

COMMUNITY • CULTURE • CREATIVITY

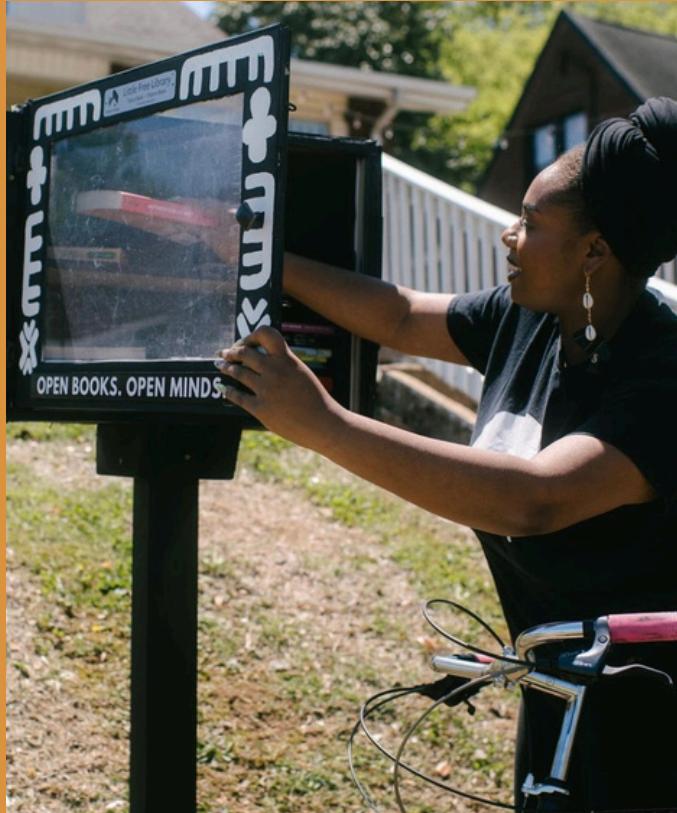
THE  
BOTTOM

# ANNUAL REPORT 2025

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# BEHIND THE BOTTOM



## OUR STORY

Founded by Dr. Enkeshi El-Amin, a local sociologist studying race, place, and Black Communities, The Bottom was named after the first Black neighborhood in Knoxville that was demolished by urban renewal and institutionalized racism in the 1950s. El-Amin conducted interviews and archival research and found resounding feelings of displacement and loss of place amongst Knoxville's Black elders and youth. She wanted to do more than just conduct a study, she wanted to make an impact, and thus the idea of The Bottom began to take form.

Dr. El-Amin's efforts joined those of Brandi Augustus, Pumpkin Starr, and Ty Murray of Black Mama's Bail Out, along with Jazmin Witherspoon and other Black women in Knoxville who also sought to do meaningful work. Today, The Bottom stands as a collective working to reclaim and reimagine Black space in Knoxville. What initially started with a youth sewing and entrepreneurial program in 2019, has grown into a hub of Black culture and togetherness. With the support of our community, our space has grown to include a tea room, podcast studio, expanded sewing studio, and bookstore. With the belief that Blackness is neither essentialist nor static, but relational, dynamic and changeable, The Bottom stands as a multi-use place to foster change and provide a sense of Black safety. The Bottom welcomes locals and newcomers to town.

## OUR MISSION

The Bottom is a nonprofit cultural organization serving our community through our Black-affirming bookshop and arts space. Rooted in place justice, we stand to build **community**, celebrate **culture**, and engage the **creativity** of Black people in Knoxville. We strive to cultivate a sense of belonging, togetherness and safety for Black people in Knoxville and beyond.

# MEET THE TEAM



## ENKESHI EL-AMIN

Enkeshi El-Amin is a community sociologist in Atlanta, Georgia. She is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology & Anthropology at Agnes Scott College. Her research, exploring the link between race and place, is focused on how racial practices shape Black places and how Black people in turn are involved in practices that define, contest, and reimagine places.

FOUNDING DIRECTOR



## TY MURRAY

Ty Murray is a multi-faceted artist and activist. As a modern day Renaissance woman rooted in the rural south, her art reflects who she is, where she's from and what she aspires to see in the world. She chooses to create art that challenges, art that confronts, art that is loud, bold, colorful and soulful. She wears many hats, but works to elevate The Bottom as a dynamic arts and cultural center in East Knoxville.

DIRECTOR OF ART & COMMUNICATION



## ANNASTASIA WILLIAMS

Annastasia is a lifelong reader, emerging writer, and creative who enjoys sharing the joy of reading with community members. As the Bookshop Director, Annastasia curates the inventory in the Bookshop to highlight Black authors and Black-centered stories for all ages. Annastasia amplifies Black authors and stories through highlighting a variety of genres, engaging bookshop events, and author talks. She is passionate about abolishing book banning and censorship, and she advocates for the freedom to read for everyone.

BOOKSHOP DIRECTOR



## KALIL WHITE

Kalil White is an Environmentalist and Multimedia Artist based in Knoxville, TN. Her artistic practice focuses on bringing together her passions for the environment, Black culture, and women's experiences, creating work that celebrates the intersection of these vital elements. With a Bachelor of Science in Biology and a Master of Science in Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications, Kalil's career has been deeply rooted in educating and empowering marginalized communities through environmental sustainability and redemptive community work.

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

# MEET THE TEAM



## NATORI MASON

My first engagement with The Bottom was in 2023, through their ceramics program. After learning more about the history and mission behind this space, I couldn't help but continue to come back. I always jumped at opportunities to help out or attend events, then I joined the team as a full time employee in September. I'm grateful to work with people that constantly uplift and support each other, especially our fellow community members. Whether I'm here to work, create, or engage with the community, The Bottom makes me feel at home.

COMMUNICATIONS  
COORDINATOR



## TORI THATCHER

I moved to Knoxville one year ago and began working at a predominately white centered bookshop when a friend mentioned The Bottom. I stopped by and Natori gave me a tour, they made me feel so comfortable and welcome I knew I needed to get involved. I attended a few events and the passion I felt led me to share with Annastasia how much I was struggling at my job. Soon enough I was meeting the whole team and have since been welcomed into this community that shares such a beautiful vision for the future. It has been incredible to combine by love of books and love for community!

BOOKSHOP  
COORDINATOR



## DASH LEE

"Do what U can, when U can, while U can"

These famous words are straight from the mouth of our resident "funcle" Dash Lee, who is a man of many talents! Among being a local chef and contractor, he has a background in youth empowerment and engagement, and also serves as the sound engineer for our Community Podcast Studio.

SOUND ENGINEER &  
SPACE MAINTENENCE

# Reflecting on 5 Years with The Bottom's Past & Current Directors





Enkeshi El-Amin,  
Founding Director  
2020-Present

"I don't exaggerate when I say, I am continuously impressed by what comes out of The Bottom, by the work that we do, by the community that we're building, by the beauty that we continue to showcase as representative of black life, past present and future.

The Bottom crew is like no crew I've ever been a part of, the dedication, the commitment, the care that comes through in how our staff do this work is exceptional.

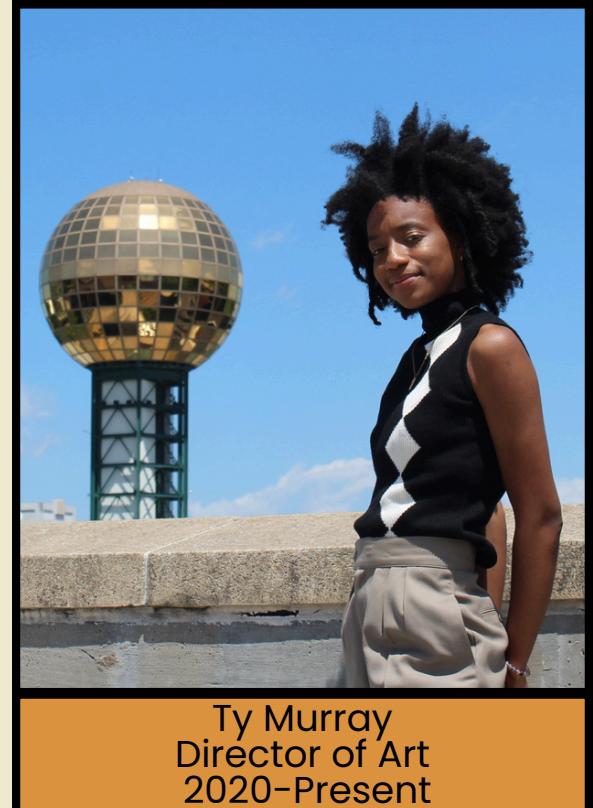
The Bottom was a vision that I had years ago, rooted in love and community and research, rooted in my understanding of how race intersects with place to create struggle but also deep connection. But this is not work that I at any part of this journey have done by myself. This is always and has always been worked in and with community. As we celebrate five years, I am overwhelmed with amazement, with joy, with reverence and remembrance for what The Bottom was, is and will be

I can't believe it some days when I think about how Sew It Sell It got started and how the joy and achievements of those first 15 kids made me want to keep going. We turned 40 books on a folding table into thousands of titles curated on shelves that sometimes don't feel like enough. When we started Black Creatives MeetUp, we didn't know we were building a stage for Tiny Bookshop Concerts. Writing workshops, a literary Magazine, a community Art Gallery, a Ceramic Studio, Our own Building; Those were dreams, too many big ideas, but those ideas nurtured, reestablished and showcased talent held deep deep in our bodies and beautiful minds. I'm not in Knoxville everyday but when I see the pictures, the richness of the shelves, gatherings in the space, my soul sometimes feels transported. I can't wait to see what the next five years will bring.

