In the US, over 48,000 youth are confined in juvenile or criminal justice facilities. In Ohio, about 2,200 youth are held in juvenile or criminal justice facilities.

They have been separated and isolated from family, friends, and members of the community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many of them feel forgotten, alone, & scared. This is for them.
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We strive to reduce the recidivism rates of our residents and participate in the transformation of the juvenile justice system.

MISSION AND VISION

Teach

We teach creative writing to youth who are incarcerated.

Empower

We empower our residents’ voices.

Assist

We assist in their re-entry into society.
We believe in creating an environment where justice becomes visible, where restoration from wrong is possible, where people are seen as more than their worst moments, where people can create a future not doomed to repeat the past.

We believe that our residents can build their self-esteem, resilience, and power through working on their writing, their reflection, their communication, through the creative writing workshop experience.

We believe in fostering genuine, strong, and long-lasting relationships as well as walking with our residents as they navigate the path to re-entry.
We believe that our residents deserve to discover and recognize their own dignity and self-worth through our creative writing workshops. We also believe that if we respect ourselves, our residents, and our student volunteers then we successfully lead by example.

We believe in the power of community. This means that we continually welcome and accept our residents into our communities because they belong to an environment that promotes individuality and empowerment, especially upon re-entry. We also believe in the creation of a collaborative atmosphere that amplifies all voices together in a spirit of mutuality and kindness.
COHORTS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Cohorts

1 Capital University
2 College of Wooster
3 Heidelberg University
4 Hiram College
5 John Carroll University
6 Marietta College
7 Oberlin College
8 University of Dayton

Community Partners

- Cuyahoga Hills Juvenile Correctional Facility
- Indian River Juvenile Correctional Facility
- Lorain County Juvenile Detention Home
- Medina County Juvenile Detention Center
- Montgomery County Center for Adolescent Services
- Portage-Geauga Juvenile Detention Center
- Seneca County Youth Center
- Washington County Juvenile Center
### Outputs and Outcomes

#### Year to date:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average</th>
<th>YTD</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 residents</td>
<td>590 residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 student volunteers</td>
<td>139 student volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97 hours</td>
<td>1,681 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$2,457.70</td>
<td>$43,443.44</td>
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### Spring 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average</th>
<th>YTD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 40.75 residents</td>
<td>• 326 residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 8 student volunteers</td>
<td>• 37 student volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 98.25 hours</td>
<td>• 393 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• $2,498.50</td>
<td>• $10,689.60</td>
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### Fall 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average</th>
<th>YTD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 27 residents</td>
<td>• 109 residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 9 student volunteers</td>
<td>• 18 student volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 74 hours</td>
<td>• 223 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• $1,890.30</td>
<td>• $5,670.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Spring 2020

**Average**
- 13 residents
- 8 student volunteers
- 105 hours
- $2,657.44

**YTD**
- 76 residents
- 56 student volunteers
- 627 hours
- $15,944.61

### Fall 2019

**Average**
- 20 residents
- 7 student volunteers
- 110 hours
- $2,784.59

**YTD**
- 79 residents
- 28 student volunteers
- 438 hours
- $11,138.34
Half of our cohorts launched this spring, which actually yielded our highest outputs compared to other seasons.

To clarify how we track our outputs, we take attendance at every session because our service population remains to be extremely transient, generating the total number of residents. However, some of the residents participate in our program more than once, so we averaged the total number of residents from every cohort to produce an approximate number that represents how many residents we engage weekly. We replicated the same calculations for our student volunteers too. The Independent Sector valuates volunteer time at $27.20/hour; we multiplied this dollar amount by the total number of service hours for every student volunteer.

Read more about our outputs, outcomes, and impact at www.writersnresidence.org/impact
Dear reader,

Before you read any further, allow me to educate you about our program model.

We facilitate weekly creative writing workshops with 5-12 undergraduates from a college or university for 10-15 residents at a juvenile facility in Ohio. Each creative writing workshop lasts 12-weeks during the spring, summer, and fall, and each session runs for 60-90 minutes, teaching our residents various writing techniques, texts, and themes from diverse and dynamic authors.

Then, we publish, showcase, and distribute chapbooks like this one filled with our residents’ creative writing inside juvenile facilities, on campuses, and throughout the local communities to raise awareness about the juvenile justice system and advocate for juvenile justice reform at the end of every creative writing workshop.
Maya Angelou said: “I have learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” When I reflect on this quote in light of the COVID-19 pandemic that forced our in-person program to become remote since the fall of last year, I hope she is wrong. I hope that our residents never forget what we discussed, what we demonstrated, and how we made them feel seen, heard, and understood as well as inspired, optimistic, and supported because they matter: what our residents think, say, and do matters not only to us but to everyone. They possess as much value as anyone else regardless of their circumstances.

