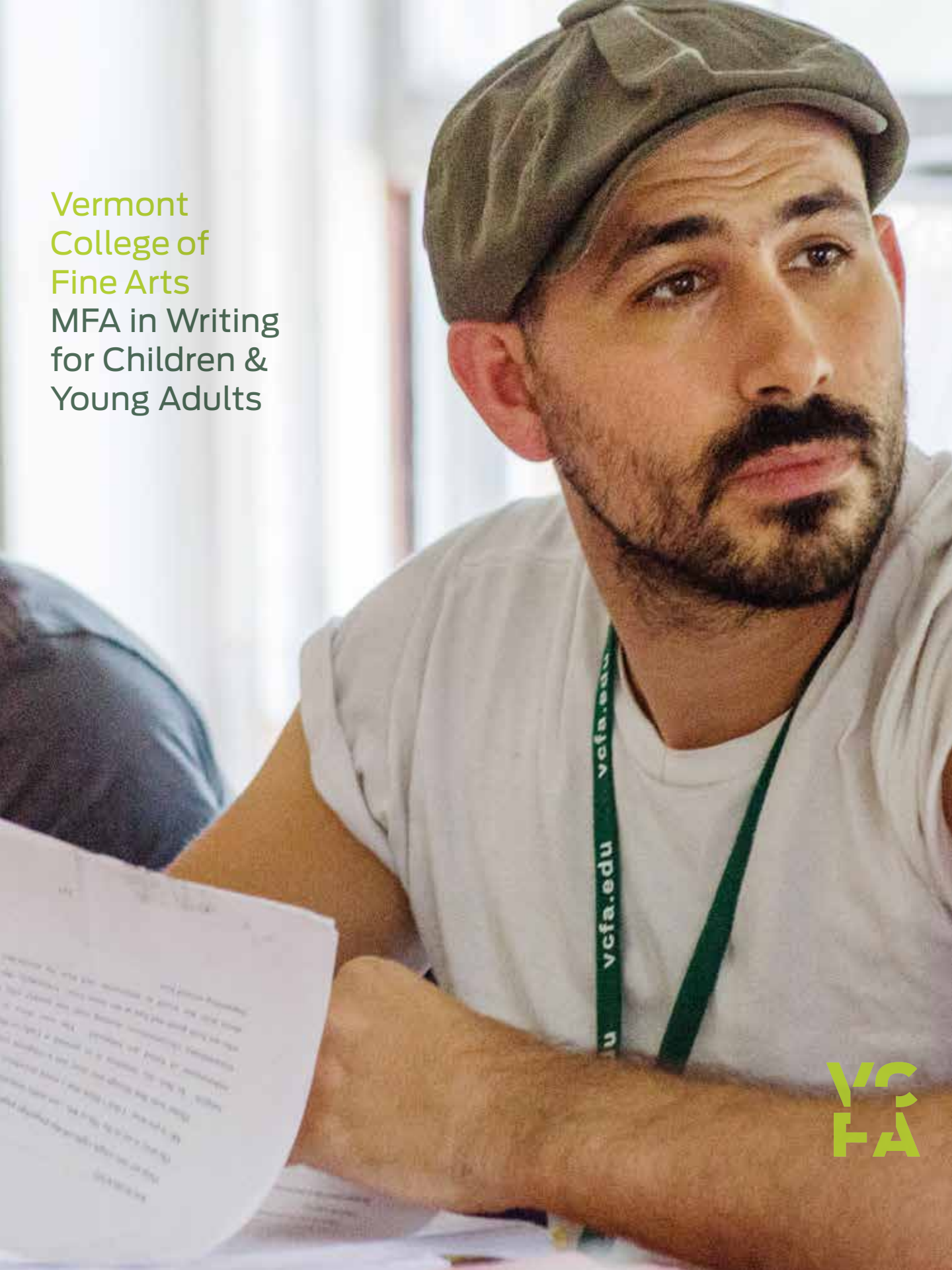


Vermont
College of
Fine Arts
MFA in Writing
for Children &
Young Adults



Our goals

- **ACHIEVE** full creative potential as writers for children and young adults
- **SHARPEN** and expand critical ability
- **CULTIVATE** knowledge of and appreciation for children's and young adult literature
- **FOSTER** a community within which to continue lifelong creative writing



M F

in **WRITING FOR CHILDREN
& YOUNG ADULTS**

DANA
WALRATH
'10

Everything about VCFA exceeded my expectations. Each semester of working with a faculty member was a gift. Every residency I soaked up new approaches from lectures and workshops on craft and the writing life. The program equipped me with the tools and the support to take each story I write as far as it can go and to start thinking of myself as a writer. Attending VCFA was one of the best decisions I ever made.