Today 5 years ago, 70 years ago and 50 years from now, The Bottom lives."

"My time with The Bottom has been a life-giving journey. To not only help plant a seed but to also bear witness to its blooms & blossoms, has been deeply transformational.

In 2020, I came to The Bottom during a season of transition. I was on my way out of Knoxville, headed to Atlanta in search of a larger cultural community and to continue working in the music booking industry. When my career in music booking came to a halt during the pandemic, I found myself laid off and directionless. I realized I wasn't the only one struggling to pivot with COVID19 changes, and I offered my creative services for free to community members in need – that's how I met Enkeshi, our Founding Director.



Ty Murray  
Director of Art  
2020-Present

I had one meeting with Enkeshi, to hear more about her vision and to clarify where she needed support. She shared her research findings, her conviction to make a change, and her hopes of creating somewhere beautiful, welcoming and sustaining for Black communities here. I still had my sights set on Atlanta, but that conversation about the importance of reclamation, ownership, and belonging was all it took for me. I told her to "say less gurl, I'm here, let's do it!" And haven't looked back since.

While navigating many realms of structural marginalization in this country, I've learned that the challenges we face often have less to do with who we are, and more to do with the access we've been denied. That realization has shaped my belief in the importance of cultivating pathways development, visibility, and connection.

It's the power of a dream, a collective vision, and the warmth of a space that can make you want to call a city home. It can inspire you to invest, to push through obstacles, to root yourself somewhere you once felt ready to leave. That's the magic of The Bottom to me. Over the past five years, my roles have evolved along with our organization, but my belief in and commitment to this space have only deepened. With the help of ETHDC, I've purchased a home in East Knoxville to be closer to The Bottom. I've strived to actualize myself as a creative, storyteller, and artivist. And I continue working to reimagine everyday possibilities, for myself and for my community.

I'm passionate about spaces where artists can grow personally, professionally and socially. In my own practice, it's never just about what I create, it's also about how I create spaces of empowerment, access, and affirmation. I've found all that and more with The Bottom. To pour so much into a space that also pours back into you is rare. It's been nothing short of a blessing.



Pumpkin Starr  
Development Director  
2021-2022

"The beginnings of The Bottom, for me, began on Randolph St. A basement level bookshop in a shared office with a room for community events, along with storage for a sewing camp. They were making it work though! I heard there was a space being curated by Black women to address displacement history in Knoxville, along with supporting Black artists. I wanted to help; I wanted to be part of it.

Very shortly afterwards, I began hosting a recurring fundraiser for a bail fund for Black women, in which I named after my grandmother who previously passed. I shared with them how my grandmother used to sell fish sandwiches and how I wanted to fundraise with joy, along with reverence for our ancestors.

They immediately poured into the vision- Ty made a flyer with her elder cooking and Enkeshi connected with a local vendor to provide the fish. Folks showed up, we raised money, we made connections, and I fell in love with what the Bottom was about—having a space for us and by us; for whatever we need for our community. It was the support and the autonomy for me!

After seeing the eventual development of the area looming, we knew we needed to make moves to secure our space and we also wanted to create a launchpad for ourselves as staff. We launched our first campaign to buy the current building and to have paid staff. It was a success and now The Bottom is on Magnolia Ave, secured, and still has staff. This is so much for a Black led community space anywhere but most definitely in a city like Knoxville. I will always feel emboldened by what we did together— I mean, we did some blood-sweat-tears kind of work for a place we loved.

I hope to see The Bottom continue to be a praxis for what folks need in Knoxville and the bravery to seek it in community. I hope it continues to curate culture and connection, like it did for me. I also hope it continues to be sustained and beloved...Black spaces deserve it!

FOREVER BOTTOM CREW"

"When I first joined The Bottom's team, we were in a season of major transition. We had just purchased the house off Magnolia, but the headquarters was still at the old warehouse. My role was to expand The Bottom's bookstore and literary offerings, a job I had never done before. Over the course of four months, Pumpkin, Ty, Enkeshi, and I worked tirelessly to prepare The Bottom for its permanent Grand Opening, a task that required us to think not only about the immediate future, but long-term success as well. A team of just four Black Femmes did the impossible, updated the landscaping, applied fresh wallpaper, wrote grants, stopped leaky toilets, bought books and organized the new space; the preparations were endless.

However, we were never alone. Our community greatly supported our efforts. They, who raised money, painted and dug alongside us, or lended their resources and time in ways too numerous to recount.

As I have returned to The Bottom time and time again following my departure, I am always hit with a wave of emotion for just how much it has grown. I remember when the Podcasting studio was a dream caught up in logistics, or when the first group of Sew It Sell It kids got to use the new space, or the birth of the Ceramics Program! And of course, I would be remiss not to mention the ways that Annastasia has taken the foundations of the bookstore and grown it to include programming such as the Read and Sip at Peter Kern's Library, and the various incredible authors she has brought into the space.

What I loved so much about working at the Bottom was that it had the capacity to lift up everyone around it. Embarking on this new role, I had the faith of the people around me, I found community that I never knew existed, and through The Bottom, I learned and grew and then learned and grew some more. It required so much from me and gave even more in return. I wouldn't have the opportunities that came after if it weren't for the powerful work done here. Four years later, I am a better writer, leader, reader, and community member because of The Bottom.

When I pray for hopes and wishes for the future, I do so in the form of gratitude for the present. I am grateful The Bottom has continued to have funding that allowed them to keep their doors open these past few years. I am grateful that The Bottom remains an unapologetically Black space that supports all community members. I am grateful for the team of people who have continued this work, both veterans and newcomers. I am grateful for their continued health and well-being. I am grateful for the opportunities that have already come and those that are on their way! Congrats on another year of success!

Keep on growing you Mountain Baddies, You!"



Jazmin Witherspoon  
Director of Literary Operations  
2021-2022



Anastasia Williams,  
Bookstore Director  
2022-Present

"I can't imagine a time where I didn't love reading. From an early age, reading opened up new worlds for me, helped me imagine new paths, modeled decisions to tough situations, and helped me learn what love was and what it was not. Reading taught me so much about myself, about others, and about the world around me. I found so much comfort between the pages of countless books throughout my childhood and adolescence.

I attribute reading and literature as one of the main driving forces of my life, and one that has led me to The Bottom. As I got older, I realized how important it was to hear storytelling from Black voices. Again, my life was expanded by the words of authors like Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, and more. But over time, life gets in the way of the things that ground us.

The Bottom found me right when I needed it — after graduate school and dealing with a challenging professional situation. I didn't realize how starved of community I was until The Bottom welcomed me with open arms several years ago. I didn't realize how much I needed to retreat back into literature again. And when I walked into the bookshop on Magnolia Ave., it felt like I was turning a page and starting a new chapter of my life as I thumbed across the spines of so many incredible books by Black authors. I had to do my part to keep this vital community space open and available. Now, I can say that The Bottom has been one of the most special gifts, and it's the gift that keeps giving to both its staff and supporters.

As Bookshop Director for the last 3 years, I have been able to build upon the incredible foundation laid by Enkeshi and the rest of the founding Bottom Crew. In that time we have introduced our LitKidz program, started multiple book clubs and our silent Sip N Read event with Peter Kern Library, hosted a wide variety of authors, launched a podcast, continued our monthly book subscription, forged many new community partnerships, developed writers through our Write It Out program, advocated against book banning and censorship across our state, and more. Not only has the bookshop seen amazing growth in my tenure, but I have grown personally as well.

