



# Life Righting Collective

THE HEALING POWER OF WRITING

THE CASE FOR  
FUNDING THE  
**LIFE RIGHTING  
COLLECTIVE**



## LETTER FROM THE **CEO** EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dear life writers,

The year in review, and this year of 2025 as it unfolds, has challenged all of us in ways we could not have imagined. In a global context marked by widening inequality and geopolitical unrest, the role of organisations like the LRC has never been more urgent.

This past year, global instability – from spiralling conflicts to the entrenchment of AI to significant changes in the funding environment – has intensified. Economies everywhere are volatile, not least our own fragile and inequitable democracy. The effects on our mental health go without saying.

For myself, after eight years at the core of the LRC Exco, I have realised that something has needed to change, both in my life as I get older, and in our organisation. New blood, new ideas. Less administration and fundraising – and more (terrible term) work/life balance – for me.

So it is with mixed feelings that I have finally found a way to slowly extract myself from the running of the LRC, with the kind and generous support of my incredible compatriots. Much gratitude to Giles Griffin, Johan Jordaan and Terry Ayugi, who make up our exco, as well as to our board, Jenny Radloff, Mathapelo Mofokeng and Simon Sephton for all the care, energy and thoughtfulness you bring to the Life Righting Collective.

*"I got to turn my  
heartbreak into art and  
gain power over it. I  
was surprised to find  
that we are all the same  
despite the differences."  
- SM*



# LETTER FROM THE **CEO**

## *EXECUTIVE SUMMARY cont.*



I must also acknowledge Nina Geraghty, who bowed out of the exco recently, but continues to design eye-catching and eloquent newsletters and maintain our website. Behind the scenes we have now coralled much-needed assistance with course bookings and social media from Pumza Mabuye and Sam Banfield, while we have a new fund-raising team, driven by Monika Elias, which is taking on the challenge of sustaining our organisation.

Since the beginning of the year, this talented team has expanded our reach, raised our profile and increased our support in numerous ways.

Our main platforms of communication remain our website, [www.liferighting.com](http://www.liferighting.com), together with our Instagram and Facebook profiles, as well as our digital newsletters. At the end of February 2025, we had 720 Instagram followers (a 9.1% increase); 1401 Facebook friends; and 41 LinkedIn followers, the latter being a very new focus for us, with the corporate market in mind. Our website is now being tracked more comprehensively and is currently attracting approximately 30 000 visits per month.

We also have a new initiative, which is bearing fruit: The Writers' Way, the second series of which started in August this year. Huge gratitude to the team who have put it together, as well as the facilitators who we pay a nominal fee for their extensive skill and experience, and who are assisting us to raise funds to sponsor writers who otherwise would not be able to afford our courses.

Further developments include new and ongoing collaborations with aligned organisations such as Nalu Thando and the Open Book Festival, as well as plans to build our profile with corporate clients through raising our nascent LinkedIn presence and creating courses that will attract an employee engagement market. We also want to make more of our Patreon platform, as well as expand our storytelling platform on our website.

Through all of this, I trust that you are continuing to support yourselves through regular creative practice, something that I need to create more time for in my own life. If the LRC can help you reignite that creative spark, please consider attending a course or retreat, reviews of which you will find accompanying this letter.

*“To step away from home and to engage with the craft of writing, in such an exquisite setting held the process sacred and rich textured.” (JS)*

# LETTER FROM THE **CEO**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY cont.

Also please pass information about our courses on to anyone who might be interested, including posting on your social media platforms. We all need to reclaim our creative birthright as a resource for both individual and communal well-being.

Co-founding and co-running the LRC has been an incredible journey. I am not disappearing altogether, but will continue on my life's calling, promoting and running LRC courses to help people empower themselves through regular personal and collective creative practice.

