

▲ Vision Board for the Writers Den

A New Home for DGF

After five wonderful years at our 40th Street location, we have moved to our new home at 520 8th Avenue. This new DGF space, designed beautifully by Michelle Carano of Michelle Carano Designs, will offer our dramatists more resources and rehearsal space than ever. Michelle spoke with us about the inspiration behind her design of the new DGF home:

"My goal for the space was to blend all the wonderful qualities of the old space with all the possibilities of the new one. As you move through each room, I wanted to have the performance and writers' spaces feel like a home, while allowing the reception area, offices, kitchen, and outdoor spaces to feel more modern. The new space has large windows with wonderful views, so the design of the performance rooms had to have a sense of calm within the bustle of the city. The energy should come from the artists. Giving them a space

that doesn't impose on them, while still being stylish, was very much in my mind. Working with everyone at DGF has been a joy. It was an honor and a pleasure to be allowed to help create this new space."

Michelle's wonderful interior design of our space is certainly a welcomed addition to DGF and the dramatists we serve. We are grateful to our founding donors Carol Hall, Leonard Majzlin, Lynn Ahrens, and Stephen Flaherty. We're also delighted that our new space neighbors many notable artistic organizations, including the Alliance of Residential Theaters A.R.T./New York, Creative Arts Works, the National Alliance for Musical Theatre, The Playwrights Realm, Ripley-Grier Studios, Theatre Communications Group, and the Theatre Development Fund, among others. As always, our ability to offer this beautiful new space and its enhanced resources for writers is owed to the generosity of our donors.

3 Questions WITH DGF PRESIDENT Andrew Lippa

1 What theater are you most excited about or looking forward to this season?

"ANY theater! After so much hardship and separation, being in a room together to laugh, cry, and be transported by great writing and great acting is a gift we have all been missing. This season, I'm especially excited about 2016-17 DGF Fellow Michael R. Jackson's "A Strange Loop" taking its Broadway bow. The journey from someone's mind to someone's pen to someone's stage to someone else's stage to, only a lucky few, Broadway, is something to be celebrated every time it happens."

2 What has been an unexpected positive in your life to come out of the last two years?

"Love and productivity. First, love. My personal life has deepened in myriad ways these last two years. I've allowed more love in, and I've worked to give more of it away. My work at DGF is an extension of that desire to be loving, to be helpful, to be good. As for productivity, Zoom has been very helpful in working long-distance with collaborators. And, as



▲ DGF President Andrew Lippa

there was a very long period where I didn't venture out of the house, the only healthy choice was to stay home and work! So, I'm entering this next phase with several musicals and films in development. I'm hoping we can take those next steps now to getting them realized."

3 What are you working on now?

"I have an original film musical in development that, we hope (!), will be shot before the end of this year. I'm working on a number of stage projects, too, but never like to announce titles too quickly. I'll say this: I'm happily engaged in a wide array of projects, some that may come to Broadway, others the concert stage. All of them are exciting to me, and I'm very eager to see them sprout wings."

DGF EXPANDS ITS GRANTS PROGRAM WITH THE STEVEN SCHWARTZBERG GRANTS FOR

Mental Health & Wellness

Steven Schwartzberg Grants for Mental Health and Wellness are direct gifts of \$1,000 that allow writers to choose mental health and wellness services that best support their individual needs and well-being. To date, DGF is the only organization exclusively for dramatists that has a dedicated mental health grant fund.

As mental health increasingly emerges as a widespread public health issue following the prolonged uncertainty and trauma of the pandemic and industry shut-down, DGF staff continue to observe an overwhelming need for mental health and wellness support amongst grant program applicants.

96% of awarded Steven Schwartzberg grantees have stated that their need for mental health support altered during the COVID-19 pandemic, and 57% of grantees reported that their mental health had "significant impact" on their art.

While DGF was grateful to be able to help so many dramatists during an especially difficult time for theater artists, during this pilot phase, we discovered that some recipients struggled to match with an adequate therapist due to a variety of accessibility barriers. To resolve this issue, the DGF staff worked to evolve our grants program into an unrestricted funding model, offering applicants the highest level of flexibility to determine for themselves what support services would best serve their individual mental health needs. This model also aligns with DGF's commitment to Trust-Based Philanthropy and creating an actively anti-oppressive organization.

The updated grant program opened on November 30, 2021, distributing \$250,000 to writers in just three months. We are currently seeking funds to ensure that all eligible applicants are able to receive grants, with the intention that the mental health fund be open year-round.