We remind them of this every workshop and session while we write poetry and prose; build positive peer relationships; and create a safe environment for them to find relief from their stress, anxiety, depression, and anger. This chapbook serves to remind you of this too, so please consider reading our residents’ creative writing with an open mind and a heart.

Zachary Thomas
Unbroken: Voices from Medina County JDC

The Mixed Cohort
A letter from the Cohort

Dear reader,

Even though it wasn’t ideal but nonetheless possible to foster a connection regardless of circumstances, whether it’s via Zoom, Google Meet, or two plastic cups and some string, two receptive minds will join like magnets. This is what we learned, and this is what happened between the residents and the student volunteers.

The intellectual conversations paired with laughter are truly what will really stick with us from this spring. We loved experiencing those moments where we all let go a bit and truly connected with one another because that is a bit harder to do during a remote creative writing workshop. We feel relieved and lifted when the residents were smiling behind their masks and talking over one another to get their piece in, simply because they are excited about the topic of discussion. We also really enjoyed when they would openly ask us questions because it showed that they were comfortable with us.

We remain grateful that Writers in Residence still exists and operates amid the pandemic, but we also await the true return of the organization’s in-person programming because nothing will substitute the impact of making physical space for creative expression and critical reflection.
However, we still provided our residents with a respite of joy every Sunday afternoon. When we had ten extra minutes at the end of a session to joke around, or a resident read a poem that they really liked, these moments made the workshop so real and human. We feel as though we have made connections with our residents and learned about their experiences that we otherwise would have never been exposed to and that alone is priceless.

The Mixed Cohort
Untitled

D

I'll be good at basketball if i keep trying
All eyes on me everyday
I have fear of big snakes
I'm awful for being in Jail
1. I am pushing on, feeling hopeful
2. Love is tough, so am I
3. Worry later, have fun right now
4. Big Mac from mcdonalds is good
5. Baconator fills my tummy all up
6. Keep friends close, but enemies closer
7. Work hard, expect greatness in return
8. Everything is earned, nothing is given
9. I'll be alright in 90 days
1. rocks & Stars takes place in space.
2. Sharks, dogs, snakes
3. Eating brings me Joy.
1. Astronauts landing
2. on the ISS
3. Uzi and I
4. bumping on the way up together
5. we chewing on Mcdonald's
6. bumping lil uzi song at the ISS
Untitled

R

Floatin in space space
But I think I'm laced
got the cops behind me
Guess I left a trace
Now I'm doing the race
Running so fast I skipped first base
My name is my reputation

Wake up well I didn't
Wake up cuz I never
Went to sleep, Banging
the 6 all night and
studying at the same
time. One makes money
how one makes it later
so I'm kinda split.
When me and Zack and our other friends went to a neighborhood park I got the cops called on me by a lady and She accused me of assaulting a kid and she said I was being suspicious and the other kid left and Zack Stayed with me and defended me.
We were at Swensons me, my girlfriend, and a few of my friends. I was playing this girl. And her dad Pulled up to Swensons. Me and my friend who’s 6’3 got out of my car and he didn’t fight us because he was a shrimp.
This one time my mom was dating this one guy and he was always being mean to her. This one time specifically he said something nasty to her so I kicked him out of my house. My mom was really hurt from the whole thing and I spent the day with her to make her feel better.
Someone told me I wasn't good at basketball and said stop trying and I got mad and yelled at the person.

Working out, playing basketball, music, games, good grades, nice clothes, nice shoes, complimented
Untitled

R

They think I'm a risk
They think I'm a menace
But it's all talk cuz they
never seen me outside these walls

They say I got whip skills
and they just seen me burn him
There gasing me up
and were bumping the beamer

yeah I'm out now
and I ain't got no bracelet
so Best believe I'm hype
cant nothing faze me
They hate on my style
but in reality I’m
so fresh and so clean
oh that man doesn’t
like me, tells me I look weak
but I know, within me
I am strong, but not weak.

