



The Case for *A Way with Words*

“Even to someone who has spent his professional life thinking about language, it’s astonishing how much there is to say about the subject, and how masterful *A Way with Words* has been at saying it... It’s one of the best things on Public Radio.”

— Geoffrey Nunberg, Professor at UC Berkeley’s School of Information and commentator on NPR’s *Fresh Air*





College students at an A Way with Words live event in San Diego in 2015.

THE POWER OF WORDS

➤ Language can divide us, but it can also unite us. In these contentious times, it is vital to understand how we use language and how we listen to each other. *A Way with Words* is a uniquely positioned national resource with a mission to unite speakers of English through informed, civil discussion and to connect us to our diverse linguistic heritage and to the unexpected history embedded in the words we use.



“Thank you for sharing your skill and knowledge, and for the lighthearted and entertaining reminders of what a beautiful thing language can be.”

— Brent Evans, a San Diego listener

ABOUT THE SHOW

➤ *A Way with Words* is a public radio show about language examined through history, culture, and family. Hosts Martha Barnette and Grant Barrett talk with listeners from around the world about word origins, slang, regional dialects, literature and writing, linguistic diversity, workplace communication, and linguistic traditions handed down through generations.

A Way with Words means different things to different people. It is an oasis of civility and informed conversation both online and on air, an enjoyable way for people of all backgrounds to learn something new, a helpful tool for educators, a place to settle disputes over grammar and usage, and an educational resource for inspiring and satisfying intellectual curiosity.

Over the past decade, the hosts have received tens of thousands of inquiries about language via phone, email, and social media. On the air, they answer a wide variety of them, emphasizing respect for diverse ways of communicating and revealing our common linguistic roots.



The show reaches more than a quarter-million listeners a week, with more than 15 million all-time podcast downloads.

The show's educational outreach also extends to talks by the hosts at schools, libraries, and other civic organizations.

Families love to listen to *A Way with Words* together.

media followers, and subscribers confirms a widespread hunger for intelligent, inclusive conversation about language. Listeners tell us they rely on the show not only to help make themselves understood and to understand others, but also to reassure themselves that they are not alone in their joy, frustration, or puzzlement when it comes to the topics explored on the show.

The continuous rise in loyal listeners, social

BUILDING ON OUR SUCCESS

➤ *A Way with Words* is produced by Wayword, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit based in San Diego, California. In 2014, a dedicated group of volunteers formed Friends of *A Way with Words* to give this nonprofit the strong base of support it needs to continue serving its listeners.

The Friends' first campaign, chaired by San Diego Community College District Chancellor Constance Carroll, raised \$144,729. This fundraising success enabled Wayword to invest in some key steps toward long-term sustainability. These investments included bringing on both hosts full-time and engaging a fundraising officer to lead a fundraising readiness assessment and strategic planning process, and to help create a comprehensive fundraising plan.

Wayword has reached a critical point. It continues to build a sustainable organization while expanding the show's reach and deepening its connections with the San Diego community.

To continue that momentum, Wayword's board of directors has authorized the Friends to raise \$250,000 from individual gifts and a signature event in 2017. In November 2016, the Friends reconvened to start the campaign to meet that goal.

Early in 2017, at the invitation of Friends member Betty Peabody, the Friends will hold a Blue Ribbon Nominating Committee event at the San Diego Yacht Club to solicit advice, nominations for Friends, and partner prospects from the show's biggest boosters and most respected advisors.

The group will spend the year building relationships with like-minded individuals and organizations to strengthen the organization, expand its board, and continue to serve its growing audience.



THE WAY FORWARD FOR WAYWORD

➤ In 2007, the hosts and producer Stefanie Levine (pictured below) committed themselves to preserving the show by taking it over after a KPBS-FM funding crisis stopped production. They founded Wayword, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, and in the years since, despite being a mostly volunteer effort, the show has grown tremendously across all metrics.



Under the direction of the nonprofit's board, this creative team has continued researching, recording, editing, and distributing the show, as well as fundraising for it.

The fundraising helps *A Way with Words* be distributed free of charge to radio stations and podcast listeners to ensure that the show's reach is as wide and inclusive as possible and to fulfill its mission regardless of a listener's ability to pay.

The show's reach continues to grow, serving a variety of listeners — students, teachers, English-language learners, and others eager to understand why and how we say the things we do.

Years of volunteer labor and shoestring budgets have taught all involved how to stretch resources and to practice tight fiscal discipline. This will remain central to how the nonprofit operates. However, the nonprofit will make necessary investments in staff, infrastructure, and programming so that it can solidify the gains it has made and to further professionalize.

