

Hope College**Holland, MI****Grant request: \$15,000****Book selection:** *Station 11***Financial information:**

Previous fiscal year expenses: \$118,046,000

Current fiscal year expenses: \$108,500,000

Project information:

Proposed programming start date: 10-29-2018

Proposed programming end date: 11-30-2018

Number of partner organizations: 70

Number of book discussions: 55

Total number of events: 70

Anticipated total participants: 8,000

Please describe your community where programming will take place.

Holland, Michigan is a city on the eastern edge of Lake Michigan in the southwest corner of the state. Holland's economy continues to thrive through an active community of small, locally-owned businesses, several large corporations such as Herman Miller and Gentex, and partnerships with a 2-branch district library, 4 institutes of higher education, 5 public and 4 private school systems. Perhaps best known for its Dutch heritage which is part of the city's cultural identity and its local economy, Holland spans both Ottawa and Allegan county lines (populations: 276, 292; 113, 847) and has a population of 33,644 (2014 census) and an urbanized area population of 95,394 (2010 census). While the racial makeup of the city remains predominantly White, there is a growing and vibrant Latino population (23%) as well other immigrant populations. This year we will continue to reach out to Holland's surrounding communities: Hamilton, Allegan, Zeeland, Fennville, Grand Haven, Saugatuck-Douglas.

Why did you choose this book?

For the past four years, our Big Read selections encouraged participants to look back in history and reflect on societal problems that went wrong: race, impacts of war, immigration, and fear-induced discrimination. In this our fifth year, we've chosen a book that encourages us to look ahead and envision what kind of society we want to create. We selected *Station Eleven*, not only for the obvious reason that it takes place in Michigan where we live but also because it prompts its readers to respond to the question: How do we want to live? While *Station Eleven* paints a bleak landscape, its focus on the idea that "survival is insufficient" encourages all of us to find beauty in our brokenness, solidarity across our differences, and commonality in our aspirations to work for what is good and true. We believe this book will help our community experience the power of literature and the arts to cross some of the racial/ethnic, political, etc divisions in our community.

What are your goals for this project?

To continue developing a successful program with multimodal events in a variety of locations that encourage wide-spread participation in our community across demographic divides. We will accomplish this through our varied main events, book discussions, and art activities that draw on different themes/topics in the book.

To further develop our reach into the Latino populations in our community. We will provide a Spanish edition of one of our children's books to our bilingual Spanish school students, creating promotional materials in Spanish, and featuring a Latino artist in one of our exhibits.

To further develop our K-16 student strand of our program. We will do this through increased professional development and resource support for teachers.

To strengthen our existing partnerships and foster new ones along the lakeshore communities of Lake Michigan. We will do this by publicizing our program and having events in these communities (i.e. Hamilton, Saugatuck/Douglas, Fennville).

Organization Description

Describe your organization's history, programming, and achievements.

Hope College is a small private liberal arts college that has consistently led the way in community partnerships both through its programs and education opportunities to the community. The mission of Hope College is to educate students for lives of leadership and service in a global society through academic and co-curricular programs of recognized excellence in the liberal arts and in the context of the historic Christian faith. Hope College is located downtown Holland, Michigan. Historically affiliated with the Reformed Church in America, Hope is an ecumenically diverse college that values open discussion and respect for the opinions of others. Originally founded in 1851, Hope College has a current enrollment of 3,234 undergraduate students from 36 states and territories and 29 different countries. There are 243 full-time faculty members, with more than 90% holding the doctorate degree. Hope offers 91 majors and minors in liberal arts and pre-professional fields. It is recognized for its national leadership in collaborative faculty/student research and creative activity and is consistently awarded more National Science Foundation grants for undergraduate research than any other liberal arts college in the country. It was ranked fourth behind the University of Michigan, Stanford and MIT for undergraduate research and creative activity in the initial rankings by US News & World Report. Hope is the only private, liberal arts college in the country to have national accreditation in art, dance, music and theatre. It is a leading college for Fulbright Scholars and has been recognized by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching for initiatives that engage students with communities here and abroad. Hope College has received funding through the U.S. Department of Education to support its Upward Bound program that seeks to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Hope has received The Big Read grant for the past four years.

Describe your organization's experience with presenting community-wide programming that demonstrates an ability to conduct a successful NEA Big Read.