Through The Bottom, I have reconnected with my love of reading. In my role, I have been able to pass along the joy of reading and literature to so many in our community, especially our LitKidz, and uplift the voices of so many Black authors across genres. I have expanded my creative practice, and built a life for myself beyond work and survival. I have developed true friendships with colleagues that I respect and admire, and together we have reimagined what a work environment can be. I am inspired everyday working at The Bottom and I can't wait to see what it will be like 50 years down the road."

"Five years of Community , Culture and Creativity, and we are just getting started! When I joined the team in Summer 2022, I had no idea of the amazing things we would be able to accomplish by now. And honestly, there are so many ideas, projects and dreams yet to be fulfilled within The Bottom.

I came into the team with an idea of how nonprofits operate and how we serve our community, but that was all flipped upside down in the best way possible.

Working here has truly transformed my view of work places and how I feel heard as an employee. The Bottom has allowed so many of my passions and dreams to come true and I am forever grateful to this space and community.

The Bottom has become a healing and restorative place that allows for many others like me to dream bigger than these walls can hold. To reimagine a space in East Knoxville that believes in the power and beauty of our community, is more than I could hope to be a part of. Throughout the years, I've witnessed so many people walk through these doors and feel at ease that there is a space that belongs to them and their identity.

I want more people to walk through these doors and find something that has been buried, something that needs to be heard by others, and something that they knew they were destined to do. I know there are many memories, laughter and joy yet to be fulfilled within this space, I can't wait to witness them all."



Kalil White  
Director of Operations  
2022-Present

# OUR IMPACT

**3,025**

Total books sold at  
The Bottom

**256**

Youth engaged  
through  
programming

**98**

Events Held

**134**

Artists & creatives  
instructing, performing,  
exhibiting or participating  
in events with The Bottom

**140**

Pieces of art  
exhibited

**\$50,397.49**

Raised through  
donations

**54**

Partnerships

**888**

Donors

# IMPACT STATEMENTS

## LitKidz, Participant Parent

We LOVE The Bottom! We can always find great books with characters that look like our family. My son gets excited when we drive by, and we always invite family members to the LitKidz programs. The activities are fun and we always talk about the experience when we refer back to the book.

Beyond positive. Being able to enter a space and easily pick out books representing different races, cultures, belief systems, etc. is so valuable and important.

Exposing my son to a plethora of books featuring diversity has helped teach valuable lessons about equality and justice and the fight to achieve those. I find the quality of books to be better than our local library and appreciate it. We only made it to one LitKidz program, it was the highest quality entertainment. Even I enjoyed it."



## Sarah Taylor, Book Club Participant

I experience such growth and community through The Bottom Bookclub! As someone whose education did not center Black authors, the bookclub provides me with exposure to significant literature and engagement through intentional discussion. The conversation around Octavia Butler's "Parable of the Sower" was one of my favorites; it brought old and new fans of the work to a shared table where we discussed the parallels between Butler's vision of 2025 in her futuristic book the world we live in today.

After a smaller gathering around Danielle Evans' "The Office of Historical Corrections", I walked away with a deeper appreciation for the social commentary in the short stories as well as connections to new people in my community. Annatasia always pulls poignant reads across broad genres and, through Banned Book Club, we take collective action advocate for unrestricted access to lifechanging literature!



# IMPACT STATEMENTS



## Margo Miller, Arrowmont Windgate Fellow

"This workshop gave me so many ideas. I'm leaving with renewed excitement for how these techniques can expand and connect my work. But perhaps the biggest gift was the reminder that community is where creativity truly flourishes.

I've long known the power of learning in community, but this workshop reinforced that in such a joyful way. We encouraged one another, shared stories, and laughed as our fabrics bloomed blue. We shared stencils, techniques, ideas, and advice.

The Bottom's support didn't just send me to learn a new technique—it placed me in a room where connection could take root. That connection is already growing. I met a woman from Knoxville who hopes to collaborate on an indigo workshop at The Bottom next year. And inspired by this experience, I've already hosted one Indigo party with some of the dye I brought back home."

## ZaKiya McGhee, Sew It Sell It

"I have been involved in the Sew It Sell It program for about five years now, and my passion for sewing continues to grow. My favorite things to make are bags. I really enjoyed the time we spent creating our own fabric designs, and I hope we can do it again. This year, I want to work on building my own business website to learn more about running a micro business.

I also talked to my principal about starting a sewing club at my school, which I hope will inspire other students to explore their creativity in sewing like I have. Last year, I was a junior counselor in the program, and I had a great time helping out and learning more about the different kinds of people around me. I would love to do that again this summer! Sew It Sell It is a fantastic program, and it has helped me grow both creatively and personally. I can't wait to see what new things I can create and learn this year."



# NEW PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS

h u s m u s  
s t u d i o

ALTAR'D STATE



S O U  
A R T S  
H

WE'RE EXTREMELY GRATEFUL  
FOR EACH ORGANIZATION AND INDIVIDUAL  
WHO SUPPORTS OUR SPACE !

# 98

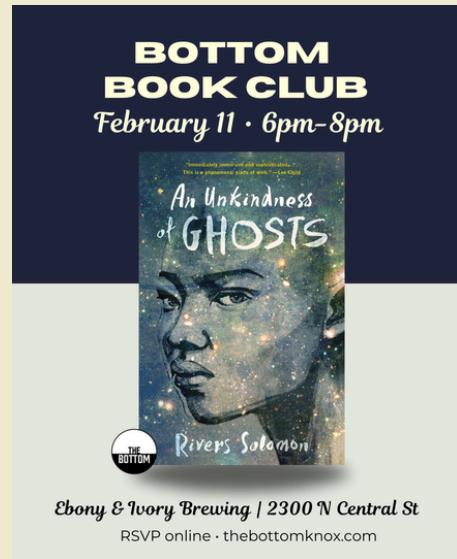
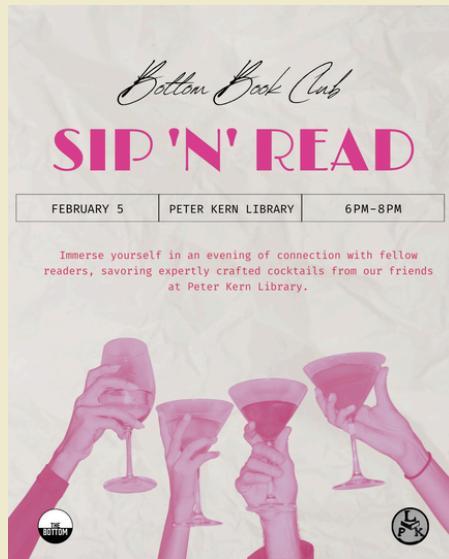
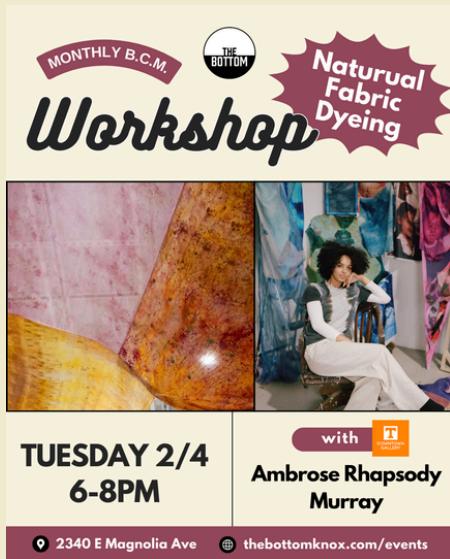
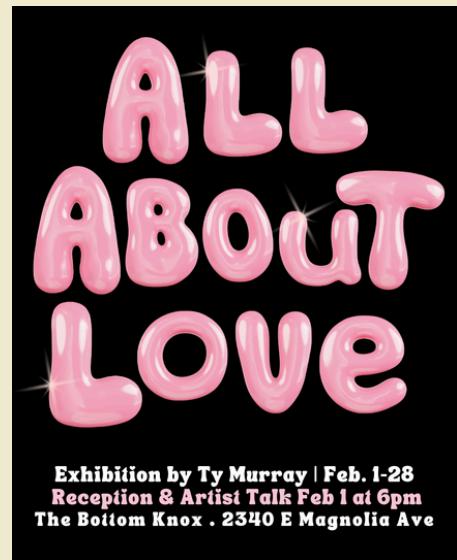
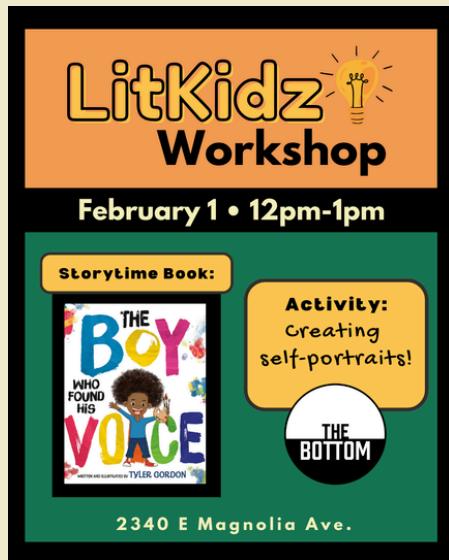
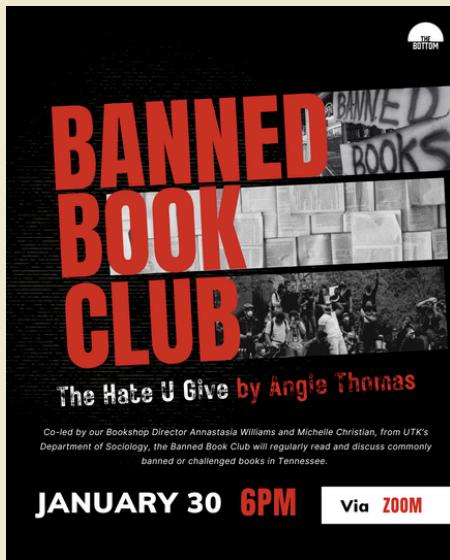
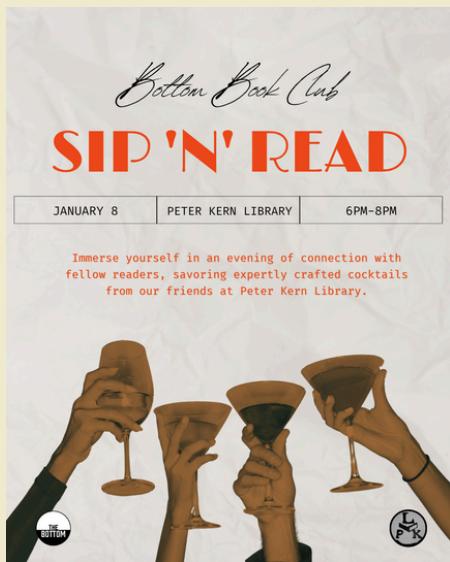
## Events this year!

