

2022

ANNUAL REPORT



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

"I love this festival and the tradition of getting students excited about stories and writing."

-Feedback from a 2022 Festival attendee

We love it too! For over 50 years we have been continuing this incredible tradition. We went virtual in 2021 but we missed providing an in-person experience. Finally, in 2022, we were able to bring schoolchildren back to our beautiful UCM campus for the 53rd festival. We may not have been completely "back to normal," but it was amazing to see those school buses pull up and watch those excited kids get out, ready for a full-day of interacting with fabulous authors, who were just as excited to be back in person with them!

A. Maya Kucij, Director

OVERVIEW

On March 8th, the 53rd Children's Literature Festival (CLF) was held at the University of Central Missouri, featuring 8 authors who presented to approximately 1300 people. In order to safely accommodate concerns about the Covid-19 pandemic, the festival was shortened from three days to one, masks were required and grades were limited to grades 4-8 (usually grades 3-10). Students from 34 schools from 28 counties across Missouri attended on Tuesday. Financial assistance from the Missouri Arts Council and additional funding from UCM's Academic Affairs allowed us to waive registration costs for all attendees.



FESTIVAL GOALS

1

To provide the experience of meeting a published author or illustrator in person

To promote reading and validate the research and creativity behind the process of bookmaking

2

3

To make a significant and visible contribution to a culture of literacy in the state of Missouri

To work towards fair representation of all groups within our Festival program and to be truly inclusive by seeking active participation by all individuals

4

NEW IN 2022

LIVE STREAMING

In order to expand the reach of the Festival, we were able to live stream and record several sessions thanks to the efforts of the Digital Media Production students in the Corporate and Freelance Production class at UCM. We experimented with having different authors present in Hendricks Hall (usually one presenter stays in one venue all day) and streamed four different sessions (3 different authors). This provided a great hands-on learning experience for our UCM students and helped extend the reach of the festival.

One teacher whose class was able to view from Columbia shared,

"This streaming option is SO nice for schools and groups who can't take a whole day to travel!"



A total of 121 devices were viewing throughout the day. The most at one time was 13 devices. Since multiple people can watch on one device, we don't have a way to know exactly how many people were viewing. We were able to keep videos up for one week post-event and each video had 8 views.

NEW IN 2022

CLF MERCHANDISE

New merchandise joined book totes for purchase at Book Sales:

- Enamel pins
- Wooden keychains shaped like the state of Missouri
- Black sharpies
- Oval waterproof stickers

& FREE BUTTONS

Thanks in part to funding from the Missouri Arts Council, CLF was able to purchase a button machine and create fun designs from which to make free buttons. We also gave out bookmarks from past bookmark contests. One grateful teacher noted,

"I really appreciated that you gave away bookmarks and pins at your store. I had several students who could not afford to shop, and I was glad they still got to take home a souvenir."



NEW IN 2022

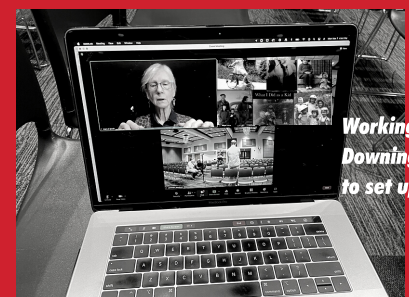
NEW VENUES: HIGHLANDER THEATRE & UNION AUDITORIUM

We were excited to be able to offer sessions in the beautiful Highlander Theater and the new Union Auditorium. These larger venues allowed us to safely accommodate large groups of students and provide comfortable seating to our attendees.