Hope College's four highly successful Big Read programs from the past four years build on Hope's rich tradition of engaging its community in conversations around current issues. For nearly 30 years, Hope College has held an annual Critical Issues Symposium, a 2-day event designed to stimulate serious thinking about current issues and to provide a forum in which the Holland community, students, and faculty may all engage in discussion with experts. Hope also hosts the Jack Ridl Visiting Writers Series. This series, free and open to the public, is designed to provide the Holland community with diverse and rich literary experiences. Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award winners perform alongside the nation's finest new voices. The annual January Happenings, a Saturday of sessions featuring talks by Hope College faculty and students is another popular community event. In the 2017 Big Read program, there were 15 main events, 11 public book discussions and 4 ongoing exhibits. A total of 15 schools, 21 teachers, and 750 middle/high school students participated in the student strand of the program which cumulated with the Student Exhibition of Learning in which 1000 people attended. Hope College's Big Read program has over 50 partnerships with area organizations, businesses, and institutions. Our program has been featured on the Arts Midwest blog and in NEA Big Read grantee resources. While the Big Read program is an excellent fit with Hope College's mission and its previous experiences with federal, state, and local grants, it is the changing make-up of the Holland community and our belief in the power of literature that propels us to continue to apply for this grant and continue to initiate conversations in our community about the arts, diversity, differences, and empathy.

Organizer Biographies

Outline the key individuals who will plan and implement the programming, including their titles, anticipated roles and responsibilities in your proposed program, and experience or capacity for managing a NEA Big Read. Include partner organizations' staff as applicable.

Planning and conduct of the 2016 Big Read Holland Area Project will be accomplished by a Big Read Steering Committee consisting of project staff, librarians, community leader, representatives from partner organizations and a host of community volunteers including high school and college students. The following are key project staff:

Dr. Deborah Van Duinen is the Project Director and will serve as the Programming Contact. Associate Professor of English Education, she holds a PhD from Michigan State University and teaches and does research on adolescent literacy and community literacy. This will be her fifth year as Program Director of The Big Read Holland Area. Two years she received a Michigan Reading Association Literacy Achievement award for her work with The Big Read Holland Area. She has written peer-reviewed articles and led national conference presentations on her work with The Big Read.

Shelly Arnold has worked at Hope College for the past 20 years and has extensive experience with national grants. She will be The Big Read office manager and our budget and logistics manager. Shelly will oversee the Hope College student assistants and communications interns who will focus their work on supporting our K-16 education strand and developing our social media presence. Dr. Will Polik, Associate Dean of Research at Hope, will serve as the Grant Contact.

Abbey Stoop (Reference Librarian, Herrick Library) is our Community Liaison and Main Event Coordinator is in her fifth year of being involved in our Big Read. She will be joined by Connie Locker Verhulst (Education and Outreach Manager, Holland Museum). Connie has been involved in the program for the past four years. Barb VanKuiken (Howard Miller Public Library) will also be on this committee.

Jeff Munroe (Executive Vice President of Western Theological Seminary) will chair our Fundraising and Publicity committee. Jeff has been involved with our Big Read for the past two years and has expertise in fundraising. He will be joined by Kristin Armstrong (Saugatuck Center for the Arts

Executive Director) and Claudia Berry (Community member, former Vice President at Huntington Bank).

Anne Harrison (Librarian, Herrick Library) is our Book Discussion Chair. She has been involved in our Big Read for the past two years. She will be joined by Bill Moreau (Hope College English department), Sally Hoekstra (Hope College bookstore manager), and Dr. Russ Dykstra (Community member). Together they will plan book discussion materials, organize the 15 planned public book discussions and help facilitate the many private book discussions.

Karen Rowe (English teacher, Black River Public School) and Audra Bolhuis (English teacher, West Ottawa Public Schools) will co-chair our Secondary Teacher committee. They have both participated in our Big Read for the past four years. They will be joined by Jason Pasatta (OAISD, Director of Innovation Services) and Tori Pelz (Hope College art department). They will organize and lead the professional development for area teachers around the use of our chosen text and of *The Giver* (middle school text) and support teachers' involvement in the program. They will work with the Hope College student assistants in running the student committee (comprised of high school and college students). The student committee will help organize and run the Student Exhibition of Learning, write blog posts during our Big Read month, and help promote our events.

Whitney Valentine (Education and Exhibits Manager, Saugatuck Center for the Arts) will chair our Elementary Teacher committee. Megan Koops Fisher (Social Innovations Officer, Ready for School), LuAnn Kern (Program and administrator, City of Holland, with over 25 years experience in public humanities programming) and Dr. Nancy Miller (former Dean at Hope College) will join her on this committee. They will support area teachers in their use of the book *Blackout* and provide professional development for them.