Our space was created as a place for the community to gather, create, fundraise, and launch their own passions.

In 2023 we held 76 events. We ended 2024 with 97 events, and this year with 98. We continue to be amazed by the passion of our staff, partners, community members and volunteers who made this possible!



# 2025 Events with The Bottom



# 2025 Events with The Bottom

**Galentine's CANDLE MAKING**

Thursday 2/13 • 6-8pm

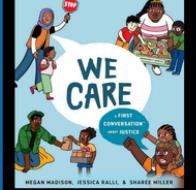


BYOB (21+)  
2340 E Magnolia Ave

**THE BOTTOM**

**LitKidz Workshop**

February 22 • 12pm-1pm

**Storytime Book:**  


2340 E Magnolia Ave.

**THE BOTTOM**

**WRITE IT OUT**  
**NEW SESSION**  
**WRITE IT OUT**  
**NEW SESSION**



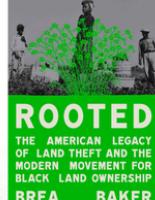
**FEBRUARY 26**  
6PM-8PM

Transformative explorations of self-expression & mental well-being through empowering sessions led by Shade Tree Therapy.

2340 E Magnolia Ave  
thebottomknox.com

**AUTHOR TALK** with Brea Baker

Feb. 28 6-7:30pm

2340 E MAGNOLIA AVE

**THE BOTTOM**

**BANNED BOOK CLUB**

**The Black Flamingo**  
by Dean Atta

**MARCH 1** 2-4PM

Knox County Library - Burlington Branch  
4614 Asheville Hwy

**THE BOTTOM**

**JOIN US FOR AN OATHBOUND**  
**MIDNIGHT RELEASE**

**PARTY**  
MARCH 3 10pm - 12am

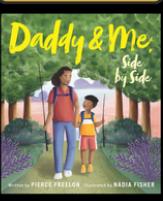


**THE BOTTOM**

**GAMES, SNACKS & GIVEAWAYS!**  
2340 E MAGNOLIA AVE.

**LitKidz Workshop**

March 15 • 12pm-1pm

**Storytime Book:**  


**Activity:**  
Building a family tree!

**THE BOTTOM**

2340 E Magnolia Ave.

**MARCH B.C.M.**  
**Workshop**  
**Intro to Crochet**



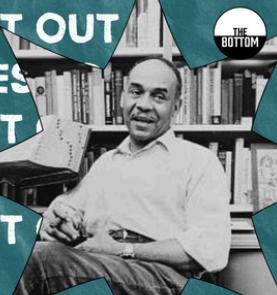
12-2pm  
March 22 & 23\*  
\*this is 1 class split into 2 days, tickets include both days!

with  
**Jazmin Witherspoon**

**THE BOTTOM**

2340 E Magnolia Ave  
thebottomknox.com/events

**WRITE IT OUT**  
**NEW SESSION**  
**WRITE IT OUT**  
**NEW SESSION**



**MARCH 26**  
6PM-8PM

Transformative explorations of self-expression & mental well-being through empowering sessions led by Shade Tree Therapy.

2340 E Magnolia Ave  
thebottomknox.com

# 2025 Events with The Bottom

**MARCH B.C.M.**  

## Workshop



**Saturday 3/29 11 am-1 pm** 

**with** 



**AUTHOR TALK** with Meka James & Karmen Lee

**March 29 2-4PM**



 **EBONY & IVORY BREWING**  
2300 N CENTRAL ST

**Women's History Tea Party**  
Sunday, March 30th / 2-4 PM

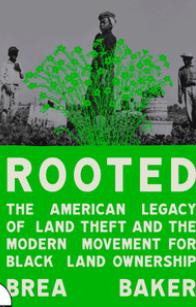




*Celebrating the Women Who Light Our Paths  
In Honor of Christi Kirk*



**BOTTOM BOOK CLUB**  
April 10 · 6pm-8pm



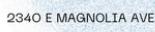
**ROOTED**  
THE AMERICAN LEGACY OF LAND THEFT AND THE MODERN MOVEMENT FOR BLACK LAND OWNERSHIP  
**BREA BAKER**



**AUTHOR TALK** with MultiMind

**April 12 2-4pm**





**APRIL B.C.M.**  

## Workshop

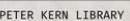
 

**Sunday 4/13 4pm - 5:30pm** 

**with** 

**Bottom Book Club**

## SIP 'N' READ

**APRIL 16**  **6PM-8PM**

Immerse yourself in an evening of connection with fellow readers, savoring expertly crafted cocktails from our friends at Peter Kern Library.



**VIRTUAL**

## BANNED BOOK CLUB

**The Black Flamingo by Dean Atta**

**APRIL 17** **6-8PM**

**LitKidz Workshop**

**April 19 • 11am-12pm**

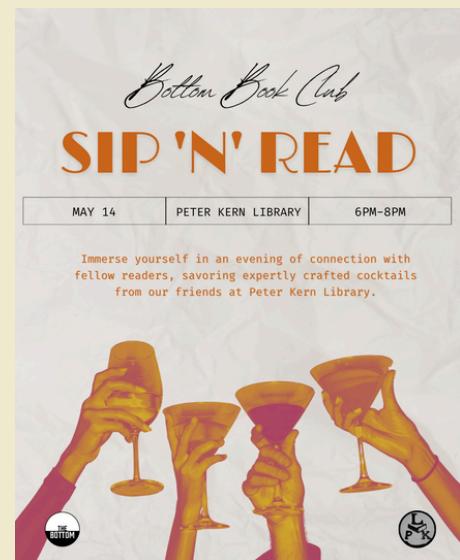
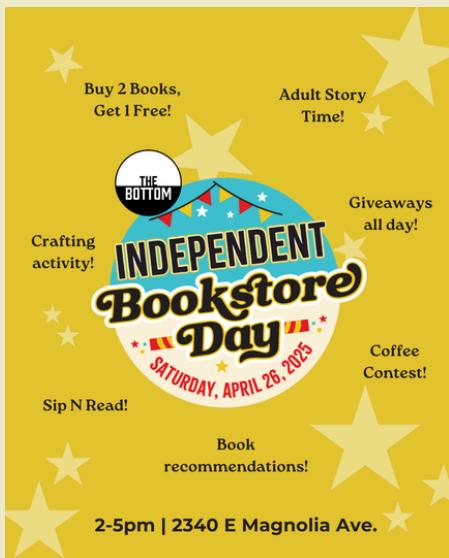
**Storytime Book:** 

**Activity:** Tea party and decorating a fairy!





# 2025 Events with The Bottom



# 2025 Events with The Bottom

**WRITE IT OUT**  
**NEW SESSION**  
**WRITE IT OUT**  
**NEW SESSION**

**MAY 28**  
**6PM-8PM**

Transformative explorations of self-expression & mental well-being through empowering sessions led by Shade Tree Therapy.

