

Fundraising Plan

The Wren's Nest

Tasha Tavaras

2015

Executive Summary

My name is Tasha Tavaras and I am a graduate student in Arts Administration at the Savannah College of Art and Design under the instruction of Professor Vanessa Bamber. It was brought to my attention through my Raising Funds for the Arts class that the historic institution and Atlanta landmark, The Wren's Nest needed some assistance in bolstering their fundraising plan. The Wren's Nest has been an important part of Atlanta for over 100 years and I would like for it to continue to be a relevant and successful part of Atlanta for the next 100 years. For the past ten weeks, it has been my pleasure and honor to work create this abbreviated fundraising plan for The Wren's Nest, an institution that has been a part of my life since childhood.

This abbreviated marketing plan consists of the financial plan that presents the current goals and objective of the organization and an overview of the current fundraising conditions. The financial perspective includes a summary of the past and present, comparative data related to the industry, analysis and ratios of the organization and other trends impacting unearned income. The plan also includes the non-financial perspective, and evaluation of transparency and government and the organizations fundraising strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). I have also provided my recommendations for moving forward and a sample of campaign materials that include a special events presentation an example of an institutional grant proposal.

It is my hope that this fundraising plan and my recommendations will help spring The Wren's Nest into a more prosperous future and provide some guidance in improving the fundraising methods and strategies so that The Wren's Nest can make more money and get a new a whole new crop of people, both local and nationally interested in everything this organization has to offer.



Table of Contents

Section	Page Number
Executive Summary	1
Organizational Profile	2
Organization Goals and Objectives	4
Current Fundraising Conditions	6
Summary of Past and Present	9
Ratio Analysis	10
Other trends in unearned income	12
Non-Financial Perspective	12
Evaluation of Transparency and Governance	13
Financial SWOT	14
Recommendations	15
Campaign Materials	17
Grant Proposal	18
Ask Script	29

*Other Campaign Materials attached

Organizational Profile

The Wren's Nest is a Not-For-Profit organization located in the Historic West End area of Atlanta, Georgia. The building was once the home of Joel Chandler Harris, former editor of the Atlanta Constitution newspaper and the author of the *Uncle Remus Tales*. The Wren's Nest is now a museum and educational resource. The organization's main focus is on education and does this through storytelling, and partnering with Atlanta and Decatur Public Schools to produce writing programs including a literary journal that is entirely run by local high school students. The work of the Wren's Nest has deep and long lasting effects, for instance The KIPP Scribes, a group of 5th through 8th graders that work closely with The Wren's Nest to develop their writing skills have recently published a book that made its debut and the Decatur Book Festival and children who have toured the Wren's Nest through school groups often speak of having lasting memories of the storytellers there.

The Joel Chandler Harris home has been a staple of Atlanta's history since 1900 when it came into its current moniker of The Wren's Nest and was established as a museum. Its historical significance alone should be a reason for people to donate money to keep it operational but the fact that it has a strong focus on the education of young people is the real reason that people should donate their money to this organization. In our age of constantly being bombarded by media and technology, it is very important to keep the tradition of the literary arts alive and by encouraging the exploration of the tradition of the written and spoken word; The Wren's Nest is providing an invaluable resource to children and adults alike.

The dominant values of The Wren's Nest are education and preserving history. Their mission statement is as follows: "By preserving the legacy of Joel Chandler Harris and the heritage of African American folklore through storytelling, tours and student publishing, the Wren's Nest serves as an educational resource for the community, the greater Atlanta area and visitors from around the globe." This mission statement does answer the question of "Why does the organization exist?" It does not, however contain an infinitive phrase. If one were to re-write the mission statement for The Wren's Nest to make it more effective and to include an infinitive phrase it might be written as follows: "In order to preserve the legacy of Joel Chandler Harris and the heritage of African American folklore, The Wren's Nest aims to serve as an educational resource for the community, the greater Atlanta Area, and visitors from around the globe through storytelling, tours and student publishing."

The Wren's Nest serves to further literacy and to preserve a piece of Atlanta's history in the face of an increase in technology that pulls young people away from these things. The Wren's Nest is an analog vehicle on a digital highway and this could be a reason that some donors don't feel the need to give to this organization. The organization may need to prove their relevancy in order to encourage donors to give to their cause. The Wren's Nest is working on maintaining relevancy by working with youth groups to keep the written word alive and should possibly look into having a greater digital presence in order to keep and capture young people's attention. The Wren's Nest has been a staple in the history of the City of Atlanta for one hundred and fifteen years and hopefully it will be around and functioning for many more.



★ Organization Goals and Objectives

The Wren's Nest is a Non-Profit organization whose mission states, "In order to preserve the legacy of Joel Chandler Harris and the heritage of African American folklore, The Wren's Nest aims to serve as an educational resource for the community, the greater Atlanta Area, and visitors from around the globe through storytelling, tours and student publishing." Their overall goals in achieving this mission are: to increase public awareness in Atlanta, to provide literacy programs for metro Atlanta, and to preserve African American oral traditions. The administrative staff have outlined several goals that they feel could help guide the organization in achieving its mission and those are: Diversify grant funding, Expand corporate donations, Establish an annual fundraising event, and Identify new individual donors. The goals are understandable but are vague and don't seem to relate directly back to the mission and constituents may wonder how these goals will directly help the organization to achieve their mission. The goals could be re-written to bring better focus on how they will help further the mission, for example: expand corporate to help with program expansion, diversify grant funding by finding and applying for 3 new grants, establish an annual fundraising event that will not only increase money raised for the organization but to increase awareness of The Wren's Nest, and to identify ten new individual donors October 31.

In keeping with the S.M.A.R.T. format of establishing objectives, The Wren's Nest's objectives for their goals should be as follows: the goal is to expand corporate donations from \$4,500 to \$10,000 by December. The Objective for this goal should be 1) Specific – the organization wishes to raise its corporate donations from the current \$4,500 to \$10,000, an increase of \$5,500 dollars 2) Measurable – the amount of money from corporate donors is measurable by keeping tabs on the amount of money contributed. 3) Achievable – with a strong focus on courting corporations to make contributions, this goal is achievable by the stated month of December 4) Results-Oriented – The goal of increasing corporate donations by \$5,500 is structured to achieve results because there is a specific result desired and all that is needed is the momentum behind it to make this goal a reality 5) Time-Determined – The time limit set for this particular goal is the month of December. By setting the month in which the goal should be achieved, sets a time limit for all of the research and implementation to be put into motion. For The Wren's Nests second goal of diversifying grant funding by 3 new grants by August is 1) Specific -in it specifies that three grants will be researched and applied for, 2) Measurable – through records anyone in the organization can see which grants are being applied for and when, 3) Achievable – Finding and applying for three grants by August is reasonable amount of time to achieve this goal, 4) R-Results Orientated – The goal is structured to achieve results in that three new grant applications is not such an overwhelming number. Results can easily be achieved by staff or grant writers. 5) Time-Determined – The time determined to complete this goal is August and that is a reasonable amount of time to complete the goal.