Programming Description

Describe your programming plans in detail. Provide details on the types of activities, target audiences for those activities, locations, and intended dates. Explain how your activities will engage audiences with your selected book.

We propose to do a Big Read program scheduled during November 2018 that will build on the overwhelming success of our past four years of programming. Our program will connect themes in the Station 11 to current topics through reading, discussing and responding artistically to the book. Our program has four strands: main events, book discussions, exhibitions, and K-16 education.

Main event strand: We have designed 15 public events to attract different groups of people in our community that collectively emphasize multimodal interactions with the book and its author.

Oct 29 – Kickoff event at Hope College will feature three TED-style talks by Hope College professors (English, Biology) that will provide a framework for reading and discussing the book. Free books will be given at this event.

Nov 01 – Theatrical event featuring Pigeon Creek Shakespeare Company and their Station Eleven themed program.

Nov 03 - Writing workshop focused on graphic novel writing and drawing and a Pioneers Skills afternoon workshop at the historic Settlers House featuring soap and candle making that will appeal to families.

Nov 05 - Creativity Revealed event at Saugatuck Center for the Arts with Tom Kiefer and his project “El Sueno Americano”. Tom will discuss how his artwork relates to the book’s themes.

Nov 06 - Lecture at Western Seminary by Dr David Dark, writer and popular culture expert who will discuss the connections between Station 11 and his recent book, *Life’s Too Short to Pretend You’re Not Religious*.

Nov 07 - Lunch and Learn at the Holland Museum titled: *The Ground Zero Moment in Your Life*”, and an evening Film Event at the Saugatuck Center for the Arts that will appeal to teenagers.

Nov 09 – Panel discussion on topics related to the book at Howard Miller Library. It will feature an expert on trauma, a cartographer, and city historian who will discuss the 1867 Holland fire and 1918 Spanish Flu outbreak in our community.

Nov 10 - Children’s author event at Herrick District Library. This event will feature John Rocco who will discuss his award-winning book, *Blackout*. There will also be a Survival Skills class at Degraaf Nature Center that will appeal to families.

Nov 12 - Food event at Hope College with a book-themed menu and performance by a group of classically trained musicians.

Nov 13 - Keynote address by Emily St. John Mandel at Hope College. Mandel will lead a campus reading and question and answer session to approx 800 area students in the morning.

Nov 15 - Student Exhibition of Learning in the Holland Armory. This popular event of the past four years will feature art projects done by 900 participating students.

Book discussion strand: We will have 15 public book discussions led by our partner organizations and held in a variety of locations. There will also be at least 40 private book discussions. We will supply each of these groups with book discussion material, discussion leaders (if needed) and program information.

Exhibition strand: We will have 5 ongoing exhibits related to the book’s themes and topics at: The Holland Museum (Museum of Civilization Show and Tell), Kruizenga Art Museum (TBD), Saugatuck Center for the Arts (Tom Kiefer), Holland Armory, Herrick District Library (Tony Lafferty).

Educational strand: In the K-16 educational component of our programming, we will work alongside of teachers and professors in having students read and respond artistically to either *Station Eleven*, *The Giver* (our middle grade alternative text) or *Blackout* (our elementary alternative text). We will have professional development for teachers involved in our program in the months leading up to our program and will support them with curricular resources, free books, time with our two artists-in-residence and art supplies for the Student Exhibition of Learning event. Emily St. John Mandel will give a student address to 800 students on Nov 13; John Rocco will visit three different elementary schools.

Partnerships Description

(a) Describe your partnerships with libraries (as applicable) and community organizations. (b) Explain the role each partner will play in your program, the activities each partner will undertake with your organization, and whether these partnerships are confirmed or pending. (c) Explain how your partnerships will allow you to reach your intended audience(s) and strengthen or build new communities around the NEA Big Read activities.

Hope College departments/programs (Confirmed): Education, English, History, Music, Theater, Dance, Communications, Van Wylen Library, Creative Dining Services, Phelps Scholars Program, Visiting Writers Series, Biology, Psychology. They will contribute funds, assist in planning, distribute educational and publicity materials and, in some cases, host an event or book discussion. These contributions will help us bring a wide variety of events and enable us to reach the Hope community and beyond.