2340 E Magnolia Ave  
[thebottomknox.com](http://thebottomknox.com)

**BANNED BOOK CLUB**  
*Grown*  
 by Tiffany D Jackson

**MAY 31** **2-4PM**

Knox County Library - Lawson McGhee  
 500 W Church Ave

**JUNE B.C.M.** **THE BOTTOM** **Book Binding**

**Workshop**

**Tuesday 6/3**  
**6-8pm**

**with**  
**George Habeib**

2340 E Magnolia Ave [thebottomknox.com/events](http://thebottomknox.com/events)

**JUNE B.C.M.** **THE BOTTOM** **Virtual Workshop** **Intro to Vogue**



**Saturday 6/7**  
**4:30-6pm**

**with**  
**Karma Stylz**

**Virtual Via Zoom** [thebottomknox.com/events](http://thebottomknox.com/events)

**VIRTUAL BANNED BOOK CLUB**  
*Grown*  
 by Tiffany D. Jackson

**JUNE 17** **6-8PM**

**Bottom Book Club**  
**SIP 'N' READ**

**JUNE 18** **PETER KERN LIBRARY** **6PM-8PM**

Immerse yourself in an evening of connection with fellow readers, savoring expertly crafted cocktails from our friends at Peter Kern Library.



**JUNETEENTH LitKidz Workshop**

**June 21 • 12pm-1pm**

**Storytime Book:**  


**Activity:**  
 Making Juneteenth bracelets!

**THE BOTTOM**

2340 E Magnolia Ave.

**WRITE IT OUT**  
**NEW SESSION**  
**WRITE IT OUT**  
**NEW SESSION**

**JUNE 25**  
**6PM-8PM**

Unstructured, open studio time to work on a writing project of your choice in the company of other writers.

2340 E Magnolia Ave  
[thebottomknox.com](http://thebottomknox.com)

**BOTTOM BOOK CLUB**  
*Parable of the Sower*  
 by Octavia E. Butler

Featuring a new foreword by acclaimed actor and author LeVar Burton

**June 26 • 6pm-8pm**

Ebony & Ivory Brewing | 2300 N Central St  
 RSVP online • [thebottomknox.com](http://thebottomknox.com)

# 2025 Events with The Bottom



## Expanding Horizons

July 5th - August 31st  
Exhibiting work from new & returning students in the Ceramics at The Bottom program.  
Opening Reception: Sat. July 5th • 4-6pm  
2340 E Magnolia Ave



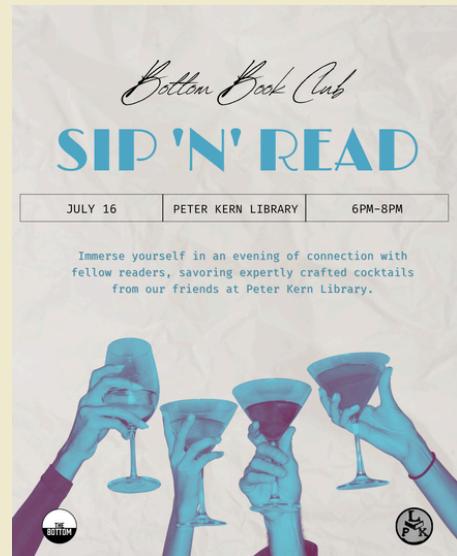
## LitKidz Workshop

July 12 • 12pm-1pm

**Storytime Book:**  
*NEVER TAKE YOUR RHINO ON A PLANE*

**Activity:**  
Make your own luggage tag!

2340 E Magnolia Ave.



## Bottom Book Club SIP 'N' READ

JULY 16 | PETER KERN LIBRARY | 6PM-8PM

Immerse yourself in an evening of connection with fellow readers, savoring expertly crafted cocktails from our friends at Peter Kern Library.



## SEW IT SELL IT PITCH DAY

Listen to students pitch their products!

JULY 18	12:00 P.M. - 3:00 P.M.
---------	------------------------

2340 EAST MAGNOLIA AVE.



## Workshop

JULY B.C.M. | THE BOTTOM | Arts In Movement Session

**TOPIC:**  
Goal  
Setting

Thursday 7/24 6-8pm | New quarterly sessions focused on artist growth!

2340 E Magnolia Ave | [thebottomknox.com/events](http://thebottomknox.com/events)



## SEW IT SELL IT MARKET DAY

Purchase products from students' booths!

JULY 26	12:00 P.M. - 3:00 P.M.
---------	------------------------

2340 EAST MAGNOLIA AVE.



## WRITE IT OUT NEW SESSION WRITE IT OUT NEW SESSION WRITE IT OUT NEW SESSION

JULY 30 6PM-8PM

Transformative explorations of self-expression & mental well-being through empowering sessions led by Shade Tree Therapy.

2340 E Magnolia Ave | [thebottomknox.com](http://thebottomknox.com)



## AUTHOR TALK

with Valerie Burns

Aug. 2 4-6pm

2340 E MAGNOLIA AVE



## BOOKSTORE ROMANCE DAY

9 AUGUST 11 AM - 6 PM

Write a love note to The Bottom for a chance to win special prizes!  
15% OFF ALL ROMANCE BOOKS!

BLIND DATE WITH A BOOK FAIR

2340 E MAGNOLIA AVE

# 2025 Events with The Bottom



**LitKidz Workshop**

August 9 • 12pm-1pm

**Storytime Book:**  
*I AM EVERY GOOD THING* by Derrick Barnes and Gordon C. James

**Activity:** Make a positive affirmations mirror!

**THE BOTTOM**

2340 E Magnolia Ave.

*Bottom Book Club*

## SIP 'N' READ

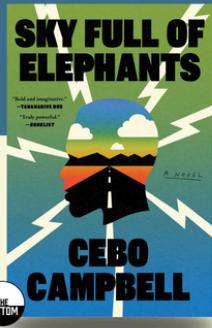
AUGUST 13 | PETER KERN LIBRARY | 6PM-8PM

Immerse yourself in an evening of connection with fellow readers, savoring expertly crafted cocktails from our friends at Peter Kern Library.



**BOTTOM BOOK CLUB**

August 14 • 6pm-8pm



**SKY FULL OF ELEPHANTS**  
A NOVEL  
Cebo Campbell

Ebony & Ivory Brewing / 2300 N Central St  
RSVP online • [thebottomknox.com](http://thebottomknox.com)

**A.I.M. MEETUP AT THE BOTTOM**

**Intro to Hair Braiding**

**Workshop**



12-2pm  
Aug. 16 & 17\*  
\*this is 1 class split into 2 days, tickets include both days!

with  
Nacira Hall

2340 E Magnolia Ave | [thebottomknox.com/events](http://thebottomknox.com/events)

**BANNED BOOK CLUB**

**Everything, Everything** by Nicola Yoon

AUGUST 23 | 2-4PM

Knox County Library - Lawson McGhee  
500 W Church Ave

**WRITE IT OUT**  
**NEW SESSION**  
**WRITE IT**  
**NEW SESSION**  
**WRITE IT**  
**NEW SESSION**  
**WRITE IT OUT**  
**NEW SESSION**  
**WRITE IT OUT**  
**NEW SESSION**



AUGUST 27  
6PM-8PM

Transformative explorations of self-expression & mental well-being through empowering sessions led by Shade Tree Therapy.

2340 E Magnolia Ave  
[thebottomknox.com](http://thebottomknox.com)

**VIRTUAL**

## BANNED BOOK CLUB

**Everything, Everything** by Nicola Yoon

SEPTEMBER 4 | 6-8PM



**Patch-wood Piecing and a Bedtime Story**

**Exhibiting: September 6 - October 31**

Featuring works by local artist Jennifer Simon, this exhibition showcases woodblock prints inspired by traditional quilt patterns dating back to the 19th century.