Vermont College of Fine Arts is a national center for education in the arts. Our programs encourage emerging and established artists, writers, musicians, filmmakers, and designers to deepen their personal work while contributing to the larger culture. Our unique, progressive graduate study model offers six distinctive Master of Fine Arts programs, each designed to develop artistic and literary excellence. Our programs are nationally recognized in their fields, and we are the only educational institution in the country devoted entirely to fine arts education at the graduate level.





the program

Established in 1997, the MFA in Writing for Children & Young Adults program was the nation's first fully developed MFA to focus on writing for young readers. We offer a program that is the strongest and most rigorous of its kind, challenging writers to expand their craft while immersing themselves in critical discourse and analytical thinking.

Students come from diverse creative backgrounds and can earn a master's degree without leaving their families, jobs, or other commitments. The Master of Fine Arts degree can be earned in four semesters, each six months long, during which students investigate more than fifteen core topics related to writing children's literature, including plot, theory/pedagogy, genre/form, and voice. Highly structured yet student-centered, the residencies and independent study work give students a broad understanding of children's literature while pushing them to exceed self-imposed limitations as writers. Students may also apply for the Picture Book Intensive, either as part of the degree program or as a stand-alone term. This unique semester provides rigorous examination of this challenging and rewarding form within both one-on-one work with the advisor and collaboration with peers.

The dynamic and intense learning environment is combined with a supportive and like-minded community of peers and faculty who revel in a passionate exchange of ideas, the rigor of critical analysis, and in-depth discussions of work in progress. Graduates of the program, recognized by editors, agents, and publishers for producing work that sets the standard for children's literature, have been published by every major publishing house and have received numerous major literary awards.

on campus

the faculty

Our faculty consists of nationally known writers of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry for young people. Collectively they have published more than 250 books that have been recognized on lists such as *School Library Journal's* Best Book of the Year, *New York Times* Best Book of the Year, American Bookseller Pick of the Lists, *Los Angeles Times* Book Award, *Redbook* Children's Book of the Year, Booklist Reviewer's Choice, *Boston Globe* Horn Book Award, and Best Picture Book of the Year. Faculty books have won such honors as the Newbery Honor Awards, Michael L. Printz Award, the Governor General's Award, the Christopher Medal, and the Edgar Award, as well as having been finalists for the National Book Award.

Our very low student-to-faculty ratio is at the core of the program and assures close attention to each student's writing process. Whether face-to-face during residencies or via file-sharing, Skype, or phone conferences during the semester, students work closely

with their advisors – writers and master teachers – to fulfill the degree requirements and their course of study.



for CH &

FACULTY MFA WCYA

An Na
Kathi Appelt
Margaret Bechard
Tom Birdseye
Coe Booth
Bonnie Christensen
Alan Cumyn
Sharon Darrow

Matt de la Peña
Sarah Ellis
Susan Fletcher
Louise Hawes
A. M. Jenkins
Mark Karlins
Uma Krishnaswami
Jane Kurtz

Martine Leavitt
April Lurie
Elizabeth Partridge
Mary Quattlebaum
Shelley Tanaka
Rita Williams-Garcia
Tim Wynne-Jones

