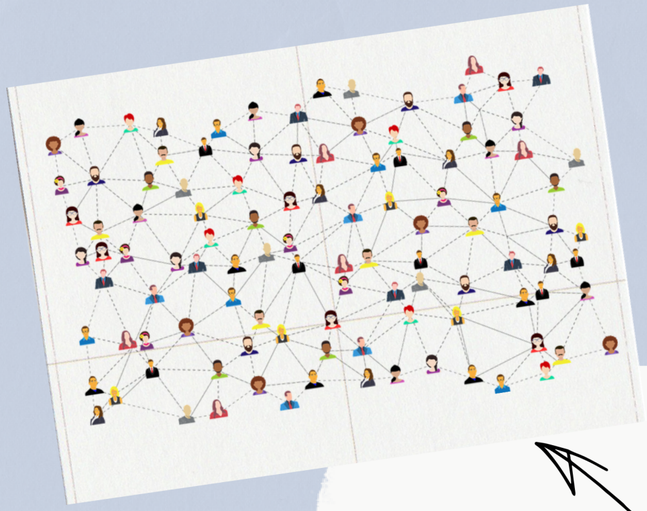
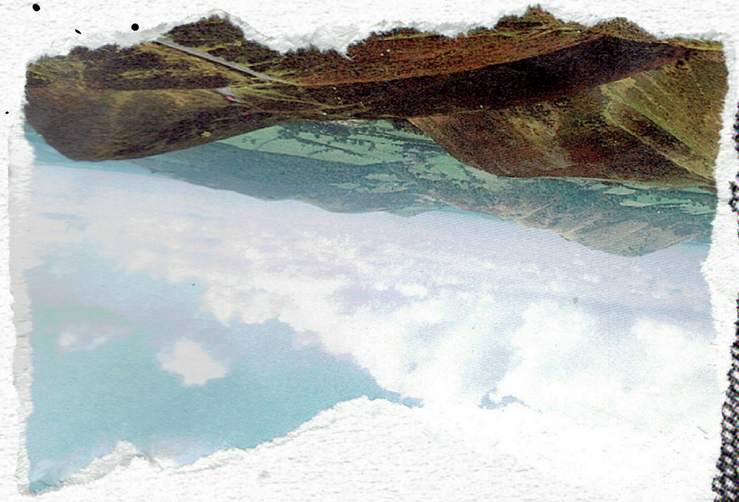


NWP in the South

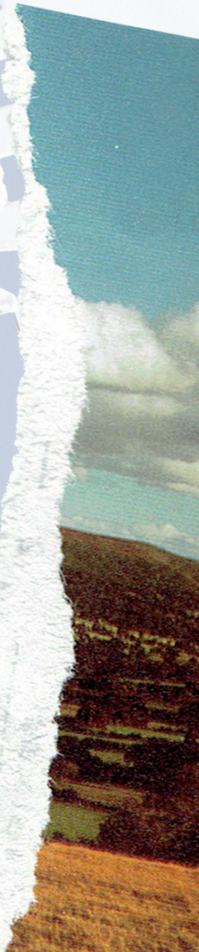
# *It Takes a Village: Establishing a Writing Village through Community Involvement*