In terms of what happens next, I need to express huge gratitude to those who have stepped up to fill the administrative and fundraising gaps created by my stepping down from most of these executive tasks: Terry and Giles, for their vision, commitment and valuable new approaches; Pumza and Sam for their enthusiastic and reliable contribution to promoting the LRC and making courses run smoothly; Monika and Annemarie for their incredible fundraising drives; Johan for keeping his finger on the pulse of our finances; Mathapelo and Judy for their valuable contributions towards thinking through The Writer's Way and fundraising; and to Graeme, Judy and Lucy for offering their writer's getaways to raffle.

And then, of course, I must thank our loyal board members: Jen Radloff, Mathapelo Mofokeng and Simon Sephton, whose wisdom and support keep us pointing forward. I also specifically want to express gratitude to Simone Le Hane for her contribution to our board over the years she was with us. Thank you, deeply. And love and inspiration to you all,



**Dawn Garisch**

PS The case for supporting the LRC, whether in kind, or with time or by making a donation, is laid out overleaf and can be shared with anyone you feel would be able to build our presence and sustain our work in any way.

*"Dawn's readings and reflections, listening to the other participants, the cobhouse and all it represents, the land art exhibition, swims, laughing and walking back home under the stars". (BC)*



## OUR **FINANCIALS**

### HOW THE YEAR HAS GONE FINANCIALLY

When we look at the financial statements for the year, we must realise that the month-by-month statement tracks the monthly activity on the bank statement, but doesn't reflect the bank balance. So a negative figure at the end of the month does not mean that we are overdrawn. In fact we don't have an overdraft facility and have never been overdrawn. The balance sheet shows the funds/assets in place at year end even more clearly.

We must once again acknowledge that it is donations that have pulled us through, not only as cash money but also in terms of supporters donating time and/or accommodation, catering or other things 'in kind'. This has allowed us to survive, despite falling income and a highly competitive grant funding environment – all influenced, as we have said, by a volatile global environment and an ailing local economy. Without that support, we would not have made ends meet in the year under review.

We will only know next year what the full effect of these global and local impacts will be on our own financial stability. But for now, we manage to make ends meet from month to month, due to a combination of donations and course income, as well as more than generous time given by our Exco and Board to our ongoing welfare. See summary below.

**Johan Jordaan**

*"This course  
made me feel less  
alone: sharing  
was good for  
me."*

Life Righting Collective													
Profit and Loss Statement													
For the period from 01/03/2024 - 28/02/2025													
	2025	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25
<b>Income</b>													
Audio courses	1,650	0	0	0	0	0	0	500	400	500	0	0	250
Courses	152,627	10,400	6,400	9,360	24,100	13,550	5,400	5,500	12,950	14,450	4,600	41,810	4,108
Donations	138,100	50	36,250	250	0	300	50	250	50	100,050	50	750	50
FUG Donations	8,735	800	100	1,385	0	300	100	300	100	4,100	0	550	1,000
My School	3,971	228	364	665	296	0	620	409	268	236	230	360	295
Patreon	32,210	3,000	3,600	0	5,300	2,310	0	5,200	2,400	4,900	0	5,500	0
Raffle	2,400	0	0	0	0	0	0	400	2,000	0	0	0	0
Scanscan	1,932	966	966	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total — Income	341,626	15,444	47,680	11,660	29,696	16,460	6,170	12,559	18,168	124,236	4,880	48,970	5,703
<b>Cost of Sales</b>													
COS - Catering	1,600	0	0	0	0	800	0	0	0	800	0	0	0
COS - Facilitation fees	73,550	7,200	0	8,850	1,100	17,000	8,700	0	0	25,100	2,600	2,300	700
COS - FUGS	2,100	0	0	400	0	200	400	200	0	900	0	0	0
COS - Venue costs	16,181	2,196	0	2,700	5,300	0	0	3,108	0	0	0	2,877	0
Total — Cost of Sales	93,431	9,396	0	11,950	6,400	18,000	9,100	3,308	0	26,800	2,600	5,177	700
Gross profit	248,194	6,048	47,680	-290	23,296	-1,540	-2,930	9,251	18,168	97,436	2,280	43,793	5,003
<b>Expenses</b>													
Accounting fees	1,727	0	0	0	0	0	1,157	0	0	0	0	0	570
Administration fees	96,212	9,000	7,000	11,000	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000	16,000	9,000	0	9,212
Advertising and social media	34,411	3,700	4,800	1,300	2,435	2,167	1,481	2,824	4,960	4,384	2,700	0	3,660
Bank charges	2,642	233	201	194	201	212	239	255	227	204	243	222	213
Legal fees	1,323	0	0	1,323	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Subscriptions	3,496	0	0	0	0	0	3,496	0	0	0	0	0	0
Website maintenance & hosting	12,018	250	628	3,239	439	439	439	439	1,439	439	2,039	439	1,789
Total — Expenses	151,829	13,183	12,629	17,055	10,075	9,818	13,813	10,517	13,626	21,027	13,982	661	15,444
Net surplus (deficit)	96,366	-7,134	35,051	-17,345	13,221	-11,358	-16,743	-1,266	4,542	76,409	-11,703	43,132	-10,441

