



MECHANICS'
INSTITUTE
Since 1854

2023 Annual Report





Mission

The mission of Mechanics' Institute is to create opportunities for people to enhance their lives by gaining useful knowledge, skills, and experiences in sharing ideas with others.

Vision

Mechanics' Institute provides resources and nurtures communities that inspire people to explore, be curious, and express their creativity in our historic downtown San Francisco building and anywhere they are.



Dear Friends,

We are excited to present our annual report, featuring highlights of the last fiscal year and our continuous trajectory of growth, innovation, and positive change for Mechanics' Institute. In particular, we are pleased to share with you the ways in which we delivered this year on the main tenets of our five-year strategic plan:

Strengthening Membership and Programming

As the city continues to rebuild following the pandemic, we are happy to report that in-person visitation to the library increased 50% from the year prior and over 500 visitors toured our building. Our library services also expanded to include, for example, a more user-friendly online catalog; an expanded and member-driven eBook, eAudio, and eMagazine collection; and engaging displays and collection highlights. We added new programs such as Storytelling as a Gift, Listen to Your Next Audiobook, and eBooks Made Easy. We saw membership participation grow significantly in the last year as well, with enhanced and expanded programming and events for those of all ages. Over 4,000 attendees participated in 287 author talks, book groups, CinemaLit, writers' groups, and other programs.

Fostering a Diverse Community

In addition to expanding and diversifying our program offerings, we grew our community by diversifying our staff and volunteers and collaborating with organizations whose constituencies enrich ours. Partnerships included entities like Center for Asian American Media, Chinese Historical Society, Consulate General of Kazakhstan, Downtown SF Partnership, Fromm Institute for Lifelong Learning, LitQuake, SF Recreation and Parks, San Francisco Opera, the American Institute of Architects San Francisco, UC Berkeley Irish Studies, and Young Audiences of Northern California. We anticipate further organizational diversity and expanded partnerships to align with the evolving needs and preferences of our community in the future.

Increasing Our Visibility

Mechanics' Institute was in the news via coverage from KRON4, KALW, *The Standard*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, KTVU/Fox 2, and U.S. Chess highlighting our programs, history and offerings to members and the community at large. Moving forward, we look to new branding initiatives, revamped communication channels to keep members and potential members apprised of our offerings, and a modern and more easily accessible website with tools to help navigate the plethora of offered library, chess and event programming.

Enhancing Organizational Effectiveness

This past year we began to implement a variety of new tools to ensure that we use best practices for nonprofit organizations and membership libraries like ours. Through enhanced processes, new methods of working and training and development we are growing our ability to ensure a best in class organization to serve our members and community participants and be a best place to work for our staff.

Maintaining Financial Sustainability

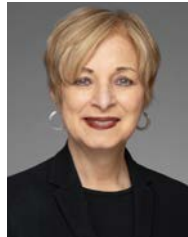
As we continue to recover from the financial impacts of the pandemic, we have begun to build a longer-range financial plan for the institution which will enhance financial health, stability and growth in the time ahead through all methods of revenue generation and investments that we employ to be excellent financial stewards of our institution.

Our mission, to cultivate knowledge, foster skills and create impactful experiences for our community, is made possible through the generosity of our members and supporters like you. We are extremely grateful for our partnership with you and look forward to sharing the exciting experiences we have planned for 2024, as the new year unfolds.

In community,



Lindsey Tonsager
Chair, Board of Trustees



Katherine Bella
Chief Executive Officer

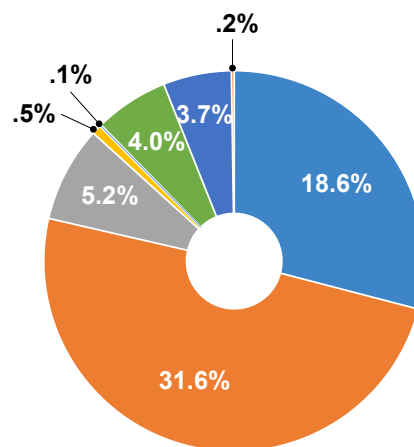
Financials

FY September 2022—June 2023

Income

Rental Income	\$802,572
Bequests, Donations, Grants	\$1,368,349
Chess Room Income	\$224,455
Event Income	\$22,207
Library Services Income	\$4,151
Membership Dues	\$173,526
In-Kind & Other Donations	\$160,107
Other Income	\$6,538
Restricted Funds Released	\$1,563,624