Presented by:
H. Michelle Kreamer
Toby Daspit

# *Agenda*

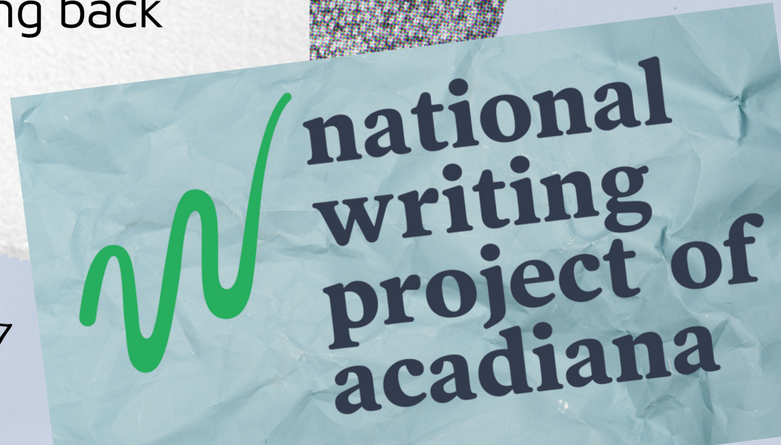


- Site History & Context
- Community Events
- Discussion
- Thanks & Closing



# *Site History & Context*

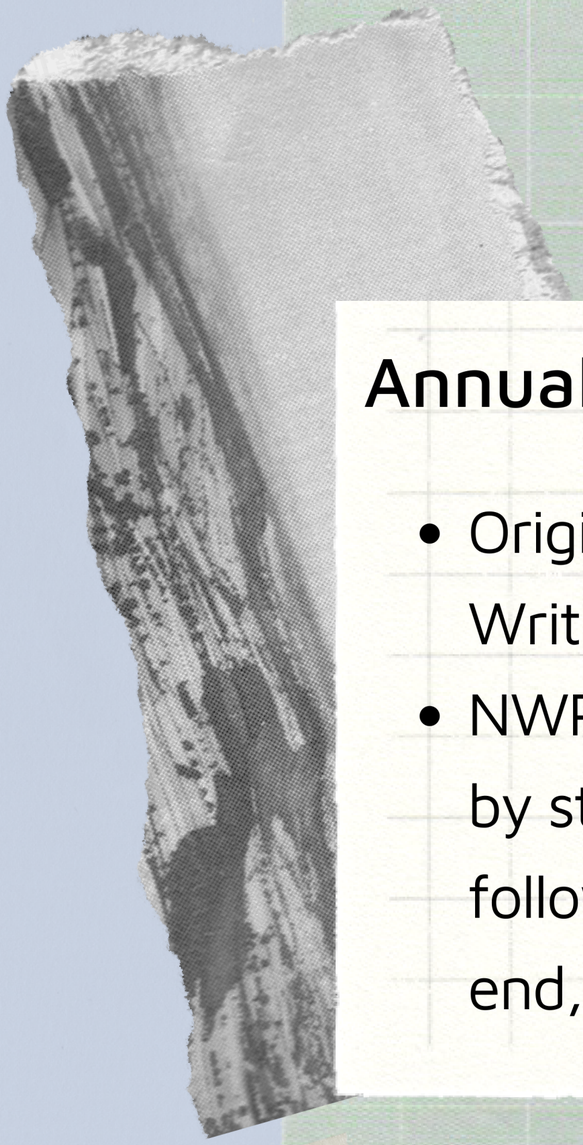
- **1989**: Established local Writing Project site, National Writing Project of Acadiana (NWP-A) at UL Lafayette
- **1999 & 2005**: Held revisioning conferences for strategic planning and goal setting
- **2009**: English Department and College of Education join forces
- **2013**: NWP-A's last full, five-week Summer Institute
- **2014-2022**: Partnership between NWP-A and GEAR UP, leading to work for Improving the Blank Page (IBP)
- **2015**: One-week "All Stars" Institute was hosted inviting back past Teacher Consultants
- **2017-2018**: C3WP Grant: SEED Teacher Leader, last funding from NWP



# *Community Events*

- Annual Writing Marathon
- Book Club
- Short Story Society
- Festival of Words Youth Writing Competition
- Southern Screen Writing Competition
- Spring Into Words: Reading Event
- Instant Poems featuring Youth Writers

