Introduction

Beacon Press is an independent publisher of serious nonfiction. Our books often change the way readers think about fundamental issues; they promote values such as freedom of speech and thought; diversity, religious pluralism, and anti-racism; and respect for diversity in all areas of life. Our current publishing program emphasizes religion, history, current affairs, political science, queer studies, education, African American studies, women’s studies, child and family issues, and nature and the environment.

Our Social Impact

The annual Beacon Social Impact Report serves to capture the moments and conversations that Beacon titles have driven over the course of the previous calendar year. Like other publishers, we use metrics of the business world to report on our financial results. But this report also answers these questions: How can we, as a mission-driven nonprofit publishing house, measure the impact and social benefits of our work? In what ways do our books touch lives and bring about change?

For this we need both stories and new metrics. In our eleventh annual Social Impact Report, we bring to light the reach of Beacon’s mission to foster conversations, challenge assumptions, and ignite personal and social change.
OUR DEMOGRAPHICS

Beacon strives to amplify diverse perspectives from underrepresented voices. Twenty-seven out of thirty-four authors we published this year chose to self-report their race and ethnicity in 2023. Out of those twenty-seven authors, 22.2% were Black or African American, 22.2% were Asian American, 11.1% were Hispanic/Latinx, 11.1% were Ashkenazi-Sephardi Jewish, and 48.1% were white.

BEACON IN VIENNA

In October 2023, Beacon director Gayatri Patnaik visited the family of best-selling author Viktor Frankl in Austria. It was the first meeting between the Frankl family and Beacon since *Man’s Search for Meaning* was published 64 years ago. The meeting is not only leading to more titles and more collaboration with the family, but also served as a powerful reminder for how vital and relevant Dr. Frankl’s work continues to be.

A note from Beacon director Gayatri Patnaik on her visit with the Frankl family

I spent three days with [Dr. Frankl’s] daughter, Dr. Gabriele Vesely-Frankl; his son-in-law, Dr. Franz Vesely; and his grandchildren, Alexander Vesely and Katharina Ratheiser.

Within the first minutes of meeting the family, Franz proposed a toast: celebrating that the relationship between Beacon Press and the Frankl family has now existed for sixty-four years! Franz, who is the director of the Frankl archive, recounted how his father-in-law always remembered that though many US publishers passed on the opportunity to publish *Man’s Search for Meaning*—dismissing the book saying there were “too many Holocaust memoirs”—Beacon Press saw the value immediately.

One of the most interesting aspects of the visit was getting a sense of Dr. Frankl’s personality. Learning he was fond of puns, for instance, and an avid mountain climber, and always open to new adventures, such as deciding to learn how to fly a plane solo at the age of sixty-six!
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I also had the opportunity to visit the Viktor Frankl Museum, which was a thought-provoking and deeply interactive experience. Erika Karrer, my guide, shared that a while back a visitor came in, pointed at Man’s Search for Meaning, and declared: “This book has changed my life.” Touching me on the arm, Erika said, “This is the impact Beacon has had.”

I have returned from my visit with the Frankl family with gratitude and renewed vigor, and with a clear understanding that we continue to have a great deal to learn from Dr. Frankl in our own time. At a time of global suffering, when so many are searching for hope and meaning, I hope you agree with me that Dr. Frankl’s work seems more relevant and more important than ever.
AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Beacon author Richard Blanco received the National Humanities Medal in a White House ceremony.

"An engineer, poet, Cuban American...His poetry bridges cultures and languages—a mosaic of our past, our present, and our future—reflecting a nation that is hectic, colorful, and still becoming."

—President Joe Biden, conferring the National Humanities Medal on Richard Blanco, 2023
Interview coverage was extensive. Gordon is well-loved as a podcast host, and her fans were eager to hear Aubrey talking about her work, which she did on programs like *The Waves* podcast, *All of It* with Alison Stewart, *All Things Considered*, *Here and Now*, *The Stacks*, *The Maris Review*, *iWeigh with Jameela Jamil*, NPR’s *Science Friday*, and Glennon Doyle’s *We Can Do Hard Things* podcast. The book also appeared on the *New York Magazine* “Approval Matrix.”

After the launch of the book, Gordon’s work found yet another way to its audience, through the release of her documentary *Your Fat Friend*, which premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival and has gone on to make a splash internationally. Through collaboration with her documentary team and our work on her two amazing books, it continues to be an honor to help share the essential social justice work that Aubrey Gordon brings to the issue of anti-fat bias.