The programs and services that The Wren's Nest provides are; the KIPP Scribes program, a partnership with KIPP Strive academy, Brown Middle school that encourages writing and literacy for middle school aged children, the High School Publishing program, where students create and publish their own literary journal and Ekphrastic!, a high school writing intensive. These program descriptions lack any sort of testimonials on how they have helped the children that have gone through them in previous years. Testimonials add a personal touch to program descriptions and help to create interest. The Wren's Nest counts among their programs accomplishments expanding their Scribes program to include two additional middle schools, partnering with the Hammond House and BurnAWAY, an arts and literary publication to produce a high school writing workshop and the publication of their first book which features both student and professional writers. The organization does not have any current plans to add more programing and services during their current transitional period.

The current organizational and fundraising plans that The Wren's Nest have are: a major donor dinner, a donor development party, additional foundation grants, two online fundraising events, the establishment of a fundraising committee run by women donors, the development of a Centennial Donor Circle, a series of specific donor asks by Board members, and a capital campaign in conjunction with *Grants To Green*. *Grants to Green* is an organization which provides environmentally focused knowledge and funding to strengthen nonprofits. The organization needs to work on more board engagement in asking for donations and further developing the Centennial Donor Circle. The organization currently has no evaluation process or measures in place for development, and needs to add these as well as processes to evaluate and analyze the effectiveness of specific donor campaigns.



Current Fundraising Conditions

The donor's list of The Wren's Nest isn't a lengthy one. It contains just 44 individual/couple donors. After doing some research, I have identified a couple that has the potential to move from their current donor status of \$5,000 to the major donor status at \$10,000. Natalie and Matthew Bernstein have a history of giving to arts and education based organizations here in Atlanta. They have given to The Paideia School, where their two sons graduated from in 2002 and 2007. Natalie works as Paideas elementary Librarian and has done so since 1997. Matthew has served on Paideas board since 1997. Natalie and Matthew have also set up a planned giving bequest for Paidea in their will. The Bernstein's have also generously given to The Atlanta Jewish Film Festival, and Out Of Hand Theatre. Matthew Bernstein is currently the chair and professor of the Film and Media Studies department and is very active in the Atlanta arts scene and has published a book entitled *Visions of the East: Orientalism in Film* and one entitled *Screening a Lynching: The Leo Frank Case on film and television*. Through my research, I have discovered that Mr. Bernstein has a great affinity for arts and history in the Atlanta area. He has spoken on the segregated primer of the classic Southern movie, *Gone with the Wind* and edited the University of Georgia film series *South on The Screen*, a series about how the South has been portrayed on film throughout the years. In studying the interests and giving history of Natalie and Matthew Bernstein, I believe that I would feel very comfortable asking them to step up their giving amount to The Wren's Nest from \$5,000 to a major donor gift of \$10,000. I feel that because of The Wren's Nests dedication to history, education and the preservation of the arts, the Bernstein's would be receptive to an advance in their giving.

The Donor's List of The Wren's Nest from August 2006 to January 2014:

- \$50,000+ -** R. Howard Dobbs, Jr. Foundation
Watson-Brown Foundation
Anonymous (2)
- \$20,000+ -** City of Atlanta Office of Cultural Affairs
Kim King Foundation
MailChimp
Harold Yudelson
- \$10,000+ -** Georgia Council for the Arts
Hunter Groton
Diane and Henry Parkman
Annette Shakespeare
Turner Voices
- \$5,000+ -** Natalie and Matthew Bernstein
Penny and George Hart
Imlay Foundation
Mary Lu and Wade Mitchell
Ailene Phillips Trust
Libby and Frampton Simons
Sherrie-Anne Straughn and Cyril Turner
Ken Thomas
Constance and Merrill Calhoun

\$2,500+ - Carol and Kevin Cleveland
Robert and Polly Dunn Foundation
Bobbo Jetmundsen
Frances Y. Kuniansky
A.S. Mitchell Foundation
Joanna and Roger Quillen
John Randall and Linda Harris
Caroline and Tony Wilbert

\$1,000 + Abell Foundation
Rick and Lynda Ballard
Kate and Charley Beans
Lisa and Stuart Bondurant
Elizabeth Broome
Keira and Jay Camillo
Stan Chatham
Joe Collazo
The Community Foundation of Greater Atlanta
Al Culbreth
Debbie and Paul Cushing
Barbara and Ted Hughes
Handy Johnson
George Lanier
Charles Loudermilk
W. Wright Mitchell
Betty and H.G. Patillo
Bruce and Andrea Rado
Jim Reaves
Mark Riley
Jeffrey Robinson
Linda and John Robitscher
Lain Shakespeare
Veronica and Marshall Thomas
Mary Beth Whitmire
Catherine and David Williams

