



## **FY21 Equity Response**

### **Strive Publishing**

3801 27th Avenue North  
Robbinsdale, MN 55422

**Organization Fiscal Year End:** 12/31/19  
**Organization Annual Income:** \$22,911.00  
**Organization Annual Expense:** \$20,203.00

### **ER21-1-013 Strive Short Story Dispenser**

Funding for Strive Publishing to bring free short stories to readers in North Minneapolis and promote free writing contests for local Black authors with the purchase of a Short Story Dispenser.

**Amount Requested:** \$2,500.00  
**Start Date:** 10/20/2020  
**End Date:** 06/30/2022  
**Total Project Expenses:** \$7,005.00  
**Fiscal Sponsor:** Springboard for the Arts

### **Group's Purpose & Background**

Strive Publishing was founded in 2016 by Mary Taris, a tenured teacher and North Minneapolis native who has been inspired by both her own journey to follow her dreams, and the lack of culturally diverse books for the students she taught over the years. Mary, as a young child, found inspiration through books and wants to share that inspiration with the next generation. The mission of Strive Publishing is to publish African American picture books and young adult novels with stories from African American communities that are contemporary and relatable. Through supporting emerging African American authors, we aim to affirm our stories and to inspire our readers to achieve their dreams for generations to come.

Strive launched in 2018 with the 1st Annual Literary Dinner where we introduced three emerging African American authors. Their books were published in 2019. The

books and authors have been featured in many local schools and libraries. The 2nd Annual Literary Dinner in 2019 was well attended and three more books were announced. Strive has partnered with the nonprofit, Celebrating the Sistas and with Cow Tipping Press. In Partnership with Free Spirit Publishing we have sponsored the Annual African American Voices in Children's Literature Writing Contest for the past two years. Because of COVID-19 we had to skip the annual literary dinner, which is why we want to bring the Short Story Dispenser to the community. This will keep us connected and keep the stories coming.

## Community

1. The Black community in North Minneapolis is a community lacking an ownership of identity and narrative, as seen in the media, which is deteriorating that very community at the deepest level. It is felt, and not easily quantified.
2. Being from North Minneapolis, I live with the effects of the deep disparities in housing, employment, income, and education. Two out of the four Strive Publishing Advisory Committee Members are also from North Minneapolis. We know what it feels like to be Black and seen as a statistic and how hard it is to overcome, how hard it is to have a voice. We also know how important it is to be able to share our stories and especially to hear the stories of our elders. The short Story Dispenser will be a valuable resource in North Minneapolis for sharing own voices stories and for using the joy of the literary arts to inspire, to empower, and even to heal.
3. The civil unrest is a cry for Black people to be heard and validated, stories that need to be heard, and voices that need to be empowered. The Short Story Dispenser will breath new life into the art of storytelling by providing a platform for the community to write and express their stories and voice. It provides free access to writers and readers for sharing stories with pride and authenticity, and it will bring positive attention to the community while showcasing the breadth and depth of the Black literary arts participants. With online access to the Short Story Portal, we can curate and publish local stories and program the dispenser to reach different audiences from children to adults. We can build community engagement by bringing the dispenser to unexpected places throughout North Minneapolis from beauty supply stores to clinics. We can also build connections with local businesses and community service organizations with the potential for them to host the dispenser or sponsor an online writing contest.
4. Using the Short Story Dispenser and online programming, Strive will stay relevant by having a presence throughout the Northside community, by being accessible both online and through bringing the dispenser to key locations, and by uplifting voices from the community. These interactions will help us to get to know what the community wants and needs from the literary arts community and we can adjust our programming accordingly. Moreover, we will be able to publish hundreds of emerging writers by using the Short Story Dispenser (compared 3 - 4 traditionally published authors) and give the Black community control of the Black narrative, which will help dispel harmful stereotypes. During this time of COVID-19 when we are unable to gather for literary dinners we can stay connected and responsive to the Black

community and we can do it in a safe way with the touch-free Short Story Dispenser and online programming.