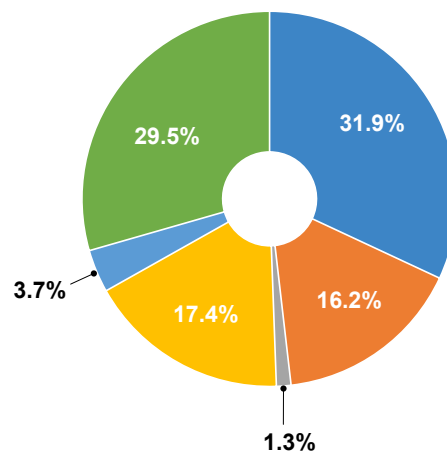
TOTAL Income **\$4,325,529**



Expenses

Library, Chess & Events	\$1,381,791
Building	\$701,683
Fundraising	\$54,204
Management and General	\$753,780
Mechanics' Institute Special Projects— Professional Fees	\$160,107
Funds for Future Program Use	\$1,273,964

TOTAL Expenses **\$4,325,529**



**This financial report does not reflect the changes in the endowment returns. For more information, please see our financial audit.

Highlights of Fiscal Year 2022-2023

Preserving Mechanics' Institute

In FY 2022-2023, we completed necessary repairs and renovations to the east wall and southwest corner of Mechanics' Institute which included the building's spiral staircase, a focal point for our 1910-built landmark building. Preserving the structural design, the work consisted of removing and replacing cracked and deteriorated brick, resurfacing structural beams, adding new plaster, molding and window frames. In addition, our meeting room space received an upgrade including improvements to our audio-visual system, installation of black-out curtains and purchase of new seat cushions.

Generous support from the National Endowment for the Humanities and our Board of Trustees ensures the safety and structural integrity of the building for the next century.



Library

Library
by the numbers



In FY 2022-2023, the library saw an overall increase in every aspect of service and visitation. While not quite pre-pandemic numbers, there was a steady increase each month as more members returned to the library and made use of the services offered. Average users per month increased by over 50% from the year prior and more than 500 visitors were introduced to the library via walk-ins and tours. Reference, research, and instructional assistance also increased significantly over the past year, and more members utilized the growing e-Resources collection than ever before.

The library team worked diligently to highlight various subjects, display undiscovered books, and

promote collections that might often be overlooked. Improvements to the online catalog helped members find materials easier and the library also brought back the much beloved magazine sale to add to the popular sales nook on the 2nd floor.

The library continually strives to serve the members and actively promotes services such as the Outreach Services for the Homebound program that provides books and audiobooks by postal mail to members who are no longer able to visit the Library. There is also a robust interlibrary loan option for materials not part of the regular collection and members are encouraged to offer purchase suggestions for materials to share with the library community.

Average unique member visits/month **1,200**

Visitors on tours or one-day passes **542**

Librarians fielded **466**
in-depth reference research questions from members

Physical book circulation **14,063**

eMaterial circulation (eBooks, eAudio, eMagazine) **2,851**

Books purchased **1,030**

Chess

As the oldest continuously operating chess club in the United States, Mechanics' Institute provided 189 class offerings attended by 2,000 individuals. Courses included Beginner Chess, Game Analysis Series, Endgame Lab, Chess Cafe, and the Women's/Girl's/Gender Expansive Individuals' Chess Class.

With an increase in the popularity of chess, the Mechanics' Institute Chess Club saw non-member participation increase by 52%, climbing to close to 3,000, with chess classes and tournaments offered growing from last year.

We welcomed 3,500 players who participated in 85 tournaments. Mechanics' Institute proudly hosted Grandmasters Anish Giri, Ramesh Pragganandhaa, Wesley So, Christopher Woojin Yoo, and Vinay Bhat; television presenters WIM Tania Sachdev and Sverre Krogh Sundbo; Play Magnus organizers Annemarta Strand Mugaas, Konrad Becker, and Will Stewart; notable author WIM Alexey Root; and special guests Kazakhstan Consulate General Azamat Abdraimov and Marshall Chess Club Vice President IM Sal Matera.

Our community enrichment and engagement activities focused on providing access to chess for the next generation:

- The 2023 San Francisco Scholastic Chess Championship returned as an in-person event after four years of remote play, drawing nearly 300 youth (ages 5-17) to Golden Gate Park, where parents and friends cheered on the players.
- Mechanics' Institute was invited by the San Francisco Unified School District and private schools to provide chess programming to youth ages 5-13. Representing diverse backgrounds, our 16 chess coaches are expanding enrichment activities by bringing chess to the classroom, providing access to playing in a structured environment.