**AWARDS AND RECOGNITION**

In her second book, Aubrey Gordon, the writer previously known as “Your Fat Friend” and co-host of the massively popular podcast *Maintenance Phase*, offered her contribution to the Beacon Press myths series with “You Just Need to Lose Weight: And 19 Other Myths About Fat People.” It isn’t a stretch to say that Gordon’s work in the areas of fat acceptance, fat justice, and dismantling the predatory wellness industry has been life changing for people. We know because they tell her, and they tell us. Response to Gordon’s book, which unpacks and corrects long-held myths and misconceptions about fatness and fat people, has been overwhelming. Launching into the #2 spot on the *NYT* list was a thrill, but the real reward from this project has been in watching it make positive change in the world.

The media campaign for this book started with starred trade reviews from *Library Journal* and *Shelf Awareness*, and glowing write-ups from *Publishers Weekly* and *Booklist*. Top-tier coverage ran on outlets like *Teen Vogue*, *Self Magazine* (where the book was also featured as a read of the month for their book club!), *The Stranger*, *The Seattle Times*, *BuzzFeed*, *Glamour*, *Glamour UK*, *Bustle*, *Slate*, *People*, and more.

*You Just Need to Lose Weight* and 19 Other Myths About Fat People

Aubrey Gordon

Is a Best-selling Author!

Readers resonated strongly with Gordon’s messages about fat acceptance and fat justice, leading to its debut as a *New York Times* bestseller.
AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

With *No Meat Required*, Alicia Kennedy proved that readers are ready for nuanced nonfiction about food and eating.


*No Meat Required* Hits Major Publications

NOTABLE AWARDS

The *Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks* documentary—based on the book by Jeanne Theoharis—was awarded a Gracie, a 2022 social justice Emmy, and received a unanimous vote in favor of a Peabody Award.

Jessica Lander’s *Making Americans: Stories of Historic Struggles, New Ideas, and Inspiration in Immigrant Education* was announced as a finalist for the 2023 Dayton Literary Peace Prize.

Ricky Tucker’s *And the Category Is…* was shortlisted for the Lambda Literary Awards.
Over the last few years, there has been a shift in how women write about motherhood. The façade has been dropped, due in part to the wins and losses of the #MeToo movement and to the insurmountable challenges of pandemic parenting that saw countless women stretched past their limits, pushed out of the workforce, and struggling to make sense of what modern motherhood meant. In 2023, Beacon published two books that spoke to this experience from different but equally compelling perspectives.

The book received fabulous early attention from trade publications including Publishers Weekly, Kirkus Reviews, and Booklist, as well as tremendous blurbs from high-profile writers like Rachel Yoder, Kate Baer, and Eve Rodsky. When the book launched, a swarm of coverage ensued, with women and mothers from every corner of the media landscape ready to discuss this phenomenon and its impact. Petersen did countless interviews and Q&As across podcasts and substacks, big and small, reaching women and mothers who were personally connected to this experience. More mainstream interview coverage included conversations with Rolling Stone, Romper, Shondaland, Yahoo!Life, Vox, Salon, The Skimm, WNYC’s All of It, Culture Study, What Fresh Hell, and Wisconsin Public Radio. The book also earned excerpt spots at high-profile outlets like Lit Hub, The Cut, and Time. The book and the author were featured at outlets ranging from The Guardian and the Globe and Mail to The Atlantic and the Washington Post. Glamour called the book “fun and informative.” Guernica complimented its use of historical scholarship and feminist theory to explore contemporary biases in American motherhood.

The author traveled up and down the East Coast for amazing conversations with co-speakers like New York Times columnist Jess Grose and author Angela Garbes. And the book also broke out beyond American audiences, with attention in outlets throughout South America, Latin America, Australia, and Europe.
Where Momfluenced explored how online culture impacted mother’s offline lives, our second motherhood title, Touched Out: Motherhood, Misogyny, Consent, and Control, unpacked all the ways that American culture more broadly influences women’s lives, and their feelings about mothering and motherhood. Blending memoir with feminist theory and cultural criticism, writer and academic Amanda Montei’s book was a brutally honest look at how entrenched misogyny and rape culture impact women’s lives, and how expectations of what women owe to men and to their children can pave a painful path. In a country that simultaneously robs women of reproductive choice and refuses to provide basic supports for parents and their children, Montei’s book is a call to action for women to free themselves from the road laid before them, and forge a better way forward for themselves and their families.

