



Dear NV SCBWI Members:

COVID-19 changed our world significantly in the past few months, but not as much as the realization that Black lives are in danger. SCBWI leadership committed to ensuring that our organization can do our part to ensure inclusion and equity for our community of writers and illustrators. We have made several changes in our policies to fight longstanding racial injustice. As part of this commitment, SCBWI hired April Powers, our first Chief of Equity and Inclusion Officer, to ensure everyone is included and valued.

Thank you very much for your continued support of SCBWI.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Mun
Regional Advisor, NV SCBWI

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April Powers, Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer, SCBWI



Myrna Foster

In your own words, what's your backgrounds and why are you excited about this job?

April Powers

I've been writing a children's book with my two boys, now eight and ten. Really, I wrote it, but they'd give me tweaks and ideas or things that concerned them like the fact that my character looked like me but didn't have golden hair.

I'm Bluish-Black and Jewish. I have Black art, Asian art, Jewish art, Indian art. Pick a country or religion, and everything's represented in this house; and my son still wanted to know why my character didn't have golden hair. That devastated me.

So, that was a problem. Having grown up with the angst of being a child who didn't have any representation of myself or my family in any art form -- not in museums that I went to, not that much, maybe a special exhibit or something, not in toys or books, and not in TV shows or films.

My family is very diverse. We have LatinX, we have non-binary, partners of our LGBTQ+ family members. We have family in the autism spectrum. We've had a lot of neurodivergence in my family and different abilities and disabilities as well.

Rarely did I see representation in a respectful thoughtful way anywhere that I needed to see it. And so COVID happened and I finally had the time to finish my book and a few days later I get this email in my LinkedIn saying, "Would you like to be considered for the Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer role with SCBWI?" Equity and Inclusion is my life's work. This is my passion -- diversity, equity inclusion, belonging and civility.

My life's work is around this subject and cultural competence and so to see all of my worlds converge into one job in an email was magic. I'll even call it black girl magic. It was just so delightful and affirming. It was everything I wanted on paper. And then I go through the interview process that was several weeks long (after a months long process). They had a very big panel of candidates.

And throughout the interview process, I really liked everyone at SCBWI. I think when you read my bio, you will see I was formerly with Nestle, Amgen, and other big clients. I've also done a lot in the nonprofit world as an example to my children and my value system. So. I'm at this point in my career where I knew, if I were to make a move into a new position, I had to like everybody. I had to believe in my heart that the organization was serious about equity and inclusion because I'm serious and committed to the work. I have been in spaces and places where they needed a person in the title, but weren't committed to the work. It was a paid position with stuff to do, and great ideas, but the position didn't have any teeth in it. And I thank, Lin Oliver for her commitment to this. When you have the tone from the top, it's really easy to say this is who we are as an organization.

The mission is the world's children. For me, it's my kids. It's my grandkids and my great grandkids. It's how they see themselves in the world. You all, and all of our members are those ambassadors. All of us, if we think of ourselves as ancestors to our future children and grandchildren and we live a life that way, then we are propelling towards something greater than ourselves. And if you don't think your books are part of your ancestor legacy, well, they are. It's a huge part of your ancestor legacy. You know, my grandfather wrote and edited tons of books and I have them in my house and my children will have them in their homes, and it's a big deal. Whether you have children or not, we are all the ancestors of future generations on this planet. Let's leave something great for them!"

Myrna Foster

What is SCBWI doing for LGBTQ plus inclusivity?

April Powers

I don't know if anybody's seen any of our social media, but we have changed the SCBWI logo to the rainbow flag for the entire month of June, Pride Month in the USA and other countries, which is I think the first time that we've done that. And I'm actually in contact with some of the LGBTQ members on a regular and ongoing basis to figure out how we can reach out to people who are writing and providing content for LGBTQ+ families. What I would like to do and what I would like to see for any underrepresented creative is to have during their month the option to have their work highlighted. I won't speak for those members. I want to hear from those members to give them the opportunity to tell us where we're lacking and what we can do better. If you saw the "Sticks and Stones" workshop, we plan to have one called #SCBWIOurStories for LGBTQ+ and other underrepresented groups.