Antony John speaks to students in the Union Auditorium

ZOOM PRESENTATION TO A LIVE AUDIENCE



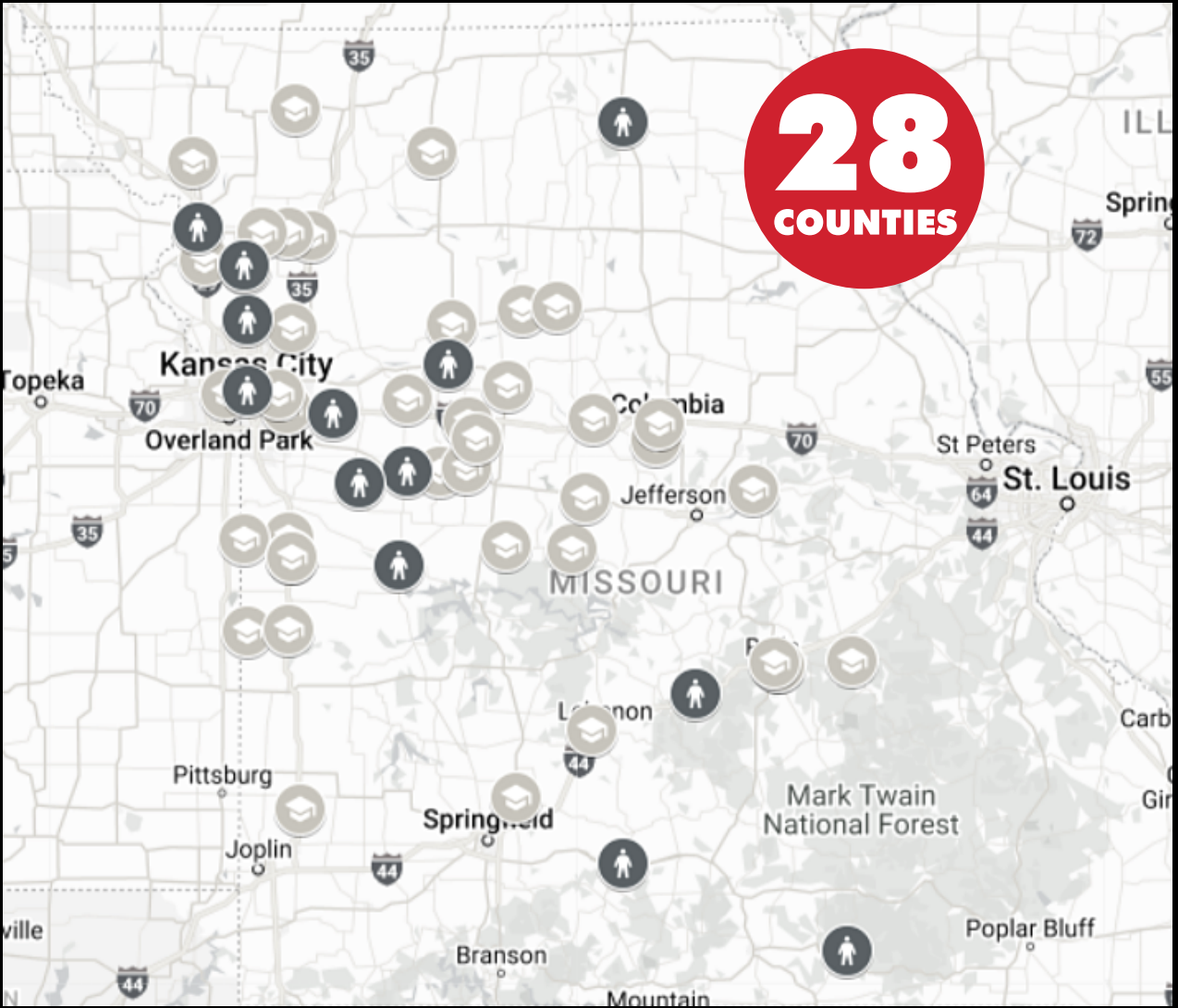
Working with Mary Downing Hahn to set up the tech.



Mary Downing Hahn presents via Zoom.

One of our long-time beloved presenters, author Mary Downing Hahn, joined us via Zoom instead of in person. In 2021 she joined us for a virtual presentation that was broadcast via the UCM Media Network but this time she was able to take live questions from the audience.