How they don’t like my music,
too bad that doesn’t affect me
people say my writing is sloppy
but, my grades speak for me.
Family is
a gift you are given
the second you are born

Family is a hand
always there to elevate you

Family isn’t always blood
but the people who accept you
regardless

Family is a book of memories
that you can look back on
and smile

Family are the people who
back you up when your cornered

Family is a gift given the
second you born.
The family is the forbidden fruit.
The fall of man,
Yet a gift
even when you aren’t who
the expected.
Love is love and family
can’t change that.
you are you no one can
Change that, only you can
change
that
The family is solid as a rock, we always will have respect and love for one another. Even though our music is quite different, The honesty between us never fails. We may fight as most families do, but at the end of the day, we help each other make our dreams come true. The family is solid as a rock.
1. I am fun smart athletic bored
2. Bumping Juice, Uzi, Polo, the G.O.A.Ts.
3. Chipotle white rice extra chicken yumm
4. Started strong can’t stop gotta finish
5. Help others makes you stronger inside
6. The mind is powerful use wisely
7. Tell that girl bye see ya
8. I will be better then you
1. I am tired, upset, stressed, hungry
2. I am funny, sarcastic, humoros, exciting
3. I am wonderful, happy, smiley courageous
4. I am selfish addictive, stubborn, manipulative
5. I am smart, artistic, creative, adventorous
6. I’ll be Everything I need to be
1. I am a good advice giver
2. I am a very good friend
3. I am a really caring person
4. I am a strong, independent person
5. I am a spontaneous/rambunctious person
6. I am a very funny person
7. I am a daring risk taker
8. I have an addictive personality
9. I will be a better me
1. are their animals in heaven
2. I want to be 100% truthful to my family
3. I am a hard worker to fix all the wrong I’ve done
4. I work hard on making money and saving it
5. I’m working on becoming a better role model for my little brother
Untitled
S

1. love to see you down, hate to see you up
2. nothing will come easy to you
3. everything happens for a reason
4. I will be a better son
1. Thief, lier, Druggy, chill, funny, loyal
2. funny, calm, smart, outgoing, caring, loving
3. Kind, Respectful, confident, lucky, willing, Safe
4. I will be Sober, honest, free
1. I’m confedant, funny, selfish, aragant, white, long haired
2. don’t wait for things get better
3. Stop saying love ya’ll being corney
4. I want food, I get food
5. Why you fake, drop the act
6. Are avicatos a fruit or not
1. I’m funny, trustworthy, athletic, realistic, confident, sarcastic
2. Life is what you make it
3. Love can always be found
to hate you have to care
4. Fight for the things you love
5. Don’t let anyone stop you achieving your goals
6. What would’ve happened if one thing’s different
   Take your chances, they come once
1. I won the 2016 basketball tournament.
2. I'm funny because I get it from my family.
3. I'll be fine, let me think
4. I always respected everyone even if I don't know them.
5. I'm really understanding when talking to others.

If there something you want it's worth working for
I come from places that can be good and bad
Places that can take your life over
And places that can benefit.
People that give you a lesson
And people that make you hurt
Places where you call fun and
Others where it sucks
Family that cares while the others
Make you want to run forever.
But I’m going to try to take the
Good path and see where it leads me.
Untitled

I come from being a nobody
I come from places where it’s not muddy
From a single mom with no support
To steppin in things I couldn’t afford
A hustler, a go-getter, that’s who I am
From hated to everyone being a fan
I come from a small town and lots of drugs
And abandoned places where people go to do drugs
One place is the brickyard and not far from
There is an abandoned factory

And I'm going to Virginia and getting
My life back on track

To meet the right one and make better friends
And to get a job
And to get a nice truck to cruise around
In with my friends

And I want to become a better big brother
And not be in jail and be with him
I come from a small town, where everyone
Knew each other and everything that went on.

Kids who would go to school and as soon
As we all got home we would link at
The park play football or catch things in
The lodi creek.

I come from the town where not everyone
Got along and but most tried.

Kids would fist fight and make up the day
After like nothing happened.

And every day the same old lodi kids
Would do the same thing just different
Day.
I come from where if you don't do something
You don't want to do you're scared
And if you're doing good they
Claim you as a friend or a cousin and they have been with you since the beginning
If you get stopped by the cops you run and
If you get caught you don’t know who was there
I'm going to get out of Ohio to get good money
I come from Seville Ohio where I skate
I come from drugs and alcohol
I come from friends and influence
I come from Board and frame
I come from weapons and ammunition
I come from dirt and game
I’m going to change
I come from a town with seed people
But even better donuts
I come from playing football on Friday nights
Adrenaline pumping through my veins
I come from swimming in pools and Granger lake
Not even caring about sunburn
I come from playing pickup basketball at the Marriott Inn
Till the lights go out
I come from home cooked meals on the grill
And fast food from McDonalds
I come from a family who loves me
Even in jail
But I’m going to create my own path
And help others along the way
I come from Cave City, Kentucky. 
With many back roads 

I come from questionable attire. 
Where it was normal to wear boots with shorts 

I come from small houses, 
Everyone knew everyone 

I come from a community, 
With unstoppable laughter in class 

I come from dirt bikes 
And four-wheelers 

But I’m going to big houses 
With built in theaters
I come from Lodi, Ohio where it’s a really small town but there is a lot to do like parks. There was a lot of hangout spots and small town events throughout the year like parades. The corn festival. Corn fest was like a mini fair there were rides and fair food and stuff.
Untitled

I come from a home where holding together
A healthy relationship was like trying to
Carry water with only bare hands

I come from friends the age of my
Older sisters, which no one approved of

I come from a school with metal detectors
And staff who silenced the hurt and gone

I come from friends who kept drugs and
Weapons on them more than phones.