**Opening Reception: Sat. September 6 • 4-6pm**  
Bring a bedtime story to share, open mic starts at 5pm!  
2340 E Magnolia Ave

**LitKidz Workshop**

September 13 • 12pm-1pm

**Storytime Book:**  
*LADY FAY* by Jennifer Simon

**Activity:** Special performance by Kelle Jolly!

**THE BOTTOM**

2340 E Magnolia Ave.

# 2025 Events with The Bottom

**AUTHOR TALK** with Carole Hopson

Sept. 13 4-6pm



**A PAIR OF WINGS** by CAROLE HOPSON



2340 E MAGNOLIA AVE

*Bottom Book Club*

## SIP 'N' READ

SEPTEMBER 17 | PETER KERN LIBRARY | 6PM-8PM

Immerse yourself in an evening of connection with fellow readers, savoring expertly crafted cocktails from our friends at Peter Kern Library.



A.I.M. MEETUP AT THE BOTTOM

**Workshop**

**The Art of Jewelry Making**



Thursday 9/18 6-8:30pm

with **Jaz Parks** of Childlike Creative

2340 E Magnolia Ave | [thebottomknox.com/events](http://thebottomknox.com/events)

**THE BOTTOM less PIE PARTY**

UNLIMITED PIE FOR A CAUSE



September 20

3:00 - 8:00 PM  
Caswell Park

A FUNDRAISER EVENT FOR THE BOTTOM

**WRITE IT OUT**

NEW SESSION

**WRITE IT**

**NEW SESSION**

**WRITE IT**

**NEW SESSION**

**WRITE IT OUT**

**NEW SESSION**

**WRITE IT OUT**

**NEW SESSION**

SEPTEMBER 24 6PM-8PM

Transformative explorations of self-expression & mental well-being through empowering sessions led by Shade Tree Therapy.

2340 E Magnolia Ave [thebottomknox.com](http://thebottomknox.com)

**BANNED**

Book Fair

@ Wild Love Bakehouse

SAT. OCT 4 | 9 AM - 12 PM



1625 N CENTRAL ST.

**AUTHOR TALK** with Jacinda Townsend

Oct. 4 2-4pm



**TRIGGER WARNING** by JACINDA TOWNSEND



2340 E MAGNOLIA AVE

A.I.M. MEETUP AT THE BOTTOM

**Workshop**

**West African Drumming**



Sunday 10/12 2-3:30pm

with **Corey Hodge**

2340 E Magnolia Ave | [thebottomknox.com/events](http://thebottomknox.com/events)

*Bottom Book Club*

## SIP 'N' READ

OCTOBER 15 | PETER KERN LIBRARY | 6PM-8PM

Immerse yourself in an evening of connection with fellow readers, savoring expertly crafted cocktails from our friends at Peter Kern Library.



# 2025 Events with The Bottom

**Arts In Movement Session**

## Workshop

**TOPIC:**  
**Planning & Capacity**

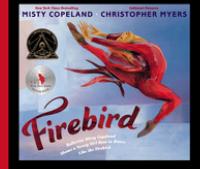
**Thurs. 10/16**  
**6-8pm**

**New quarterly sessions focused on artist growth!**

2340 E Magnolia Ave [thebottomknox.com/events](http://thebottomknox.com/events)

## LitKidz Workshop

**October 18 • 12pm-2pm**

**Storytime Book:**  


**Activity:**  
Trampoline with Dragonfly Aerial Arts Studio!

**THE BOTTOM**

2340 E Magnolia Ave.

## BOTTOM BOOK CLUB

**October 23 • 6pm-8pm**

*"Extraordinary..." - Walter Mosley*

**THE OFFICE OF HISTORICAL CORRECTIONS**  
A Novella and Stories  
**DANIELLE EVANS**  
*Author of Beloved, If You've Seen One You've Seen Half*

Ebony & Ivory Brewing / 2300 N Central St  
RSVP online • [thebottomknox.com](http://thebottomknox.com)

**WRITE IT OUT**  
**NEW SESSION**  
**WRITE IT OUT**  
**NEW SESSION**  
**WRITE IT OUT**  
**NEW SESSION**

**OCTOBER 29**  
**6PM-8PM**

**NEW SESSION**  
**WRITE IT OUT**  
**NEW SESSION**  
**WRITE IT OUT**  
**NEW SESSION**

Unstructured, open studio time to work on a writing project of your choice in the company of other writers.

2340 E Magnolia Ave [thebottomknox.com](http://thebottomknox.com)

**5 YEAR ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION** **SAT. 11/1 2-6PM**

**SPECIAL PHOTO EXHIBITION, RAFFLE + COMMUNITY CONVERSATION WITH**



**Dr. Enkeshi El-Amin**  
Founding Director of The Bottom

Community convo starts at 3pm, come celebrate with us!

## VIRTUAL BOTTOM BOOK CLUB

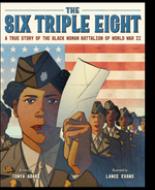
**November 6 • 6pm-8pm**

**PSYCHOPOMP & CIRCUMSTANCE**  
**EDEN ROYCE**

Featuring author Eden Royce!  
RSVP online • [thebottomknox.com](http://thebottomknox.com)

## LitKidz Workshop

**November 8 • 12pm-1pm**

**Storytime Book:**  


**Activity:**  
Learn to write and send a letter!

**THE BOTTOM**

2340 E Magnolia Ave.

**A.I.M. MEETUP WITH THE BOTTOM**

## Workshop

**Fall Time Photo Walk**


**Saturday 11/8**  
**2-4pm**

**with**  
**The Graft**  
with TriStar Arts & Ty's Eye

2631 Riverside Drive [thebottomknox.com/events](http://thebottomknox.com/events)

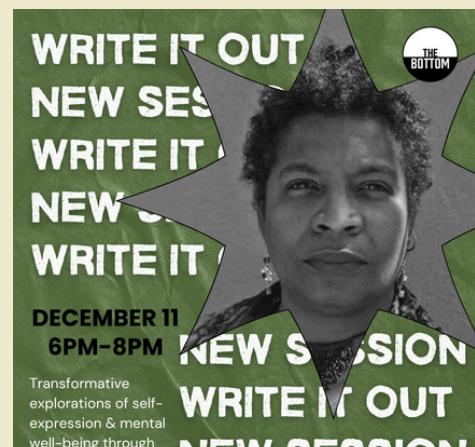
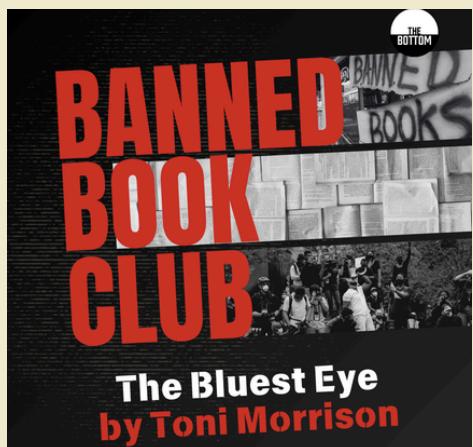
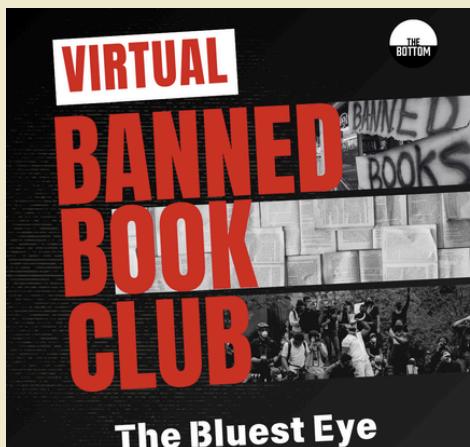
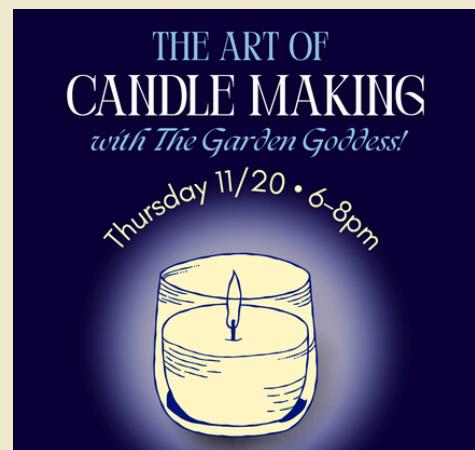
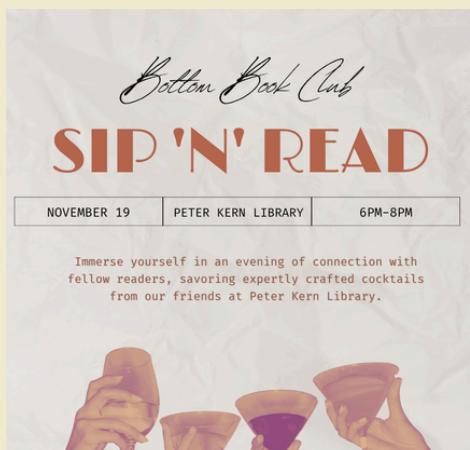
**WRITE IT OUT**  
**NEW SESSION**  
**WRITE IT OUT**  
**NEW SESSION**  
**WRITE IT OUT**  
**NEW SESSION**

**NOVEMBER 12**  
**6PM-8PM**

Unstructured, open studio time to work on a writing project of your choice in the company of other writers.

