

826
SEATTLE

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****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

826 SEATTLE SET TO OPEN IN GREENWOOD
New youth writing program,
recently invited to become a chapter of Eggers organization,
scheduled to open in Seattle, Fall 2005

WHY?

Because
in our
culture
the
inability
to write
is a
devastating
handicap.


Seattle—July 15, 2005—After months of anticipation and hard work by many local volunteers, **826 Seattle**, a nonprofit writing and tutoring center, recently signed a lease at **8414 Greenwood Avenue North** in the heart of Greenwood’s retail center.

Created specifically for youth, this innovative writing center is dedicated to helping public school students, ages 6 to 18, improve their creative and expository writing skills. Set to open in fall 2005, 826 Seattle will offer after-school tutoring, writing workshops, mentoring with professional writers, field trips, and other services, all of which will be **free to participating students**.

Because in
our culture
the ability
to express
oneself
effectively
in writing
opens
large doors.

826 Seattle is one of six chapters of **826 National**, a consortium of literacy and writing centers across the country. Author, publisher, and philanthropist **Dave Eggers** (*A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius*) co-founded the first chapter, 826 Valencia, in San Francisco’s Mission District with teacher **Nínive Calegari** in 2002. The center was so successful at attracting students who wanted to improve their writing skills, and recruiting the necessary volunteers to help them, they were inspired to open chapters in other cities. This success, and its impact on thousands of students, led *Time* magazine to name Eggers one of the “100 most influential people in the world”—a unique honor for an independent press publisher, teacher, and writer.

Teri Hein, 826 Seattle’s Executive Director and founder, brings more than 20 years of unconventional and inspirational teaching to the creation of 826 Seattle. A Fulbright Scholar who traveled to Ecuador to study the various cultural influences on the learning styles of Ecuadorian children, Hein eventually became part of the team that transformed the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center’s Hutch School from a small, predominantly recreation-based program into an award-winning academic school.

A
chapter
of 

(OVER)

Hein first teamed up with Eggers when he taught a workshop for her class at the Hutch School.

“We have a shared understanding about the power of words to transform lives,” explains Hein. “As writers and teachers, we both believe that the ability to express oneself brings with it increased self-confidence and opportunity. Unfortunately, many students fall behind, and this affects everything from their ability to take tests to their ability to interact with the world around them. We believe that by improving their writing skills, we can help increase opportunity, and level the academic playing field.”

As a teacher and an author, Hein recognized the need for a youth writing program in Seattle that was independent of the public school system and yet supported the efforts of the teachers. An essential part of 826 Seattle’s mission is to support teachers in the Seattle Public Schools by helping them inspire their students to write. Over the past year, Hein and a team of volunteers have been in the schools surveying students and teachers about how 826 Seattle can best meet their needs.

“Every day I deal with 150 students with a wide range of writing abilities,” says Alan Kahn, a Language Arts teacher at Ingraham High School. “It will make such a huge difference to know that, just down the road, 826 Seattle will be there to support those I can’t give the kind of one-on-one attention they need.”

In fall 2003, Hein worked with other community leaders to start building a Seattle-based writing program called Studio 26. Hein identified Greenwood as the perfect home for the Seattle chapter because of its vibrant retail corridor, burgeoning immigrant population, and easy access from various parts of the city. The program changed its name to 826 Seattle when 826 National invited Studio 26 to become a chapter in early 2005.

826 Seattle is now a chapter of 826 National, a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting students, ages 6 to 18, with their creative and expository writing skills, and to helping teachers inspire their students to write. All 826 services are structured around the belief that great leaps in learning can happen with one-on-one attention and that strong writing skills are fundamental to a child’s future success. Each 826 chapter boasts distinguished authors, journalists, musicians, and radio professionals who volunteer their time to help students learn how to write novels, plays, and feature articles, produce radio programs, make comic books, write songs, and work on their school writing assignments. 826 students have had their work featured in a variety of venues, including publications, public readings, and web broadcasts. In addition to Seattle, there are chapters in [Ann Arbor](#), [Chicago](#), [Los Angeles](#), [New York](#), and [San Francisco](#) (the original 826).

The Board of Directors for 826 Seattle is comprised of Sherman Alexie, Teri Hein, Pam McEwan, Bryon Peterson, Alyssa Royse, Leanne Ryan, Ann Senechal, and Bonnie Towne.

For more information, visit www.826seattle.org or email heidibroadhead@826seattle.org.

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