MARGARET

BECHARD

*former faculty chair
and faculty*

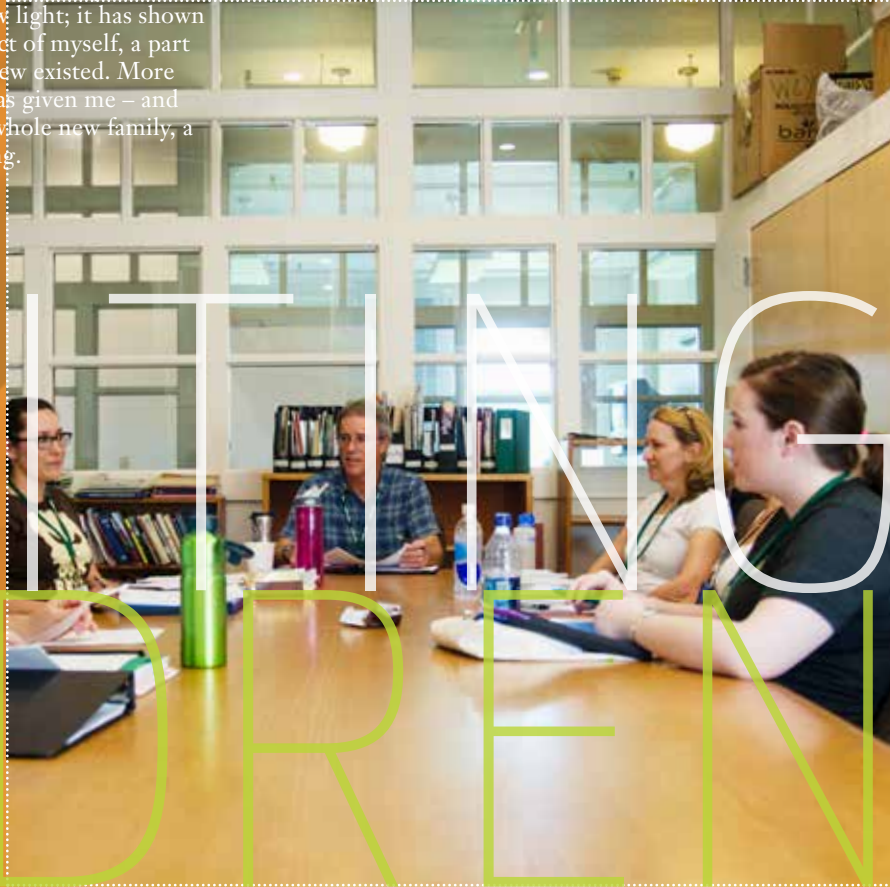
Why do I teach at VCFA? Why do I keep coming back, semester after semester? What is VCFA to me? VCFA is working on a student's critical

thesis and learning as much, if not more than she is. VCFA is reading a student's fourth packet and feeling that rush of excitement at how the pieces are coming together, the story coming to life. Over the past nine years, VCFA has challenged me to be a better writer, a better teacher, and a better thinker. It has helped me see myself in a whole new light; it has shown me a whole new aspect of myself, a part of me that I never knew existed. More importantly VCFA has given me – and countless others – a whole new family, a place where we belong.

the residency

Each semester begins with a residency in which faculty, students, and visiting writers gather on our campus in Montpelier for ten intensely energetic days of workshops, lectures, panel discussions, readings, faculty conferences,

and dialogue. The residency offers us all time and space away from daily concerns for reflection, input, and conversations about artistic practice and study. The experiences shared during residencies are profound. Students come together to enter into conversations across localities, across genres, across histories and experiences, languages, and cultures. They develop relationships that help inform every student's program experience. The effects last far beyond graduation.



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off campus *the semester*

During the on-campus residency, students work one-on-one with faculty to create unique semester study plans designed to broaden and deepen their writing skills, as well as develop independent work habits that will serve them throughout their professional writing careers. Students stay in close contact with faculty during the semester, learning, creating and challenging themselves with projects of their own design. Students often engage with peers via forum discussions and have access to over fifteen years of archived program lectures from faculty, visiting writers, and program alumni.



the work

During the independent study project, each student is closely supervised by an advisor (an experienced, internationally recognized writer) whose role is combination teacher and mentor. A sustained monthly correspondence between advisor and student helps establish a combination of solitude and collaboration that can truly enrich a writer's work. With this support in place, throughout the four semesters, students take an active role in shaping their own curricula and advancing their writing according to their personal vision and passion.

ADULTS

NON-DISCRIMINATION

Vermont College of Fine Arts does not discriminate in its admissions, employment, or policy procedures on the basis of age, race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, political party affiliation, or physical impairment.

admission

Admission to the MFA in Writing for Children & Young Adults program at Vermont College of Fine Arts is highly selective. We seek candidates with distinct voices and abilities, applicants who can thrive in the context of our model of student-centered education.

Candidate Requirements:

- Applicants must have completed a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university. In rare and special cases, we admit writers who have not earned an undergraduate degree. Such candidates must show evidence to the Admissions Committee of an exceptional academic, literary, and/or publishing background.
- Work Samples: 20–25 pages of middle grade prose, 20–25 pages of young adult prose, or 2–3 picture book stories (applicants may submit samples in more than one of these literary forms).
- Personal essay that gives the Admissions Committee an understanding of the applicant's experience with writing and criticism, goals for work in the program, readiness to work in the low-residency format, and the appropriateness of admission.
- A critical essay demonstrating the applicant's ability to read and critically discuss children's literature. The essay should engage questions dealing with the writer's craft, central ideas, and/or the relation of the writer's work to the applicant's.

Contact the Admissions Office or visit vcfa.edu for more information, including forms, application deadline dates, and current tuition and fees.

MFA in Writing for Children & Young Adults

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Montpelier, VT 05602
802.828.8535 | www.vcfa.edu

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