

Writers in Residence



SPRING 2021

HEIDELBERG UNIVERSITY COHORT

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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Heidelberg University Cohort

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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 strive to reduce the recidivism rates of our residents and participate in the transformation of the juvenile justice system.

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.

Relationships

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. 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 | 5 John Carroll University |
| 2 College of Wooster | 6 Marietta College |
| 3 Heidelberg University | 7 Oberlin College |
| 4 Hiram 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:

Average

- 25 residents
- 8 student volunteers
- 97 hours
- \$2,457.70

YTD

- 590 residents
- 139 student volunteers
- 1,681 hours
- \$43,443.44

Spring 2021

Average

- 40.75 residents
- 8 student volunteers
- 98.25 hours
- \$2,498.50

YTD

- 326 residents
- 37 student volunteers
- 393 hours
- \$10,689.60

Fall 2020

Average

- 27 residents
- 9 student volunteers
- 74 hours
- \$1,890.30

YTD

- 109 residents
- 18 student volunteers
- 223 hours
- \$5,670.89

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 values 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

A letter from the ***Program Director***

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

Creative Expressions During COVID-19

Heidelberg University

A letter from the **Cohort**

Dear reader,

We have thoroughly enjoyed hearing our residents speak passionately about the things that they enjoy. They don't always have the opportunity to talk openly about the things that make them happy, so for us to provide them with that experience was amazing and eye-opening. Plus, some of us want to pursue careers in education, law enforcement, and social work, which only motivated us even more to pursue those aspirations that are now informed by our residents' stories.

During each creative writing workshop, we discussed different aspects of life as it relates to the session's text, technique, or theme. Take, for instance, the time we shared special moments of nostalgia, connecting all of us together with the little enjoyments we cherished as a child. Every individual goes through different trials and tribulations, becomes proud of their achievements, and imagines a better future for themselves. For these reasons, we ask that you read our residents' creative writing with an open mind and a willingness to understand their point of view because that is how you discover the meaning of each artifact.

Finally, we want to thank Zachary Thomas, Sarah Lazzari, and the staff at SCYC for allowing us to engage with the residents. We want to thank our residents who participated in our program because their involvement made this spring worthwhile for everyone, especially via Zoom. They filled the remote platform with smiles and laughter, which we are also extremely grateful. As a matter of fact, we titled this chapbook *Creative Expressions During COVID-19* because despite the pandemic, our residents remembered and expressed the good parts of our past through a year of struggle.

The Heidelberg University Cohort

Untitled

Keithlynn

1. I am nice but crazy competitive.
2. All are unique few are original.
3. they never said "I love you."
4. Am I useful or just used.
5. I will be loved more than ever!

Untitled

Anthony

1. I am tired of being in Jail
2. I am Resonable
3. I like Birthday cake
4. I like to get my way
5. I am outgoing
6. I will be the greatest African American male
role model I possibly can.

Untitled

Bryan

1. Remain humble while going hard.
2. loose your fake self, find your true self

Untitled

Justice

Life 1. No matter what, life goes on

Love 2. Pain is temporary, you'll find better.

Food 3. Chipotle chicken tacos are the best

Advice 4. Begin with the end in mind.

Untitled

Keithlynn

I come from a town that does drugs.

I come from a place that has helpful people.

I come from my home town that has good police.

I came from a town where my friends grew up.

I came a town that the high school band

played in parades

I came from a good high school that helps people

too.

I come from a place where we rap for fun

to forget

But I'm going to come from a town I love

and help out.

Untitled

Anthony

I come from Toledo where the streets aint a game and the system is corrupt, but i'm going to get rich or die tryin and I know I will succeed in life from NBA or being a rapper. I now live in a safer town but that don't mean it will be easy, people act like they know everything.

Untitled

Keaton

I come from the streets of Tiffin where
There's No good restaurants

I come from the trap where there's
Blunts always Burning drug dealers always selling

I come from a town with
Rappers and Song artist

But I'm going toward
A label that is calling my name

Tiffin

Miya

I come from a small trashy town
Where everyone talks too much.

I come from a place where my mom made
a life for us

I come from a place where going to
Mcdonalds or Walmart is exciting.

I come from a place of chaos
Where my room is the safe place.

but I'm going to a place where
It's warm & free & Beautiful.

Untitled

Keaton

One time I really covered somebody
Was when my Parent was talking Bad
About my Best friend I got really
Mad and yelled and Backed them up.

Untitled

Keithlynn

I remember when WE got in a fight (at your dad's), you never
Called me names, you never hit me, you told me
I was being rude, you stuck up for me when your
dad punched me in the face, you calmed me
down by saying something hilarious to me I choked you
and still you never laid a hand on me inspite of
all of that you still love me and I still love you.

Untitled

Dylan

I remember when your mom kicked you
out and you didn't have anywhere to go and
I took you in with me at my moms and you helped
me and my mom pay for food and help throw in
on rent so we could keep our place. I think that made me
look at you like a wife when I ate you ate.

