

Texas Book Festival Staff

Marianne DeLeón, Chief Executive Officer

Marianne serves as Texas Book Festival's CEO. She holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Texas at Austin and a master's degree from Southern Methodist University where she documented the story of her family's immigration experience from Cuba. Early in her career, Marianne dedicated over three years to full-time volunteer service in the United States Peace Corps (Republic of Moldova from 2000-2002) and AmeriCorps VISTA (Dallas, Texas from 2002-2003) where she developed a passion for fundraising for mission-driven organizations. She has since spent the last two decades developing her skills as an organizational leader and social entrepreneur. Most recently, she served as the Chief Revenue Officer for Pease Park Conservancy where she helped finalize the \$15M capital campaign to revitalize, operate, and maintain Austin's beloved Pease Park. She currently serves on the boards of directors for the No Comply Foundation, Evergreen Austin, and Laboratorio Arts. In her free time, she totes around her teenage son (who is her brightest star) and avidly walks while listening to her Libro.fm audiobooks.

Dalia Azim, Chief Operations Officer

Dalia serves as the Texas Book Festival's Chief Operations Officer. She holds a bachelor's degree in Modern Thought and Literature from Stanford University and published her first book, *Country of Origin*, in 2022. Her writing has appeared in *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *Texas Highways*, *American Short Fiction*, *Aperture*, *Glimmer Train*, and *Other Voices*, among other places. Before joining TBF, she was the manager of executive initiatives and chief diversity and inclusion officer at the Blanton Museum of Art, where she helped oversee the realization of Ellsworth Kelly's *Austin*, the Blanton's new grounds initiative, and the museum's DEAL priorities. She was an Op-Ed Public Voices Fellow at the University of Texas at Austin and has received the First Star honor from *American Short Fiction*, the Discovery Award from the Writers League of Texas, the Staff Excellence Award from the Blanton Museum of Art, and the Lee Tenenbaum Award for exceptional curatorial work at MoMA. She is a member of the Austin Bat Cave Board of Directors.

Susannah Auby, Chief Impact Officer

Susannah Auby serves as Texas Book Festival's Chief Impact Officer. She received her MBA from Columbia University and her bachelor's degree from the University of California at Berkeley. Prior to joining Texas Book Festival, she was a volunteer in Austin in many roles focused on education fundraising, literacy outreach, libraries, and her greatest passion, introducing children to books and all the magic that they offer. Her prior professional experience was in New York and included management consulting, strategic planning, and financial analysis. She is a member of the Pease Park Conservancy Board of Directors.

Hannah Gabel, Literary Director

Hannah joined the Texas Book Festival as the Literary Director in 2023. She holds a double bachelor's degree from Boston University in Advertising and History. Hannah has spent the majority of her professional career in corporate event management, marketing, and design. A native Austinite, she previously directed events and marketing strategy at The Real Estate Council of Austin (RECA) and Stream Realty Partners. Prior to joining TBF, Hannah founded HLG Creative, a freelance graphic design and marketing agency, where she worked with a variety of clients on everything from logos and branding to website design and content creation. She is also the founder of the book blog and social community, Bookmarkparty, which has enabled her to connect with authors, publishers, and fellow book lovers around the world and ultimately led her to Texas Book Festival.

Michelle Hernandez, Director of Youth Programs

Michelle serves as Texas Book Festival's Director of Youth Programs where she manages the Reading Rock Stars and Real Reads programs year round and oversees children's and young adult programming for TBF's annual Festival. She received both her master's degree in education and bachelor's degree in psychology from Texas State University. Prior to joining Texas Book Festival, Michelle worked in various roles in K-12 education, including spending 11 years as an elementary school teacher, serving as a teacher mentor, and managing Austin ISD's student teaching program and new teacher support initiatives. Her love of children's books, and their authors and illustrators, started in the classroom while engaging with stories and poems with students. Michelle enjoys exploring Austin with her husband and daughter, checking out local restaurants, visiting the library, and reading picture books, graphic novels, literary fiction, YA, middle grade, and memoirs.