Holland Area Libraries (Confirmed): Herrick District Library (both branches), Howard Miller Library, Fennville District Library, Saugatuck-Douglas District Library, Henika District Library, Louit District Library, Beardslee Library (Western Theological Seminary). These libraries will contribute funds, host book discussions, create displays, and distribute books, book discussion resources and help us promote our program.

Holland Area Schools (Confirmed): Ottawa Area Intermediate School District, Holland Public Schools, West Ottawa Public Schools, Zeeland Public Schools, Holland Christian Schools, Black River Public School, Hamilton Public Schools, and Saugatuck/Douglas Public Schools, Fennville Public Schools. Various elementary, middle, and high schools within these schools/districts will publicize the Big Read to their students and families; contribute funds for books, support teachers participating in six months of curriculum training including lesson planning and collaborating with our artists-in-residence (Joel Schoon Tanis, Barry Elz) to create art in response to our chosen books. The partnerships with area schools allow us to reach over a thousand students and their families and particularly those representing our Latino/a population.

Colleges: Grand Valley State University (Lakeshore Campus); Grand Rapids Community College - Holland campus (pending). They will help promote our Big Read program through their networks.

Cultural Museums: Holland Museum, Saugatuck/Douglas History Center (Confirmed), Dekker Huis Zeeland Museum (Pending). They will host or support events, provide in-kind contributions and allow us to tap into the history and venue resources of area museums.

Arts (Confirmed): Holland Area Arts Council, Saugatuck Center for the Arts, cultureWorks. They will provide financial and in-kind contributions, will host an event(s) or book discussion and will help publicize our program.

Holland Area Churches (Confirmed): Western Theological Seminary, Fellowship Reformed, Third Reformed Church, Pillar Church. These churches/seminary will contribute funds or in-kind resources, host an event or book discussion and will help publicize our program.

Businesses (Confirmed): Centennial Park Studio, Barnes and Noble Bookstore, Coppercraft Distillery, Our Brewing Company, Big Lake Brewing Company, Living Lark, Fris' Office Supplies, Readers World, Lemonjellos Coffeeshop, Zeeland Printery, DeBoer Bakery, Carolyn Stich Art Studio. These businesses will support Big Read through in-kind contributions and publicizing the program. Some will host book discussions or art activities.

Organizations (Confirmed): Degraaf Nature Center, Alliance for Cultural and Ethnic Harmony, Holland Area Senior Professionals, Freedom Village, Evergreen Commons, Rest Haven Seniors Home, Upward Bound, Boys and Girls Club, Holland Rescue Mission, Ottawa Addictions Recovery. They will support Big Read through participating in book discussions or art workshops and will help publicize the program.

Local Government (Confirmed): The Humans Relations Commission will provide funding for some of our free books and representation our steering committee. City council members will help publicize The Big Read. State Representative Daniela Garcia and Holland mayor, Nancy DeBoer will be involved with one of our events. The Holland Youth Advisory will help organize our panel discussion event. These partners will give our program more visibility in our community.

Promotional Description

(a) Describe how you will promote your programming. Discuss any proposed or existing partnerships with specific media outlets. (b) Explain how your program will utilize the PDF digital resources found on arts.gov and distribute copies of your reading selection.

We will maintain and expand our promotional efforts from the previous four years of successful Big Read programs. We will create a marketing plan with Hope College Marketing to develop and produce our promotional print materials, including PSAs, palm cards, banners, flyers, bookmarks, brochures, posters, as well as our digital campaign including social media content on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and our website: <https://hope.edu/bigread>. We will continue to promote our program through our established and new partners including area libraries, schools, businesses, organizations and local media. These partners will promote our materials on their websites and in their communications with patrons/customers. Our school partnerships are some of our most important avenues of promotion and publicity they are able to reach people in our community who otherwise might not hear about our program. Hope College will capitalize on its special relationship with local media including television stations - WZZM 13, WOOD TV 8; newspapers and magazines - Holland Sentinel, Grand Rapids Press, Urban Street; four radio outlets - WHTC, WZZM, WTHS, WGVU. They will assist our program with regular PSAs, interviews, news ads, and special articles.

We will use the digital guides by linking them on our program website and promotional materials (i.e book discussion resources).

