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.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mission p. 01
Values p. 02
Schools & Facilities p. 04
Impact p. 06
Letter From the Cohort p. 08
Artifacts p. 10
Acknowledgments p. 28

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.
SCHOOLS

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

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 Oberlin College Cohort’s chapbook was designed on November 7th, 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,

This was Oberlin’s first semester back at the Lorain County JDH with brand new volunteers. We were all excited to jump in but weren’t really sure what to expect. Within minutes of our first workshop, the residents had us laughing. We feel lucky to have been able to connect with the residents in all sorts of ways—whether sitting and processing our feelings together through writing, debating the categorization of avocados, or bonding over our fear of scary movies. Thinking about our brief times together so far fills our hearts with warmth and admiration.

We feel so grateful to have been able to share in the vulnerable creative writing process with the residents. For many of them, this is their first time writing creatively and they are able to produce beautiful work that is truly touching. Our residents have been able to tap into their own life experiences (good or bad) and use them as fuel for their writing. One of our favorite parts of the workshops is seeing how all of our work influences each other—often one resident or volunteer will share a thought or idea and it will inspire something in someone else’s writing.

As Nelson Mandela stated, “There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul than the way in which it treats its children.” A lot of these residents have gone through immense, immeasurable hardship in their short lives but are still kind and respectful people with goals and dreams just like anyone else. They deserve to be seen for more than their current residential status and recognized for their growth and maturity.

We hope you take this work in with the utmost care and gentleness, but we also hope you laugh and smile and feel the times our residents said they felt “like a 10” at check-in some days. We acknowledge not every day of life can be perfect, but reading these pieces hopefully brightens yours! Monday nights always start our week off right with our visits to the residents, and we are so happy to share some small part of that experience with you.

Oberlin College Cohort
**Untitled**

M.Y.

Live life to the fullest extent
Take it day by day slowly
Is what you’re doing worth it
Why love even when it hurts
Why is the good feed bad

---

**Untitled**

D.P.

Live life the way you want.
Don’t put 100% of love into something you don’t trust
Eat to stay healthy not entertained
Don’t let time that you don’t have escape
Why does one problem have so many outcomes?

---

**Untitled**

J.J.

I’ve been in the detention home thrice

I overthink stuff

My love so all the way
Just as loyal but don’t take it
For granted

I eat when I’m just
Bored sometimes

You gotta fail in life
To success and when you
Fail learn from it like mistakes

Do are soul really room around the earth
What do we really do when we die

How is it in heaven
My name is T.B. I'm very quiet sometimes when I don't know you. There could be times where I get angry but I'm always respectful towards others. I'm a genuine person, I'm focused on what I need to succeed in life. I'm also a very outgoing. I'm very wise in different ways.

The decisions that I make in my Life right now has a Major impact on my future

The Love that I have for people Could sometimes hurt me

Food is something that gives Me energy that helps me Get through my day

The best advice my father Gave me is to set goals to Get to where you want to be Or need to be

What is the purpose of life? Why can't everybody be happy?

Thoughtful, Caring, Positive, Helpful, Athletic, Hardworking

Life:
1. Always be the best you can be
2. Always lead toward success
3. Be great

Love:
1. Why is it hard to love?

Food:
1. Pizza or chicken?

Advice:
1. Watch who you hang around
2. Don't put your trust in everybody

Questions:
1. Why do people have hate in their heart?
C.H.

Caring, Kind, Hardworking, Respectful, Funny, Helpful

Life: Don’t ever quit keep going kiddo.
Love: LOL Loyalty over love.
Food: Hot food is better than cold.
Advice: Life is hard if you don’t try.
Questions: Why do we live to die.

T.J.

I am a good listener
I’m a curious
I’m a fun person
I’m a responsible
I am smart
I am kind

R.C.

Kind respectful and smart
Good kid, athletic fun hardworking
Love my family love twice once
Returned
Full time watching life

I.V.