# *Community Events*



## Annual Writing Marathon

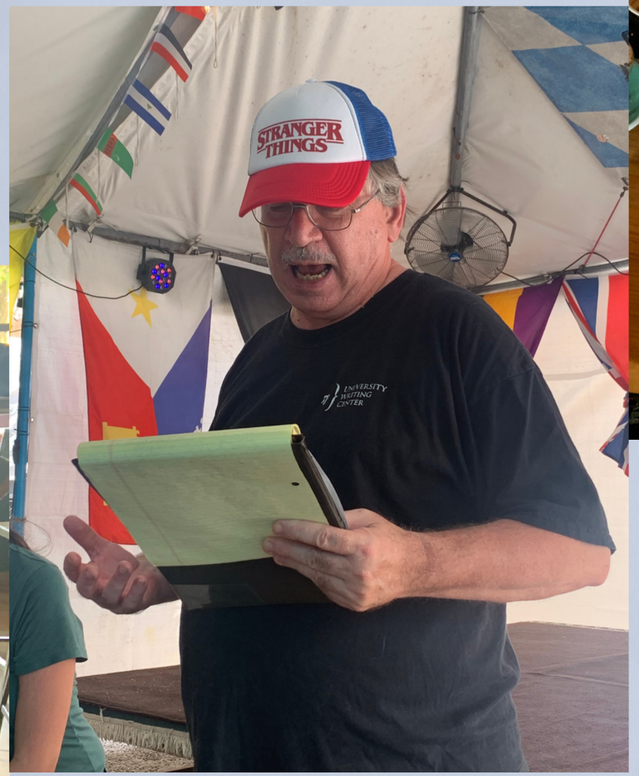
- Originally created by Richard Louth of Southeastern Louisiana Writing Project in 1992 and held in New Orleans
- NWP-A hosts this event each summer in downtown Lafayette by starting with a group writing exercise at a local venue, followed by a day of downtown exploration and writing. At the end, everyone reconvenes to share writing from the day.

# *Community Events*

## Annual Writing Marathon

- Video explanations about event to encourage participation
- Online event promotion with the tagline, "Writing Marathons are borderless and everyone is encouraged to join!"

# *Annual Writing Marathon*



# *Community Events*

**BOOK CLUB**: The Art of Fiction

- In Spring 2022, NWP-A hosted a virtual book club
- Book was broken into three parts with each part being discussed every two weeks via Zoom

# *Community Events*

**BOOK CLUB**: The Art of Fiction

- Book Club Struggles:
  - Inconsistent and low attendance
  - Overall lack of interest in text chosen making it challenging to discuss in meetings

# *Community Events*

## SHORT STORY SOCIETY

- A different facilitator each month selects two short stories that are freely available online
- Participants read the stories, then attend an in-person event to discuss the stories and engage in a related writing exercise

# *Community Events*

## SHORT STORY SOCIETY

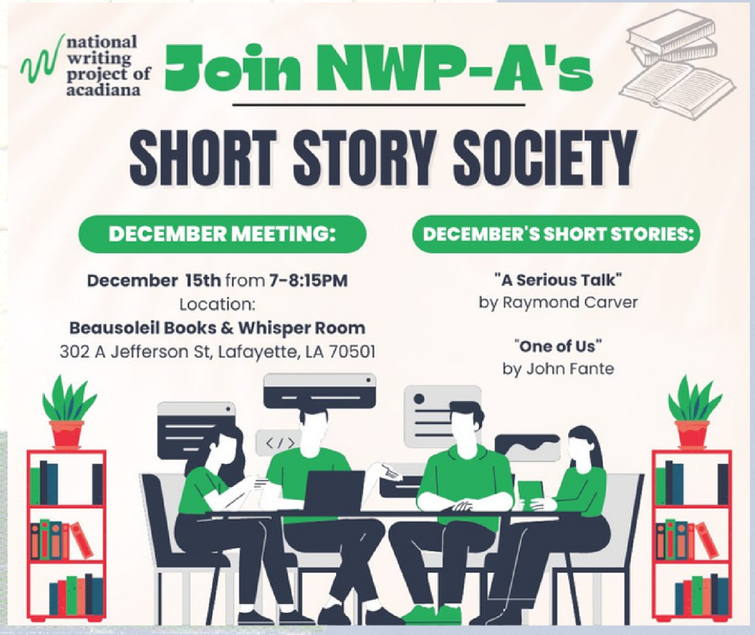
- Benefits:
  - Smaller reading/time commitment
  - Can participate when works for you
  - Hearing from different facilitators exposes participants to greater variety; encourages new and different participants
  - We have since cultivated a relationship with a local, independent bookstore where events are now held each month