2340 E Magnolia Ave [thebottomknox.com](http://thebottomknox.com)

# 2025 Events with The Bottom



# PROGRAMS

**Sew It**  
**Sell It**

**Arts In Movement**  
**Meetups**

**LitKidz**

**Book It**  
**Subscriptions**

**Ceramics at The**  
**Bottom**

**Book Clubs at**  
**The Bottom**

**Arts In Movement**  
**Exhibitions**

**The Sewing Circle**

# SEW IT SELL IT

A sewing and entrepreneurship program where participants have the opportunity to express their creativity, learn vocational skills and develop a sense of self-reliance by sewing and selling a product.

Through Sew It Sell It, students design a product and conceptualize a micro business around that product.

The program serves children between the ages of 12 and 17. No prior sewing skills are necessary and all equipment and supplies for the program are provided to students.

In addition to learning the basics of sewing, through a number of workshops led by business professionals and local entrepreneurs, community leaders and university faculty, students learn business and professional skills from branding and marketing, to giving a good pitch.

This year, our program also expanded its vocational offerings to include workshops on screen printing and pottery!

The goal of Sew It Sell It is to supplement youth in our communities with creative, practical and business management skills that they can continue to use on their own outside of the program.

Our 2025 Sew It Sell It summer program was made possible in part by funding received from the Tennessee Arts Commission and City of Knoxville.

Expressing creativity, learning vocational skills, and developing a sense of self-reliance by sewing and selling a product.



# ARTS IN MOVEMENT MEETUPS



Our Arts In Movement initiative, previously names Black Creatives Meetups, is a long-term investment into Black artists and makers in our community.

As a year-round program, we continuously provide instruction, support and a safe space for our creative community to incubate and develop. Arts In Movement (AIM) meetups offer monthly workshops in addition to seasonal events. Each workshop centers an element of development, whether that be artistic, professional and/or social.

Through this initiative, we are listening and responding to creative voices. We asked artists what they need to thrive in our community and it came down to these three key points:

- Welcoming spaces to learn, gather and create
- More opportunities to meet and network with fellow artists
- Workshops, trainings & developmental opportunities

Through offering space, resources, and developmental programming for emerging creatives, as well as supporting established artists and organizations, we invest in a historically underrepresented community, reinforcing our dedication to community investment and engagement in East Knoxville.

Our 2025 AIM program was made possible by funding received from the [Tennessee Arts Commission](#).

Providing support, resources and a safe space for our creative community to incubate and develop.

# BOOK CLUBS AT THE BOTTOM

At The Bottom, books bring people together. Our book club experiences explore Black literature and banned or challenged literature through thoughtful discussion and community building. We have two book clubs: The Bottom Book Club and the Banned Book Club.

## Bottom Book Club

Meets every other month to discuss books from a variety of genres.

2025 Titles:

An Unkindness of Ghosts • Rooted • Parable of the Sower • Sky Full of Elephants • The Office of Historical Corrections • Psychopomp & Circumstance • A Little Devil in America

## Banned Book Club

Meets quarterly in person and online to discuss banned books and build an active community to combat book bans in our state and beyond.

2025 Titles:

The Hate U Give • The Black Flamingo • Grown Everything, Everything • The Bluest Eye

## Sip N Read Events with Peter Kern Library

A reading event open to everyone! This event is for book lovers who want to set some time aside for themselves to read in community. The first hour is dedicated to reading a book of their choice. The second hour is spent getting social with fellow readers.

Reading, connecting, and exploring literature together in community!



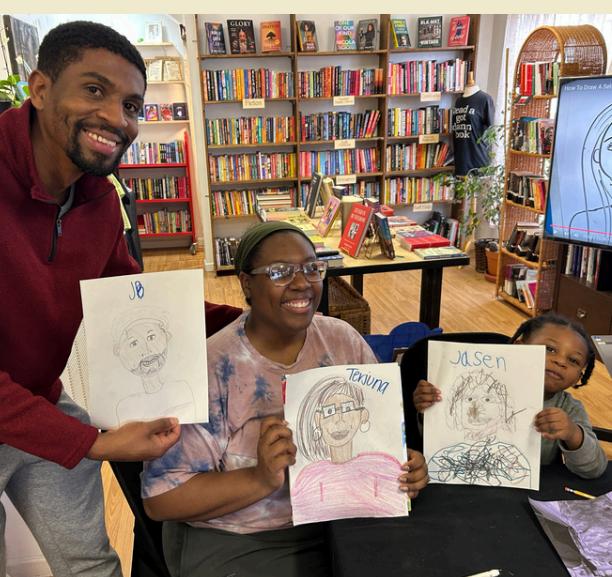
# LITKIDZ YOUTH PROGRAM



Through the Lit Kidz program, we actively involved our community by empowering youth to make their own book selections in our space. We understand that giving youth the agency to choose literature that resonates with them encourages a deeper engagement with reading and promotes a lifelong interest in representative literature.

Additionally, we contracted local artists and authors to lead themed workshops centered around specific books. These workshops not only enriched our program but also fostered a strong connection between the community and our initiatives. By bringing in local creative professionals, we amplified the messages of the books, spread the joy of reading, and inspired the next generation of creatives.

Within our community and others like ours, limited access to diverse literature in public libraries and schools is extremely common as we encounter systemic book bans nationally. We are bridging the gap within our community, ensuring more children have access to quality, representative books. Children's increased enthusiasm for reading and appreciation for diversity in book selections are notable. Additionally, we remove the financial barrier to accessing literature by keeping our program free. This allows families to feel comfortable coming into our space and selecting any book without worrying about the cost.



Inspiring a generation of writers and readers, and encouraging our community through literature.

# CERAMICS AT THE BOTTOM

This project is an ongoing community workshop to develop and transmit ideas regarding ceramic culture and to help foster the next generation of BIPOC Appalachian ceramic craft culture.

These ceramic arts-focused classes are broken into five different sessions where students gather once a week for three hours. Each session is six weeks long and takes place between January and April 2026, there will be a two week break in between each session. Over the course of its duration, this project will provide experiential education the equivalent of an MFA course to a traditionally unsupported community.

The class will provide an exploration of ceramic hand building and will cover the following techniques:

- Pinch Pots
- Coiling and Slab Building
- Hump Molds and Slump Molds

Decorative techniques will include:

- Underglaze
- Slip Trailing
- Sgraffitto
- Inlay
- Monotype Transfers
- Glazing Styles

Classes will be taught by Maggie Connolly and members of the Ceramic Soul Collective.



Fostering the next generation of  
BIPOC Appalachian ceramic  
craft culture.

# ARTS IN MOVEMENT EXHIBITIONS



As an extension of Arts in Movement, our bi-monthly exhibitions create space for emerging Black artists and makers to share their work with the community in meaningful and tangible ways. Held six times each year, these showcases are designed to increase visibility, spark conversation, and provide real opportunities for artists to sell their work in a supportive and culturally affirming environment.

Over the past year, exhibitions included All About Love by Ty Murray; Back To Our Roots Group Show; Expanding Horizons by the Ceramics Program; Maame Nsuroma with Ama Swabia and Nina Scott; Patch-Wood Piecing & A Bedtime Story by Jennifer Simon; and Sewing Circle Stories by Sewing Circle Participants.

These exhibitions reflect our continued investment in artists from underrepresented and underserved communities, helping them build confidence, expand their audiences, and strengthen their creative practices while ensuring their work is seen, celebrated, and supported close to home.

Working with scholars and professionals on projects that document and advance the local Black community.



# THE SEWING CIRCLE



The Sewing Circle is a community program centered in the craft of sewing and community quilting.

Workshops are broken into four 3-hour classes, taking place on Sundays from October to November 2025. These workshops are specifically designed for adults, especially those who find it difficult to learn new crafting skills due to limited access in their community, income barriers in class affordability or finding dedicated instructors.



Along with gaining basic knowledge of sewing and how to operate a machine, our hope is that participants not only gain a level of comfortability with this crafting skill, but also develop their own artistic voice. The program will end in a culminating exhibition of final projects created by participants, including uniquely handmade quilts.



