized minority group.
- Celebrate women and girl's creativity through written work.
- Create a space where individuals feel safe to share and discuss the personal trauma they have experienced as a result of the harmful stereotypes placed on them.
- Expose women and girls to various creative outlets of self-expression that can lead to future opportunities.
- Dismantling the Model Minority Myth and increasing awareness of harmful stereotypes prevalent in society and media outlets.
- Improve our understanding of ourselves and others through the submissions in the literary journal.
- Encourage and rally for change to occur on a legislative level.

Methods and Practices:

The National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF) uses a reproductive justice framework, to encourage Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) women and girls to impact policy drive systemic change in the United States (napawf.org). The organization, founded in 1996, strives to vocalize the stories and experiences belonging to AAPI women. They center their mission around the belief that being seen and heard in the public narrative gives been power to shape the police and culture change needed in order to gain agency over their own lives (napawf.org). While their core focuses include policy and structural change, organizing and civic engagement, and legal advocacy and litigation, the creation of a literary journal that feature

stories from AAPI women will add a humanistic variable to the organization. The increase in own voices stories will increase support for change and increase the chances of legislation being approved.

In order to create a literary journal, several factors will need to be determined. Due to this being the first literary journal for the organization, there will only be one issue printed that first year. NAPAWF has chapters in 11 cities across the United States, however because this is NAPAWF's first literary journal, the best course of action would be to create and distribute completed journals at only one chapter. Selecting one chapter would allow NAPAWF to closely monitor how many people are interested in submitting to the journal, and how the journal is being received by the public. Based off of the reception to the journal, the NAPAWF's staff can decide whether to expand the literary journal to other locations, and how many issues of the journal should be printed each year.

An editorial team that consists of an editor in chief, a managing editor, a creative director, designers, production manager, copy editors, proofreaders, and submission readers would need to be formed. A brief summary of each occupation is listed below:

- **Editor in Chief:** The editor in chief is someone who has a plethora of skills and experience in the publishing field. They create and plan the overall vision for the publication. In addition, they communicate regularly with other departments to ensure the team is staying on track for publication (Nikola, 2013).
- **Managing Editor:** The managing editor reports directly to the editor in chief. A managing editor administers to the daily operations of the publication such as generating

story ideas, planning, assigning and editing content. In addition, she/he oversees the spending and production schedules (Talley, mediabistro).

- **Creative Director:** The creative director is responsible for how the publication is going to look like. He/she is responsible for commission artwork that will be included in the publication, in addition to creating a team of designers such as photographers and picture editors (Nikola, 2013).
- **Designers:** Designers operate under the supervision of the creative director. Their tasks heavily depend on what kind of publication they are working for. For a literary journal, common tasks can include creating the layout, choosing the font and font size for pieces, and editing pictures (Nikola, 2013).
- **Production Manager:** The production manager oversees the physical compilation of all the materials in the production schedule, while ensuring that all team members are on track. He/she also is responsible for communion with the printing-house and setting deadlines for commissions (Nikola, 2013).
- **Copy Editor:** Copy editors are responsible for acquiring submissions from writers, in addition to maintain the quality of those texts as determined by the editor in chief and the managing editor (Nikola, 2013).
- **Proofreaders:** Proofreaders work closely with the copy editor to ensure all submissions have correct grammar and spelling (Nikola, 2013).
- **Submissions Readers:** Submission readers read, analyze, and review submissions to determine which texts would best suit the topic or theme of the publication.

In order to create an editorial team that features the most experienced and qualified individuals, an ad placed by NAPAWF on the Poets & Writers website would yield the best results. Each of

the occupations listed above will be filled by one person, except for proofreaders and the submission readers. In order to prevent overwhelming the team's proofreaders and submission readers along with the uncertainty of how many submissions the literary journal will receive, the best course of action is to assign two individuals to become proofreaders and create four submission reader openings. The job listings are free, but they will be reviewed by the Poets & Writers staff first (pw.org). Poets & Writers is also a good place to begin advertising for submissions. The cost of advertising will be discussed in the Budget portion of the grant proposal.

Following the creation of the editorial board, the exact page count of the literary journal would need to be determined. Similar to the decision to create and distribute one literary journal issue at only one of NAWAF's locations, a shorter literary journal would be the best way to determine whether or not audiences are interested in the product. In addition, the best way to encourage and attract high quality submissions is to allow writers to submit any work that follows the theme of what it means to be an Asian American Pacific Islander woman and the experiences they have faced. The theme leaves room for interpretation, which allows for more creative submissions.

Web and Print

While the NAWAF's literary journal will only be publishing at one of their eleven locations, the grant will fund the official website for the journal. This will allow the staff at other NAWAF locations to advertise submissions written by Asian American Pacific Islander women and girls. The best way to determine which submissions will be published on the web and which submissions will be published in print, is determine if any of the content is specific to a certain region or state. Other ways of determining what could be published on the web is to determine

which submissions are more universal and which are more focused on the events/political climate of a certain location. The NAPAWF's website for their literary journal could potentially be a good place for interns to practice their marketing and editorial skills while getting involved with the organization.