# Short Story Society

# *Community Events*

## SHORT STORY SOCIETY: Time to Write!

- You will create a short work of fiction with 2 lines of prose and 8 lines of dialogue -- centered on an unidentified conflict between 2 characters
- First line of prose establishes conflict without directly referencing -- action is good here
- Each character gets 4 lines of dialogue
- Last line concludes, indirectly, subtly

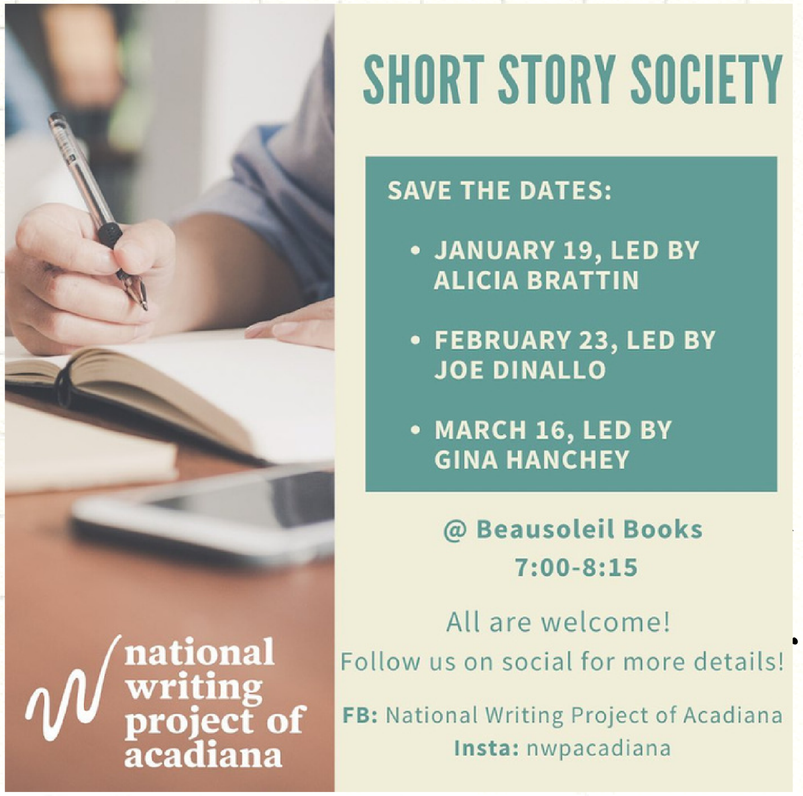


# *Community Events*

## SHORT STORY SOCIETY

Connecting with facilitators to expand community

- Area teachers not previously associated with NWP-A
- SSS Member who heard about us through word of mouth
- Sec. ELA PST graduating in May