We will give away over 2000 free copies of our book to all students participating in our program, libraries (book bags and a free giveaway), partner organizations, book discussion group leaders, and select book discussion groups. We will also be distributing 400 copies of *The Giver* to middle school students (Spanish or English) and 100 copies of *Blackout* to middle and elementary students participating in our program. In reaching these younger students, we will be able to further extend our promotional efforts. Every free copy of the book will contain a stamp on the inside cover with our program contact information.

NEA Big Read: proposal budget

Expense	Detailed description	Source(s)	NEA Big Read Grant	Match/Cost-share			Totals	
				Applicant	Partner/Funder	In-kind	Match total	Sub total
Personnel	<i>Detail the cost of staff for your Big Read project. This can include fringe benefits.</i>							
Program Director	Course release and 32% fringe rate (7.65% FICA/MQFE + 10.5% retirement + 13.85% healthcare)	Grant/Applicant	\$500	\$3,500			\$3,500	\$3,500
Administrative Assistant	Salary	Grant/Applicant	\$500	\$3,500			\$3,500	\$4,000
Student Assistants	Salary (\$9.25/hour X 2 assistants)	Applicant		\$2,000			\$2,000	\$2,000
Communications interns	Volunteer hours (\$20 * 60 hours, 3 interns)	Applicant				\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200
Associate Dean	5% salary and 18.15% (6.20% FICA + 1.45% MQFE [medicare] + 10.5% retirement)	Applicant				\$4,010	\$4,010	\$4,010
English Professor	5% salary and 18.15% (6.20% FICA + 1.45% MQFE [medicare] + 10.5% retirement)	Applicant				\$3,515	\$3,515	\$3,515
Librarian (3)	5% salary and standard fringe benefits	Herrick/Howard Miller Libraries				\$2,910	\$2,910	\$2,910
City Hall Employee	5% salary and standard fringe benefits	City of Holland				\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500
Area teachers, student committee	\$20 * 200 hours (20 teachers); \$10 * 150 hours (15 college/high school ss on student committee)	Community members				\$5,500	\$5,500	\$5,500
						\$0	\$0	\$0
						\$0	\$0	\$0
Program expenses	<i>Detail costs associated with your Big Read.</i>							
Books	2000 copies of Station Eleven (\$6.40/book)	Grant/Applicant/Herrick/Howard	\$7,000	\$2,000	\$3,800		\$5,800	\$12,800
Kick-off Event	3 Kick-off event speakers' honorarium (\$250/speaker)	Applicant/Lakewood Construction		\$250	\$500		\$750	\$750
Theater Performance	Pigeon Creek Shakespeare Company honorarium	Individual donation			\$350		\$350	\$350
Writing Workshop facilitator	Graphic novelist honorarium (Dr. Beth Trembly)	Holland Area Arts Council			\$500		\$500	\$500
Author events	Emily St. John Mandel visit honorarium (\$12,500)	Grant/Applicant/Herrick District Library	\$4,000	5000	\$3,500		\$8,500	\$12,500
Children's author events	John Rocco visit honorarium (\$5000)	Herrick District Library/West MI Ped Dentistry		\$1,000	\$6,000		\$7,000	\$7,000
Children's books	100 copies Blackout (\$9.50/book); 300 copies The Giver (\$4.14/ENG), 60 copies (\$12/SPAN)	City of Holland/Area Schools			\$2,912		\$2,912	\$2,912
Survival workshop and Homesteading event	DeGraaf Nature Center staffing and supplies; Holland Museum supplies and staffing	DeGraaf/Holland Museum			\$200		\$200	\$200
Food event	Musical group honorarium	Applicant		\$500			\$500	\$500
Student Exhibition of Learning supplies	Art supplies for 15 area teachers/schools	Ottawa Area ISD			\$1,000		\$1,000	\$1,000
Artist fees	Honorarium for two artists-in-residence	Grant/Area Schools/Individual donations	\$1,000		\$8,000		\$8,000	\$9,000
Film screening	Mountain Film screening rights (pending)	Saugatuck Center for the Arts			\$500		\$500	\$500
Facility Space (College)	Knickerbocker, Dimment Chapel, Haworth Conference Center, Jack H Miller Concert Hall	Applicant				\$6,035	\$6,035	\$6,035
Facility Space (Partner Organizations)	\$6,850 Museum, \$1,050 SCA, \$80 Herrick, \$192.50 Howard Miller, HAAC \$664, Degraaf \$95,	Partner Organizations				\$8,932	\$8,932	\$8,932
SCA/KAM artists fees	Guest artist - Tom Kiefer (SCA), TBD (KAM)	Saugatuck Center for the Arts/KAM			\$1,000		\$1,000	\$1,000
Travel	Travel expenses: Emily St John Mandel (\$2000), John Rocco (\$1000), David Dark (\$500)	Grant/Western Seminary	\$1,000		\$2,500		\$2,500	\$3,500
Lecture Event	David Dark honorarium	Western Seminary			\$1,000		\$1,000	\$1,000
Herrick artist fees	Tony Lafferty photographs for display	Herrick District Library				\$200	\$200	\$200
						\$0	\$0	\$0
Promotion	<i>Detail costs associated with advertising and promoting your Big Read.</i>							
Creating promotional materials	Developing promotional materials: brochure, bookmarks, posters, social media (45 hours * \$40/hr)	Applicant				\$1,800	\$1,800	\$1,800
Printing and Photocopying	Printing of promotional materials	Grant/Applicant/Individual donations	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$2,000		\$4,000	\$5,000
Photography of Student Art	Photography of student art for display in outdoor park	Individual Donations			\$500		\$500	\$500
Promotional	Sonscreen - t-shirts for volunteers	Applicant		\$500			\$500	\$500
Postage	Postage for promotional brochure	Applicant		\$100			\$100	\$100
						\$0	\$0	\$0
						\$0	\$0	\$0
						\$0	\$0	\$0
						\$0	\$0	\$0
						\$0	\$0	\$0
						\$0	\$0	\$0
						\$0	\$0	\$0
						\$0	\$0	\$0
						\$0	\$0	\$0
						\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL			\$15,000	\$20,350	\$34,262	\$35,602	\$90,214	\$104,714

