what they don’t know:
VOICES FROM INSIDE

Fall 2022  Heidelberg University Cohort
For the 49,000 youth confined in a juvenile facility in the US.

For the 2,200 youth confined in a juvenile facility in Ohio.

These youth have been separated from family and friends. Many of them don’t feel seen, heard, or understood.

Their creative writing in this text rewrites the stereotypes and biases of a juvenile in detention.

And for the youth no longer with us. We call them our friends. We know them by name.

This is for them.
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MISSION

We teach creative writing to youth who are incarcerated.

We empower our residents’ voices.

We assist in their re-entry.
VALUES

**JUSTICE.** 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.

**DIGNITY.** 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.

**EMPOWERMENT.** 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.

**COMMUNITY.** We believe in the power of community. We continually welcome and accept our residents into our communities to promote 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.

**RELATIONSHIP.** 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.
1. Baldwin Wallace Univ.
2. Bowling Green State Univ.
3. Capital Univ.
4. Case Western Reserve Univ.
5. Cleveland State Univ.
6. College of Wooster
7. Heidelberg Univ.
8. Hiram College
10. Marietta College
11. Oberlin College
12. The Ohio State Univ.
13. Ohio Univ.
14. Univ. of Dayton
15. Univ. of Toledo

SCHOOLS

FACILITIES

Circleville JCF
Cuyahoga County JDC
Cuyahoga Hills JCF
Franklin County JDC
Hocking Valley CRC
Indian River JCF
Lorain County JDH
Lucas County JDC
Medina County JDC
Montgomery County CAS
Portage-Geauga County JDC
Seneca County YC
Washington County JC
Wood County JDC
Our Creative Writing Workshops occur weekly in the spring and fall seasons. Each workshop lasts 12 weeks and every session runs for 60-90 minutes either in-person or remotely. 10-15 residents participate and 5-12 student volunteers from a local college or university engage with the youth. The experience is facilitated by a teaching artist from the community. Then, we publish, showcase, and distribute chapbooks filled with our residents’ creative writing artifacts inside juvenile facilities, on campuses, and throughout the region at local businesses to raise awareness about the juvenile justice system.

We survey our residents to understand our impact. These surveys give us quantitative and qualitative data so we can continue to deliver a high-quality program experience. The Heidelberg University Cohort’s chapbook was designed on November 10th, 2022, to ensure that the residents received this chapbook at the final workshop. As a result, the outputs reported only reflect a fraction of this cohort’s and the organization’s net impact from this fall program season.

To learn more, visit writersnresidence.org/impact!
Dear Readers,

During the workshops, we had our minds opened up to see the world in a different light. The residents talked to us about their stories and future. They were nervous and anxious just as much as we were at first when we met each, but realized we were super welcoming when we shared our stories with them too. That was an important feeling for us as student volunteers because we wanted them to feel comfortable with us. Along with that, we were open to seeing them as people and working with them as kids, and not just “residents” and the labels that many other people give them. But overall, we have had really good experiences with this workshop and the kiddos.

We ask that you remember that these are kids and not adults. They have made mistakes before, but they have also been hurt before. We are also not writing teachers trying to show them how to write better.

We are just trying to teach them a better way to express their emotions. They have different ways to express themselves and people should be accepting of their creativity. None of the work was changed or edited and it was published how the residents wanted. Have an open mind when you read this chapbook because their journeys and experiences appear through their writing. They haven’t had an “easy” life growing up. They are people just like us, and that is one of the most important things.

Ultimately, we are grateful for this experience altogether, especially giving the residents an outlet for their creativity and being a part of it. We appreciated the opportunity to hear a new perspective on life coming from someone with a different path growing up. They trusted in us to provide them with a safe space where they can be themselves and talk about their experiences and imagine new ways for them to grow and be successful.

Heidelberg University Cohort
Life – going through a lot but just know it gets better just gotta keep a good mindset

Love – if you rock with someone and have each other through thick and thin I would consider them family

Food – spicy food always hits no matter what it is

Advice – I look at as like anyone can snake you people say they rock with you but in the end they will end up snaking you

Questions – I rather be straight up instead of beating around the bush

Why not come to Carey it’s a quiet town although it may be small in comparison to the city we still have plenty to do, in the fall it looks almost like heaven although it may not smell like it, and Friday nights are where it’s at during football games and all you can hear across the whole town is the crowd and the announcer, in my town everyone is like family to you. My neighborhood is not a backwoods town full of hilljacks and bumkins, everyone there has a kind heart and would do anything for one another. You might just call it just another small town but to us it’s everything.
Untitled
H.B.