As I mentioned, I have LGBTQ+ family. This is really important to me – to make sure that everyone feels welcome, included, and counted. I also want to make sure that people who write, illustrate, or translate LGBTQ+ friendly books for children are able to be highlighted as well. So, if I need a book for someone who is gay, or transitioning, or has two mommies, etc. I want to know how to find those books and how to find those authors who are creating them with authenticity.

Myrna Foster

I had a person who said that she feels like students and children with disabilities are being left out of the equation. It was a teacher who teaches disabled students and she wanted to make sure that disabled creators and people who are creating content for disabled children are part of the equation. And I was wondering what we're going to do to address that.

April Powers

One of the things you will notice (I don't know if you've seen it in the past) is that we have implemented an ASL interpreters for every workshop and event that we are sponsoring and hosting. I know that won't always be sufficient for people who don't use ASL. It's a start. We want to make sure that accessibility is a part of what we do. Not everyone reads a website like a sighted person would. For every type of disability that I can think of, we want to make sure that we're highlighting them at some point in the year and making sure we accommodate where we can. You will find I am very collaborative a round this work. I cannot pretend to know everything, so please know that I welcome advice and suggestions when you see that we have missed the mark.

Jerilyn Patterson

How can we become more inclusive? What are our first simple steps that we as members can take to change our behavior or our viewpoints or whatever to create a more inclusive environment for the organization as a whole?

April Powers

I strongly recommend starting from your kitchen table as Kwame Alexander said and as Linda Sue Park says. How are you living your life? And how do you honestly feel? I'm prejudiced. Every single person is. That is part of the

human condition -- to be prejudiced because it's part of our old limbic brain that makes snap decisions for our own safety. And when you're given images for your entire life of who is and who isn't safe, then those images have a lasting impact on you. That's the importance of really good children's books that show underrepresented families and kids in normal situations, not just the sad stories. So, I highly recommend taking the time to educate yourself.

I'm going to address things in the Black Lives Matter movement and also the LGBTQ + movement. There are so many great documentaries. If you have Netflix, just search on any of the terms like racism, sexism, etc. and it's there.

For example, "13th" (plus the Oprah special after) is really an invaluable film. It's a must-see film to understand race relations in the United States. "When They See Us" and "When They See Us Now," the Oprah Special after that. Right now, there is a really interesting documentary called "Disclosure" about the history of trans life in the United States of America, which is really well done. I mean, it's a beautiful documentary. There are so many other ones. And if you're a reader, there are just so many books on this subject, like *White Fragility* by Robin Deangelo. Layla F. Saad is an interesting author (*Me and White Supremacy*). She does the Good Ancestor podcast.

Just search "top books" on racism and "top books" on being a good human right. There's great stuff on TED Talks and YouTube. What I always teach in my training is that you have to take a moment to go insert yourself in a world where you might be the minority. In the USA, for example, most major cities have a Chinatown or an LGBTQ+ area, where you'll be exposed to people who aren't like you. Often, exposure after exposure takes you to another place. Travel, of course, does that too.

What I've heard from my black friends is that everyone's trying to get a black friend right now to help them understand what's going on. I've also had great conversations with some of my friends but I've also had draining conversations where I need a year off from those friends. I think the best way to look at this moment for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous People of Color) is like a funeral. And so, somebody may not want to talk about the death, someone may not want to be there. There is just a lot of energy around it. And if you are marginalized yourself in some way, I get it, I hear you, but in the wake of George Floyd, we are going to hold off on discussing anything else for a beat. We want to make sure that we're respecting the moment. I think people are generally good inside. We will never have the answers to everything. I've been in this line of work for over 15 years and I don't know that anybody gets it 100% right. One heart at a time.