\$500 +
Anonymous

\$250 +
Anonymous

\$100 +
Anonymous

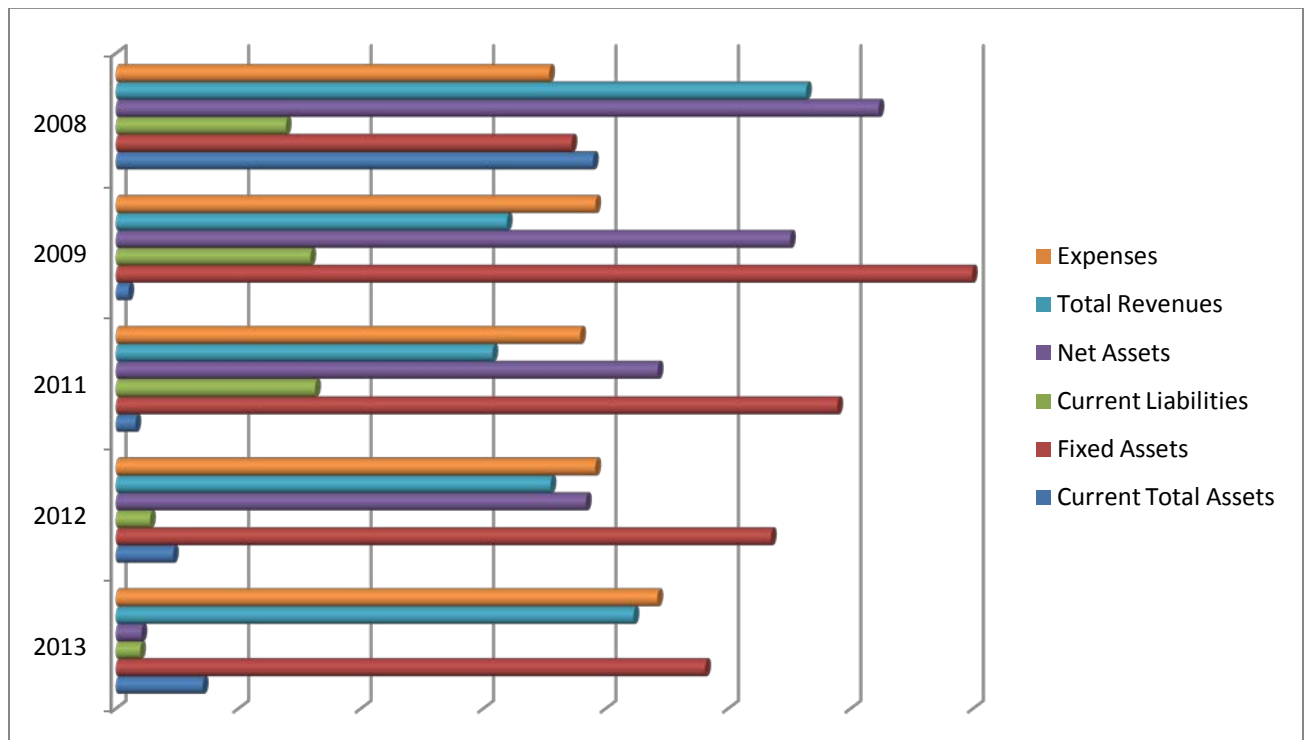
\$25 +
Anonymous

Funders

Funder Name	Programs Related to grant	Deadline	Proposed Amount to Ask For
The Foundation Center	The Scribes Program & The High School Publishing program	March 1	\$20,000
The Atlanta Foundation	The Scribes Program, Ephrastik!, and The High School Publishing Program	Between Jan. 1 and Oct. 31	\$20,000
J. Bulow Campbell Foundation	The Scribes program, Ephrastik!, and the High School Publishing Program	1st of Jan., Apr., July, and Oct.	\$100,000
The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta	The Scribes program, Ephrastik!, and the High School Publishing Program	April 16	\$25,000
The American Honda Foundation Grant	The Scribes Program	Feb. 1, May 1, Aug. 1, Nov. 1	\$20,000
Cousins properties Foundation Grant	Ephrastik!, The Scribes Program	None	\$50,000
The Mable Dorn Reeder Foundation Grant	Ephrastik!, The Scribes Program	None	\$100,000
The Rich Foundation	The Scribes Program, Ephrastik!, The High School Publishing program	Dec. 15, Mar. 15, June 15, and Sept. 15	\$25,000

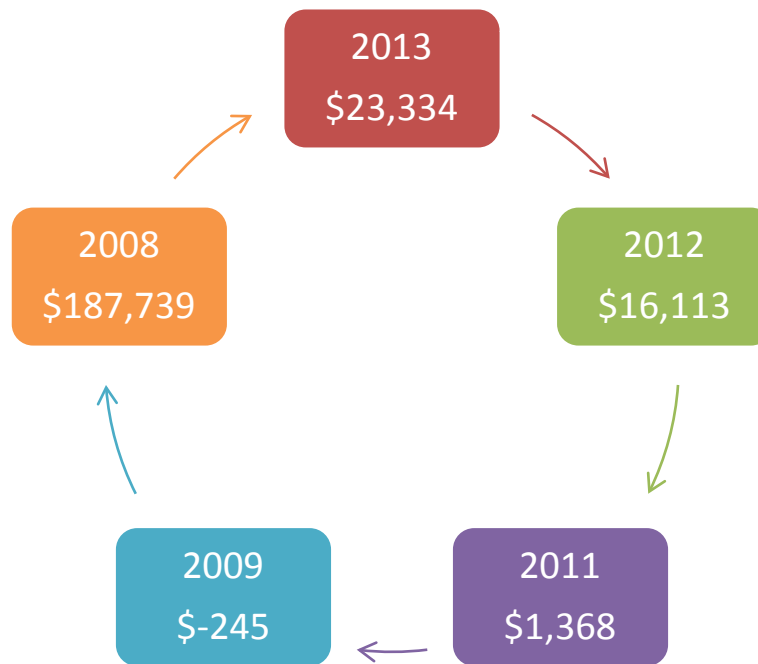
Summary of Past and Present

Looking at The Wren's Nests Statement of reviews shows the balance sheet, the income statement and the statement of cash flows. This is basically a snapshot of the organizations financial health. On the Wren's Nests website I was able to find years 2008-2009 and 2011-2013 and the data, in short, is as follows:



Year	Current Total Assets	Fixed Assets	Current Liabilities	Net Assets	Total Revenues	Expenses
2008	\$194,749	\$186,010	\$69,370	\$311,389	\$281,776	\$176,903
2009	\$5,081	\$349,554	\$79,373	\$275,262	\$159,601	\$195,728
2011	\$7,950	\$294,549	\$81,287	\$221,212	\$153,725	\$189,556
2012	\$23,308	\$267,448	\$13,926	\$191,899	\$177,464	\$195,760
2013	\$35,451	\$240,594	\$9,885	\$193,188	\$211,341	\$221,069

Cash in the bank at the end of the year from 2008-2013



★ Ratio Analysis

According to the website NetMBA.com, financial ratios are useful indicators of an organization's performance and financial situation. Most ratios can be calculated from information provided by the financial statements. Financial ratios can be used to analyze trends and to compare the organization's financials to those of other organizations. In some cases, ratio analysis can predict future bankruptcy. I have used The Wren's Nests Statement of Reviews found on the organizations website to find the Current Ratio, the Working Capital Ratio and The Debt -to-Asset Ratio. These ratios will tell the organization all it needs to know about financial liquidity and long term solvency.