OUR ATTENDEES



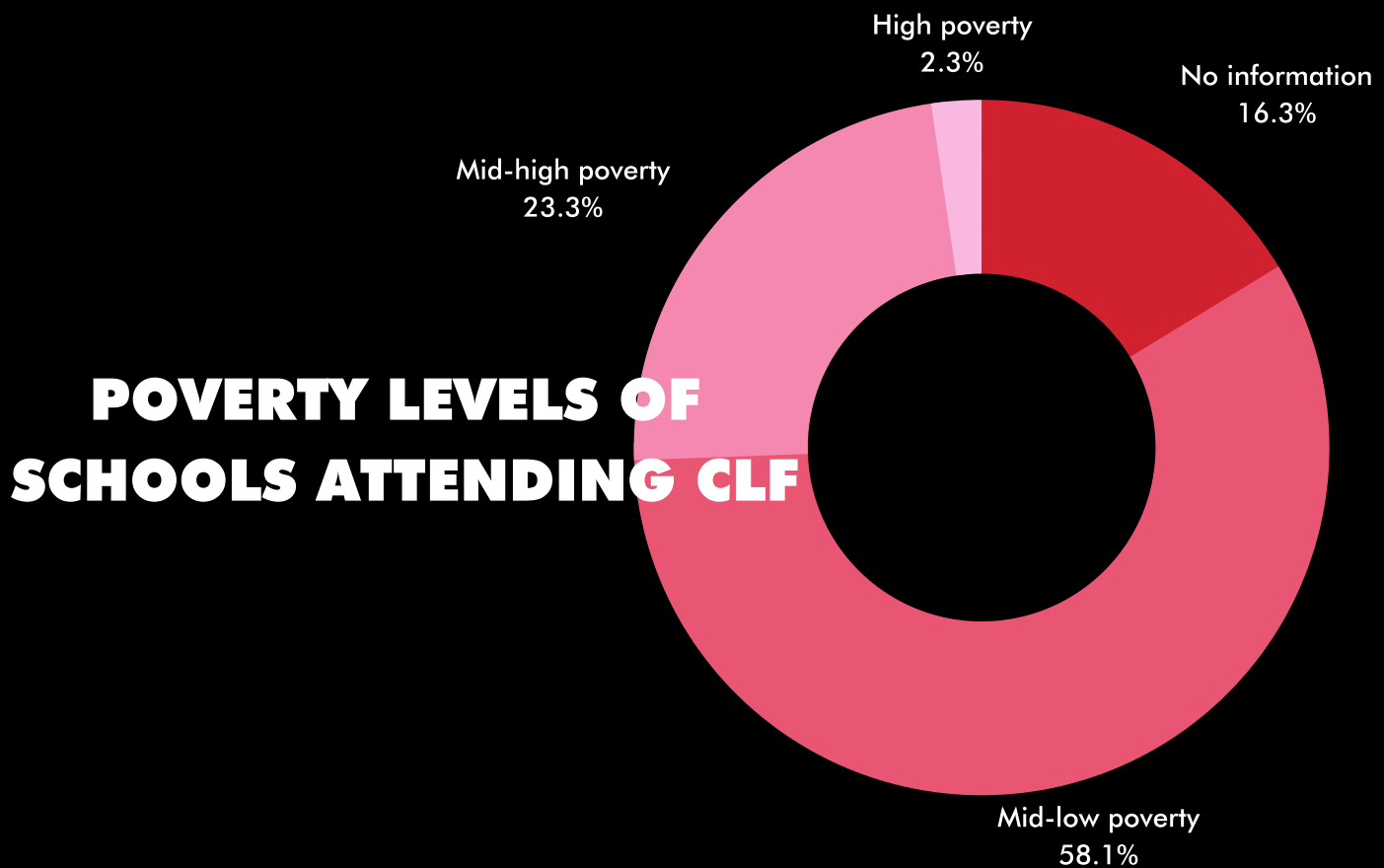
**43 SCHOOLS,
INCLUDING 11 NEW SCHOOLS**



160 INDIVIDUALS

SERVING OUR COMMUNITIES

81% percent of schools who attended the CLF receive Title I federal funds. In 2022, roughly 26% of schools that attended were considered to have mid-high or high poverty levels, using Free or Reduced Price Lunch eligibility percentages. These schools may struggle to provide enriching activities outside of their daily routines.



Title I funds are awarded to assist schools with the highest student concentrations of poverty to meet school educational goals. The percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL) under the National School Lunch Program also provides a proxy measure for the concentration of low-income students within a school. Low-poverty schools are defined as public schools where 25.0 percent or less of the students are eligible for FRPL; mid-low poverty schools are those where 25.1 to 50.0 percent of the students are eligible for FRPL; mid-high poverty schools are those where 50.1 to 75.0 percent of the students are eligible for FRPL; and high-poverty schools are those where more than 75.0 percent of the students are eligible for FRPL.

Source of Poverty Level ranges: https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_clb.asp

Source of Missouri Federal allocations: <https://dese.mo.gov/financial-admin-services/food-nutrition-services/statistics>

ATTENDEE SURVEYS



On March 9 post-event surveys were sent out to the contact person for each school that attended as well as to all individuals who pre-registered. The survey for teachers and individuals consisted of questions divided into the following categories: Registration, Communication and Campus Navigation; Author and Illustrator Sessions; and Book Sales and Publicity. Survey respondents were entered into a drawing for either \$50 Book Sales certificate (teachers) or free registration for 2 adults and 2 children (individuals). 49 total responses received (42 teachers and 7 individuals).

Beth Vrabel presents in Nahm Auditorium.



