

Writers in Residence



SPRING 2021
THE MIXED 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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The Mixed 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

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

Untitled

L

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

Untitled

D

1. rocks & Stars takes place in space.
2. Sharks, dogs, snakes
3. Eating brings me Joy.

Untitled

J

1. Astronauts landing
2. on the ISS
3. Uzi and I
3. bumping on the way up together
4. we chewing on Mcdonald's
5. 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

R

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.

Untitled

T

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.

Untitled

J

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.

Untitled

M

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.

Untitled

D

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

Untitled

J

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.

Untitled

M

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 your born.

Untitled

B

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

Untitled

J

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.

Untitled

J

1. I am fun smart athletic bored
2. Bumping Juice, Uzi, Polo, the G.O.A.Ts.
3. Chipotle white rice extra chicken yummm
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

Untitled

H

1. I am tired, upset, stressed, hungry
2. I am funny, sarcastic, humouros, excting
3. I am wonderful, happy, smiley couragous
4. I am selfish addictive, stubborn, manipulative
5. I am smart, artistic, creative, adventorous
6. I'll be Everything I need to be

Untitled

X

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

Untitled

M

1. are their animles in heaven
2. I want to be 100% truthful to my famleiy
3. I am a hard worker to fix all the wrong ive Done
4. I workhard on makeing money and saveing it
5. im working on Becoming a beter Role mottlefor my littel 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

Untitled

N

1. Thief, liar, Druggo, chill, funny, loyal
2. funny, calm, smart, outgoing, caring, loving
3. Kind, Respectful, confident, lucky, willing, Safe
4. I will be Sober, honest, free

Untitled

W

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

Untitled

Z

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 things different
Take your chances, they come once

Untitled

A

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 dont know them.
5. Im really under standing when talking to others.

If there something you want it's worth working for

Untitled

R

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

X

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

Untitled

M

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

Untitled

J

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.

Untitled

C

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

Untitled

N

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

Untitled

J

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

Untitled

M

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

Untitled

G

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

W

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

A

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.

Untitled

C

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 acrossed you. To get first downs is like something positive that happens when you are trying to reach your goal.

broke down car is me

W

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

Untitled

J

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.

Untitled

M

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.

Book

Z

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

S

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.

Untitled

M

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 burning 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.

Untitled

J

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!!!

Untitled

A

Basketball, It helps me when Im down and stress, I can hoop 6-8 hours a day and thats 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.

Untitled

T

Me and my mom may
argue and she may
make me mad
but I can play
PS4 to make sure
It wasnt in
vain.

Untitled

J

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

Untitled

D

ima be excited

If i do months i can't cry bc one of my
friend did 2/1 years with no tears

Untitled

J

Im Lost right Now, sike I got it

Big Trees with No Leafs

Im too cool For school

Life is Boring in Jail

Untitled

W

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

Untitled

D

Refridgerator

Basketball is so awesome

I hate school so much

Untitled

A

Refrigerator

Promises are broken

Love doesn't last long

Untitled

M

Door locks spio

Like vending machines working

Others dropping like shoes

Erases goo like candy

Ploliils all the way

Fike dldrag drwrech

Untitled

J

Nice Winter No snow

Great time watching the wind blow

Knippy spring season

Untitled

A

My guilty pleasure is smoking weed.
before I feel anxious or upset after I feel
content and tired sometimes hungry for
some fried chicken

Untitled

M

Boxing? Volleyball?

Drinking or smoking weed

Writing about how I feel

Watching childhood movies

Untitled

J

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.

Untitled

J

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 proolly also find
some type of nice peace

Untitled

D

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

Untitled

L

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.

Untitled

J

1. I was very clearly in a terrible mood that was lasting Week and my first childhood best friend came by to once again help me realize I'm not alone. People still think nicely of me, everybody still wants to be around me, and that we are doing good and have nothing impactful to worry about besides our future and the people we know will be in it, and it really helped me find my way out of a bad mood.
2. Me and my best friends went sledding and got food. Even though like 3 of us didn't have money, and we even bought the sleds, all of us we definitely. Excited and it was the only

Untitled

T

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.