The Current Ratio helps to determine organizations liquidity and liquidity determines the ability to convert assets into cash. The Current Ratios' formula is Current Assets divided by Current Liabilities. A ratio of at least 1 is good but over 2 is better.

$$2013 \quad \$25,021/\$9,885 = 2.5$$

$$2011 \quad \$2,933/\$81,287 = 0.03$$

$$2012 \quad \$12,291/\$13,926 = 0.88$$

$$2009 \quad \$919/\$79,373 = 0.01$$

$$2008 \quad \$56,270/\$69,370 = 0.81$$

These ratios show that The Wren's Nest has not be liquid in years 2008-2012 but achieved liquidity in 2013.

Working Capital Ratios also track liquidity. The Formula for a Working Capital Ratio is Current Assets minus Current Liabilities. A Current Ratio of at least 1 with more assets than liabilities is preferable.

2013 $\$25,021 - \$9,885 = \$15,136$ 2011 $\$2,933 - \$81,287 = \$-78354$

2012 $\$12,291 - \$13,926 = \$-1635$ 2009 $\$919 - \$79,373 = \$-14$

2008 $\$56,270 - \$69,370 = \$-13,100$

These ratios show that The Wren's Nest has not be liquid in years 2008-2012, running at a negative but in 2013 the organization brought in a positive that was over 1 dollar.

The Debt-to-Asset Ratio tells is how solvent, or the ability for the organization to stay in business. The Debt-to-Asset ratio formula is total assets divided by total liabilities. The end result should be below 0.4 for maximum solvency.

2013 $88,970 / 282,158 = 0.31$ 2011 $81,287 / 302,449 = 0.26$

2012 $94,163 / 286,062 = 3.61$ 2009 $79,373 / 349,554 = 0.22$

2008 $69,370 / 194,749 = 0.03$

These ratios tell me that the last time the Wren's Nest was solvent was in 2008.



Other trends in unearned income

There are several factors that are impacting The Wren's Nests unearned income. One of these major factors is community activities. Historic West End is beginning its journey into revitalization, with large scale events such as The Streets Alive Festival, a one day event where the Atlanta Bicycle Coalition, puts on where the streets surrounding a well-populated area are closed to vehicle traffic. In April of 2014, Atlanta Streets Alive went right by The Wren's Nest, and will come back again in 2015. If The Wren's Nest does not partner with Streets Alive or plan events around this popular event, the organization will lose not only money but future patrons and donors. Another large community event that occurs every year, steps away from The Wren's Nests doors is the Malcolm X festival. By not setting up a booth at this event, the organization is again missing out on potential revenue and future donors.

According to the National Endowment for the Arts, the arts suffered more than the overall economy during the great recession of 2007-2009, but this landscape is changing. We are just now coming out of what is being dubbed as the Great Recession and people are beginning to spend money again. The NEA recently did a survey on what motivates people to attend the Arts and the number one motivation was socialization with friends and family at 73%, To learn new things was second at 64%. By not caching in on the socialization and learning aspect of the organizations programming, The Wren's Nest is missing out on income.

The Atlanta Beltline is a huge boon for the city and with the launch of its West End trail, that spans 2.4 miles from White Street to the Westview Cemetery, but as of now the Beltline does not reach anywhere near The Wren's Nest. Because it is so far The Wren's Nest is missing out on the income that is associated with businesses on the Beltline.

Non-Financial Perspective

The Wren's Nest is located in the Historic West End area, an area that is a juxtaposition of sorts. It is known for its high crime rate, its beautiful historic homes and its entrepreneurial spirit as seen in the businesses that set up there. Nevertheless, it is a neighborhood that is experiencing a change and revitalization. Old abandoned buildings and houses are being torn down to make room for a new crop citizens and businesses that come along with being on the Atlanta Beltline. The Wren's Nest has not opened itself up to embracing these changes and to grow with the neighborhood. From the street, it always looks closed and empty. There is a very beautiful wrap around porch that is being greatly under used. The porch has long been a staple of the American South, a symbol of relaxation, welcome and hospitality. The Wren's Nest's porch does not have the same warm and welcoming feeling. This would be a place that I would love to be able to sit in a rocking chair and have a glass of lemonade in the spring and summer. Being more open and inviting would help The Wren's Nest to become more a part of the community. When I arrived to take a tour around the Wren's Nest I noticed that there was no one to greet

me when entering the house. Having someone stationed near the front to greet unexpected visitors goes a long way in giving visitor's a taste of that Southern Hospitality that Georgia is famous for. The Wren's Nest has a wonderful and spacious backyard that could host many special events and activities for the community but it lacks appeal. With some minor additions of flowers, shrubbery and decorative trees, The Wren's Nest could be the gathering place for the West End Community.

In the past few years, The Wren's Nest has been focusing more on its youth based programming. Programs like Ekphrastic!, The Scribes program and The High school Publishing program are amazing ideas to get kids excited about learning and writing.

Evaluation of Transparency and Governance

In matters of transparency the first place I looked was the organizations website. I did find the organizations IRS form 990's but it wasn't an easy task. When I clicked on the link that would bring me to where the individual 990's are it took me to a page that was dominated by a reply box and just above that in small font was the link that took me to the 990 form. If you blink, you could miss it. If I am a potential donor who wanted to research The Wren's Nest I would wonder why the information that I am looking for is so hidden. By not having the link to the 990's in a prominent place, I would wonder if the organization is trying to hide something. It does not foster a feeling of transparency or trust. I was pleasantly surprised to find that the organization has their statement of reviews but again, the page has a huge reply box and the font that takes me to the statement of reviews is small. Over all, the website does have the information that a person would need if they were researching this organization but the website design does not make finding it easy. Next, I visited the website Guidestar.com, a website that specializes in the transparency of nonprofit organizations and I found that most of The Wren's Nests Form 990's were available for me to look through. However the board information remains blank. I also found that the programs and impact also remains blank.

The Board of Directors at The Wren's Nest consists of 15 members and the Board section only lists 9 members. I sought out Guidstar.com, again to find a completed list of the members of The Board of Directors and discovered that The Wren's Nests website listed (at the very top of the list) a person who is no longer on the Board. I researched a few of the key members of the Board of Directors to see what skills they bring to the Wren's Nest. James "Jay" Baily is the CEO for the Southeast region of an organization called Operation HOPE. The Atlanta native is a graduate of The University of Georgia and currently sits on several boards around Atlanta. Jay Camillo is as principal at accounting firm Ernst & Young LLC. He is a graduate of The Johns Hopkins University and has previously worked for the United States Department of Commerce. Hunter Groton is the Vice Chairman of the Wren's Nests Board of directors and is also Senior Director at BNY Mellon Wealth Management and is a graduate of Kenyon College. Caroline Wilbert is the managing principal at The Wilbert group, a communications and public relations firm. This brief snapshot shows me that the board is made up of a diverse group of talented people that van leverage their talents to help push The Wren's Nest into the future.