*"I am just speechless
in gratitude.
Thank you for your generosity
and support."*

-Lily, New York

**&
Now:**

A Message from DGF's Executive Director **Rachel Routh**

I hope that this letter finds you and your loved ones well. Thank you for your ongoing generosity to DGF and the writers we serve. In the history of the American Theater, rarely has there been a time when your support has had a more profound effect than in these past two years. I am grateful for the aid we are able to give dramatists who are creating and producing meaningful work amidst the extraordinary challenges that our industry, and society at large have faced. The last year certainly offered many joyous moments, including available vaccines, allowed for Broadway and theaters across the country to reopen with a season of phenomenal productions, many of which continue to push the dial toward further inclusiveness in the theater community. But this time has not been without its hardships; emerging Covid variants and economic constraints caused the early, temporary, and permanent closings of many productions that deserved longer runs, once again significantly impacting writers livelihoods. These challenges are why your support has never been more urgent and more appreciated.

The work that is being made by theater writers during this time will stand as a testament to the fortitude of this community, and your contributions to DGF support us in our mission of advocating for the

resources that dramatists need now. With your help, we have a new round of funding of Emergency Grants to dramatists – providing essential financial support for housing, living expenses, medical, and mental health and wellness services. We are also thrilled to announce another initiative to support our dramatists—after five transformative years at our previous location, DGF has moved to a bigger, brighter, and better home at 520 8th Avenue. Our new space will provide enhanced resources for writers, including access to the Music Hall and two beautiful new rehearsal spaces. Our ability to offer this space and assistance for writers is owed to the generosity and support of donors like you, especially our founding donors Carol Hall, Leonard Majzlin, Lynn Ahrens, and Stephen Flaherty. Stay tuned for more on the upcoming reopening of the Music Hall. We are also excited to check in with DGF President Andrew Lippa and learn what he is looking forward to this season, as well as what has kept our Fellows inspired to write during these challenging times.

Thank you as always for working alongside DGF to honor writers' voices and champion a more inclusive theater community. I look forward to seeing you at the theater this season or at a DGF event when it is safe to gather together once again.

**Thank
you,**
Rachel Routh

Fellows Spotlight:

A FEW WORDS WITH OUR FELLOWS ON WHAT HAS KEPT THEM
INSPIRED DURING THESE LAST TWO YEARS:



**Meridith
Friedman**

MERIDITH FRIEDMAN (2012-2013)
“The past two years have made me SO extremely grateful to have the career I have. To make my living writing stories and dreaming up worlds. Gratitude is what has kept me writing!”



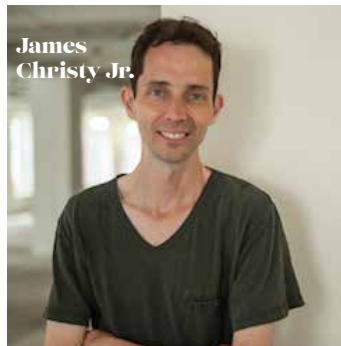
**Chisa
Hutchinson**

CHISA HUTCHINSON (2010-2011)
“I think I might be one of those weirdos for whom the pandemic (and all the accompanying bullshit) was the best thing to happen to my writing. As an introvert who writes specifically because she doesn't much like talking to people, I was perfectly happy to stay in my hidey-hole with my partner, my puppy, and my laptop-- working on scripts, reading, watching movies as “research,” avoiding the news, and heading down strange and pleasant rabbit holes. I've been getting invitations to come back out into the world, and that makes me anxious for a lot of reasons, but I'm proud to say that lack of work to share ain't one of them.”



Kit Yan

KIT YAN (2018-2019)
“What's been keeping me inspired to write during this time is memory, family, and community. Because of the pandemic, I have spent a lot of time at home in my childhood house in Hawaii in order to be near family and friends. My grandmother just turned 100 a few days ago, my two best friends had babies at this time, and I realized how important these moments are to me as a person. I don't write creatively every day, I work A LOT, but I don't write every day. I make sure for my own life balance, I take time to be in community with my friends and family, to surf, to take care of the land, and to live. This time has reminded me of the importance of living in order to tell the stories I want to tell.”



**James
Christy Jr.**

JAMES CHRISTY JR. (2016-2017)
“I've been lucky to be in a profoundly supportive writing group. Knowing I'm going to meet (virtually) with this group of talented writers and performers each Monday night keeps me driven throughout the week to bring in pages I feel good about.”

Thank you!

For all that you do.

“There are not enough words in the English language to state how much DGF **helped** me or how crucial the timing was. It was an **honor** to be included in this **family** of dramatists, and an absolute **blessing** to receive such **unreserved support.**”

- **Jenny, Los Angeles**
Emergency Grant Recipient

DGF
DRAMATISTS GUILD
FOUNDATION

Thank you to Nicole Pandolfo, our writer. Nicole Pandolfo is a playwright and screenwriter. She was a DGF fellow in 2016-2017. www.nicolepandolfo.com