I come from an area where going out
Alone was punished

I come from where fighting and hugging
Would go to the same people

But I’m going to a better path.
Untitled

I come from a small place called the square where there's not
A lot of stuff to do but play b-ball

I come from Ray Miller where we play baseball and see the
Same people every day.

I come from a place where it used to be violent
To a peace and quiet neighborhood.

I come from a place where a lot of people that was close to you are
Gone, but I'm going to be the one who makes it out

I come from a place where people don't think of success and positive things
I come from a place where is born at and
Lived in the same house before.
a football game I have a goal to reach its to win if you get hit you got to get back up and try a different plan if i didnt work the first 4 downs. And sometimes you got to defend people from coming acrosed you. To get first downs is like something positive that happens when you are trying to reach your goal.
broke down car is me

1. I once was a great mobile car
2. I would see so many places and so many faces
3. I hung out with other cars like me
4. Then one day I crashed it was a dumb accident
5. I thought I could keep movin and that the fires would go away
6. But the I got more and towed away
7. They found all my diesel and oils so I was put in impound
8. I said I could be fixed so I went to the mechanic's but then they said I was too broke and brought me back
Power on, power off
Setting picked up and put down all day
[no idea] on top of me, see right through me
Let you know what's going on by vibrating
Crack my screen, it happens
just don't forget
to put me on my charger.
I'm like a bottle because I keep my feelings
Bottled up like a bottle keeps the drink
Bottled up and when people are
Done with bottles they throw them
Away just like how when my
Friends were done with me
They threw me away to jail
By putting all the blame on someone.
people open and close me all the time
some read only the words [two words] some read between the lines
if you don't read the beginning you won't fully understand the end.
I have good days and I have bad ones.
My Mothers Working Hands

When I was born the first person that I saw
Was my mother already working as hard as the
law. When I turned 3 my mother crafted me a present
I would love. a beautiful peice of leather work that id
oh so love. When I turned 7 I relized my hands have
yet to be like my mothers. I have never crafted
a peice of wood into something beautiful nor washed and
bathed a child and I had yet to learn the lesson
of how my mom survied the wild life she
lived. Yet she taught me how to craft a
peice of leather work and it was so beautiful
like the beauty of the light in her eyes
my mother is the light inside me that
my family loves so now I do trully
understand what it is like to work hard
like my mothers working hands.

What I mean by this is that my mom inspired
me to grow up and to Do good deads
for others.
Something that is my light is the [?] my family, who help me get through this time in Jail. My family helps me by giving me positive thoughts and give me something to think about So I get through this time in Jail easier.
look on the bright side

W

1. Jail is poo poo, and these dudes is bumming me out , but look on the bright side, we get tacos sometimes.
2. These shoes be hurting me, I swear flip flops got more support, but look on the bright side
3. I get to take naps the air is stuffy and my lies be cracker , but look on the bright side, theres females waiting on the outs
4. My sell is uncomfy, and I swear they be opening my door every time I dump but look on the bright sides I got a sandwhich today.
Welp right Now life is trash But look at the bright side I go home in 36 Dayz an my life will Finally be Back. Their is always parts in life that's Not Fair Nor Fun But at the end of the day Jus know it will be OKAY!!! ☺
Basketball, it helps me when I'm down and stress, I can hoop 6-8 hours a day and that's what I like. My girl is the only person that can calm me down, you know how black widow can calm the hulk down its like dat.
Me and my mom may argue and she may make me mad but I can play PS4 to make sure It wasnt in vain.
I was trying to keep my concentration When I heard Everything complaining it was at that time i wished I was swimming Maybe hydroplaning all because my mind started straining moral is keep concentrating not contemplating
ima be excited
If i do months i can’t cry bc one of my friend did 2/1 years with no tears
Im Lost right Now, sike I got it
Big Trees with No Leafs
Im too cool For school
Life is Boring in Jail
Where could the Food be?
My stomach’s baren dessert
I think I hear food

My Parents left me
They got it like snakes in sun
Why forsaken me

Refrigerator
What a wonderus comfort
It’s my disney land
Basketball is so awesome
I hate school so much
Untitled