Financial SWOT

Strengths:

- *contributions are on the rise
- *Ended 2012 without a deficit *Program Service Revenue is up in 2013
- *Organization achieved liquidity in 2013

Weaknesses:

- *No dedicated development staff person
- *The organization is cash poor
- *Expenses went up in 2013
- *Company is not solvent
- *

Opportunities

- *Partnering with the Atlanta Beltline
- *Using outside space for special events to bring in revenue
- *capitalize on the revitalization of The West End
- *capitalize on the education programs that are the lifeblood of the organization

Threats:

- *The Atlanta Beltline could pull revenue away from the organization
- *The Hammonds may be pulling revenue away from the organization
- *venues around the organization could be pulling revenue away from the organization because of the lack of the special event space





Recommendations

The Wren's Nests current fundraising status is fair. There are a few solid major donors and a few grants that have been received. Without the number associated with the fundraising projects that have been done recently to benefit the Scribes programs, I cannot accurately speak to the successfulness of these events but the fact that the Wren's Nest has gotten other neighborhood organizations involved is a positive sign.

Campaigns:

High Net worth Individuals: The Wren's Nest has a small but loyal list of high net worth individuals that donate to the organization but I feel that, especially with the wonderful educational program being implemented, that they can be tapped for more money.

The Public: The organization does some things to solicit donations from the general public but more could be done. If The Wren's Nest were to really engage with the community that surrounds them and with the greater Atlanta area as a whole, the funds being donated from individuals would see a significant up-swing.

Special Events: There absolutely needs to be more Special Events dedicated to fundraising and with the beautiful space that The Wren's Nest has as it back yard, these events could be done without spending a ton of money. Holding a simple a bar-b-que during the summer months could bring in more revenue and garner some recognition for the organization in the community.

Foundation Grants: There are a lot of really terrific grants out there that the organization could be taking advantage of both for the historic renovation of the house and to support the educational programs that it has going, however this would require a dedicated staff member for grant writing. This person could be part-time but if the organization wants to bring in more grants, there has to be a person on staff who is strictly there to research and write grants.

I recommend that the organization focus its efforts on trying to get more foundation grants, and cultivating their high net worth donors.

Fundraising Documents:

The documents that The Wren's Nest uses to solicit donors could use a bit of re-vamping. The language and appearance could do with some updating to make it more appealing to prospective donors. I think that brochures that highlight the amazing educational programs that The Wren's Nest has going on would be a great interest to potential donors. Also a website revamping would so wonders for visibility and will help increase giving.

Prospect Research

The Wren's Nest does not have a prospect research policy. I recommend that they put one in place as soon as possible

Individual and Major Donors

The Wren's Nest considers a major donation to be \$10,000 and goes about soliciting these donations by direct ask. The organization also does not have a process to cultivate donors for major gifts. I recommend that a cultivation process be put in place as soon as possible.

Corporations and Foundations

The Wren's Nest develops relationships with foundations and it is these relationships that lead them to applying for and receiving some grants. This is not a bad process but I feel that they should apply for more than just grants from foundations that they have a relationship with. There is a lot of grant money out there and by limiting which grants they apply for, The Wren's Nest is missing out on possibly being granted some of that money.

Grant Writing

The Wren's Nest has received some grants from companies such as Imlay Foundation, Zeist Foundation, Sartain Lanier Foundation, a variety of Trusts, Turner Voices, MailChimp, and GasSouth. Because they have developed relationships with these companies, their grant acceptance is quite high, around 90%. This is fantastic; however I feel that they should also branch out and apply for a wide array of grants.

General Fundraising Efforts

The organization is doing a fair job at fundraising using printed materials (letters, brochures etc.) and is starting to use technology more to raise funds, but it is my recommendation that their use of technology, especially social media and crowd funding to help support their programs should increase greatly. The world of crowd funding and peer-to-peer funding is growing by leaps and bounds and if The Wren's Nest does not get on board they will be doing themselves and their programs a great disservice.

Board involvement

I understand that The Wren's Nests Board of Directors is going through some changes right now, but from what I can see, there is some major talent on the board as it stands, especially in the financial field, I feel that if the board really gets involved with this organization the way they are supposed to, The Wren's Nest will be on the right road to long term success.

Summation

In summary, there are some things wrong with the way The Wren's Nest goes about raising funds but it's nothing that some dedication, handwork and a few changes couldn't fix. I recommend that they up date and change their website as soon as possible, plans a few special event, reach out to the community around them and try to work out a partnership with The Atlanta Beltline. They have some amazing programming and all that's needed id to get excited and passionate about raising fund to keep these programs going.



Campaign Materials

*Below is a prospective grant proposal and Ask script. For all other campaign materials, please see attached PDF.

**Grant Proposal for
The Community Foundation of Atlanta**

**Submitted
March 12, 2015**

**By Sue Gillman
Executive Director
The Wren's Nest**

Letter of Inquiry

February 19, 2015
Suzanne E. Boas
The Community Foundation of Greater Atlanta
50 Hurt Plz. Ste. 449
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Dear Ms. Boas,

Thank you for speaking with me in regards to The Wren's Nest and the programs we provide. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I submit this letter of inquiry to the Community Foundation of Atlanta in hopes that we will be invited to submit a full proposal. We are respectfully requesting your consideration of a grant in the amount of \$20,000 to expand our educational program.

The Wren's Nest is a 501 (c) (3) organization focused on the preserving the history of African-American oral storytelling and encouraging the tradition of the written word. The mission statement, "In order to preserve the legacy of Joel Chandler Harris and the legacy of African-American folklore, The Wren's Nest aims to serve as an educational resource for the community, the greater Atlanta area, and visitors from around globe through storytelling, tours, as student publishing" is fulfilled through several of our programs, they include The Scribes Program, Ephrastik!, The High School Publishing Program, and the Wren's Nest Ramblers.

