

CityLit Project
Nurturing the culture of literature

Set for Board Approval, November 19, 2008

Strategic Plan, 2008-2011

Mission

CityLit Project elevates the profile of and enthusiasm for literary arts in the Baltimore metropolitan region, for the benefit of Maryland readers and writers. CityLit Project works to build, connect, and nurture a community of avid readers and writers, through public events and publicity, workshops, website, publishing, and collaboration. CityLit engages in outreach and education to open opportunities for young people and diverse audiences to embrace the literary arts.

Vision

The Vision of CityLit is to create a vibrant community of readers and writers in the Baltimore metropolitan region.

As the go-to source for avid readers, CityLit's website and programs will help connect them to authors, events, and resources. Through CityLit, active readers will have ample opportunities to dialogue about pressing issues, discover current and noteworthy literature, and participate in a dynamic and supportive community. Excitement will build around the vibrant "scene" for readers and writers that can serve as a literary sounding board for issues of the day.

CityLit will contribute to expanding and diversifying the ranks of avid readers. Through vibrant programs that appeal to young audiences, CityLit will help cultivate appreciation of literature among new generations. Through collaboration with the public schools and the public libraries, middle- and high-school students will have after-school opportunities to explore writing and reading. Through direct outreach and ensuring programs are multicultural in nature, CityLit will make sure that the rich diversity of the Baltimore metropolitan region is honored and included in all programs.

For writers at all levels, CityLit Project will provide opportunities for writers to be supported in creating, disseminating, and promoting their work. For aspiring writers, CityLit Project will be a place to meet experienced authors and learn about the profession. For emerging writers, CityLit Project will help expand their networks with publishers, and help strengthen their ability to promote their work. For established authors, CityLit Project will provide opportunities for peer exchange, creative renewal, and access to the reading public.

CityLit Project will establish a physical location for writers and readers to gather. The robust calendar of events and website will provide ample opportunities for people to connect. CityLit will be supported by a wide range of sources.

Ultimately, CityLit Project will contribute to increasing Baltimore's reputation as a center for the literary arts. Publishers and authors will be attracted to the Baltimore metropolitan area, and the circle of readers and writers will continue to expand and flourish.

Values

The following values will guide all aspects of the CityLit Project, including Board, staff, partnerships, and programs:

- 📖 CityLit Project is an inclusive organization and values diversity, accessibility, and cultural sensitivity in all of its endeavors. CityLit recognizes different voices and cultures, and different genres in literature.
- 📖 CityLit Project practices accountability and acts with integrity. Internally, staff are accountable to the Board and the Board is accountable to fulfill its fiduciary duty. Externally, staff and Board are accountable to constituents to deliver on our goals and live by our values. CityLit Project will act with transparency and ensure due process.
- 📖 CityLit Project uplifts creativity in its programs, and is open to new ideas and new solutions. Programs aim to be empowering and inspire creativity.
- 📖 CityLit Project will promote quality and excellence. Programs and products will be practical and relevant, and we will have high standards for our work. CityLit will exhibit intellectual openness, and will not become elitist or cliquish.

Strategic Goals, 2008-2011

- 1. To build, nurture, and connect the community of readers and writers by maximizing the potential of the CityLit Festival, launching a program for youth, and planning one brand new event.**

Objectives

a. Develop the CityLit Festival to its fullest potential while sustaining its quality in programming and partnerships, so that it is among the more notable cultural events locally and on par with the best literary festivals nationally.

* Explore a new location for CLF that is appropriate size, attractive to core audience, accessible to people with disabilities, and accessible by public transportation (C.B.A. free vs. paid).

b. Develop CityLit Teens to its fullest potential by conducting writing workshops on afternoons and weekends, teaching computer skills, and

involving teens in other CityLit programs such as publishing, CityLit Festival, and networking opportunities. Utilize social sites to reach teens.

c. Develop one brand new program that will advance the mission of CityLit.

New Opportunities

Ensure that opportunities are consistent with the mission of CityLit. Evaluate the costs and time commitments and ensure adequate funding and staff resources are available. Review partnership and sponsorship potential, and also evaluate whether the program should be free or for a fee.

2. To improve and invigorate CityLit's communications to attract more attention to literature and the literary arts, and to build a stronger appreciation of literature in the Baltimore metropolitan area.

Objectives

a. Strengthen the CityLit brand, develop a new logo

b. Redesign the website by the end of 2008 that would include a message board for local involvement, calendar, reciprocal links, and optimize for search engine content.

c. Explore new online communication opportunities such as Facebook to engage younger and student audiences; Develop an e-newsletter by 2009

d. Explore partnerships with public radio, public TV

e. Explore sponsoring literary events at local cultural institutions

New Opportunities

New communication opportunities will be pursued only if they are affordable and fit within the mission. Communication opportunities should contribute to building a sense of literary community.

3. Provide Maryland writers with a local, accessible, supportive means of publishing their work (CityLit Press).

Objectives

a. Establish advisory board to define editorial philosophy and mission of the imprint.

b. Determine budget and sources of funding; explore distribution, promotion, costs, and pro-forma

c. Define roles of and the need for board, staff, volunteers

d. Solicit manuscripts, develop contracts with authors

e. Establish publishing calendar

New Opportunities

As other opportunities arise in the publishing areas, CityLit will first ensure that the opportunity is consonant with the editorial philosophy. Consideration

will be given to the logistics, funding, merits of the opportunity, and will be evaluated case-by-case by the Board of Directors/Advisory Board.

4. To increase and diversify revenue to support CityLit programs and develop infrastructure (Board, committees, staff, systems, and facilities) to sustain the organization and advance its mission.

Objectives

- a. Develop a three-year Fundraising Plan to increase and diversify revenue to support CityLit programs and organizational development.
 - i. Develop a case statement on why to support CityLit
 - ii. Increase individual contributions, including 100% Board giving and establishing an annual fund for individual contributions.
 - iii. Identify and solicit private (foundation) and public sources of grants.
 - iv. Cultivate corporate sponsorships for CityLit programs
 - v. Increase earned revenue such as fees for workshops, selling merchandise
 - vi. Establish a special event for fundraising
- b. To build the capacity of CityLit Project to engage in fundraising.
 - i. Identify roles of board, staff, and volunteers
 - ii. Develop a two-year plan with program goals and budget
 - iii. Conduct a capacity analysis (baseline) to accomplish increasing revenue
- c. Governance: Develop the board's capacity for fundraising, foster greater diversity on the board, increase board's level of engagement and knowledge.
- d. Staff: Enable executive director to become full time; hire program director to handle program management and administration. Ensure staffing is sustainable.
- e. Volunteers: Involve interns, Americorps, and other sources to bolster staff capacity. Ensure volunteers are competent, have a high level of interest, and are properly screened.
- f. Operations: Improve technology, ensure software is up to date, improve financial management systems, ensure systems in place to track grant opportunities and reports. Ensure cost/benefit analysis is positive for all new investments.
- g. Facility: Develop a plan for space – extent to which it will be office space or program space. Identify potential partners (developers, developments); Identify funding source for acquisition/lease and operations.

New Opportunities

New fundraising opportunities will be evaluated to a) ensure they are ethical and the source of funding is consistent with our mission; b) ensure the cost/benefit ratio is positive; and c) ensure it will be well planned.