

# Wisconsin Arts Board 50th Anniversary Shared Stories

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Woodland Pattern, Molly Hassler

**Have you ever seen or experienced a program that received Arts Board support? If so, how did it make a difference in your community?**

I (Molly Hassler) provided support for our Poetry In the Park Series that also overlapped with our Milwaukee Youth Poet Laureate Program when Emily Igwike read her works in June 2023. Having both of these programs that have been positively affected by Wisconsin Arts Board funding collide and be shared with patrons of Woodland Pattern that have been coming to readings for over 40 years was really special. Emily also read with Nicholas Gulig, Wisconsin Poet Laureate 2023-2024; Michaela Lacy, Youth Poet Laureate of Prince George's County, Maryland, 2018; and Angela Trudell Vasquez, Madison Poet Laureate, 2023-2024.

**Have you or your organization ever received an Arts Board grant? If so, what impact did it have?**

We have received an Arts Board Grant that allowed us to advance the Milwaukee Youth Poet Laureate Program as well as continue our ongoing programmatic series Poetry in the Park. Poetry in the Park in Milwaukee's Juneau Park, which hosted sixteen local and regional poets over the June–September summer season. The MYPL program is a branch of the National Youth Poet Laureate program, which is administered by Urban Word NYC. This year we celebrated the inauguration of our first-ever Milwaukee Youth Poet Laureate, Emily Igwike, and we are now cruising through her Laureate year while preparing another cohort of Milwaukee students to compete for the position next May. This would not be possible without funding from the Arts Board.

**If you work directly in the arts, why is Wisconsin and/or your specific community a good place to do your work?**

Woodland Pattern is located in Milwaukee's Riverwest neighborhood, which is just west of the Milwaukee River on the city's north side. In support of our goal of promoting a lifetime practice of reading and writing, we serve people of all ages and backgrounds both in our immediate vicinity and from all around the city and region. Arts and culture organizations like ours in our community work together consciously to provide creative opportunities and resources across the underserved populations in these areas, and bring together people who might not otherwise collaborate or mingle to exchange ideas and experience programs.