Schedule:

Due to the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum's focus on improving the lives and representation of Asian American Pacific Islander Women in the United States, an ideal time to publish the literary journal could be around Lunar New Year. The holiday is typically celebrated in China and other Asian countries that begins with the first new moon of the lunar calendar and ends 15 days later on the first full moon of the lunar calendar. The lunar calendar is based on the cycles of the moon, which changes the dates of the holiday each year, though it normally occurs sometime between January 21st and February 20th according to Western calendars (britannica.com). The close proximity in terms of timing for the launch of NAPAWF's literary journal that celebrates Asian American Pacific Islander women and girls, and Lunar New Year will highlight how much individuals from Asian descent have to celebrate, regarding their lineage and how they have come while living in the United States.

February 2020	Staff of NAPAWF meet and draft an advertisement looking for an editorial staff (based at one location) and the staff will hold interviews with the applications once a location is determined.
April 2020	The editorial board members are solidified. Introductory meeting is organized, where the editorial staff along with a member of NAPAWF meet to determine the logistics of the literary journal and draft an advertisement for public submissions.
June 2020	Submissions open at the beginning of June.
August 2020	Submissions close at the end of August.
September 2020	Submission readers begin to review the submissions and meetings are held to determine which pieces would best suit the literary journal.
Mid-October 2020	Final submissions are due. The managing editor gets in contact with the authors to inform them of whether or not their pieces have been accepted or rejected.
November 2020	Design team drafts layout for the literary journal and begin creating the journal. Editor in chief, creative director, and managing editor meet to draft ads about the launch of the literary journal.
December 2020	Proofreaders check the journal for any errors before it is sent to the printing company.
January 2020	Final draft of journal is received and reviewed.
February 2021 Lunar New Year - February 12, 2021	Literary journal is disrupted around the NAPAWF's chapter location around the time of the Lunar New Year.

- Regularly held remote meetings and check ins, such as phone calls, emails, video messages, etc. will be determined by the editorial board.

Description of Available Facilities

New York as Starting Location

The NAWAF's New York location is the ideal place to test whether or not the literary journal will be received well by the public. From a historical standpoint, not only has New York been a major player in the publishing industry, but many well-known authors have lived in New York. By the mid-nineteenth century New York had surpassed both Boston and Philadelphia and become the center of the U.S publishing industry. The introduction of U.S. copyright and the commencement of the royalty system allowed an increase of professional authors to be published. Despite constant news that the publishing field is slowly dying, New York remains at the forefront of the industry: "Today, the city is home to a large number of established names, as well as numerous up and coming independents" (Ribbonfish, 2016). New York's rich history surrounding publishing and authors makes it the perfect location to see if a literary journal would be received well.

In addition to regularly held remote meetings and check ins, a space to meet in person would need to be secured. The NAWAF's New York chapter has an office on 39 Eldridge St 4th Floor, New York, NY 10002 that will be ideal for editorial board meetings.

However, there is a high chance that the space will not fit an editorial board of ten members. An alternative location is Luminary located on 1204 Broadway New York, NY 10001, which is a collaboration hub for women and women-identified who are passionate about professional development and expanding their networks (luminary-nyc.com). In addition to supplying members with a communal workspace, Luminary also offers Wi-Fi, printing and phone booths, conference rooms and event spaces as well. Luminary's focus on assisting women improve their

professional careers makes it the ideal spot for the editorial team to meet and discuss the progress of the literary journal.

Qualifications of Personnel

An Organization that Believes in the Power of Storytelling

The National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum is an organization focused on building power with AAPI women and girls to influence critical decisions that affect their own lives in addition to the lives of their families and communities.

Originally founded under the belief that the stories of AAPI women deserve to be told, today the organization continues to increase the visibility of AAPI women and girls, amplifying their stories, and building their power to achieve social justice. NAPAWF states that at this current time in history: "NAPAWF works not just to advance justice and rights, but for transformation. By lifting up our dreams and visions of a world where we have full agency to flourish, we are planting seeds of transformation. And by organizing to build power, we are creating the tools, leaders, and partnerships necessary to transform the world and to realize our vision" (napawf.org). In addition to the beliefs held by the founding members, the current staff is determined to improve the lives of AAPI women and girls.