In 2017, the production team will stay focused on doing what they do and love best: producing a high-quality show and getting out in the community to encourage informed, civil discussion, and answer listeners' questions while learning their slang, folklore, colorful phrases, and linguistic heirlooms and sharing them around the world.

In order to broaden the show's audience, Wayword will establish partnerships with organizations aligned with its mission.

We know that going to places that represent a wide range of language and perspectives will help spread our message, as well as adding to our store of knowledge about language. We look forward to deepening our connection with the community, and re-sharing the linguistic gems and diverse perspectives they will share with us. Some of the partnerships in development for 2017 include:

- *City Heights Performance Annex at the Weingart Library.* City Heights is among the most linguistically diverse communities in San Diego County, with nearly half of its residents born outside the United States and at least 58 languages and dialects spoken.
- *Lambda Archives.* The mission of the Lambda Archives of San Diego is to collect and teach the history of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people in the San Diego and Northern Baja California region. Lambda is dedicated to preserving, interpreting, and making available important historical material, and language is a key part of that history. They are housed together with the Diversionary Theatre in University Heights, home to a diverse community.
- *California State University San Marcos.* CSU San Marcos serves a largely Spanish-speaking population, and awards diplomas to many students who are the first in their families to graduate from college.

Wayword will be proud to call each of these groups “partner” and looks forward to working toward our shared goals in 2017.

THE SHOW IN A NUTSHELL

Broadcast over the air on more than 70 broadcasters in 33 states and countries • more than 225,000 monthly podcast downloads • more than 120,000 Facebook followers • more than 23,000 Twitter followers • more than 721,000 SoundCloud followers • more than 53,000 newsletter subscribers • more than 4,000 online donations • more than 200 calls and emails from listeners each week

WE ALL NEED A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS

➤ Wayword has always functioned as a small, tight-knit group — more like a family than a corporation — in part because it has relied on personal dedication and relationships. Now, we are making room at the family table to add more people to supply support, advice, and feedback.

By contributing to this campaign, you are doing more than just supporting thoughtful radio programming. You are standing with us — the hosts, the staff, the board, the Friends, and our listeners — and saying you believe in the power of language to build bridges between people and communities. You are recognizing the importance of investing in this organization at a critical point in its development. You are choosing to be a partner in our growth.

You may make a gift of any amount to help with this campaign. Your support will help promote a better understanding of what makes humans human — language — and to help listeners connect and find the common ground that such knowledge has the potential to create.



Donor Categories

➤ The following donor categories allow us to recognize our Friends at our events, on the podcast or radio show, and on our website and social media accounts. Donors always have the option to transfer any of their benefits and invitations to students, teachers, or librarians who would not otherwise have the chance to mingle with the hosts and other like-minded word lovers.

We will honor any requests to keep donations anonymous. Otherwise, we will recognize gifts as follows:

- ★ *Abecedarian*: \$500–\$749 Invitations to exclusive events such as Thursday Night Family Dinner with Martha Barnette and regular VIP receptions at community events with Grant Barrett and Martha Barnette.
- ★ *Belletrist*: \$750–\$1,499 All of the above, plus an invitation to attend a recording of the show and recognition in the newsletter.
- ★ *Etymologist*: \$1,500–\$3,499 Social media recognition as co-sponsor of a pub quiz evening with Grant and Martha, and two places on one of their teams to be used by you or donated to a student, teacher, or librarian.
- ★ *Grammarians*: \$3,500–\$7,499 All of the above, plus recognition at one annual signature event.
- ★ *Orator*: \$7,500–\$14,999 Podcast-only recognition as sponsor of a quarterly salon event, including four VIP tickets for your use or to be donated to a teacher, student, or librarian.
- ★ *Wordsmith*: \$15,000–\$24,499 Podcast and on-air thanks, as well as recognition as co-host of Blue Ribbon Nominating Panel event with Betty Peabody at the San Diego Yacht Club.
- ★ *Shakespearean*: \$25,000+ Presenting sponsor for first-come, first-served choice of annual signature event, programming (e.g. City Heights Performance Annex), or Family Dinner series.

Wayword, Inc., is a 501c(3) corporation. Federal Tax ID is 27-0277377.

Wayword, Inc., Board of Directors

- Martha Barnette, President
- Michael Breslauer, Vice President
- Bruce Rogow
- Rick Seidenwurm
- Betty Willis

Friends of *A Way with Words*

- Constance Carroll (chairman), Chancellor, San Diego Community College District
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- Ignacio De La Torre, Regional Vice President, AT&T
- Rosemary Downing, paid nonprofit consultant
- Joan Houston Hall, Editor-in-Chief, *Dictionary of American Regional English* (ret.)
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