By exploring the important role that quilting has historically held in Black storytelling and community building, this program presents a "full circle" moment that relates directly to our mission: to celebrate culture, engage creativity and build community for East Knoxville!

Exploring the importance of storytelling through community quilting.

# 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

## AT THE BOTTOM: A PODCAST



In May 2024, The Bottom launched our very own podcast aptly called, "At The Bottom: A Podcast". This year, the podcast continues to serve as another way for us to connect with our community and highlight all of the amazing work that we do in our organization through art and literature.

Our podcast can be found on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and Amazon Music. Hosted and produced by our Bookshop Director, Anastasia, the podcast has featured authors, artists, and local community partners. This year, guests include: Brea Baker, W. James Taylor, Meka James, Karmen Lee, Ashley Jordan, Carole Hopson & The Bottom's Directors!

**488** Podcasts Plays  
**40** Podcast Followers  
**7** Podcast Episodes

# 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

# ALTAR'D STATE MISSION MONDAY

## ALTAR'D STATE

Mission Monday is a give back program with Altar'd State and Stand Out For Good Inc. where 10% of net proceeds in all stores and online sales go directly to local non-profit organizations across the country.

Through this special day, guests and Altar'd State family take an active role in uplifting the children of their communities and give back in meaningful ways. Each season, Altar'd State chooses a different area to focus our efforts on. Each individual store chooses a beneficiary organization in their area that fits the seasonal theme.

**\$10,539.29** raised for  
Sew It Sell It through  
Mission Monday!

We'd like to give a big **thank you** to Altar'd State and everyone who participated in helping us raise funds towards our Sew It Sell It program.

These funds continue to support the sustainability of the program and ensure our future Sew It Sell It students have the best summer experience they deserve!



# 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

# 5<sup>TH</sup> YEAR ANNIVERSARY CAMPAIGNS

The BOTTOMless Pie Party was a fundraising event fit for the whole family! Tickets included unlimited pie slices, one drink ticket and one raffle ticket.

We gathered at Caswell Park with over 50 pies donated by local community members, along with mocktails and coffee from local vendors. There was a pop up marketplace in addition to a raffle with goodies from local businesses, artists, and makers.

**We're thrilled to announce that together we raised \$8,962.50 with the BOTTOMless Pie Party!**

A special round of applause for our amazing event volunteers, sponsors, & partners: Zero Zero, Cecil Frost, Bob & Amy Cross, TVB, The Glowing Body, Nkem Warner, Peg Hambright, Pioneer House, Oglewood, Mother Shop, The Back Pocket, Remedy, Three Rivers, Aw Snap, Barley's, Dirty Mess, French Fried Vintage, Skin Cleric, New Start Fitness, Lura Troy, The Marlowe, Mood Ring Vintage, Everything Mushrooms, Frank's Closet, Camp Honey, Coffee Partial, Cruze Farm, Two Bikes, Mama Bear Cookies, Adrift Coffee, Wild Iris Floral, Native Maps, The Pink Cactus, Semilla, Freckled Flamingo, Wabi Wear, Ebony & Ivory, Potchke Deli, The Happy Envelope, Root and Branch, Chismoso and Central Bottle!



# 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

# 5<sup>TH</sup> YEAR ANNIVERSARY CAMPAIGNS

What began in 2020 as a bold vision for Black safety and belonging in Knoxville has grown into a dynamic home for community, culture, and creativity. This fall marked five years of The Bottom, five years of gathering, reflecting, building, learning, making and imagining together.

To celebrate this milestone and sustain our mission, we launched the 100x100x100 campaign, 10/1/25 through 1/9/26!

We called on artists, makers, supporters and dreamers to help mobilize 100 individuals or organizations to contribute \$100 over 100 days, raising \$10,000 to continue cultivating community space and programming.

**We're excited to share that we made our 100x100x100 campaign goal, our community helped us raise \$10,326 in celebration of our 5th Year Anniversary!**

Contributions such as these make a significant impact on our efforts, and this generosity enables us to continue our mission of building community, celebrating culture, and engaging creativity.

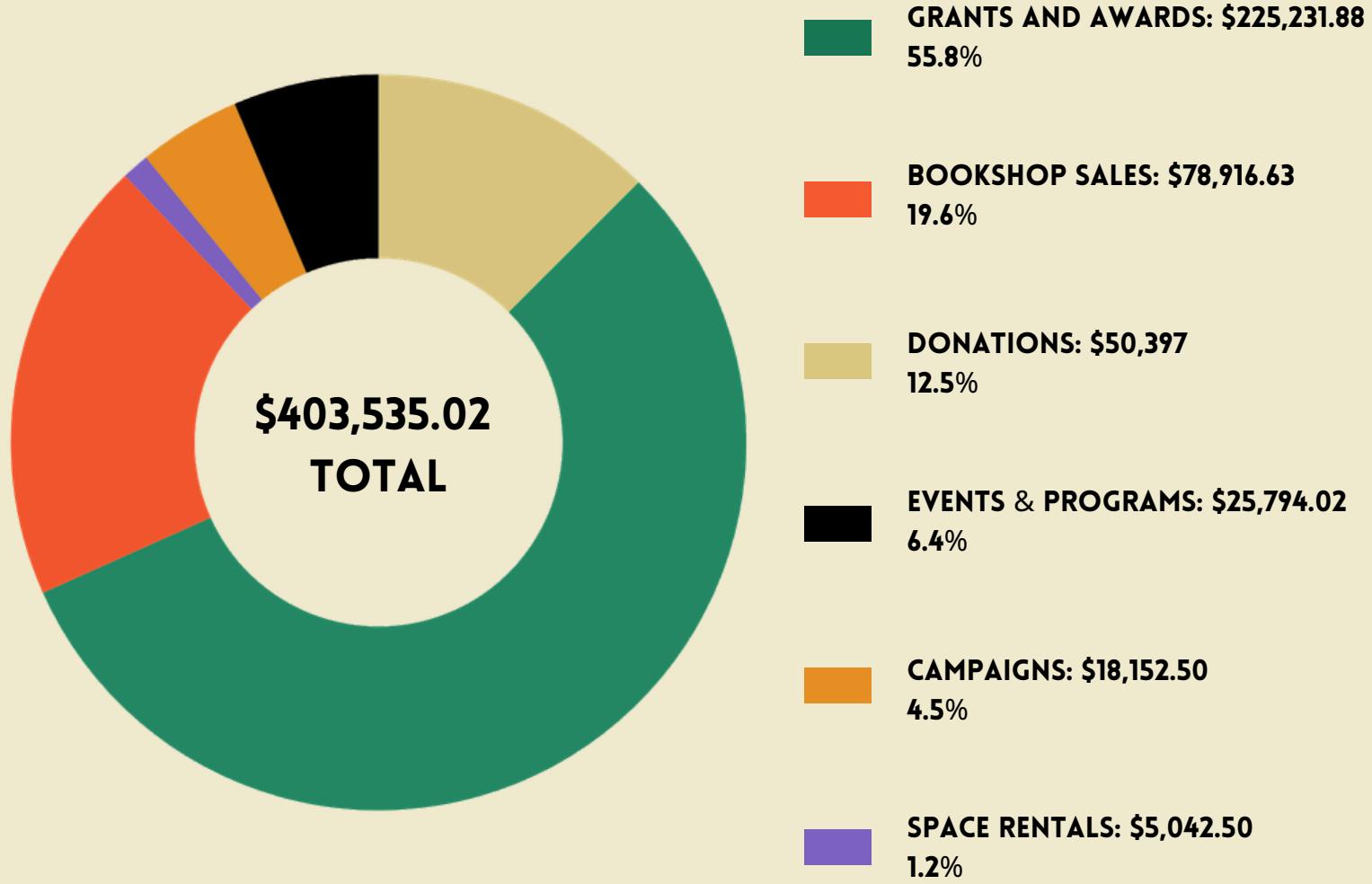
Thank you to everyone who helped us celebrate our 5th year anniversary!

With love and gratitude,  
The Bottom Crew



# ANNUAL INCOME STATEMENT

A summary of our sources of income in 2025



We are so grateful for the advocates and funders who support our mission and who help make our work possible!

# **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

## **2025 Volunteers**

Thank you to everyone who donated their time to our space!

## **2025 Strategic Planning Support**

Provided by Stephanie L. Small with Synergy Partners Consulting

## **2025 Board of Directors**

President: Denise Harris

Secretary: Michelle Christian

Treasurer: James Kemp

Member: Jeddah Cardines

Member: Jered Croom

Member: Phillip Collins

Member: Rebekah Tweed

**WE THANK YOU  
FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT IN  
THE BOTTOM !**