Executive Director

Sung Yeon Choimorrow a first-generation immigrant working mom who is passionate about building power to create change so her daughter can live in a more just world than the one she inherited. She initially came to NAPAWF as its National Field Director with a vision to create a foundation for community leaders who were most affected by the policy issues that NAPAWF focuses on such as immigrant rights, economic justice, and reproductive rights and health, using the reproductive justice framework. After she became the executive director of NAPAWF, the organization has expanded from one organizer to a team of nine. She believes that "policies

should be made by the people for the people and when people are equipped with the tools to build power and create change, we will get the job done” (napawf.org). Sung Yeon Choimorrow’s personal experience as a woman in a marginalized community combined with her desire to create a better world for her daughter make her the perfect woman to lead the organization.

New York Organizer

Becca Asaki is a fourth generation Japanese American who has many years of experience organizing for issues ranging from housing, health, and gender justice in poor and working-class communities of color. Becca Asaki has previously worked for Community Action for Safety Apartments as the Communications and Development Coordinator. In addition, she was an AIDS Campaign Coordinator and organizer for the Home Based Care Alliance for the Huairou Commission, where she helped develop and coordinate global peer learning academies on organizing and leading campaigns on women’s unpaid care work. Lastly, she serves on the NY Day of Remembrance Committee, and is dedicated to advancing women’s empowerment (napawf.org). Becca Asaki’s experience organizing events and organizations combined with her clear passion for helping women from minority groups, make it clear that she would be a valuable asset to assist an editorial team in creating a literary journal.

Personal Experience

As an Asian American woman, myself, who was raised in a predominantly Asian American community, I have seen first-hand the detrimental effects the “Model Minority” stereotype has had in the growth, development, and self-expression of Asian American women and girls. In addition to stunting an individual's creative development, many of my friends and family have

been pressured by their families and society to pursue degrees and jobs in STEM related fields, regardless of their independent interests. I am extremely lucky that my family has never forced me to pursue paths that I was not interested in, but I am aware that there are many Asian American Pacific Islander women and girls who do not have the same family situation that I do.

I believe in the massive potential that the creation of a literary journal can have on the development of AAPI women and girls. In addition to uniting individuals who are experiencing similar problems, the journal will help foster growth and connection in an otherwise isolated community. As someone who is constantly writing, both in an academic and personal setting, I can attest to the relief, solace, and validation I feel whenever I document my own thoughts, opinions, and stories in words. I have been involved with multiple literary journals during my career as an undergraduate English major, ranging from being a submissions reader to interning with the managing editor. These opportunities have given me a solid grasp on the activities that occur behind the scenes of a literary journal, from designing the page layout for an issue to communicating with writers about their submissions. My interactions with authors have shown me how liberating sharing one's personal work can be, and as someone who has read hundreds of submissions, I can confidently say that reading personal pieces from other writers has expanded my perspective on myself and the environment I live in. In addition, it has made me a more empathetic and compassionate individual.

Budget

Title of Expense	Cost
Location	\$8,000
Staff	\$45,000
Advertising	\$960
Website Creator	\$264
Editing Software	\$6,399.20
Submission database	\$120
Printing Company	\$5,075.82
Miscellaneous	\$15,000
Total	\$80,819.02

Budget Breakdown

Location

In addition to using NAPAWF's office in New York, a space must be reserved for members of the editorial team. In order to stay on schedule and enhance communication, it is best to meet in person at least twice a month (bi-weekly). Luminary offers a \$40-day pass for individuals and the cost is broken down below.

$\$40 \times 2$ (number of meetings per month) $\times 10$ (number of total months) = \$800

$\$800 \times 10$ (number of staff members) = \$8,000 total

Staff

The staff budget heavily depends on each individual's experience level in addition to how many hours a week each person will be working. Because there is no way to determine the exact

amount without having a good idea of the skill levels for each person, and how much time would have to be put into working on the journal, the pay and number of work hours for each additional member is the same in this grant proposal. The equation used to calculate the total number below is highly subject to change.

$\$15.00 \text{ per hour} \times 30 \text{ hours per month} = \450 per month

$\$450 \text{ per month} \times 10 \text{ months} = \$4,500 \text{ per person}$

$\$4,500 \text{ per person} \times 10 \text{ staff members} = 45,000 \text{ total}$

Advertising:

Poets & Writers is the most well-known nonprofit organization that supports Creative Writers, and they offer many different types of advertisements for literary journals. A Billboard online advertisement (970x250 pixels) located on their homepage will cost \$960.

Website:

In order to create an online version of the literary journal that can be assessed from any location, a website will need to be created. Wix's Pro package offers 20GB of storage, site booster app, visitor analytics app, events calendar, etc. which will help the NAPAWF staff view and analyze how well the online journal is being received.

$\$22 \text{ (monthly rate)} \times 12 \text{ (number of months)} = \264 total

Editing Software:

In order to create a literary journal, editing software is needed. Adobe offers teams a Creative Cloud package. The package comes with an entire college of more than 20 apps, premium fonts, and 100GB of cloud storage for collaboration. These apps will allow the editorial board to create a clean and polished literary journal that reflects the professionalism of the NAPAWF.