Insufficient vocabulary, comprehension and literacy skills negatively impact children for the rest of their lives. 65 percent of Georgia third graders lack necessary vocabulary and reading comprehension skills. Nearly three quarters of children who read poorly in elementary and middle school, remain poor readers in high school and are more likely to drop out and struggle to find self-sustaining employment. The Scribes Program promotes an increase of reading comprehension and vocabulary skills by pairing at-risk students who show interest in writing and publishing with experts in the literary field. Under the direction of their mentors, Scribes scholars write and publish their own literary journal. This program is greatly gaining traction and making waves amongst the literary community. Last year, The Scribes scholars were asked to debut their journal at the Decatur Book Festival to rave reviews. The Scribes program is currently in two schools, Brown Middle and the KIPP Academy. Since the implementation of the Scribes program, there has been a marked increase in the grades of the Scribes scholars as well as a decrease in disciplinary actions.

In a world where social media is increasingly becoming the main source for self-expression and language is becoming truncated to fit 140 characters or less, writing and reading comprehension are being put on the back burner, the Scribes Program works to not only help its scholars to understand the importance of the written word but to be able to tell their own stories.

With the help of The Community Foundation of Atlanta's Metropolitan Arts Fund grant, The Scribes Program will be able to expand into two more schools to achieve the following goals:

- Add two more schools to the Scribes Program, which will enable up to thirty more students to participate
- Create an additional 2 literary journals (totaling 4 journal produced with one journal per school)
- Fifteen kids per school to be taken on a total of two educational trips over the length of the semester
- Transportation for the students to and from the educational tips
- 4 additional mentors for a total of two mentors per every 5 students

The outcomes listed above represent a 50% increase in the number of students that The Scribes Program will be able to serve. The Scribes program focuses on providing literary arts programming in metropolitan Atlanta. Because of you and your commitment to arts and education, we can help the scholars of the Scribes program will be able to find their voice.

The total budget for the Scribes program is \$30,000 for the year. Your investment of \$20,000 will complete the funding we need to fully implement the Scribes program. The Scribes program fits well with the Community Foundation's Arts grant because it is championing an art that is becoming lost in our tech-heavy society, the art of Creative Writing. Our Board of Directors is very enthusiastic about the Scribes program, and we already have two additional schools that have expressed interest in having Scribes in their schools. If you have any questions or would like to receive a full proposal, feel free to contact me at (404) 753-7735 or by email at sue@wrensnest.org. I deeply appreciate your consideration of our request and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Sue Gillman

Executive Director

Summary

The Scribes Program was established in 2010 by The Wren's Nest, a Non-Profit 501 (c) (3) corporation and began by exploring the storytelling possibilities of creative non-fiction through recording a story from a significant adult in each student's life. The Mission of the program is to provide a hands-on learning experience for under-served 5th through 8th graders by providing mentoring in the art of literature, improve writing skills, improve reading comprehension skills, bring families closer together, and to validate the stories of Southwest Atlanta. This mission is fulfilled through the one-on-one mentoring of students by dedicated writing professionals who walk the students through the writing, editing and publishing process. At the end of each program, the students produce a complete literary journal that is printed and bound. Since its inception the number of students who participate in the program has increased from seventeen to over thirty.

The overall goal of The Scribes Program is to empower students in underserved schools to take an active role in their learning, to gain confidence in their writing skills and to be able to tell their own stories and the stories of their community. One of the main objectives of the Scribes program is to achieve the goal of getting 50 students a year to articulately write their own stories so that have the opportunity to enjoy the writing process and to creatively express themselves giving them a greater sense of self-confidence. To date over one hundred students have participated in the Scribes short lifetime. Every one of these students has shown some degree in improvement in both grades and disciplinary infractions. The Scribes program is delivered by a team of qualified mentors, a full time program director, the Executive Director of the Wren's Nest and a fifteen person board of directors who provide oversight and governance.

The Wren's Nest is the one hundred year old former home of Newspaper editor and author Joel Chandler Harris and is located in Atlanta Georgia's Historic West End neighborhood, an underserved urban neighborhood whose population in 2013 was 18,000 with an average of age of thirty two and an average income of fewer than thirty thousand dollars a year. The West End area has a crime rate that is well over the national average, while the education rate that is well under the national average. Only 28 percent of residents of the West End have graduated from high school. The kids that com through the Scribes Program live under stressful conditions and attend schools that are unable to provide them with much needed extra educational support due to lack of funds, lack of teaching staff and having to devote precious classroom time to dealing with disciplinary problems. The Scribes program provides a safe space for fun, learning and self-discovery.

The Scribes Program currently operates out of two schools, Brown Middle and the KIPP academy. The goal is to expand into two more middle schools, Sylvan Hills Middle School and Young Middle School, this fall. These schools are excited about hosting the Scribes program and seeing their students benefit from it. Through this expansion The Scribes program has the opportunity to share the gift of creative writing to other students who would normally not have access to the kind of one-on-one mentorship that the program provides.

The yearly budget for the Scribes Program is \$30,000. Your gift of \$20,000 will go a very long way in helping us meet our objective of program expansion, thus allowing us to serve 50 percent more students. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Needs Statement

There is no doubt that education plays a very important part in the shaping of a person's future. In a study by Frank Vitaro, Denis Larocque, Michel Janosz and Richard E. Tremblay of The University of Montreal, in Montreal Canada, it was found that "Personal and Societal consequences of dropping out of are costly." decision to end ones education early can be lead to unemployment, poverty, crime and prison overcrowding, making the connection that the decision to drop out not only effects that person's life but it effects society at large, and to quote Vitaro, Larocque a d Janosz "Dropouts experience a higher level of unemployment and receive lower earnings than graduates. Dropouts are also more likely than graduates to become dependent on welfare, engage in illegal activities, and experience health and affective problems". In a New York Times article entitled Fighting Crime with Education, one key predictor of youthful criminal behavior is failure in school. A Justice Department survey of state prisoners found that only 22 percent were high school graduates, while an additional 12 percent had attended college. In a study done by the Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation, two out of three eighth-graders can't read proficiently. Taking this into consideration, the fact that every 26 seconds, a student in America drops out of high school and, in 2011 600,000 students did not graduate from high School in the state of Georgia is pretty concerning. The numbers are twice as staggering for African Americans and other people of color. African American and Hispanic students across the country, dropout rates are close to 40 percent, compared to the national average of 27 percent.

The West End area of Atlanta is a greatly underserved area in terms of education. 83.70% of the population is African American and according to the 2014 census 19% of residents 18 and over graduated from high school. There are 6 elementary schools, 2 middle schools and one high school that serve this immediate area. The Atlanta Public School System is trying its hardest to boost school retention rates and to increase the number of students that are on the track for graduation, but due to funding shortages and changes in the national curriculum, the public school system falls short in being able to properly reach the students that need extra help and encouragement.