## Proposed Project

1. Black people in America are not empowered to be their best selves because the world around them is constantly reflecting a narrative or identity that doesn't belong to them. The stories we tell in the books selected for curriculums, and the ones injected into our communities on a micro or macro level, are sending the message that Black people should be somehow different-through either gross misrepresentation, or simply not being a part of the narrative at all. Although Strive Publishing was founded with a mission to get more books written by and about African Americans into the hands of children, the current civil unrest has Black people (African American and African immigrants) inquiring about how to get their stories and poetry published. Based on these inquiries and recent manuscript submissions, Strive Publishing is in a position to re-envision our programming and become more responsive to the Black community. The community needs free and easy access to the literary arts and the Short Story Dispenser along with online programming is a key piece of equipment for community engagement.

2. The online Short Story Portal provides necessary materials for virtual programming. The portal allows digital access for reading short fiction online (PC, smartphone, ipad...) and also allows a platform for submissions from the community, providing a voice for all to express themselves through fiction and creative non-fiction. This is a community-based literary platform deliverable via the Short Story Dispenser. The portal serves as a launchpad for creative writing projects in the community, allowing co-publishing of 'hyper-local' content both online and on the Short Story Dispenser for free. The Short Story Dispenser will travel around the community on a monthly basis. Local businesses, organizations, churches, and libraries can be hosts and can advertise their logo on the bottom of the printed stories. Writers can submit stories online to be published on the dispenser, and readers can choose (touch-free) a 1, 3, or 5 minute printed short story tape (looks like a long receipt and is ink-free/eco-friendly) to enjoy, keep or share - a dose of culture and literature to color in the mundane moments of everyday life.

3. Members of the Strive Advisory Committee as part of their volunteer service will arrange/coordinate the locations for the Short Story Dispenser. Our developmental editor will be in charge of the Short Story Portal programming and will be paid on a work-for-hire basis (\$20/hour, up to \$1,000). As publisher, I (Mary Taris) will monitor and approve literary submissions and dispenser content (in-kind).

4. The project will begin October 20, 2020 and end June 30, 2020 at which point we will evaluate the impact on the community based on engagement, and determine how best to use the Short Story Dispenser moving forward.

5. The Short Story Dispenser will assist Strive Publishing to transition from a fiscally sponsored small business to a social enterprise with a public service specifically responsive to the Black community in North Minneapolis. By having the capacity to engage the Black community in changing locations of the dispenser we can gauge the best location for a Black Literary Arts Center - a space that counteracts the disparities

on the Northside that too often tend to strip away the creativity and mindfulness of Black people.

6. Short-Edition Inc. has offered Strive Publishing a discounted quote to purchase a used Short Story Dispenser for \$2,000 (a new dispenser costs \$9,200) our dispenser has the previously used discount of \$5,500 and the non-profit discount of \$2,000; the online subscription services cost \$3,030/year and the touch-free device costs \$800; the total price for the dispenser and services is \$5,830. Strive Publishing pay will the costs exceeding the grant amount with capital from the Strive checking account. Strive will also pay the \$1,000 for the work-for-hire developmental editor.

## **Board of Directors / Advisory Committee**

Strive Publishing Advisory Committee Members:

Kevin Jenkins, Supervisor of Adults with Disabilities, Hennepin County Social Services, Committee Community Engagement Officer

Patricia Welch, Accountant, Minneapolis Accounting Firm, Committee Accounting/Non-profit Advisor

Marty Schirber, Retired Business Owner, Committee Business/Education Advisor

Colleen Waterston, Founder of Curriculum Company, Committee Publishing/Marketing Advisor

## **Amount Requested**

\$2,500.00

## **Project Budget Expense**

\$2800 equipment purchase

\$3030 online portal services

\$1000 work-for-hire developmental editor

\$175 fiscal sponsor administration fee

## **Total Project Cash Expenses**

\$7,005.00

## ***(Important!)* Additional Fields Required**

Please note that in the full application there are additional fields that will need to be completed and are not shown to panelists:

- Type of group
- Legislative MN House District
- Legal Status
- Type of institution
- Organization's arts discipline
- ADA Plan status

- Individuals in leadership (for help filling out this section, please download the ER21 Organizational Leadership Worksheet on the [Equity Response page](https://mrac.org/grants/equity-response) [mrac.org/grants/equity-response])
- Annual participants in the organization's activities
- Project's arts discipline
- Populations benefiting from the project

Depending on your organization and/or project, you may also need to upload:

- Fiscal sponsor letter
- Property owner permission letter