Akiann

Anthony

I remember when an opposition was talking down on you so I texted him and you to go to the park to hoop. You didn't know what was happening, but I did and we whooped that boy. You were happy and was on they head so I did the same. Akiann you are funny and like to Be straight up. My mom never liked you but I told her if I wasn't allowed to hang with you then I would breakdown, and now that she has met you, she claims You as her own son. If I never met you I prolly would have not been the same person.

Untitled

Anthony

when I bought my brother some shoes because he always had my back
when I got in trouble, It made me feel good because I payed him back for
keeping me out of trouble, It made him feel good too because he got some
nice shoes, (vapor max).

Untitled

Brayden

I went to the dentist to get my teeth cleaned, afterwards I got to pick a reward and at that moment I seen the ring toss baby game I knew instantly my little sister would love it so that's what I chose.

Untitled

Miya

I gave my brother
My cookie (my last
cookie.) I lowkey
felt regret but also
was happy for my
brother. We were in
my kitchen & it
was after school.
It was a chocolate
chip cookie.

Untitled

Anthony

Anthony is in space and is on a game called

Cod: Ghost, There is gravity somehow and a basketball

Court. When I walk into the bball court I see Lebron

James dunking over LiL baby and LiL baby is saying Honeybun

Untitled

Dylan

Im in space and I see peter from
Family guy throwing a toilet at a rock
Trying to break it and he cant. Then he
Floats at the toilet and head butts it and
Finally gets it to break. And he finally
Feels like he has succeeded

Untitled

Grace

I'm in the air
like I'm free
like everything I've ever wanted to be
is here. Everybody I care about
My Girl Eva is pulling upchurch
By the car. She throws everyone
I love and they come
Crashing on and I'm filled with joy.

Mi Amor

Grace

Blue like your eyes
the sky which you bring
the smiling face
Your face all blue
Your love so sweet like the sky
Your smile like the ocean

Untitled

Grace

Your eyes like diamonds

Your skin like the sea

Your heart like the pearls

The mock of your tone

your beating heart like love

You are my angle.

Your face all blue

Untitled

Anthony

Dear Anthony, Remember when you were locked up and a lot of crazy things happened while you were away. Well you need to start doing things by yourself and start taking risks, because if you keep hanging out with "those" people then you're not going to get anywhere in life. You can't be trusting anybody cause they always gon do what benefits them. You need to learn from your mistakes and don't think about peoples opinions cuz they aint facts.

Untitled

Breylan

Dear Breylan I know—
how it is in life but just
know it not your body telling
u what to do it's your heart telling
u and your memories of the past
self to do better to know your
mistakes. The thing is that
just follow your dreams and
just help the people in your
life.

P.S.

To the one I love most myself
To the one the only Finn, this is
your spirt telling you this.

Untitled

Cody

April 16, 2021

Dear Cody,

I can be whoever I want to be
have learned that people can change
and that change can be good,
I have amazing Girl. Your kind
respectful you cherish everyone
who you come across. Don't
let anybody push you around.
You are smart and an amazing
Person don't let anybody come
in the way between of
me and myself. Stay in

Contact with God.

Love,

Cody

Untitled

Evan

To myself, a year from now I have to ask one main question. Are you where you wanna be? If so, then great, but knowing myself now You Probably wont. So what will you do about it? Is your relationship with all your family better? Has your dad physacally said, "Im proud of You?" Is your family outside your own blood still around? Do they still mean everything to you like they do now? Have you found a greater Purpose in life? Just make sure you better yourself and find motivation to move forward.

Sincerely, Old Self

Life

Miya

Dear Miya,

Get out of the system, stop doing things u know will get u introuble. You have a lot of potential weather u see it now or not and u can do great things & be successful like other people. Make your mom & dad proud, you've got this. Get back into sports, fix family relationships, be a better person. Don't dwell on things u have no power over and change the things u do have power over.

Sincerely,

Miya

Untitled

Nevaeh

Gushers, thank yu for bein there for me. You've been there since I was little. I always enjoy eating yu wit my lil brother. Me & my lil brother would always find yu in the cabinet when lookin for snacks. My mom would always get mad at us fer eating all of yu cuz you're her favorit too. I love how when I bite down on yu the liquid fills my mouth. My favorite color of yu to eat is red. I usually always get yu when in at tha store. My lil cousins like yu too. I'll be sure to eat some of yu when I get outta jail

Untitled

Grace

Your color so bright,
Oval easy to peel
Your color like the sun
So yellow and pretty
I thank you for your sweet but sour taste
Your a big boss bouser
Your small and able to drink
I love you so much
Your my lemon

Untitled

Miya

Thanks cornbread for always
being there when I need you.
you are squishy and delicious
you arent obnoxious to eat
and you are beautiful.

Untitled

Alana

Thank you so much resses for
Make me feel better.

you pick me up when Im down.

you make my hands smell like
peanut butter when Im finished
eating.

you smell like the sweet joy of
peanut butter.

you must like like you've been
in the sun

An Ode to Pineapples

Katiya

You have always been my favorite
even with your sometimes sour taste
or hard to find during seasons
you were always my go-to when
I went into that huge kitchen
full of wonderful options.