# *Community Events*

## WRITING COMPETITIONS

### Festival of Words Youth Writing Competition

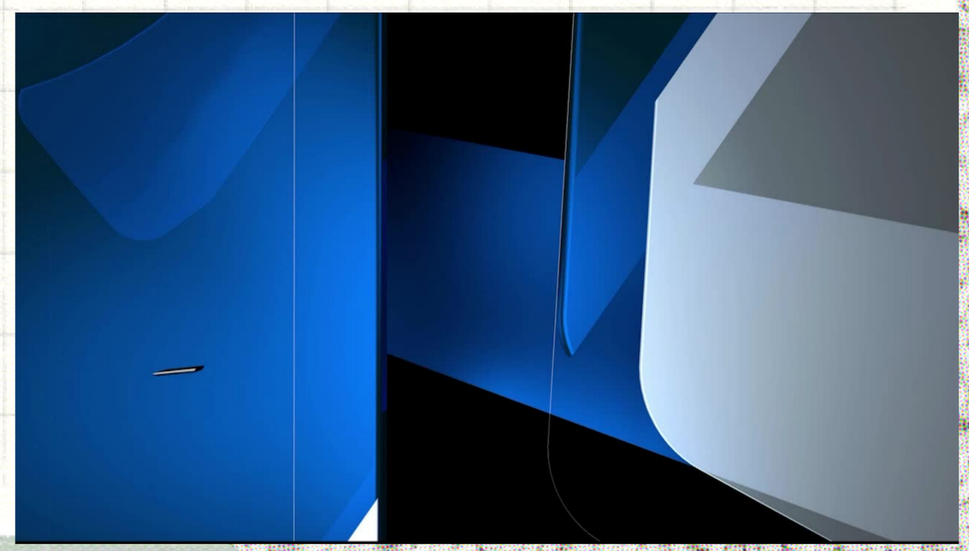
- Writing competition for area 3rd-12th graders hosted by NWP-A
- Categories include: Poetry, Fiction, Multimedia, and Advertisement
- Students who place receive an anthology of all winning pieces and are invited to read their work at the festival