If you'd like to offer further clarification on any expenses, please provide details below:



January 15, 2018

Dear NEA Big Read Review,

I am writing this letter to convey the strong support by the Holland Museum for Hope College's proposal to the NEA for a grant to support a Big Read in our region.

The Holland Museum has been a key partner in Hope College's Big Read program for the past four years and has taken an active role in participating in the program. Connie Locker continues to be an active representative on the program's steering committee.

The Holland Museum has taken an active role participating in the program. This past year, we hosted several events and promoted the Big Read's most recent book *When the Emperor was Divine* by Julie Otsuka through our social media and web site. The events the museum hosted included a lunch and learn afternoon featuring the book's themes and topics; a book discussion led by another local non-profit, the Alliance for Cultural and Ethnic Harmony, (we offered a free pass to the museum for participants), and the closing event, the Student Exhibition of Learning, which I understand is the most popular and well attended event in the program with 1,000 visitors.

This year, the museum is excited to be involved in many important ways for this year's book, *Station Eleven*.

- Hosting a lunch and learn for the book "The Ground Zero Moment" program will encourage discussion and conversation around major events that make an impact in an individual's life (i.e. 9/11, the JFK assassination, etc.).
- Hosting book discussion with the Alliance for Cultural and Ethnic Harmony (ACEH)
- Hosting a Pioneer Skills workshop, will allow participants the opportunity to learn some basic homesteading skills like, soap making, or candle making.
- Hosting the Student Exhibition of Learning
- Publicizing the Big Read program in our network of supporters and members

I could not be more enthusiastic to offer the museum's support and participation next year and respectfully request that the committee provide the requested funding so that this important program can continue to play a robust educational role in our community.

Sincerely,

Ricki L. Levine
Executive Director





18 January, 2018

This letter is in support of the Hope College Big Read program. One current initiative of public libraries nationally is to realize how "Libraries Transform Communities." As I consider the Hope College Big Read and our partnership with Hope over the past several years, I believe that the Big Read is helping us realize that dream of helping our community transform. The Big Read books have allowed the community to talk about some difficult topics in ways that promote understanding. This is the power of stories. More than simply hearing stories, we are discussing and having conversations and responses to those stories. We are also gathering stories of people who have been profoundly impacted by some of the responses to the readings, the discussions, and the author visits. This program is having tangible impact on our community and it is something that needs to continue.

This year Herrick District Library and its staff will be hosting book discussions; planning and hosting events surrounding topics of the book; assisting with other programs in the community which reach people of many ages, races and ethnicities; promoting the "Big Read" through various means including social media; and engaging in community conversations to help us understand the desires of the community and how the library can respond to those goals through books and programs such as the Big Read.

Thank you for your consideration of grant funding this important community building program.

Kindest Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diane Kooiker".

Diane Kooiker

Director

Herrick District Library