Receiving great early praise from writers like Kate Manne and Soraya Chemaly, the book garnered attention from countless outlets, including Vogue, Mutha Magazine, the Boston Globe, The Good Men Project, The Meteor, The Cut, and the Los Angeles Review of Books. The author ran original and adapted pieces in the New Yorker, Elle, The Guardian, Time, Lit Hub, and Insider. The book also found eager, engaged, and supportive audiences of mothers and other women in the podcast and Substack spaces – all of whom were excited to have this resource available to them.

Montei traveled for events in Northern and Southern California, visited Seattle, and spoke throughout New York and New England. Everywhere she went she was met with passionate readers who expressed solidarity and gratitude for the important and necessary work that this book was doing.
THE CONTINUED FIGHT AGAINST BOOK CENSORSHIP

2023 saw the continued surge of book censorship in state and local governments across the United States. In May of this year, Beacon released an official statement on our social platforms denouncing this current wave of book banning, which particularly targets titles by Black, Indigenous, and LGBTQIA+ authors.

We also launched our Free the Book campaign, which included offering some of our eBooks for free to anyone who might have trouble accessing them and donating 10% of all sales from the seven books in our ReVisioning History series in October 2023 to the National Coalition Against Censorship.

We additionally created an informational booklet that lays out the current state of book bans in the United States and highlights the many devastating ways censorship impacts us all. This booklet includes a list of concrete actions anyone can take, with direct links to resources for combating the right’s ongoing attempt to inhibit people’s right to read freely. In addition to sharing the resource online, we distributed over 400 printed booklets to librarians, educators, booksellers, and the general public at conferences and through our newsletter, bookstore, and community networks.

In July 2023, City Lights Bookstore in San Francisco used the title of Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz’s *Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States* for a banner as part of their campaign against book banning. A quote from Indigenous scholar Debbie Reese (who adapted the book for young adult readers) was also included.
ENTERTING THE CLASSROOM

30,382 views
of our Teacher’s Guides for Beacon books

COURSE ADOPTIONS IN 2023

Beacon Press strives to ensure that teachers and students alike find their way to Beacon resources that can inform discussions and cultivate an appetite for change. As of 2023, Beacon books are now being taught in college courses in every state in the country. This year, Beacon titles were adopted into 2,257 courses, totaling 106,853 books. Our most-adopted title was Octavia Butler’s *Kindred*, with other top adoptions being Michel-Rolph Trouillot’s *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, Robin DiAngelo’s *White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz’s *An Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States*, and Viktor Frankl’s *Man’s Search for Meaning*, many of which feature curated reading guides, available through the Beacon Press website.

Our books reach thousands of students in all areas of study, but this year, we saw our titles most frequently adopted in the fields of history and English, as well as interdisciplinary studies, religion, sociology, and education. Our titles also span a wide geographic scope. States with the most adoptions include 310 adoptions in California, 178 adoptions in New York, 139 adoptions in Texas, and 86 adoptions in Illinois. This spread of interest in academic readership illustrates the universality of the stories and histories that Beacon Press titles addressed in 2023.
This year, we were heartbroken by the passing of Beacon author and activist Judy Heumann, who spent her seventy-five years fighting to achieve respect, acceptance, and inclusion for all members of society. One of the most influential disability rights activists in US history, Heumann and her legacy of resistance continue to touch the lives of many. Rachel Maddow did a moving tribute segment on her MSNBC TV show, and the New York Times also reported on her passing, stating, “She saw a revolution occur in the government’s involvement in the lives of disabled people such as herself. And she, as much as anyone else, helped bring about that revolution.”

In line with Heumann’s advocacy, Beacon strives to make our titles more accessible by offering eBook and large-print editions for a number of our books. We also continue to see classrooms and organizations across the country rely on Heumann’s books to further shape people’s understandings about social justice and what true equity means. Indiana University-Bloomington adopted 2,800 copies of Heumann’s celebrated memoir, Being Heumann, for use in their Student Success and Career Development Center. Their Kelley School of Business also selected the book as their common read for undergraduates, where it sparked many discussions about the ways we can make real a world in which we all belong.

“A Kelley student’s reflection:

“Learning about Judith Heumann’s journey is inspiring as she advocates for disability rights, challenges societal norms, and lobbies for policy change. This memoir empowers me and demonstrates that it takes only one person to fight for a more inclusive and welcoming world. There is a responsibility for all Kelley students to understand how they can positively influence businesses and corporations—Being Heumann is a blueprint for that leadership development.”

— Ajith Amba, BS ’24, Kelley Student Government President

At Madisonville Community College in Kentucky, the school distributed 1,700 copies to students for their common read, along with a reading guide and video commemorating Heumann’s lifelong work for disability justice.