Chess programs
by the numbers

Regular Chess Programs

members

2,514

non-members

2,953

class &
tournament sessions

274

Scholastic Chess Programs

16 schools

16 coaches

participants

267

class sessions

420



Programs & Events

Events
by the numbers

Mechanics' Institute offered 35 author talks, 23 book group sessions, 36 CinemaLit film screenings, 36 class sessions, 104 writers' sessions, and Bastille Day, and other special events and public tours. Here are a few highlights of our year:

total attendees

4,111

member attendees

2,506

non-member attendees

1,605

Highlights of Author Talks and Conversations

- A year-long exploration of Charles Yu's *Interior Chinatown* through our partnership with National Endowment for the Arts, including tours and talks, film screenings, and a grand finale featuring Celebrity Master Chef Martin Yan. Among the artists featured: Valerie Luu (writer), Andria Lo (photographer), Hieu Minh Nguyen (poet), Arthur Dong (author), and Debbie Chin (author)
- Jonathan Franzen in conversation with Thomas Brussig
- Book event with *American Midnight* author, Adam Hochschild
- 2 poetry events with Robert Hass, Henri Cole, and Brenda Hillman; and Kim Shuck and Caroline Goodwin
- Fête de Colette celebration of Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette with an author talk, book group, film, and performance with chanteuse Lorri Holt

Highlights of Spaces for Storytelling

- First Storytelling Showcase series hosted by Corey Rosen
- Family Story Hour, welcoming families and children under 8 years of age for story time and craft-making

CinemaLit—Highlights of themes explored

- Exposing Chinese Stereotypes
- Epic Black Experience Stories
- Sight & Sound's Top 100
- Silent Spring
- Novel Ideas Book-to-Screen



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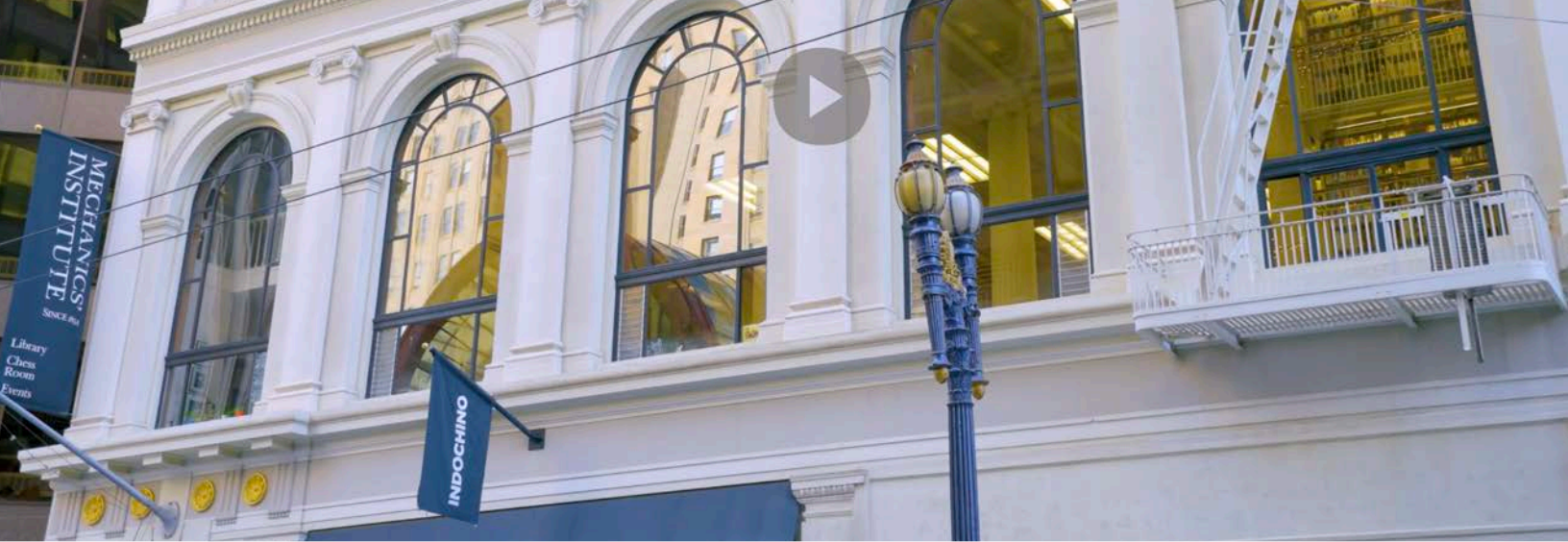
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