Untitled

T

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 Doesnt Like
me. She's not supposed to hang out with me

Untitled

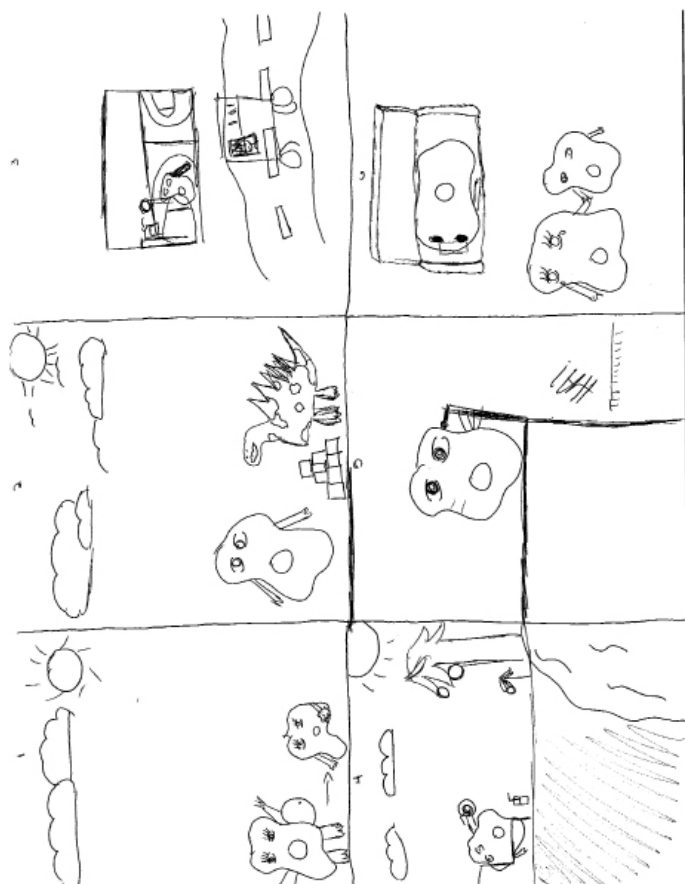
E

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.

Untitled

D

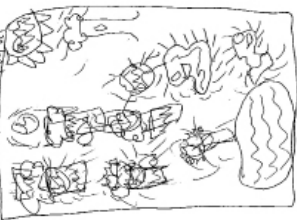
me and my homie was at my house when
dis girl wanted to come over and
she knew i was home and my friend lied
to her saying i got locked up.



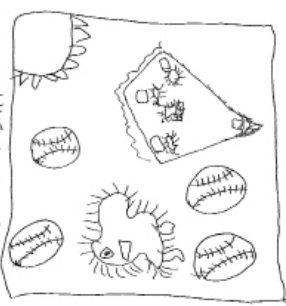
3 video games



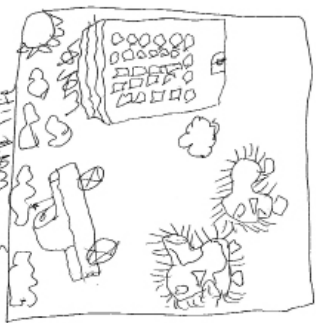
6 Monster Truck



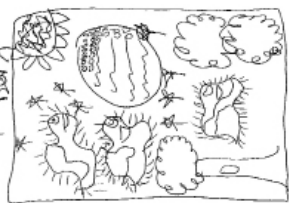
2 Baseball



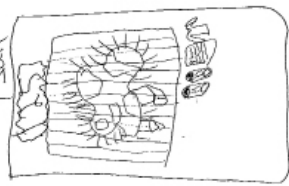
5 Work Life



1 Ball



4 Jail

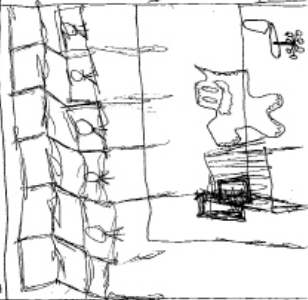


Robert Miesnik
Classmate

2 AS a Kid



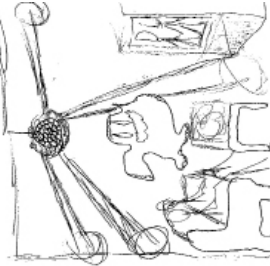
Young adult



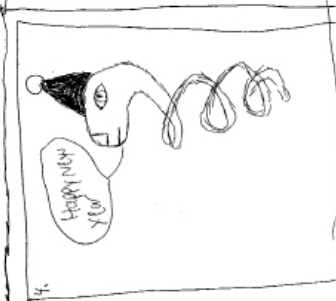
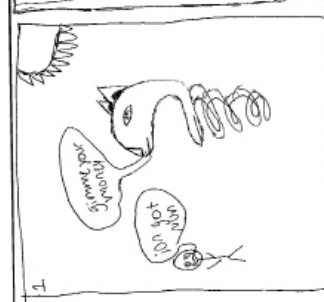
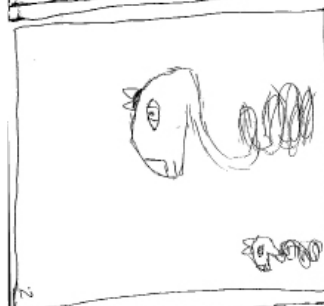
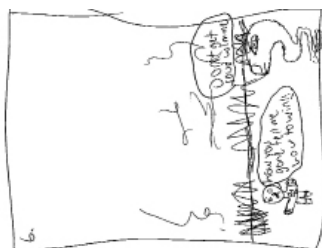
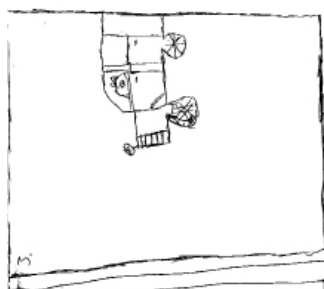
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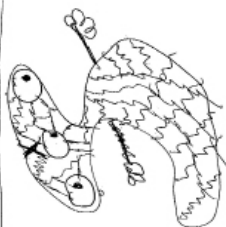


3.