# *Community Events*

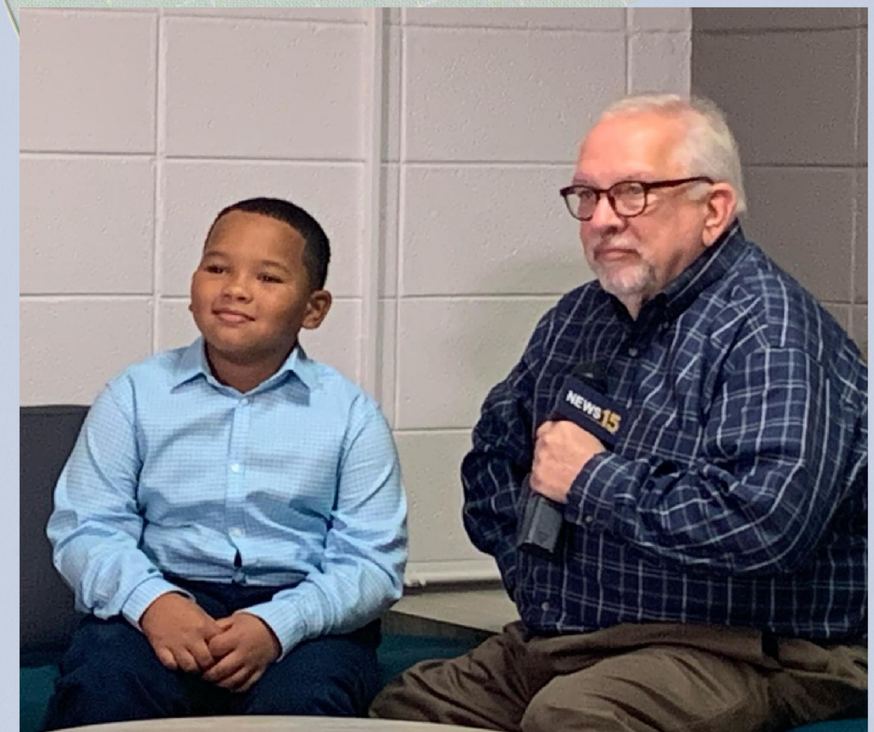
## WRITING COMPETITIONS

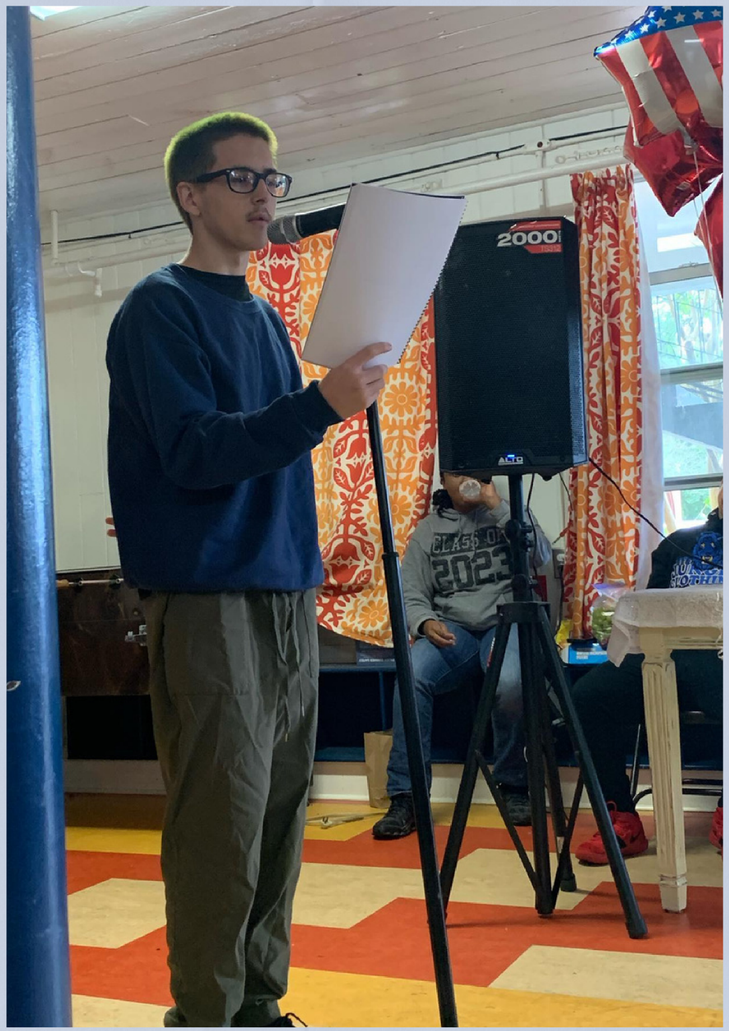
### Festival of Words Youth Writing Competition

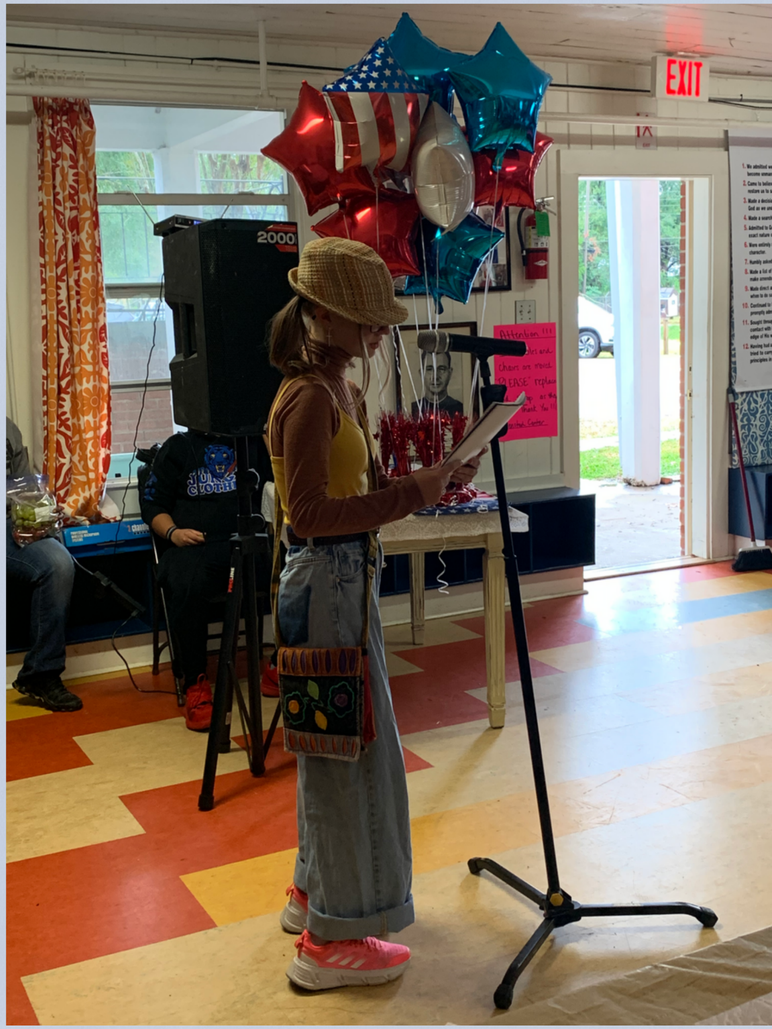
- PSTs had the opportunity to read, talk about, and evaluate submitted pieces
- Local news features



