

**Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 90**

**Is your organization a 501(c)3 nonprofit?**

Yes

**According to your 501(c)3 letter, in what town is your official office located?**

Hartford

**Where will your project be performed or exhibited?**

Hartford

**Will this activity occur after February 1, 2023?**

Yes

**Are you a recent grantee?**

No

**Organization Name**

Harriet Beecher Stowe Center

**Organization's IRS Tax ID #**

066042822

**Principal Contact Name**

Briann Greenfield

**Title**

Executive Director

**Email**

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77 Forest St.  
Hartford, Connecticut 06105  
United States  
[Map It](#)

**Website**

<https://www.harrietbeecherstowecenter.org/>

**Amount requested this application**

\$16,850.00

**What is the organization's mission/vision statement?**

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The Stowe Center preserves and interprets Stowe's Hartford home and the center's historic collections, promotes vibrant discussion of her life and work, and inspires commitment to social justice and positive change.

### **Provide a brief history of your organization and its activities.**

The Stowe Center is a heritage tourism site, museum, program center, and research library. The Stowe Center offers museum visitors a unique experience in which they learn how the social issues of Harriet Beecher Stowe's era, the mid to late nineteenth century, still resonate in contemporary culture. The Stowe Center opened to the public in 1968. It was one of the earliest museums to focus on women's history and African-American history. Stowe's house was designated a National Historic Landmark in 2013; all three of the historic buildings on site (Stowe House, Katharine S. Day House, Visitor Center, Stowe's former carriage house) were listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979, and the Stowe House was added to the Connecticut Register of Historic Places in 1975. Recognized as a distinctive cultural institution, the Stowe Center holds the largest collection of materials related to the life and work of Stowe. As a museum with an extensive collection of artifacts and primary records, the Stowe Center hosts a robust archive of nineteenth-century American history that is accessible to its community and beyond. The Stowe Center offers onsite tours of Stowe's home, and presents public programs such as Salons at Stowe, author talks, writer's workshops, and the Stowe Prize, a book award for individuals whose published work fosters civic engagement and inspires action to make positive social change. The Stowe Center's educational programs for children include onsite field trips, instruction in classrooms offsite, and book clubs. It also participates in workshops to help K-12 educators teach African-American history in the classroom.

### **Describe the demographics of your audience/people served by your activities.**

The Stowe Center's programming targets residents of the Asylum Hill neighborhood and the Greater Hartford region. The Stowe Center offers a selection of program formats to appeal to multiple learning styles. We present a variety of perspectives and seek to attract audiences that are diverse in age, gender, race, and ethnicity by including representation in programs both for the audience and for presenters. The Stowe Center serves as a meeting spot for its community to engage in pertinent social issues, become more informed, provide possible solutions and opportunities to inspire action. It is a center of civic engagement and coalition building. We have the possibility of up to the West End's 19,000 residents; the greater Hartford population is over 122,000. As more of our programs are accessible on our website, we have the ability to reach larger national and international audiences. Generally, our population served is more than 50% female, less than 50% veteran, LGBTQIA, and disabled.

### **Describe your organization's governance.**

The Stowe Center has an elected Board of Trustees, an engaged group of volunteers from areas in the community, many of whom are experienced non-profit board members. The board meets six times a year. Each trustee participates in at least one subcommittee. The subcommittees are organized around the strategic plan. Terms are three years, renewable for one time. The board appoints a paid executive director. The last board election was held on May 12, 2020.

### **Describe the diversity of your board.**

The Board consists of thirteen members, six are identified as female, seven as male. Seven are of African-American descent and six are White.

### **What percentage of your board makes personal financial contributions to your organization?**

100% of our Board contributes personal financial contributions to the Stowe Center.

### **Project Name**

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Emergence: Reflections on Life Incarcerated

### Project Description

The Stowe Center requests \$16,850 from the Roberts Foundation to support a three-day program in October 2021 inspired by the 2020 Stowe Prize book award winner, Albert Woodfox and his memoir, *Solitary*, a story of the author's almost 45 years in solitary confinement for a crime he did not commit. The program will present an original performance piece by the Judy Dworin Performance Group titled *Emergence*. This site-specific piece references the writings of Harriet Beecher Stowe and of incarcerated women from York Correctional Institution in Niantic. Stowe described newfound freedom as entering into the light, "the rays of the sun and to the luxuriant splendor of this earth;" Dworin's performance will utilize the entire campus, creating performances around the buildings, gardens, and the *Solitary Garden*, an installation by artist, jackie sumell, a friend of Woodfox. The program is also a commentary on the ongoing pandemic and individual's relatable feelings of confinement and solitary.

### Total estimated project budget

\$30,424.00

### Project start/opening

10/09/2021

### Project end/closing

10/11/2021

### Project venue

The program will occur on our grounds and it will be accessible as a recording on the website.

### Project town

The event will take place in Hartford, CT, the Asylum Hill neighborhood in the city's west end.