Phil Bildner

“One of the best festivals I have been to. I liked being in the auditorium instead of classrooms. Way more comfortable. Presenters were fantastic and engaging. Well done!”

“This was a first time for our entire group and we enjoyed it so much! We will definitely be returning.”

“I really enjoyed all presentations and I REALLY appreciated that the books were pre-signed. ”

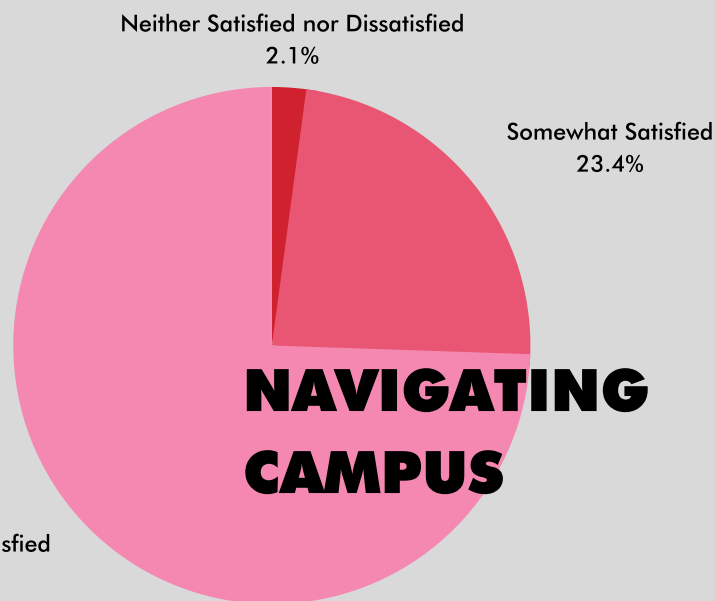
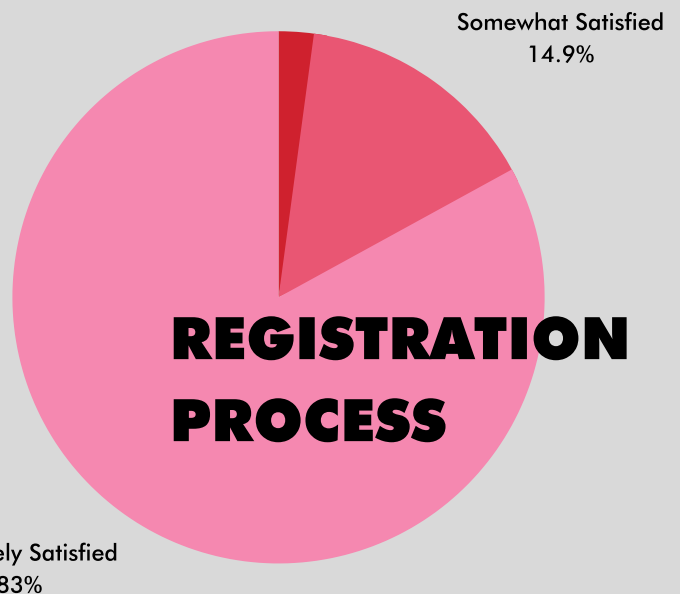
“Thank you for bringing the CLF back!! It was a great day with excellent author presentations.”



Jasmine Warga

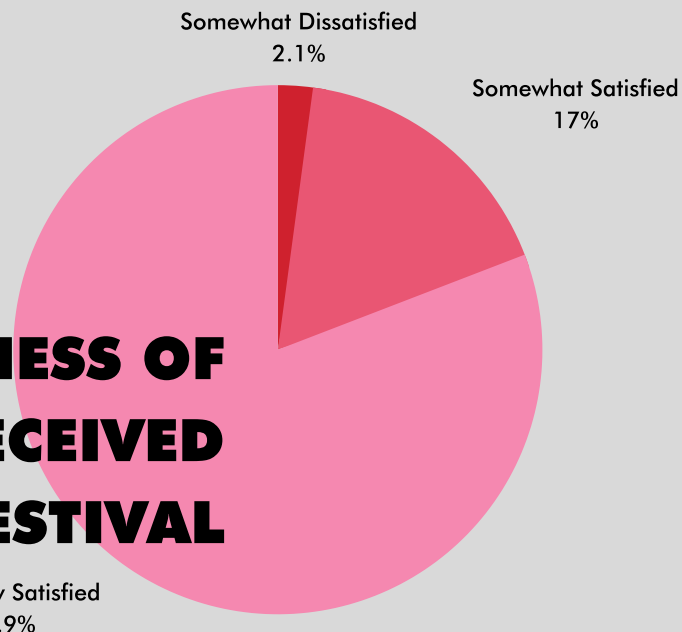
SURVEY RESULTS

Survey results on attendee satisfaction with Pre-Festival processes and information-sharing were overwhelmingly positive. The majority of survey respondents said they were extremely satisfied with the registration process, navigating campus and the completeness of the information they received prior to the event.