# FOW Youth Writing Competition



# *Community Events*

## WRITING COMPETITIONS

### Southern Screen Writing Competition

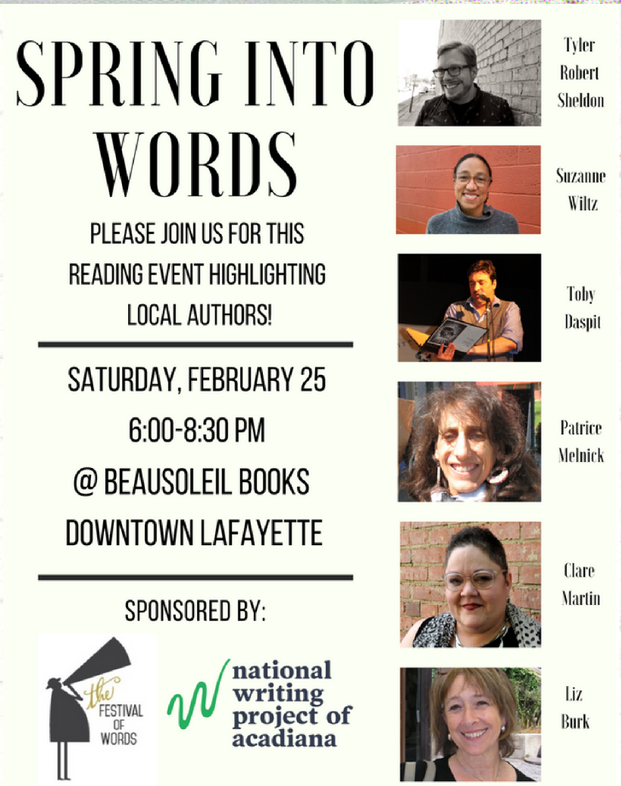
- In November 2022, NWP-A partnered with Southern Screen Film Festival to host the festival's first short fiction writing competition

# Southern Screen Writing Competition

# *Community Events*

## Spring Into Words: Reading Event

- Six local writers sharing their work with the community
- Free event to attend
- Hosted by NWP-A and FOW
- Again, partnered with local bookstore for event location



# *Spring Into Words*

# *Community Events*

## INSTANT POEMS FEATURING YOUTH WRITERS

- Members of a local high school Poetry Club joined NWP-A's fundraising efforts in Spring 2022 by offering "Instant Poems" in exchange for tips during local events
- The youth writers create a poem about a requested topic or something of their choosing
- Benefits: authentic writing experiences, celebrating writing, and way to raise funds for both groups

# *Instant Poems*

# *Discussion*

- What are ways  your NWP site has engaged with the local community?
  - What have been the benefits of building your writing village?
  - What challenges, if any, have your experienced?
- What ideas do you have to increase engagement between your NWP site and local community?
- Anything else you would like to discuss or ask?

# *Thanks so much!*

*H. Michelle Kreamer*
hmkreamer@louisiana.edu

*Toby Daspit*
toby.daspit@louisiana.edu

*Follow NWP-A on social to hear about all of our events!*

NWPACADIANA

FOLLOW US ON facebook