Located in the heart of The Historic West End, The Wren's Nest seems an unlikely solution to the problem of urban education issues. The former home of Joel Chandler Harris, The Wren's Nest is a one hundred year old house that provides tours, storytelling and a glimpse of a past long forgotten, but it is more than that. Within the doors of The Wren's Nest there are the beginnings of a movement. The Scribes program takes students from the underserved schools of Brown Middle and KIPP academy and makes them published authors, fulfilling a dream that would have otherwise not have been possible. The Scribes program pairs these young people with experts in the field of literature and publishing to mentor them and to help them tell their stories. At the end of the program, the students have a published literary journal that they all have contributed to. Last year the Scribes scholars were invited to premier their journal at the Decatur Book Festival and received rave reviews on their writing. The pride and confidence that this gave the students is immeasurable. They were able to tell their own stories, to express themselves in a safe and nurturing environment and because of this, they thrived. The students that participated in the Scribes program saw a 45% increase in their grads and a 35% decrease in disciplinary problems. The kids that are a part of the Scribes program found a renewed interest in learning. Currently only 4 percent of African American students and 11 percent of Hispanic students finish high school ready for college in their core subjects, and if they keep on their current path, the scholars of the Scribes program will beat these odds.

As in the quote by Confucius stated before “Education breeds confidence, confidence breeds hope, hope breeds peace” The Scribes program gives its scholars confidence, that they too can accomplish great things and that when they express themselves through the proper channels, people take notice and pay attention. This confidence breeds hope, the hope that they too can go on to succeed in high school and college and they can strive to reach the dreams that they previously thought impossible. That hope translates into a peace that they not only will carry within them but that they will spread to others that they encounter.

The Scribes Program has already touched many lives already. “The Scribes program helped me to work through being bullied at school. I never told anyone what happened to be but my mentor helped me to tell my story by putting it into a story. I hope that my story can help other kids who were bullied to know that everything is going to be alright and to get help as soon as they can” – Tiana Williamson age 12 “Seeing my story in print was the best experience ever! I started working on more stories that I want to turn into a book that my mentor is helping me put together.” – Stephen Clemmons – age 11 “The Scribes program has helped me do so much better in class. I used be embarrassed when my teacher called on my in class to read out loud because I stumbled on the words and would get laughed at but now I love to read aloud in class. Plus I understand things in my Language Arts class so much better now.” – Darren King – age 12

The Scribes is starting to change the outlook for kids in extremely underserved area of The Historical West End. By allowing a safe, judgment free space for these kids to learn, grow and find their own voice, The Scribes program is helping to build strong, confident youth who have the ability to tell their own stories. Together with the generosity of the Community Foundation, The Scribes program can continue to build brighter futures.

Goals and Objectives

Goal: Youth in underserved areas who complete The Scribes program will know how to construct and write a story

Objectives:

- * 100 percent of participants will recognize the difference between fiction and non-fiction writing
- * 90 percent of participants will recognize the structure of a story
- * 85 percent of participants will develop self- confidence as writers and the motivation to further improve writing skills

Goal: Youth in underserved areas who complete The Scribes Program will know how to edit a story

Objectives:

- * 100 percent of students participating in the Scribes program will recognize the editing process
- * 90 percent of students participating in the Scribes program will participate in the editing process
- * 80 percent of students participating in the Scribes program will be able to recognize simple grammatical errors

Goal: Youth in underserved areas who complete The Scribes Program will have an increased confidence in their reading skills

Objectives:

- * 100 percent of students participating in The Scribes program will be able to read and understand one book in their current grade level
- * 90 Percent of students participating in The Scribes program will be able to read and understand a book one grade level above their current level
- * 85 percent of students participating will be able to read and understand a book two or more grade levels above their current level

Methods

The Objective: To increase the writing competency of the underserved youth in the Atlanta Area by adding two additional school to The Scribes Program and increasing overall student participation by 50%

Methods:

- The Scribes Program Manager will recruit a school liaison at the two new schools who has a specified interest in the program
- The program manager will create a task force including the chosen mentors and the school liaison

The Objective: Youth in underserved areas who complete The Scribes Program will have an increased confidence in their reading skills

Methods:

- The Scribes Program mentors along with the school liaison will choose a grade level appropriate book for the book circle as well as books one and two grade levels above the current reading grade level
- Scribes mentors and the school liaison will provide one on one support for all Scribes scholars

The Objective: Youth in underserved areas who complete The Scribes Program will know how to edit a story

Methods:

- Scribes program mentors and school liaisons will help Scribes scholars recognize and correct grammatical errors and errors in sentence syntax
- Scribes mentors and school liaisons assist Scribes scholars in editing each other's stories in a non-judgmental manner

Gantt Chart The Scribes Program

Task	Person(s) Responsible	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May
Contact Point Person (school liaison) at the two new schools to set up planning meeting	Program Manager													
Hold first meeting with Mentors and School Liaison	Program Manager													
Hold Follow Up meeting with Mentors and Liaison to discuss book circle	Program Manager													
Create Recruitment Materials	Program Manager													
Create and develop outreach strategies for all sites	Program Manager													
Schedule an interested parents meeting for all new sites	Program Manager													
Finalize all evaluation materials for new sites	Mentors and Manager													
Recruit a minimum of 10 students per program with a max of 15	Mentors and Manager													
Officially launch The Scribes Program in all schools	Manager and Mentors													
Evaluate progress at the new schools	Manager and Mentors													

Evaluation

The evaluation of the participants of The Scribes program will measure short term and long term outcomes. Program mentors and school liaisons will measure student performance by giving them a brief diagnostic test at the beginning and at the end of the program. The short term outcome evaluations will include identifying the parts of a story, how to recognize and correct grammatical errors and a reading at various grade levels. The book circle will also be used as a form of evaluation by increasing the level of books that the participants will read during the duration of the program. The results of these evaluations will be compiled and sent to the Atlanta Public School district and its administrators as well as The Community Foundation if this request is granted and will be used for program improvement.

The Scribes program plans to keep in touch with all the participants as they make their journey through high school and will evaluate their rate of graduation as well as their progress post high school. This will be used to evaluate the long term outcomes and will also be made available to Atlanta Public School administrators and The Community Foundation.