I am,
1) Artistic
2) Sporty
3) Funny
4) Open Minded
5) Smooth
6) Hardworking

Life
A.G.

You call it the hood but we call it home.
You rely on the cops we rely on the chrome
You can be rich but still get hit in the
Dome. The houses look like traps, you
get rich or die trying. 50 got facts

Trench Baby
C.H.

In my neighborhood we think a lot about gunshots
and gangs and hoping we make it home at night.

In my neighborhood we think a lot about the feds kicking
down the doors with warrants.

In my neighborhood we think about all the music and
rappers that come out of our city.

In my neighborhood we think about is you gonna eat or
starve or strive to make it out the trenches.

In my neighborhood we think about what it’s like to
pursue your dreams and keep your family safe.
It’s Not What U Think

H.B.

you call it Trashco
but we call it home
in my neighborhood, we think a lot about
being lucky to live another day
we think a lot about
being blessed to make it to 18
my neighborhood is fun
with kids, music, palm trees and even love
but you might see it differently
like its ghetto and trashy
there may be a lot of gunshots and sirens
with homeless people wondering
in the hot days or rainy humid nights
but my neighborhood is good because
with the right people someone always has your back
there is a lot of nice beaches
with cute dogs and happy kids playing
Pasco, may be trashy to you but
people from there make the best of it
you call it Trashco
but we call it home

Untitled

J.B.

I got my name through a bet with my
parents I like my name my close friends
call me JuJu or Jules

M.B.

M.B.

My name came from a
beaten soul, not quite put together, not
quite whole. My name means strength
others see it as weak.
As I sleep at night the tears would leak.
Once named I became
the wannabe, gang member, angry
b***h. I felt as though I’m cursed
by a witch as I grow older I
began to see why my name
was assigned to me.
Untitled
M.B.

Then I jumped out of the car
But, it wasn’t quite as easy as it seemed.
If we went to Italy
Then the skin of people would turn green.
If the Kingdom was falling
But Mexican food is my favorite
Then drive
If only I could travel everywhere
But why can’t we breathe underwater
If my name wasn’t meant for me

Untitled
P.S.

My neighborhood is not that bad
but if you don’t live there
and you’re new and you look at someone
crazy they will talk crap
to you

Untitled
J.B.

If grass was blue
Then Saturn’s rings fell onto earth
Otherwise the dinosaurs would take over
If cole couldn’t swim
Then your ankles wouldn’t click when you walk
But wait, did the apple hit your head?
If apples fell far from the trees
Then I repainted my car
But I would love to have a super power

Then I wanna go home
Only if I can run
But I don’t want to go to the moon
Then I felt the ground beneath me
Otherwise, I think it might have rolled downhill.
If zebras had spots
Then bulls would be on parade.
If my dude was no longer my dude
But pumpkins are squishy when old
**Untitled**  
M.B.

Atmosphere is cold, so cold  
Oxygen, non-existing. I go to take a  
breathe but remember what I was told...  
remain on this listing. Traveling further  
from the place I called home, traveling  
faster my mind it roams home. At last  
with my dad...  
Maybe death isn’t  
so bad?

**Untitled**  
A.S.

A snake  
When I lived  
Down home  
Came in  
The house  
And bit  
Our dog  
But now  
I am older  
I like them
When I was younger I was walking with some friends from school and there was this big bullmastiff in the alley we cut through and it started chasing us and ripped my shirt off my back.

I had a blue nose pit and wasn’t supposed to take her on a walk and when I did, she seen another dog, a lil terrier, she took off and snapped its neck.

floating like nothing
it takes no effort
who needs Zoloft
when you can just glide by
do nothing

J.B.

A.G.

C.H.

J.B.

A.G.

C.H.
We want to acknowledge the following individuals for their time, energy, and resources devoted to Writers in Residence:

- Residents and Juvenile Facility Staff
- Student Volunteers and Cohort Advisors
- Staff, Teaching Artists, Production Manager, and Printer
- Board of Directors, Community Partners, and Donors

It takes a team to achieve what we do, so thank you to everyone involved!
ways to give

This chapbook is available in exchange for a donation.

Your support directly benefits our youth through education and re-entry.

$5 - This gift covers the cost of a chapbook printed locally in Cleveland, OH by Outlandish Press.

$50 - This gift allows a teaching artist from the community to facilitate a creative writing workshop at a juvenile facility. This gift also helps a resident become matched with a mentor.

$100 - This gift sustains the organization’s daily operations to provide its programs and initiatives.

Visit writersnresidence.org/donate to give or scan the code below.

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