It was you I chose and it will
forever be you I cherish

The sweet tropical smell on
a warm summer evening with
my ocean view I wouldn't
replace for a million

Untitled

Grace

You throw the ball,
You start sprinting
to catch it
you through a touch
down your team
is cheering
You win the
game
The team
yells in
victory.

Tough

Andrew

The aggressive voice.
The grunting noise.
The crowd cheered.
He strove down field
In the eyes
of the team
He faced tonight.
His sweat gleams.
He ran and ran
until the ten
the TD he lands.
The game ends.

Untitled

Miya

In the box sweat dripping
waiting for the ball to come
bat up and ready in my stance
the pitcher eyeing me ready to through a strike
I swing hard and watch the ball fly
fly and fly over second & over the fence
flying across the bases feeling free,
I hit a home run.

Louisville Slugger

Evan

My freshman year. Playing baseball for
tiffin Columbian. I had never really
played at all that year, just wasn't as
talented than some other people at the
time. But our coach put me first at
bat, top of the order, our very last
game. So I remember distinctly I took
my friends baseball bat it was a
Louisville, and I went up. The pitcher
threw a changeup and I just absolutely
cranked it into left field, I
remember it bounced and hit the
fence, and I just kept sprinting.
I ended up getting a triple, and
playing a lot more after that.

Clean Up on Aisle 3

Anthony

When I shoot the ball I feel like Harden but we all know I'm Lebron James. No one can guard me but if they do they gonna need some new ankles. I got ice in my veins I'm like Lamelo I'll pull up from anywhere. You reach I teach clean up on aisle 3 is what they preach.

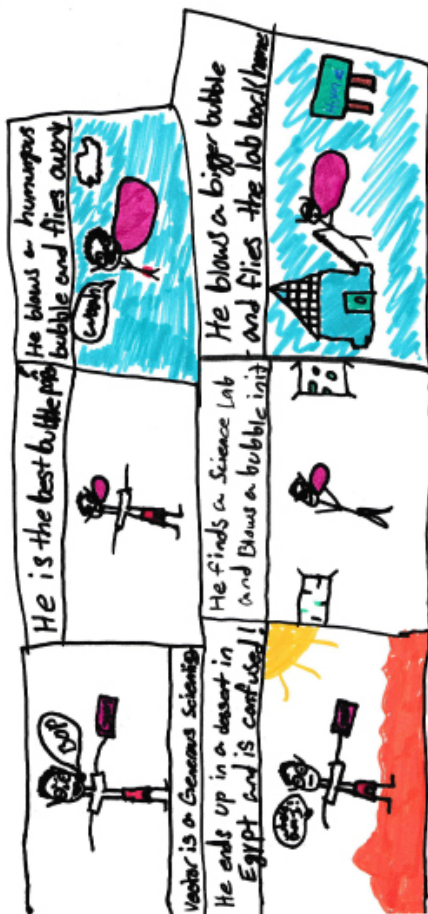


Grace ~~Went~~

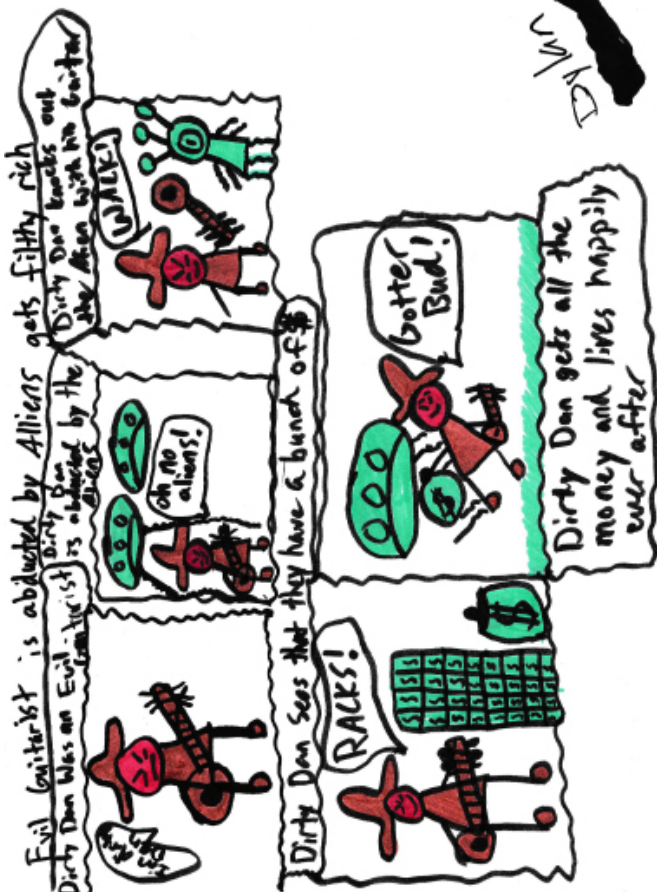


Grace ~~Wendell~~

Generous Scientist who is the world's greatest Bubblegum blower and gets Stranded in the desert



Arman



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 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.