JOSIE DALUGA by Cynthia Mun

Josie was my friend. I met her about seven years ago at an SCBWI event in Las Vegas She was a writer and had written *Max Malone* and *Hospital Nation*, both of which I had the honor to read. We met at critique groups and for coffee to discuss our writing journeys. Then, a few years ago, when Josie was admitted to the 2018 Nevada Mentorship Program, she told me that she had cancer. She wanted to keep it quiet because she didn't want the other participants in the program to feel uncomfortable. She was courageous and still very focused on her writing. She continued to revise her novel even through the grueling chemotherapy. Fortunately, she completed her revision and was looking for an agent. The last I heard was that she might be in remission. Then, this week, I learned of this very sad news. I know Josie was loved by many other SCBWI members and wanted to share her obituary below and information regarding funeral services.

I can still hear Josie's wonderful laugh, and she laughed a lot because she had a great sense of humor. I will miss her.

Josephine Daluga

November 17, 1959 – August 11, 2020



Josephine Marie Daluga, age 60, of Henderson, NV passed away on August 11, 2020. Josie was born November 17, 1959 to Richard and Patricia (Eisenhart) Daluga in Tacoma, WA while Rich was stationed at Fort Lewis.

As an Army brat, Josie attended primary school in several different locations, culminating with her graduating from Heidelberg American High School in Heidelberg, Germany in 1977. She continued her education graduating with a degree in English Literature from Cornell University in 1981, then earned her MD from SUNY Upstate Syracuse Medical School in 1985.

She completed a surgical internship at Queen's Hospital in Honolulu, HI the following year, then entered a 2-year residency specializing in Emergency Medicine at Kern Medical Center in Bakersfield, CA. It was while in Bakersfield she met her future husband, David Schultz.

Josie accepted a full-time position as a Board Certified, Residency Trained ER physician at Kaiser Permanente in Oakland, CA in the Fall of 1988. David joined her in the Spring of 1989, and they were married in September of that same year. Two years later, she transferred to the ER at Kaiser Permanente in Sacramento, CA and started a family while residing in Folsom, CA in 1994.

Josie worked as a physician her entire career, spending time at Peace Health Urgent Care in Eugene, OR; Legacy Urgent Care in Henderson, NV; Concentra in Las Vegas, NV; and finally retiring in July of 2019 from the University Medical Center health care system in Las Vegas, NV. It was there she practiced her most gratifying work, providing physicals to the entire Clark County population of police officers and fire workers.

Josie was a passionate reader and author, having completed several short stories and three novels prior to her passing. Her children were the light of her life and she was terribly proud to see them thrive in the Clark County School District.

Josie is survived by her mother Patricia Daluga; husband David Schultz; daughter Alexandra Schultz; son Maximilian Schultz; sister Cathie Kohlmann (Jim); brother John Daluga (Susie); and nephew Kevin Kohlmann. She is preceded in death by her father, Richard Ballard Daluga.

Funeral Service will be held on August 22, 2020 at 1:00PM at Palm Eastern Mortuary, 7600 S Eastern Ave, Las Vegas, NV. Reception to follow at 2:00PM.

A FEW OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF UPCOMING EVENTS:

Sept 9 at 7:00 pm PST – NV Mentorship Informational Session. Meet 5 of the mentors and learn what they are looking for in a manuscript: <https://nevada.scbwi.org/events/nv-mentorship-informational-session/>

Sept 12 at 10 am PST – Nonfiction Day hosted by Iowa: <https://iowa.scbwi.org/events/non-fiction-day/>

Sept 29 at 5pm PST – Newbery Medalist Med Medina: Nurturing Your Artistic Voice:
<https://swtexas.scbwi.org/events/webinar-nurturing-your-artistic-voice/>

Oct 31 at 7 am PST – Discover the Trick for Finding an Agent – Online Agent Day:
<https://iowa.scbwi.org/events/discover-the-trick-to-finding-an-agent-online-agent-day/>

Free Digital Workshops by SCBWI : <https://www.scbwi.org/scbwi-digital-workshops-archive/>

NOTE:

This has been a special issue. Our great editor, Myrna Foster, has asked to step away from editing for personal reasons for the near future. Until we have a new editor, we'll be holding off further issues of the WriteRiders.

Inquiries for the editor position can email nevada@scbwi.org