A

Refrigerator
Promises are broken
Love doesn’t last long
Door locks spio
Like vending machines working
Others dropping like shoes

Erases goo like candy
Ploliils all the way
Fike dldrag drwrech
Untitled

Nice Winter No snow
Great time watching the wind blow
Knippy spring season
My guilty pleasure is smoking weed. before I feel anxious or upset after I feel content and tired sometimes hungry for some fried chicken
M

Boxing? Volleyball?
Drinking or smoking weed
Writing about how I feel
Watching childhood movies
Constant thought’s of getting released,
I use my positivity to get me threw
the Day, An to remind my-self it
will all be over

with soon.
Making food Especially when its seasoned good, good songs that I really like the beat to or think are lyrically good, I have a few funny favorite movies too like step brothers, talledega nights, an scary movie 3, trailer park bois, also I like nature alot but lately I forgot about that mainly why I like seasoned food so much is cause it never ah. get old cause you could make anything like 10 different ways, an pair it with 10 other foods an- then you could pair it with a movie thats really funny or whatever an keep those same feelings going on or around some music that you really like an maybe put some music. With a spot in the woods you really like an maybe prolly also find some type of nice peace
Pizza, chicken, burgers, tacos, fish
rap music
Lifetime tv show
Horror, Action, and Crime movies
Playing the game, basketball, swim, hang w friends

All this means so much to me
because this is what i enjoy doing
1. My bestfriend and I buy each other everything, and do everything together. She also check up on me everyday, I do also.

2. My best friend and I don't look out for each other.

3. My bestfriend takes me out of state almost everytime she leaves Ohio.
1. I was very clearly in a terrible mood that was lasting. Week an my first childhood best friend came by to once again help me realize Im not alone People still think nicely of me everybody still wants to be around me an that we are doing good an have nothing impactful to worry about besides our future an the people we know will be in it an it really helped me find my way out of a bad mood.

2. Me an my best friends went sledding an got food. Even though like 3 of us didn’t have money an we even bought the sleds all of us we definitely Excited an it was the only
I lived in brunswick for most of my life and I moved to medina.

Me and my friend got the cops called on us for no reason and a weomen was screaming at us about random stuff.

Me and my friend were hanging out when a kid was screaming and we went outside and he was so mad at his mom and he stated screaming at her n cussing at her to.
1. my Bestfriend and I hang out every Day after school Till me mom get home from work Because my mom doesnt Like her

2. my Bestfriend and I ever Since we’ve Known each other have always wanted to grow up and move to L.A together, she wants to be a Doctor and a wanna be a interior designer

3. my Bestfriend isnt really supposed to hang out with me, I’m only aloud at her house when her moms not home because She Doesn’t Like me. She’s not supposed to hang out with me
1. Me and my bestfriend were at the park once and she had tripped over one of the benches because she wasn’t paying attention, and she fell and had broken her wrist but ended up laughing it off.

2. Me and my bestfriend went to D.C. for a trip and when we were in the hotel rooms she dressed up as a grandma with an iron.

3. During Language arts in 7th grade she would collect fluffy pends from the book fair and wrote creative stories and shared them.
me and my homie was at my house when
dis girl wanted to come over and
she knew i was home and my friend lied
to her saying i got locked up.
Acknowledgements

- Residents
- Student Volunteers
- Cohort Advisors and Academic Institutions
- Community Partners and Juvenile Facilities
- Special Guest Authors and Artists
- Donors and Community Members
- Board of Directors
- Graphic Designer

Thank you for working with us to fulfill our mission and vision! We appreciate your time, talents, and treasure. This work relies heavily on collaboration, so without every stakeholder’s contribution, then we would not be operational.

We want to express our endless gratitude for The Cleveland Foundation’s and the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award’s on-going generosity.
We ask that you please consider donating because your financial contribution will sustain our ability to teach creative writing to youth who are incarcerated to empower their voices and assist in their re-entry into society. Your donation will allow us to:

- Purchase programmatic materials (e.g., writing materials, technology, personal protective equipment (PPE), snacks, and chapbooks) for our creative writing workshops.

- Compensate special guest authors and artists to facilitate one or more of our creative writing workshops with an honorarium.

- Assist our residents who are re-entering society with very little or zero access to social services and resource to prevent recidivating.

- Educate our local communities and government officials about the juvenile justice system’s traumatic effect on our youth.

Visit [www.writersnresidence.org/donate](http://www.writersnresidence.org/donate) or scan the QR code below with your smartphone’s camera to donate!

Writers in Residence is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization incorporated in Ohio.