I COME FROM MY PEOPLE
AND MY PEOPLE COME FROM ME
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.
# Mission

We teach creative writing to youth who are incarcerated.

We empower our residents' voices.

We assist in their re-entry.

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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.

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.

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.

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.

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.
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
IMPACT

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 Case Western Reserve University and John Carroll University’s chapbook was designed on November 1, 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!

FALL TOTALS

- **37 RESIDENTS**
- **8 Student Volunteers**
- **64 HOURS**
- **$1,916.80** Fiscal Valuation
- **23 ARTIFACTS**
- **1 Chapbook**
Dear Readers,

Every week we heard and enjoyed different stories from every resident. When we think about this semester’s creative writing workshops, each week presented a new story to be told. And within those stories, we learned something new about the young men and ourselves.

Initially, they were quiet but after a couple of weeks, the residents began openly talking about their creative works, thoughts and feelings, and how much the sessions made their days better. A lot of what we discussed within the workshops focused on our families, where we come from, and how those moments built us up and defined us, which inspired the title of this chapbook. They appreciated having the time and space to share their experiences with us because we would listen. We loved reading our artifacts aloud to one another and snapping in celebration at the end. These moments evoked a sort of cohesiveness and a sense of camaraderie between the residents and the student volunteers that was unmatched.

You should know that these are amazing guys who speak through their hearts. There is more to them than meets the eye. We know that most of them do not share the same experiences as us, but this difference makes their work all the more powerful and worth your attention. Each resident took careful consideration and took the time to create works that were meaningful and completely “them.” They also took their personal experiences and expressed them within these works, and each one is inspirational and unique to each resident.

We are entirely grateful for these new connections with the residents and a stronger understanding of how creative writing can become an outlet and an expressive means. The fact that we see them each week at the same time, and they know our names as we know theirs makes us feel like we had at least a small impact on their life. Be prepared to think deeply and deeper into the meanings of the residents’ work. Take time to become involved and immersed in their creations. Reflect after every piece. We promise it will be worth it.

CWRU & JCU Cohort
The way I’m feeling you prolly won’t imaging taking my actions and putting them past tense I hope Father God forgive me for the stuff I did last year thankful for my baby girl she better than any girl I’m working on being a better person is the only thing that matters.

I’m from east 55th where you hear loud music and people running in and out. The aroma of Thanksgiving food being cooked and served around the table. Kids playing basketball in the grass using trees as bases or playing dinoman on the daily bases. Families coming together for birthday celebrations or siblings graduations. One day you might see friends fighting or arguing the next day you will see laughing and playing. A family getting together watching the browns play or maybe a different team.

100% Rap, I like hearing Youngboy 100% laid back, a lot of people like how I act, 70% curious, 100% shoes, I mostly wear Jordans, 30% gaming, I play a little Warzone, 100% Cleveland, 100% my hair, sometimes people like to stare, 70% athletic, I love playing sports.
I'm from a loud home where I feel my safest, I'm from my grandmother's dining room table where she makes her famous sweet potato cheesecake and where we say our grates before we begin our feast. I'm from a woman who works hard to feed and love her children and do anything to protect them.

I'm from a city with four seasons where the killing never stops, while the talent keeps rising.

I'm from hooping at Zelma. George right by a pool off buckeye

I'm from a city where you hear music bumping from cars and gun shots and sirens at night.
I'm from my mom food cooking on the stove for Thanksgiving.

I was born out of my grandfather chilling with my grandmother playing cards with their kids. I was born out of family get togethers and People get to knowing each other better. I was born out of playing basketball at nearby parks playing against new people. I was born out of celebrating holidays and having fun.

I was born out of a century that do every thing the dumb way n some weak minded ppl. I was born out of the Muscle of my mother N the hussle of my brothers and the trust of my peers without those things I wouldn't be here we are all related through each other keepin up with one another
I was born out of the smell of thanksgiving dinners
I was born out of my mother baking banana pudding,
I was born out of my grandmothers great Smell of cornbread,
I was born out of my great-grandmothers delicious cake,
I was born out of a family that can cook but no one is a chef.

He's in the clouds, like a plane but in the deep end like a shark. Diamonds shine bright like the Sun is out but only at night like an owl. She's as delicate as a flower but as hot as a volcano.

In order to find me you'll have to look through a telescope I'm a star, but a tree might be in the way so you might not see that far, can hear me coming so don't snooze me. I'm not a clock, I flow like a (IDK) the rhymes will leave you shooked.

Dear Batman,
Growing up I always wanted to be like you because of how even though you didn't have any parents you were still the leader of the Justice League. I always liked how you handled your own even though you were the only one who didn't have any superpowers.
Dear Superman
S.W.

I grew up wanting to be big and strong like you. Wearing a super suit with a S on my chest while I'm wearing blue. While I was watching the TV show I would imagine me flying with a blanket as a cape. I would shoot lasers out my eyes and throw criminals in the sky. If I could fight criminals like you I would beat them till they were black and blue. Seeing you in action fighting criminals is funny and Superwoman like how you are.

Untitled
L.B.

Ace boa wassup, How you feelin
I'm glad you pulled through when they tried to rob you. I would've never trusted rico I knew he was fishy from the jump you Should've never set him up to the police you should've handled him yourself mitch should've never trusted him either he was to flashy and bring to much attention to the gang I can't believe mitch let em get that close be BTW mitch boa. It was a smart idea leaving the game tho that was real big for you. Ima hit you up later tho keep yo head up gangsta.
Here’s What My Powers Would Be

T.J.

I got vision and I got solutions. I can see situations before they happen and I can prevent them from happening. An example would be me on the football field. I can see the hole before it opens and run through it and get a touchdown. I hate getting tackled so I juke or use my speed to prevent it from happening.

Invisibility no one can see me I could go anywhere or escape anything without being detected. Super strength I could pick up anything and everything. Telekinesis I could control the things out of my control. Avatar I would use the natural elements against the evil forces of life. Foresight I win.
I can disappear into thin air anywhere I'm at. When I use my superpowers, I would use them for good. Using my invisibility I can appear when I am least expected. Me being me I would pop out when people think I'm long gone. If I could choose two powers my other superpower would be prediction. I would use this superpower to tell the future. I would know when and how people would operate or do things. Well I might not have some of those superpowers but I can use the stuff I have now to help out the world.

Lil Lz he ain't your average teen he see the opps and gone bang it out

Zero tolerance for bull crap so don’t say nothing dumb out the mouth

If I had a superpower my power would be foresight and time travel. I would probably use my powers to prevent world tragedies and invent a couple of things.
acknowledgments

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!

And a special thanks to the following institutions:
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.