“Click to Watch the Video”

Rolling Warrior, the young readers’ edition of Heumann’s memoir, also saw significant adoptions in high schools across the United States, with Ridgewood High school adopting both Rolling Warrior and Being Heumann at 1,800 copies and Carroll County Public School District adopting Rolling Warrior for a Language Arts course or program with 600 students.
CONNECTING ONLINE

278,719 WEBSITE VISITS
Our blog had 116,045 visits.

26,790 FACEBOOK FANS
Content had a reach of 217,204 (29,482 organic, 171,572 from ads) and 345,911 paid impressions.

1.03 MILLION TWITTER CONTENT IMPRESSIONS
All organic.
Our Twitter followers grew to 17,145.

597,000+ YOUTUBE VIEWS
The bulk of the traffic came from over 539,000 views of Martin Luther King Jr. delivering his speech “What Is Your Life’s Blueprint?”
FOSTERING COMMUNITY AND DISCUSSIONS ABOUT IDENTITY

24 HOURS IN CHARLOTTESVILLE
NORA NEUS

Lauded as one of “25 Nonfiction Books You Need to Read This Summer” by LitHub, 24 Hours in Charlottesville: An Oral History of the Stand Against White Supremacy signals a strong start to Beacon’s new oral history titles. Nora Neus launched the book in the Charlottesville community, and it was covered by NBC29 (Charlottesville). Teen Vogue ran an excerpt from the book on publication day, C-Ville ran a feature interview with the author, and other interviews included The Stacks podcast and The Thom Hartmann Show. New Yorker writer Benjamin Wallace-Wells called out the book in a piece about the anniversary: “To revisit the Unite the Right rally, as the former CNN producer Nora Neus does in her excellent oral history 24 Hours in Charlottesville, is to realize that the patterns of right-wing violence that are now familiar were then still new.” Nora Neus will also be on a panel at the Virginia Festival of the Book this March and remains committed to centering the community activists in her work.

TWICE AS HARD
JASMINE BROWN

Jasmine Brown’s experience as a Black woman in medicine resonated with readers across her communities. Her first event was with The Philadelphia Inquirer’s Telling Your Health Story webinar, and she did events across the country at medical schools, as well as the Mütter Museum, the History Book Festival, and Politics & Prose. Shondaland raved, “Twice as Hard is a brilliant exploration about the work of several Black women and their vast contributions to medicine...Twice as Hard educates while providing role models for other Black women in the field, ushering in new generations of talent to the medical world.” Mainstream media included TIME magazine, Ms., an excerpt in the Philadelphia Inquirer, a Q&A with the author that was syndicated nationally in African American daily newspapers, W magazine, NBC10, ABC6, and more. She also did a variety of high-profile medical and science media interviews, including America Dissected, Medscape, and more. The Lancet noted, “Brown has given us an important and still unfinished story;” Booklist included it as a top ten biography of 2023 and the author continues to promote and speak to medical students and other audiences.
FOSTERING COMMUNITY AND DISCUSSIONS ABOUT IDENTITY

YOU SHOULD BE GRATEFUL
ANGELA TUCKER

Angela Tucker is a renowned speaker and advocate for transracial adoptees. She has shared her story of adoption in an award-winning documentary, and again in "You Should Be Grateful." She was profiled alongside other adoptees in the New Yorker, coverage that helped generate opportunities for thousands more engaged readers and listeners to encounter her activism. Outlets like Business Insider and Anne Helen Petersen’s “Culture Study” Substack, TODAY, Yahoo Parents, and The Good Men Project all featured her book. She spoke about “You Should Be Grateful” on podcasts and regional radio, as well as across the country at well-attended events that included young adoptees Angela has mentored over the years. Angela continues to speak at events and conferences, her book making a positive impact with adoptees, parents, and communities of color.

LOVING OUR OWN BONES
JULIA WATTS BELSER

Loving Our Own Bones is a thoughtful reflection on disability from a theological perspective. Disabled rabbi Julia Watts Belser’s call to abolish ableism in religious spaces and beyond resonated thoroughly with Jewish and general readers alike. Trade publications lauded the book; Library Journal called it a “triumph of theological insight, disability activism, and honest, personal, hard-won wisdom.” A 2023 winner of the National Jewish Book Award in Contemporary Jewish Life and Practice, Loving Our Own Bones was featured in TIME magazine, Tablet magazine, Hadassah magazine, and various disability podcasts and Substacks, and was noted as a “best spiritual book of 2023” at Spirituality & Practice.
REDUCING OUR ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT

At Beacon, our primary printer has been at the forefront of the industry in using sustainable materials and developing sustainable practices—including using or recycling 95% of the materials that come into the plant, operating a closed-loop plate process that limits the use of raw materials and waste, and running a system that utilizes unique inks and blanket wash that are nearly solvent-free. Beacon also favors digital and offset printers who reduce our carbon footprint by being geographically close to our warehouse on the East Coast.