Life Righting Collective

**Balance Sheet**

As at 28/02/2025

	28/02/2025
<b>Assets</b>	
Cash & cash equivalents	126,425.36
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>126,425.36</b>
<b>Equity</b>	
Retained earnings	126,425.36
<b>Total liabilities &amp; equity</b>	<b>126,425.36</b>





## OUR **WHY**

### THE CASE FOR FUNDING THE LIFE RIGHTING COLLECTIVE

South Africa is a country still reckoning with generational trauma, systemic inequality and invisible suffering. While policy and advocacy remain critical tools for transformation, the emotional and psychological repair needed at an individual and community level is often ignored.

The Life Righting Collective exists to fill this gap.

Through our life writing programmes, people process grief, rewrite harmful narratives, build self-worth and rediscover connection. The impact reaches far beyond the individual. It strengthens families, workplaces and communities. We believe storytelling is a birthright, not a luxury. We bring it to those who have been silenced.

We offer a non-medical, low-cost, human-centred intervention that helps people make sense of their lives through writing.

*“Writing is not therapy. But it is therapeutic.” - DG*

*“I was quite surprised at how much emotion came up for me during the course. The course had a powerful effect on me. The facilitation was fantastic. The space felt very safe to share my vulnerabilities.”  
(MH)*





## OUR **DIFFERENCE**

### WHAT MAKES OUR WRITING COURSES DISTINCTIVE



Our primary purpose is not to help people edit their work into publishable manuscripts, but to help people live better lives by giving them the tools to make sense of their own stories and hold space for others.

#### **MOST WRITING COURSES**

- Skill or craft focused
- Often expensive and exclusive
- Individual gain: publishing, career, fame
- Writing as an art or business
- Western-centric, English-dominant

#### **THE LIFE RIGHTING COLLECTIVE**

- Healing and self-awareness focused
- Sliding scale access with donor-subsidised places
- Collective impact: inclusion, compassion, belonging
- Writing as a mental health and social repair intervention
- Multilingual, diverse, South African, socially conscious

“I feel that when we realise we’re not alone in our journey... because effectively the people around us are... strangers within a community of love... all of a sudden we connect through this journey of sharing your writing.” - RP



# THE **CHANGE** WE MAKE

## HOW WE SEEK TO HAVE AN IMPACT



### **The Problem:**

South Africans live in a society marked by trauma, inequality and emotional isolation. Traditional systems of support (mental healthcare, social services) are often inaccessible, under-resourced or culturally inappropriate.

### **Our Long-term Impact:**

A more compassionate, resilient and literate society, where stories heal, rather than divide.

### **Our Intervention:**

The LRC offers facilitated life writing courses, retreats, online workshops, mentorship and publishing opportunities. These provide:

- A safe space for reflection and expression
- The tools to deconstruct and reconstruct personal and community narratives
- Creative literacy, not just language literacy.