NAVIGATING CAMPUS

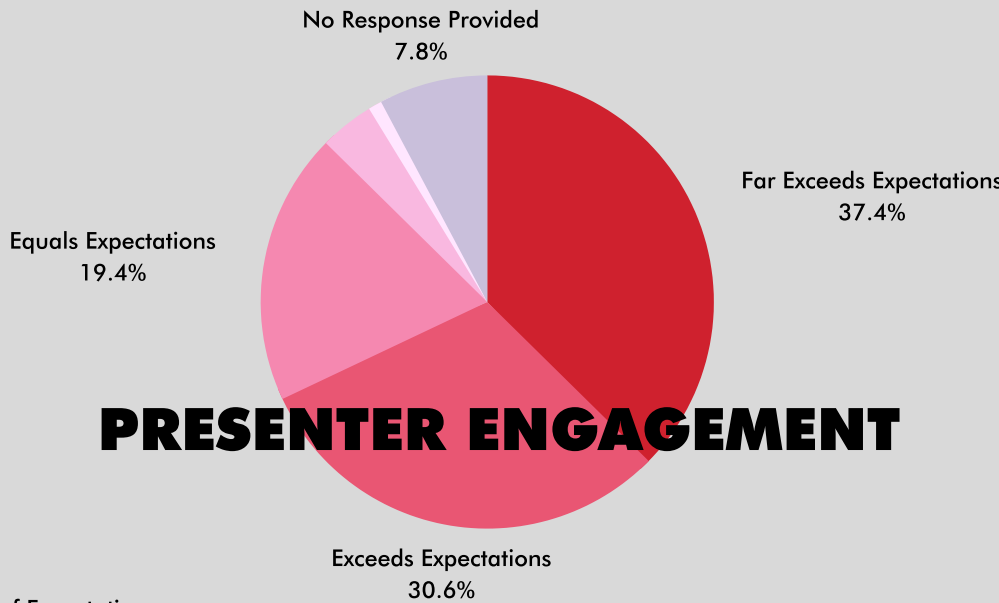
COMPLETENESS OF INFORMATION RECEIVED PRE-FESTIVAL



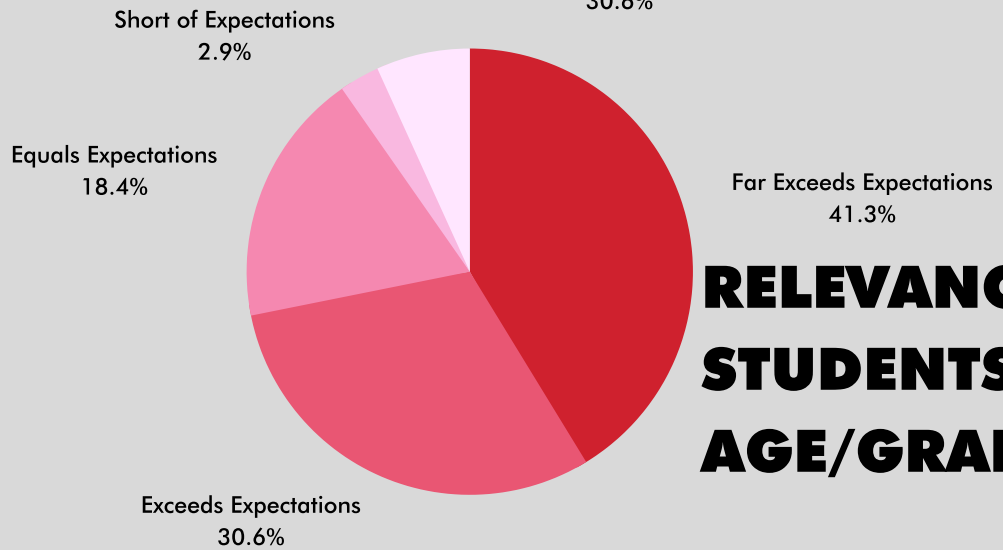
SURVEY RESULTS

68% of total responses received indicated that the 2022 presenters either exceeded or far exceeded expectations for presenter engagement and relevance to students' grades or ages. Almost 60% of total responses received indicated that the attendee would be extremely likely to attend another presentation by that author again at a future festival.