$\$79.99 \text{ (cost of package per month)} \times 10 \text{ (number of months)} = \799.90

$\$799.90 \times 8 \text{ (team members who will be using the apps)} = \$6,399.20 \text{ total}$

**The two submission readers will be using submittable instead of the editing software.*

Submittable database:

Submittable is a reliable and easy to use website that allows writers to quickly submit their work, and submissions readers to access that work without any problems. Submittable allows for easy collaboration and submission readers will be able to tag the pieces they like best, making it easier for other team members to see. The starter package includes three members to have access to the literary journal submission account, 100 submissions per month, and basic review options.

$\$40 \text{ (cost per month)} \times 3 \text{ (number of months that submissions for the literary journal are open to the public)} = \120 total

Printing

Given the large focus on climate change today, it was important to find a printing company that uses sustainable paper and materials. PsPrint uses recycled paper stocks and vibrant soy-based inks that means customers don't have to choose between quality and sustainability. In addition, they automatically print orders at the plant closest to the customer, which reduces fossil fuel emissions (psprint.com). The literary journal's dimensions will be 5.5" x 8.5" and contain a cover with 92 pages of content in color. A quantity of 500 literary journals will be printed in order to test how well the public receives it.

$\$4,590.91 \text{ (printing cost)} + \$128.03 \text{ (shipping cost)} + \$356.88 \text{ (taxes)} = \$5,075.82 \text{ total}$

Miscellaneous

Regardless of how well planned a project is at the start, mistakes are bound to happen. That is why it is important to set aside a portion of funds to effectively deal with any problems that occur. Some predicted issues include editorial staff salary/stipends, mistakes during the printing process, decorations needed to celebrate the launch, compensation for some acquired writers, etc. An ideal amount to cover any potential issues would be \$15,000.

Summary

Benefits for People

As a result of the “Model Minority” stereotype, AAPI women have been taught to be docile and gentle, which causes them to suppress their own feelings and emotions. Those who have experienced trauma and oppression at school, in the workplace, or in their own homes, in addition to the trauma resulted from immigration, or abusive childhoods, have been taught to ignore their problems, which creates more psychological problems. In a study done by Dr. James W. Pennebaker, Pennebaker found that in addition to thinking and expressing emotions about an experience, writing can help people organize their thoughts and giving meaning to a traumatic experience. In addition, it is the act of constructing a story about a traumatic event that helps them “break free of the endless mental cycling more typical of brooding or rumination” (health.harvard.edu). Based off of this evidence, a literary journal would create a safe place for women and girls to document and analyze their experiences. The process gives them a chance to unload what they have internalized and suppressed. Once published, the journal has a strong potential to unite others who are experiencing the same thing, helping to foster growth and connection in an otherwise isolated community.

The literary journal will tell the stories of the past and present and serve as a source of guidance and inspiration for the future. Without a doubt, the works of literature in the journal will contain many traumatic and horrific experiences, but it will also contain themes of hope. If this project is to be funded, the existence of the literary journal itself states the clear message that the voices and identities of the women in the journal survived, fought, and won the challenges they were faced with. Their stories will inspire younger generations of women to continue the fight until they receive the rights they deserve.

Similar Projects

This literary journal has a high rate of success based off previous examples of the power of storytelling in communities. In Kenya, violence overtook the country during the controversial Kenyan presidential election in 2007. The conflict went unnoticed by the rest of the world, even as the government used its own military on its citizens. This is mostly because every riot was seen as an isolated incident, therefore it received little media coverage. It wasn't until a group of bloggers and software developers created a mechanism to capture the true story. They called it Ushahidi (Swahili for “Testimony”). Citizens rushed to share what they could, ranging from texts, written accounts, photos, and live video shot with cell phones, to show the brutal extent of the violence. United, Ushahidi caught the world’s attention. The wide range of stories offered intimacy and inspired those listening to take action. Ushahidi was able to speak to the world while connecting individuals to each other as well (Bradly, Wired). The unification created through sharing stories based off of mutual trauma shows the importance of storytelling and self-expression. The example in Kenya is one of many, and it further emphasizes how vital and effective a literary journal can be in unifying a marginalized and oppressed group, while inspiring legislation.

Call to Action

While the job market and by extension the future, is shifting towards more STEM focused fields, it is important not to forget the important role self-expression and creativity have on our development. Self-expression through poems, fiction, personal essays, etc. can help the writer come to terms with their identity and trauma, while helping readers feel less isolated at the same time. As Asian American Pacific Islander women share their own stories, they are given the

opportunity to reclaim their identity, and help secure a brighter future for the younger generation. With funding from the National Endowment for the Arts: Folk and Traditional Arts grant, this literary journal can help women accept and embrace their past, while advocating for legislation that will improve the lives of Asian American Pacific Islander women in the United States.

Appendix

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