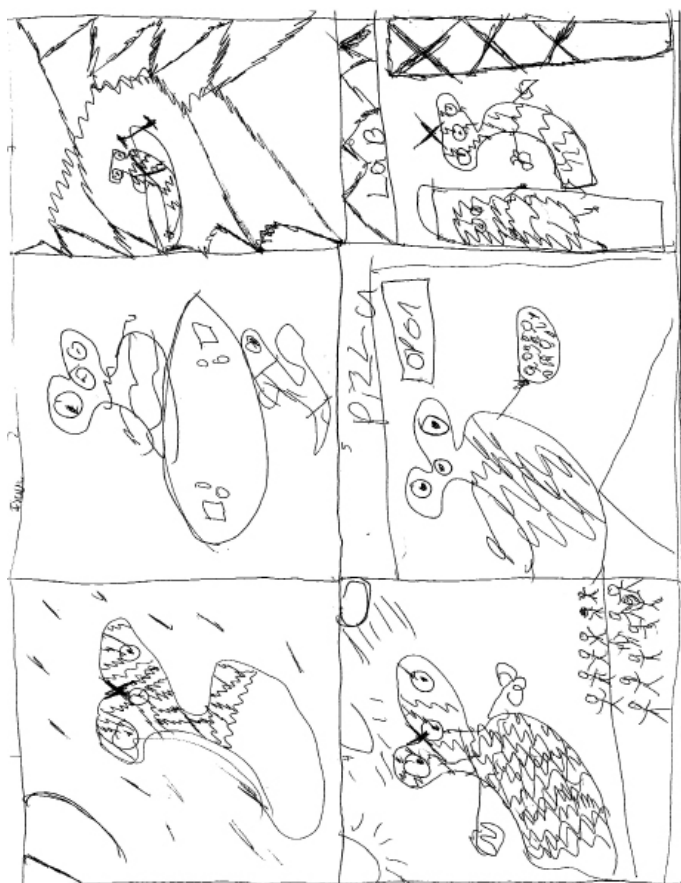


19

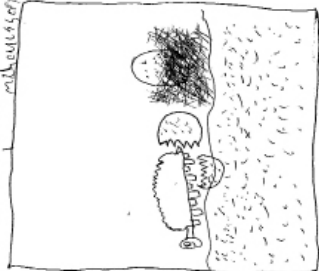




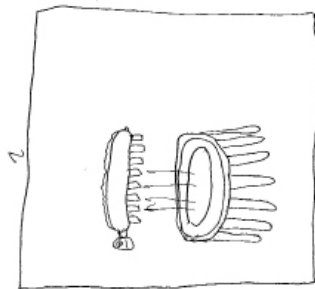
Figure



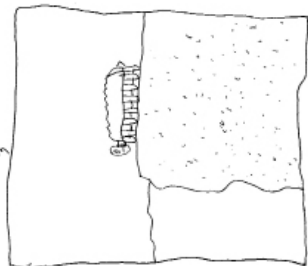
malakussey



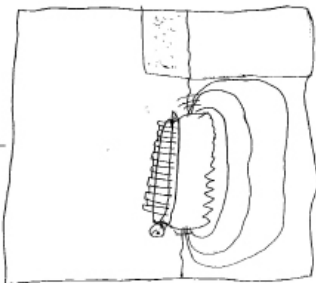
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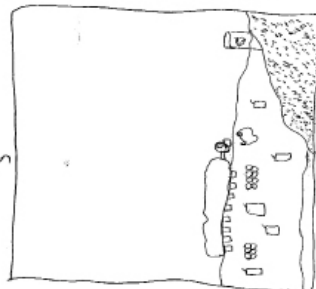
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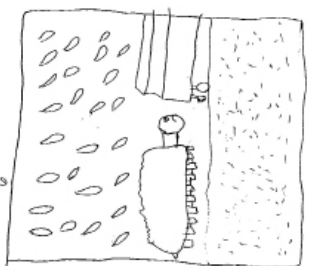
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6



5



Acknowledgements

- Residents
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- Donors and Community Members
- Board of Directors
- Graphic Designer

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- 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.

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