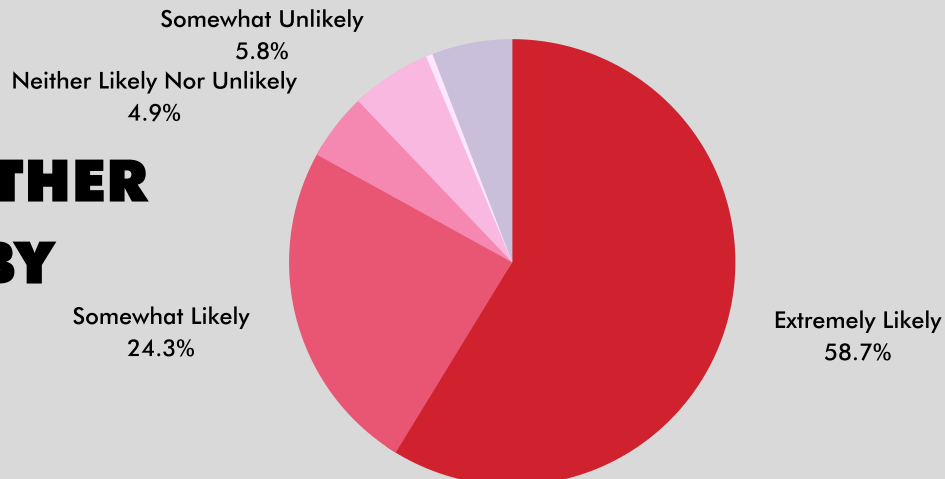
PRESENTER ENGAGEMENT



RELEVANCE TO STUDENTS' AGE/GRADE



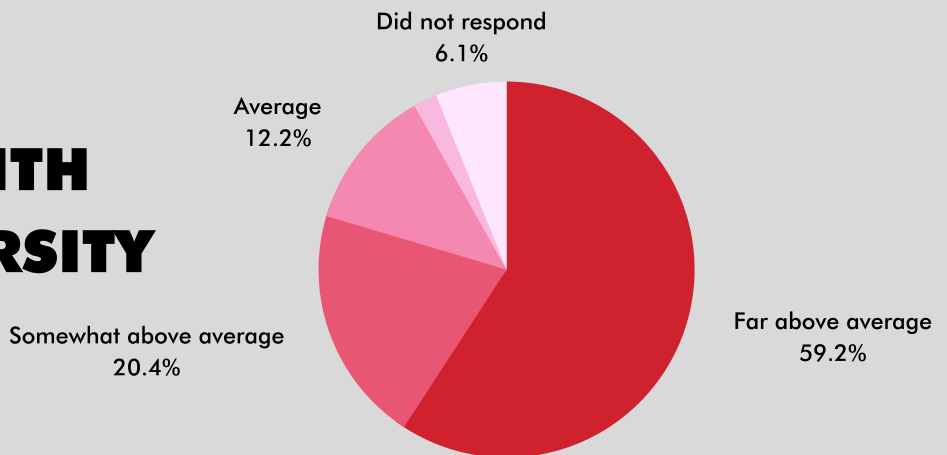
LIKELIHOOD TO ATTEND ANOTHER PRESENTATION BY PRESENTER IN THE FUTURE



SURVEY RESULTS

While the Festival is a regional event, presenters come from across the country, and it is important for the lineup to reflect not only artistic excellence, but also national demographics. Doing so provides a diversity of perspectives to attendees, and affords authors and illustrators of historically marginalized groups a forum in which to present their work. We have actively increased the diversity in our presenter line-up over the last five years, from 16% in 2017 to 50% in 2022. The festival's goal is to maintain the level of at least 50% diverse voices in the presenter lineup. Survey results indicate 59.2% far above average satisfaction with presenter diversity in 2022.

SATISFACTION WITH PRESENTER DIVERSITY



*L-R, top row: Antony John, Phil Bildner, Roland Smith
L-R, bottom row: Jance Marks, Beth Vrabel, Jasmine Warga, Padma Venkatraman*

PRESENTER SURVEYS



Antony John

On March 22, a post-event survey was sent out to all the 2022 presenters. The survey for presenters consisted of questions divided into the following categories: Pre-Festival Experience, Festival Experience, Presentation Sessions, and Looking Forward. All of the presenters who attended in person filled out the survey.