FOREIGN RIGHTS

In 2023, Beacon titles were internationally acquired for 51 new editions in 19 different languages:

- Catalan
- Croatian
- English
- French
- German
- Greek
- Indonesian
- Italian
- Japanese
- Korean
- Kyrgyz
- Portuguese
- Romanian
- Simplified Chinese
- Slovene
- Spanish
- Tamil
- Turkish
- Uzbek

Some of the most-translated titles:

- Viktor E. Frankl
- Herbert Marcuse
- Karl Polanyi
ORGANIZATION PARTNERSHIPS IN 2023

This year, Beacon continued to partner with the Zinn Education Project on their campaign for “Teaching The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks” in classrooms across the country. Beacon assisted with book distribution to facilitate Zinn’s classroom use of the book and educator film screenings of the documentary.

Beacon author Jeanne Theoharis introduced Randi Weingarten in New Orleans this year at the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists conference, where they distributed hundreds of copies of The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks: Adapted for Young People to those in attendance.

Project BEE provides equity and anti-poverty services to rural communities in North Dakota. In December, Beacon donated two cartons of Man’s Search for Meaning to distribute to their team.

More Than Words is a nonprofit that empowers youth to take charge of their lives by taking charge of a business. In 2022, Beacon donated 22 boxes of books to their Boston store location in January and again in the summer.

Beacon Press donated over 50 copies of Freedom Dreams to NoName Book Club, a Black-led worker cooperative that connects folks inside and outsider carceral facilities with radical books. These donated copies of Freedom Dreams are going toward the book club’s Prison Program.

Books Through Bars has been sending free books to incarcerated people in six mid-Atlantic states (Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia) for over thirty years. Beacon donated advanced reader copies in September of the following titles: Desire, 24 Hours in Charlottesville, Loving Our Own Bones, Toward Liberation, and Unbroken Chains.

The Prison Book Program is a nonprofit that supports people in prison by sending them free books and print resources that meet their specific needs and interests. Beacon sent advanced reader copies to their branch in Quincy, Massachusetts, in both September and October of the following titles: 24 Hours in Charlottesville, Celebrity Nation, Superfreaks, A Master Class on Being Human, Loving Our Own Bones, Toward Liberation, and Unbroken Chains.

First Book is a nonprofit dedicated to ensuring that all children, regardless of their background or zip code, can succeed, by removing barriers to equitable education. In 2023, Beacon donated approximately 3,000 units total of the following titles: Parenting with an Accent, Living While Black, Pregnant Girl, and All Is Not Lost.

IFES is a global, nonpartisan organization based in Arlington, Virginia, that collaborates with civil society, public institutions, and the private sector to build resilient democracies that deliver for everyone. Beacon donated two cartons and discounted the purchase of an additional two cartons of Being Heumann to for their Democracy Awards Dinner on October 17th.
Little Free Library is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to be a catalyst for building community, inspiring readers, and expanding book access for all through a global network of volunteer-led Little Free Library book-exchange boxes. Beacon donated 100 copies each of the following titles: *Harnessing Grief*, *Living While Black*, *Nice Racism*, and *Parenting with an Accent*, to be placed in Little Free Libraries in areas that have limited access to books.

Every Town is an organization with the single goal of placing at least one healthy piece of land from every town in the state of Vermont in trust for permanent BIPOC access and stewardship. Beacon donated three boxes of books for their Liberation Library, a space for borrowing books, tools, and art supplies out of the church.

Beacon donated books on racial justice to First Parish Church, a UU congregation in Milton, Massachusetts, to help establish a Little Free Library on their church campus with a particular focus on sharing social justice books.

Skinner House Books is an imprint of the Unitarian Universalist Association that brings insightful writing to readers of all ages. Beacon is continuing to work with Skinner House Books on the Goodreads group, co-started by both publishing houses. This partnership allows Beacon to collaborate with Skinner House in providing books for Unitarian Universalist communities.

“Beacon Press is truly a beacon, shining light on the past, spotlighting what matters in the present, and guiding us toward a better world.”

—Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz