

TOUCHSTONES® DISCUSSION PROJECT
ANNUAL REPORT



BUILDING CRITICAL THINKERS AND COLLABORATIVE LEADERS



Dear Friends:

2020 will remain in our memories as a year when our health and our youth’s education took center stage. As we schooled our children in our homes, our own jobs changed amid an extraordinary economic downturn leading to increased automation and digital disruption.

In response, last March Touchstones undertook transformative work to bring digital content, training, and learning to over 200 teachers and professionals, more than 4500 students, women’s prison program volunteers, and more than 150 adults participating in new community initiatives. This enabled various schools and communities to continue learning, listening to each other, respecting others’ voices, and sharing responsibility for developing skills and improving lives. And it brought adults together in a new form of community. During a year of growing inequality, Touchstones worked tirelessly to offset that imbalance.

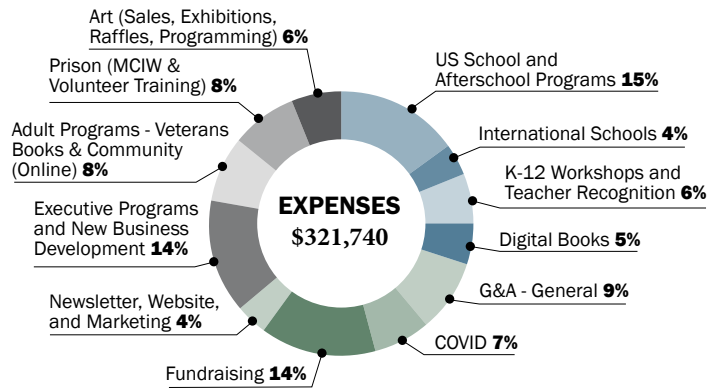
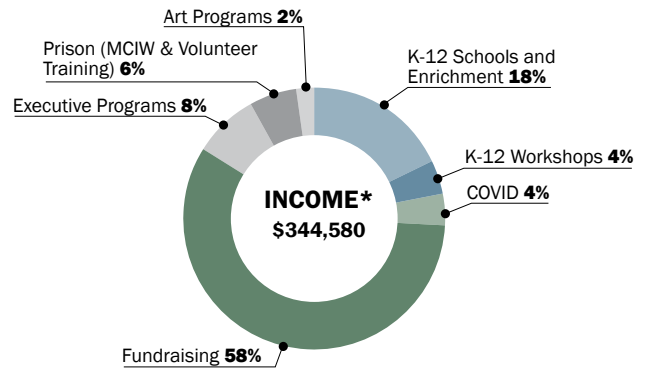
We made book sales to nearly a dozen new schools and districts, adding to tens of thousands of schools and organizations worldwide already using Touchstones. We raised \$30,000 for teacher training scholarships and free and discounted school materials, thanks to a generous challenge gift from a former board member, the Board’s responsive match, and special support from donors. And notwithstanding the constrained finances of many Americans, we raised more than \$235,000 in total contributions.

Such accomplishments are possible only through your generosity and commitment and the unceasing efforts and hard work of a dedicated staff and volunteers. I thank you and hope to thank many of you again in person—soon.

As you think about ways to strengthen our social fabric and improve our abilities to be responsible citizens, please remember Touchstones in your giving this year. Touchstones, with a boost from you, will give many a voice to be better learners and leaders—creating more tolerant and inclusive communities for all.

With warmest regards,
Debra Valentine
Vice-Chair
2021 Board of Directors

2020 INCOME AND EXPENSES



Note: Touchstones uses an accrual accounting method. These figures are not audited.
* Does not include pandemic relief loans received

2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Kurt Redfield, *Chairman*
- Howard Zeiderman, *Vice Chair*
- Nicholas Maistrellis, *Secretary*
- Debra Valentine, *Treasurer*
- Laurie de Grazia, Garreth Heidt,
Rachel Lewis, Ford Rowan, Gregg Steinberg

2020 IN REVIEW

\$235,000

Raised in Contributions & Planned Gifts

\$74,000

Earned Income from Goods & Services

36

Digital Volumes Produced

1

Year We'll Never Forget



“Touchstones community discussions by Zoom achieve what radio, television and Internet apps have long dreamed of—building true communities and expanding human horizons. They tune the soul, transforming dissonance through simple ground rules into beautiful music, grounding and inspiring one to see the world and its possibilities anew. No small feat.”
—Tom Dabney

18 free Saturday programs for **44+** adults

6 free art-discussion programs



“The Touchstones program will get you thinking about the ‘why’ when reading and learning new things. We often take a person or textbook point of view and never explore the ‘WHY’. After completing this program, I started to ask more questions to gain a better understanding.”
—Noah H., 6th grader in MD

2 free summer camps
1 after school program

22 youth served from CA, MD, Ontario, NY, IL



“Participating in the Touchstones workshop a few weeks ago felt life changing and life affirming. The principles guiding and underlying the Touchstones program reflect my philosophy of teaching and learning. They are principles that I believe will change lives.”
—Patty Stark

129 participants attending
8 trainings

30 scholarship seats provided

4500+ students and
263 teachers accessing Touchstones digital materials online



“In 2020, *Completing the Odyssey*, the veteran-led Touchstones program that explores issues in homecoming, was produced as a Leader’s and Participant’s Guide. Now, veterans everywhere have access to these books. We are looking forward to meeting in person, as virtual sessions have been difficult to impossible for many veterans.”
—Joe Smith

Completing the Odyssey: A Journey Home converted to print-on-demand Leader’s and Participant’s Guides for wide-scale replication



“As a newcomer serving incarcerated populations, the volunteer training, with its thoughtful dialogues and understanding of the trends and experiences of female inmates, was an excellent gateway to become more knowledgeable about the women I will meet and the importance of creating a safe, respectful community where such spaces are not guaranteed.”
—Eliza Poffenberger

10 volunteers trained

50 incarcerated women attended 14 classes



“Touchstones has made a meaningful difference among my managers. It was a pleasure to work with the Touchstones staff and we continue to use the tools they taught us to become better collaborators and to make sure all voices at the table are heard. I have and will continue to recommend them to my colleagues.”
—Patty Favreau

4 custom programs run with policy experts professionals, emergency & crisis managers, and professional executives

62 participants



“The Mount Desert Island Regional School System was looking for exactly what Touchstones provides: a structured way to teach and coach students to gain the skills for civic discourse. Despite the pandemic closing schools just as we were to have our first Touchstones workshop, we’ve engaged 50% of our middle and high school Social Studies teachers in training. Our teachers are continuing their coaching by Touchstones staff, whose flexibility and expertise helps us maintain momentum—despite masks, hybrid classrooms, and virtual coaching.”

—Julie Meltzer

25 educators received custom multi-day training program

11 new districts implemented in the U.S.

WHAT’S ON TAP IN 2021

- Digitizing 7 Touchstones volumes in French
- Submitting a proposal to the NEH for a 2022 Summer Institute for social studies, history and civics teachers
- Launching a new executive program on modern poetry and 3 additional programs on modern fiction
- Using technology so teachers can observe Touchstones classes and Touchstones coaching sessions in larger groups
- Developing digital on-demand training modules so teachers everywhere have access to training
- Hosting another exciting art raffle
- Continuing our free community programming
- Getting back to programming with incarcerated adults

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Individuals

Jonathan Adams
 Anonymous (several)
 Geoffrey Comber, Jr.
 Donlin and Harriett Long
 Family Charitable
 Gift Fund
 Laurie de Grazia *
 Margreta de Grazia
 Garreth Heidt *
 Mary Pat Justice
 Rachel Lewis *
 Nicholas Maistrellis *
 Alpa Patel
 Ron Plante
 and Dan Hammond
 Kurt Redfield *

Noelle and Philip Richmond
 Ford Rowan *
 Lisa Simeone
 and Timothy Munn
 Joan and Joe Smith
 Gregg Steinberg *
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 and Mikael Salovaara
 Sharon L Thomas
 and Randall S Cover
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 Linnea and George Takacs
 Stefanie Takacs
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 Touchstones Advisory Board
 Debra Valentine *

Joanne Valli-Meredith
 and Glen Meredith
 Jill Wilkinson
 Howard Zeiderman *

Foundations

Anne Arundel Women Giving
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National Endowment
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 Queen Anne’s County
 State of Maryland
 Stewart and Constance
 Greenfield Foundation
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In-Kind Donations

Nancy Ewert
 Neil Harpe
 B. Brett Heavner,
 Finnegan Law
 Sean Hutzell
 KRM BCR, LLC.
 Howard Zeiderman

*Touchstones Board of Directors 2020

Thank you to everyone who supports Touchstones!

TOUCHSTONES[®]
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