100% of the respondents found the Festival to be extremely well organized and wished to be invited back for a future festival. 100% of respondents rated the Festival staff members to be excellent, with 86% finding their volunteers to be excellent, or good (14%).



Roland Smith

"I loved that students from many different schools were able to attend. It was great to be able to do the three presentations in front of large groups of enthusiastic kids. I thought the day was well-organized, and I found it easy to navigate campus."

"This festival is a tremendous honor to attend. I'm grateful for the opportunity to connect with so many readers and mindful of the efforts of everyone involved to make it a success."

"Simply HAVING a festival again was a huge triumph. It would have been totally understandable to wait one more year, but I'm so glad it went ahead. I thought the enthusiasm of the audiences (who were clearly eager to see authors live and in person again) was palpable, as was the enthusiasm of the authors themselves."

"The warmth of the staff & volunteers + the audiences--all of the young people were excited and engaged."



Janae Marks

VOLUNTEERS



Ravali Jonnalagadda and Liv Riggs help set up flags.

In 2022, Kirsten Shaw, a UCM alumna and the school librarian at Martin Warren Elementary School in Warrensburg, continued as our volunteer coordinator. She recruited 17 volunteers.

Due to our shortened event and smaller pool of authors, in 2022 we had less of a demand for volunteers, who usually serve as our "author/illustrator ambassadors". They perform a number of important tasks, such as introducing the presenter to attendees, and directing teachers and children into the room for sessions.

We also have volunteers who assist with Book Sales and the Presenter Lounge.



Student volunteers from State Fair Community College's Cross Country team.

BOOK SALES

In 2022, Book Sale Coordinators Chad Marnholtz and Kim Anthes were excited that we completely sold out of the titles from 4 of our 8 authors! It was also great that we were able to pull previously unsold inventory (from presenters who had been to CLF before) and add those to titles from our new authors.

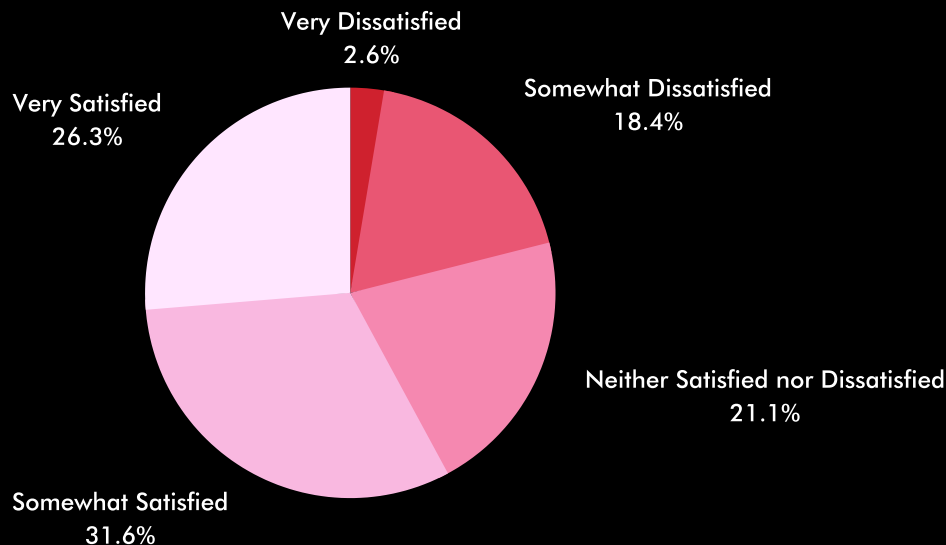
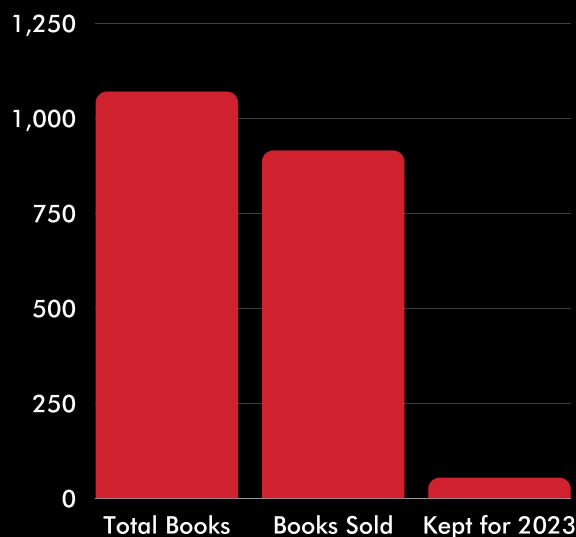
Due to Covid-19 restrictions, we were not able to offer book signings or selfies with authors. However, we were able to have authors pre-sign books or sign book plate stickers that could be inserted into the book after purchase.