### Admission fees, attendance, and activity details

If the Stowe Center can secure appropriate funds for the program, admission will be free of charge. Any deficiencies in expenses could result in \$10 per person with a \$25 "family ticket" for up to 5 people in the same family. The program will occur over the three-day Columbus Day holiday weekend, plus video documentation that will allow for ongoing audience experience on the Stowe Center and Dworin Project websites. Each performance will cap at 15 people to accommodate CDC regulations.

### How do you intend to promote/market this project?

Our marketing plan will comprise posting with local and national media outlets via press releases. Media outlets will include WTNH, the Hartford Courant, and WNPR. We will also highlight the event on our website, in e-mail blasts to subscribers, as a notice in our cyclical e-newsletters, and as ads on our social media pages of Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

### How is your organization going to use Roberts funding?

Funds from the Roberts Foundation will go towards half of the fees for ten performers; marketing for the event; photography and videography services; the sound designer and visual designer consultants; the performance fees; and set elements construction.

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### **How will Roberts support be recognized?**

The Roberts Foundation will be recognized in all of our marketing adverts, press releases, and ads as noted above. The Foundation will also be listed on the Supporters page of our website and listed on the calendar notice on our website. The Foundation will also be acknowledged in the introductions of each performance and for the online version along with a presentation of the logo in all marketing efforts.

### **What is your organization's definition of artistic excellence?**

In a letter from 1851 to *The National Era*, Harriet Beecher Stowe promoted her new fictional story, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, about the life of an enslaved African-American as he navigates the South. Stowe stated that the story would bring light to the "patriarchal institution," a duty Stowe felt bound to due to the "peril and shame as now hangs over this country." Stowe further claimed that "my vocation is simply that of a painter, and my object will be to hold up in the most lifelike and graphic manner possible slavery.... There is no argument with pictures, and everybody is impressed with them...." For Stowe, her words "painted" the atrocities of American slavery. The popularity of the book also resulted in a theater adaption, the longest-running known production in the U.S. Our program brings writing and performance art together to honor art's ability to highlight social issues and inspire public activism, partnering with professional artists who represent Hartford's robust artistic culture.

### **How does this project align with that definition, and how does it advance your mission?**

Our program celebrates Stowe as an example of how one person can make a difference. The Stowe Center strives to encourage its community to act to make positive change. Aligned with our mission to preserve and interpret Stowe's Hartford home and collections, and to promote vibrant discussion of her life and work, we believe that Stowe's activism remains relevant today. Stowe's legacy is an example for our community to engage with each other on the recent Black Lives Matter Movement and its importance as a leader in bringing about tangible change to the cultural norms that continue to feed racist policy in the United States. The program wrestles with the concept of confinement, both for those incarcerated and for those affected by the isolation of the pandemic. The program's synergetic approach to bringing together performance and literature further aligns with the Roberts Foundation recognition and of Hartford's arts community as an important entity to ensuring the city's vitality.

### **How will your audience and the community benefit from this project?**

Harriet Beecher Stowe's story illustrates the power of personal responsibility and community involvement. By highlighting the Stowe Center's work on issues surrounding prison reform and racism in America, and by celebrating the literary activism of Stowe and Woodfox through performance art, the local diverse community has an opportunity to address such issues critical to the community's well-being and preservation. Our programming allows the community to experience how historic role models, the art form of writing, and theater with social activism can work together to make a difference at home and beyond. The Stowe Center serves as a meeting spot for its community to engage in these issues, become more informed, consider possible solutions to inspire further action. It is a center of civic engagement and coalition building. In response to the ongoing pandemic, activating our park-like campus for this program invites new ways to engage audiences in a safe environment.

### **How will this project be evaluated?**

The Dworin group will offer multiple viewings of its performance; participants after each showing will receive an online survey, the data of which will serve to analyze the effectiveness and quality of the program. The survey will consist of a few questions relating to the quality of the facilitator, organization, program, and favorite lessons learned. The survey will also include an open comment section for impressions, concerns, and suggestions, as well as how they learned of the event.

### **Cover letter**

## **Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 90**

- [Stowe-Center-cover-letter-2021-Roberts-Foundation.pdf](#)

### **Board list**

- [Board-of-Trustees-9.15.2020.pdf](#)

### **IRS 501(c)3 determination letter**

- [IRS-Tax-Exempt-Ltr-June-2015.pdf](#)

### **Financial statement**

- [Stowe-Center-2019-Financial-Statements.pdf](#)

### **Last year operational budget**

- [HBSC-2020-Budget-numbers.pdf](#)

### **Current year operational budget**

- [2021-Budget-Summary.pdf](#)

### **Balance sheet**

- [HBSC\\_Nov-2020-StatementofFinancialPosition.pdf](#)

### **Project budget**

- [Roberts-Foundation-2021-Project-Budget.pdf](#)

### **Does your organization produce an annual report?**

No

### **Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?**

No

### **Have you contacted the Executive Director by email or phone to discuss this proposal?**

Yes

### **Is your cover letter signed by your senior executive? on your letterhead? with your official office address?**

Yes