(Respectful, fun, confident, cool, smart, hardworking, athletic)
Life: is a struggle it’s how you create the outcome
Love: is genuine take care of it
Food: Food is life produce energy
Advice: always important and helps strive for greatness
Questions: Help you learn new things
I'm a good kid
I love my dad
I like play games
I like work
I like to sleep
I like dog
I like tattoos

Life. I want to be somebody in life
Love. I can’t love you if you don’t love me!
Food. Pizza
Advice. Be someone who makes you happy?
Questions. Do you love yourself?

Jail food is not good
Life is not easy
Am I gonna get out on my mom's bday?
Untitled
J.D.

1. Funny
2. Smart
3. Nice
4. Curious
5. Creative
6. Respectful

Be a (leader) not a (follower)
Love a person
For being themself
Marcos is always
Better than pizza hut
Today's bad
Tomorrow can
Be better.
Does my honesty
Hurt people sometimes

Untitled
J.B.

Comfortable lies make baby jesus cry

Untitled
T.W.

1. Tall
2. Funny
3. Strong
4. Handsome
5. Happy
6. Athletic
**Toco Cat**
E.A.

I saw a cat in a
House eating toco
Bell and it was
Dancing in space

**Untitled**

**D.P.**

Talking to someone, then watching the camera
and not seeing them

Feeling someone watching you but not seeing them
at all

Having a bad dream but waking up with the
marks

**Untitled**

**M.G.**

Voy de camino y mi abuelo se esta
muriendo y de repente se me explota
la coma

Voy de camino para jardin
y estoy recogiendo flores
y de repente me asista
un es panta pajaros y se me
caan las flores y me voy
corriendo

I'm on my way and my grandma is
dying and all of a sudden I explode
into a coma

I'm on my way to the garden
and I'm picking flowers
and all of a sudden it gives me
a birds feather and I drop
the flowers and start
running
Untitled
H.S.

My phone is on one l, no signal, and I'm going down a dark road and I'm on E where is the nearest gas station then I seen one and when I went in nobody was there and a nun with a mask on asks you weird questions

Untitled
Anonymous

You're in jail, they ask you to work on your worst subject...English

Untitled
A.R.

Spongebob. Rick and Morty. The Walking Dead. Sandyshack. They are funny looking everything about them in the show Is funny to watch loney zoomey and are we there yet Barbershop.

Untitled
J.J.

I went to go check up on my niece I opened her door I see her in the closet with two tea cups when I opened it fully one tea cup dropped and she stood there in the closet with her tea cup in her hand she said to me you scared away Stacy. I ran.
I was in my car and then I got a call on my cell phone and it was my mom calling me and her car tire blew and she told me that she needs help and I go with my car and then my tire blew and then I can’t help her because my tire blew too and then I can’t help her because my tire blew.

I was at the cinema watching a movie and all of a sudden they touched me by the legs underneath me and I felt it and I ran out.

---

I really like Vin Diesel movies because he makes good movies and when you see him he entertains you and you feel good and every movie that he makes is better and they are all brutal and I like that and if they put me to work in two or three movies I choose all of them I like his movies.
Untitled

H.A.

I been talking to this girl since August after I got out. I saw her. I thought about her a lot. I meet her girl friends. We talked a lot which warmed my heart. I asked her to drive over she said yeah I was ecstatic. She came over we talked for hours until the night and it didn't bother me until she had to go that night she left I felt my heart or whatever is in my chest was hurting a lot so much and I knew why

Untitled

R.A.

Dear Paul Walker I respect you as a person you're good at what you do, you're always there when somebody needs you

My Cousin

J.J.

I look up to my cousin because he never led me to the wrong path or never told me nothing wrong. I also look up to him because he showed me only things possible for example we all stayed at my grandma house not my uncle's or my grandmother kid's could move her out her old house an get her a better one but my cousin her grandson did what he had to do on his first thing first was to move her into another house then he took care of each and every one of his family so I look up to him and look at him as a role model or big brotha that not too many people that's still young can do a lot for his family.
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!

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- Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards
- Cleveland Foundation
- The Medina County Arts Council
- The George Gund Foundation
- Outlandish Press
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.