One teacher wrote:

“Several students were intrigued by [a] presentation enough to purchase [the presenter's] books and so did I as a gift to our school library.”



Students select their books.



2022 BOOK SALES

BOOK SALE SATISFACTION

MARKETING

In 2018 CLF began using the email marketing service Mailchimp to manage newsletter subscriptions. One newsletter usually goes out in the Fall, one holiday newsletter is sent in December and then one newsletter is sent per month from January to March to keep subscribers up to date with important festival information and deadlines. In a typical (non-pandemic!) year, an additional postcard mailing is sent to schools.

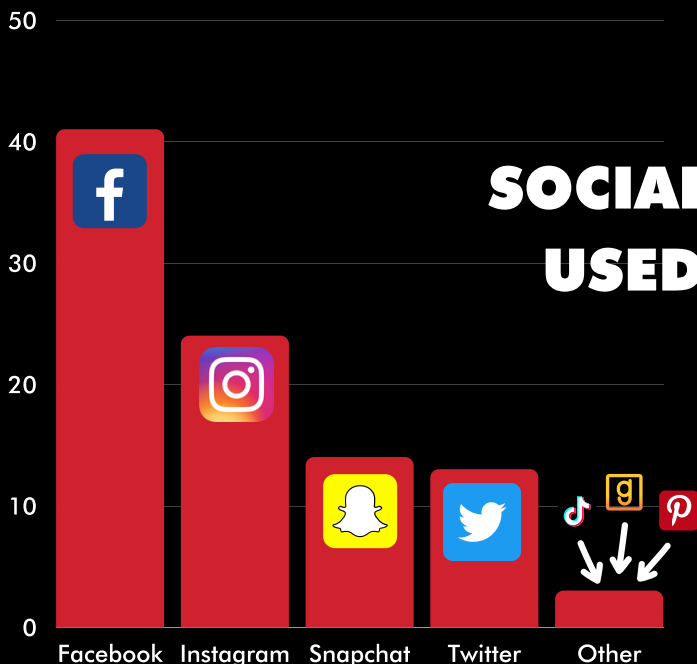
Since 2018 we have seen a 122% increase in subscribers, from 450 to 1138 in 2022. Additionally, in 2022, thanks to a new JCKL TikTok account, we had a fun brief video posted with some of our festival authors.



Scan to see JCKL's TikTok page



SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS USED BY CLF ATTENDEES



Facebook continues to be the dominant social media platform used by survey respondents.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1

Include information about Emergency Operations for all presenters and volunteers. March is Tornado Season and a situation with the Missouri Statewide Tornado Drill helped emphasize that everyone needs to be prepared!

2

Bring our Book Sales equipment and software up to date to assist with reconciling accounts post-event.

3

Find a replacement for our event management software system. The former company whose system we used folded under Covid when the majority of large in person events were cancelled world-wide.

4

Expand merchandise offerings to t-shirts, book plates and more.

2022 CLF PRESENTERS

- Jasmine Warga
- Beth Vrabel
- Padma Venkatraman
- Roland Smith
- Janae Marks
- Antony John
- Mary Downing Hahn
- Phil Bildner



**PROVOST PHIL BRIDGMON
& THE OFFICE OF
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**



**Missouri
Arts Council**

The State of the Arts

UCM PARTNERS

- Meeting and Conference Services: Michelle Schulz, Klint Braun, and JT Jacobsen
- Sodexo Food Services: Kelly Haggard and Justin Dreslinski
- Digital Media Production: Dr. Steve Price & Brenden Barnes



SPECIAL HELP

- Angie Curtright
- Pearl Miller
- Sara Evans
- Anthony Kaiser
- Sanja Gidakovic

FESTIVAL COMMITTEE & STUDENT WORKERS

Director, Maya Kucij

Logistics Coordinator, Patty Cary

Book Sales Coordinator, Chad Marnholtz

Assistant to Book Sales, Kim Anthes

Volunteer Coordinator, Kirsten Shaw

Phaedra Lauck

Liz Riggs

Ravali Jonnalagadda

BOOK SALES

- Jill Houk
- Janette Klein
- Carol Knight
- Shara McNeeley
- Cindy Skahan

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Comfort Inn
- Soapweed