### **The Change:**

- Individuals become more confident, emotionally grounded and connected
- Diverse stories are published and circulated, promoting social cohesion
- Participants are often transformed into facilitators, multipliers of impact.

*“Meeting others who are also out on their edge, going deeper and exploring new ways of being in the world. I got courage from their courage.”*





## WHAT WE **OFFER**

### OUR PROGRAMMES & FUNDING TARGETS



#### Writers' Way Guest Facilitator course series

Predominantly online course series (six workshops) designed to deepen writing practice, build community and reach, as well as generate income for the LRC.

Funding Needed: **R46,920**

#### Anthology 1: This Is How It Is (digital version)

Creating an eBook of our first anthology, originally published in collaboration with Jacana in 2018.

Funding Needed: **R20,000**

#### Anthology 2 (print & digital)

Publishing diverse South African voices from our course alumni, ensuring representation, preservation and national dialogue through storytelling.

Funding Needed: **R167,000**

#### How to Self-Publish (video)

Empowering previously silenced voices with tools to independently and collaboratively publish and share their stories. Funding Needed: **R14,850**

#### Core Operating Costs

12-month runway to fund administration, team coordination, facilitator training, digital infrastructure, outreach and marketing, together with monthly in-person writing courses, retreats and collaborations with the corporate and NGO sector.

Funding Needed: **R300,000**

**TOTAL INVESTMENT REQUIRED: R548,770**





## OUR **BENEFICIARIES**

### WHO BENEFITS FROM OUR PROGRAMMES

#### **Our Beneficiaries:**

- Survivors of violence and abuse
- Unemployed or underemployed youth and adults
- People dealing with mental health challenges, including caregivers
- Specific marginalised or vulnerable groups: the queer community, the disabled, artists, pensioners
- NPO staff and community workers seeking resilience tools
- HR departments looking for employee engagement debriefing tools.

#### **The People Who Benefit from our Programmes:**

Our workshops are inclusive by design, accessible via subsidised rates and facilitated by trained writers and wellness practitioners.

*“It was a great way to learn to use my emotions and describe them better. It was fun learning how to write from a place of hurt/loss without it being traumatic. I didn't realise how much I had to say or write about.” (LP)*



## OUR **MONEY AIMS**

### WHY FUND US: OUR CURRENT FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS

- Demand for our workshops and collaborations is growing
- We have a tested model with research-backed outcomes and testimonials
- We have proven lean, community-based delivery can work
- We are ready to scale but require operational stability to do so.

#### **Our Proof of Impact: Information for Funders:**

- Over 950 course participants across South Africa over eight years
- First anthology published and reprinted (1800 copies): This is How it Is (with new one pending)
- Peer-reviewed validation: research study in the British Medical Journal
- Alumni feedback and documented personal transformations – see our Testimonials here.
- Funded collaborations with educational institutions, NPOs and community groups

*“I am still blown away at how writing about food brought to life so many beautiful, funny and painful memories. I also enjoyed the setting and listening to other participants’ stories which gave me insight into their lives as well.”*  
(ZM)





## HOW **FUNDERS** CAN HELP

### HOW FUNDERS CAN HELP EXPAND OUR SCOPE & REACH



- ▶ Fund a full programme or one of our funding targets (e.g. our second Anthology or the Writers Way 2025)
- ▶ Cover our monthly operational costs for a set period
- ▶ Sponsor places for participants from under-resourced communities
- ▶ Match-fund public donations or contribute to marketing costs
- ▶ Invest in scaling our model digitally and nationally.

*"I had eye-opening moments during the course - during the creation of my paper soul journey and the writing of the poem. The guidance and facilitation of Nicole and Giles each individually worked perfectly." (DL)*





# Life Righting Collective

THE HEALING POWER OF WRITING

## OUR **CONTACT** DETAILS

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**visit our website here:**

[www.liferighting.com](http://www.liferighting.com)