The evaluation of overall program effectiveness of the Scribes program at the two original schools and the two new schools, mentors will use preprogram diagnostic tests to determine baseline performance levels for all participants. Scribes Scholars progress will be based on reading comprehension, writing level, and word usage. The assessment process will also track changes in attitudes towards reading and writing. This will be gathered by having each participant create simple narrative expressing how they feel towards creative writing and the program in general. School administrators, teachers, and parents will be asked for qualitative feedback on their satisfaction with the program using a scale of 1-10 with one being completely dissatisfied and 10 being extremely satisfied. This qualitative feedback will be used to assess implementation strategies and administration policies. The Scribe programs definition of success is to the increase of reading and writing skills for participants by at least 80% over all in the short term and in the long term, to see every participant of the program graduate from High School successfully.

Sustainability

In the event that The Wren's Nest is not awarded the grant from The Community Foundation that we need to expand The Scribes Program or after the initial grant has run out, we do not plan to let the program suffer. If needed we will try as best as we can to maneuver the funds from our initial operating budget by making sever cuts to everything we can, try to increase individual donor gifts and apply for other grants in order to keep the Scribes Program going and to help facilitate its growth. The Scribes program is very important to The Wren's Nest and we will do whatever we need to do to keep it up and running.

Organizational Background

The Wren's Nest was built in Atlanta Georgia in 1890 and became the home of Joel Chandler Harris who was the editor of The Atlanta Journal newspaper. Mr. Harris was also the author of The Uncle Remus Tales, a collection of folk tales adapted from the stories that slaves of the American South told orally that Mr. Harris adapted, compiled and published. After the death of Mr. Harris in 1908, the house opened as a museum in 1913 with support from philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, President Theodore Roosevelt and funds raised from the children of The Atlanta Public Schools. The Wren's Nest was designated as a National Historic Landmark by The National Parks service in 1962.

The Wren's Nest still offers walking tours of the historic house, offering visitors a glimpse of the life of the wealthy during the Victorian era in the South. The organization is also keeping alive the oral tradition of African American fables with The Wren's Nest Ramblers, a group of exemplary storytellers who take the stories of Uncle Remus and bring them to life for the visitors and tour groups who gather to listen.

This organization is more than a link to Southern history; it is also an advocate of the literary arts and is committed to keeping the tradition of the written word alive and well. Through programs like Ephrastik!, which is a program that works in conjunction with The Hammonds House and introduces high school aged students to visual art and the written analysis of art, the High School Publishing program which mentors High School students who are interested in going into the field of publishing and the most popular program to date is the Scribes Program.

The Wren's Nest has been an integral part of the history and heritage of Atlanta Georgia for over one hundred years and continues to remain relevant by inspiring present generations of writers and publishers and hopes to continue to do so for another one hundred years.

The Ask Script

The Time Frame:

25 minutes

The Warm Up:

Asker: Hello Vanessa, It's so good to see you again, it's been a while.

Thank you so much for taking the time out of your very busy schedule to meet with me.

How's your wonderful Arts Administration students?

Vanessa: They are pretty amazing! Doing very well, thanks.

Asker: I hear Spellcast is rockin!

Vanessa: Yes it is! We have so many great things coming in the near future, including a musical that's currently in the works.

Asker: That's amazing; I'm so excited for you.

I can't wait to see the final production!

The Ask:

Things have been going pretty well with me, you know I work with the Wren's Nest now and we have some great things going on, There is a good deal of restructuring happening and there is a more concentrated focus on the educational component. The work continues with young writers and we're currently up to three programs so far: there is the high school publishing program, Ekphrastic!, which is a summer writing and arts intensive, and our breakout program is the Scribes program. As an educator yourself, I think this program will be of great interest to you. The Scribes program takes students in grades 5th through 8th and pairs them up with professional writers to mentor them and at the end of the program the kids write, edit and produce a literary journal. Last year, they made their debut at the Decatur Book Festival to rave reviews and have already been asked to come back this year. These kids are dynamic and as a writer, producer and all around creative force, I know you understand how important it is to be the author of your own story. The Scribes program helps these young scholars to find their voice so that they can begin to tell their stories.

And that brings me to my visit today. The Wren's Nest has the opportunity to expand the Scribes to include two more schools outside of Brown Middle and the KIPP academy it is currently in. And it is hoped to launch the program in these two schools by August to kick off the new school year. So I would like to ask if you would consider becoming a major donor to this program by giving a gift of \$5,000 to provide books, supplies, transportation and to assist with the educational field trips that we have planned for the students?

The Anticipated Response:

If the response is yes: Thank you so much. This will really mean a lot to these kids. Your gift will go to help bring the gift of writing into more kids' lives. I would like to follow up with you at a later date, whenever is convenient for you. In the mean time I would like to leave the brochure that will give you more details on the Scribes program for you to peruse at your leisure. I would also like to invite you to visit a Scribes session so that you can see your gift in action. Once again, thank you for taking the time to talk with me today and thank you once again for your generous gift.

If the response is no: Well thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me today, the fact that you allowed me to be a part of your busy day means the world to me. I would like to leave this brochure with you that gives you more information about the Scribes program and if you happen to be at the Decatur Book Festival this year, please stop by and meet the kids and listen to some of their readings. Thank you for your time once again.

The Close and Follow up:

I would like to follow up with you at a later date, whenever is convenient for you. In the mean time I would like to leave the brochure that will give you more details on the Scribes program for you to peruse at your leisure. I would also like to invite you to visit a Scribes session so that you can see your gift in action. Once again, thank you for taking the time to talk with me today and thank you once again for your generous gift.

Conclusion

The Wren's Nest has been an Atlanta land mark for over 100 years now, providing visitors with a tangible link to the past. It is not poised to spring into the future. The organization is already on track to success with the creation of several top notch educational programs, the only piece left is to bring up the fundraising piece so that these programs not only continue but have the funds necessary to grow. The opportunities presented in this plan are meant to assist The Wren's Nest in re-establishing a prosperous and successful fundraising system. In this plan I have suggested a website re-vamp a stronger focus on cultivating high income donors and an implementation of some special events. In the next three to five years I hope to see the Wren's Nest flourishing under a new fundraising plan and bringing in more revenue and the Scribes, Ekphrastic!, and High School publishing program expanded to help underserved youth throughout the city. With these programs in place, focus on education and a passion for preserving history, The Wren's Nest shines as a unique force among non-profit organizations. As a patron, I expect the Wren's Nest to live up to its mission, to begin to work towards being more open to its community and to keep encouraging the youth to express themselves through the art of creative writing. I implore you to help make the Wren's Nest into not only the jewels of the past that I can be but to propel it into the future so that in the next 100 years, its legacy still stands.