

# Writers in Residence



Fall 2021

**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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## Teach



We teach creative writing to youth who are incarcerated.



We empower our residents' voices.

## Empower

We assist in their re-entry



## Assist

**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.

**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.

**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.

"One writes  
out of  
one thing  
only

— James A. Baldwin



We strive to reduce  
the recidivism rates of our  
residents,

and participate  
in the transformation of  
the juvenile justice system.

g

/ \_

one's own  
experience."

# SCHOOLS



- |                            |                                |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Capital University      | 6. Marietta College            |
| 2. College of Wooster      | 7. Oberlin College             |
| 3. Heidelberg University   | 8. University of Dayton        |
| 4. Hiram College           | 9. Cleveland State University  |
| 5. John Carroll University | 10. Case Western Reserve Univ. |



**Circleville JCF**

**Montgomery County CAS**

**Seneca County YC**

**Portage Ceauga County JDC**

**Cuyahoga Hills JCF**

**Washington County JC**

**Medina County JDC**

**Cuyahoga County JDC**

**Lorain County JDH**

**Indian River JCF**

**Franklin County JDC**

# **JUVENILE FACILITIES**

# OUTPUT + IMPACT

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.

This information was last updated on 11/29/21 before our creative writing workshops concluded for the fall season.

Read more about our outputs, outcomes, and impact at [www.writersnresidence.org/impact](http://www.writersnresidence.org/impact)

# IMPACT

FY19-FY21 AVG. YTD

**26**

residents

**7**

student volunteers

**87**

hours

**\$2,242**

fiscal valuation

**39**

artifacts

**82**

chapter books

FY19-FY21 TOTAL YTD

**782**

residents

**159**

student volunteers

**1,908**

hours

**\$50,336**

fiscal valuation

**826**

artifacts

**2,096**

chapter books

## FALL FY21 AVERAGE

**27**  
residents

**5**  
student volunteers

**48.3**  
hours

**\$1,378**  
fiscal valuation

**29**  
artifacts

**50**  
chapter books

## FALL FY21 TOTAL

**192**  
residents

**20**  
student volunteers

**227**  
hours

**\$6,892**  
fiscal valuation

**116**  
artifacts

**50**  
chapter books

## FALL FY20 AVERAGE

**27**  
residents

**9**  
student volunteers

**74**  
hours

**\$1,890**  
fiscal valuation

**39**  
artifacts

**30**  
chapter books

## FALL FY20 TOTAL

**109**  
residents

**18**  
student volunteers

**223**  
hours

**\$5,671**  
fiscal valuation

**39**  
artifacts

**90**  
chapter books





*reconstruction  
of the soul*



Dear reader,

This chapbook marks our second program season in a single year engaging the residents of the Montgomery County Center for Adolescent Services. Unit by unit, we are facilitating a 90-minute, weekly environment for the youth to creatively express themselves as well as critically reflect on their life's journey – the past, present, and future.

We feel honored and humbled to witness each resident change and grow from the first week with six-word memoirs to the very last week with affirmations. We built connections with the youth and wrote alongside them during every session, which always included moments of laughter, learning, and longing for more time together. We are grateful for the residents allowing us to work with them to empower their voice and feel heard by their peers.

We hope that you read our residents' creative writing with an open mind because they put forth a lot of time and energy into their poetry and prose even when they didn't recognize themselves as storytellers. Hence the title of this chapbook, "Reconstruction of the Soul," each youth wrote to repair something either visible or invisible for you to also heal with them.

University of Dayton Cohort



# Untitled

CM

1. I am tax free. I like fast cars
2. Choose the best route for yourself
3. I love the treasures, police don't
4. I will be great without a doubt
5. It's a high speed sports mode, go!!!
6. I keep my circle small 100%
7. Six words six hellcats six million with me
8. Blender action blow the motor tax!
9. Dang 223's really do go through houses
10. Brickfair tax long lived ex bro.

# Untitled

HB

1. I am a cool white dude
2. I am a 14-year-old
3. I was about 13 last year
4. I was a quiet person then
5. I need to work in school
6. I used to not play chess
7. This has to be six words
8. Words six be to has this
9. I need to get out now
10. I liked to eat food today

# Dooda

VJ

1. I am small but very strong
2. I am lazy but finish things
3. I am short but I got nice hops
4. I was bad but very good
5. I did fail but never quit
6. I did hoop but I stopped

# LKE

KR

1. I am a lowkey person
2. I am always hungry when I'm full
3. I am capable of anything
4. I have different vibes in situations
5. I enjoy listening to music
6. I like to workout

# Six-word Memoir

MB

1. I am black, intelligent, and smart.
2. Sometimes I was failing to succeed.
3. Setbacks motivate me to go harder.
4. Greatness takes patience, practice makes perfect.
5. I play basketball on a daily basis.
6. Is tomato a fruit or vegetable?
7. I am a very smart person.
8. I'll be winning in the future.
9. Destination doesn't matter, journey does.

# Untitled

SB

1. I like playing music and games.
2. I am confident in basketball.
3. I like driving on the highway.
4. I was playing football for the flames.
5. I like when girls act toxic
6. I like going to my auntie's house
7. I like playing spades with my mom

# Two Truths and a Lie

MB

I wake up every day, brush my teeth, wash my face, eat breakfast, then call my best friend. We talk about what we get into for the day and what time they tryna link up. When we link up we go get some food, chill, and conversate for a little bit. (true)

Every day I drag race with my friends on side streets and run from the police when they try to stop us from drag racing. (lie)



# Two Truths and a Lie

KR

I got tipp

The police can't catch me

I'm gone stop cheating

# Big Lung

KR

It's big lung I'ma big boss yah ah  
Big bum my clothes cost ah boss  
I'm lowkey come in see sum

# Untitled

VJ

Stop talking to me

You on some weird s\*\*t

What you on

On my son

Put it on yo hood

# No Bicker

MW

Outside, shots fired

If they make moves gotta talk to me

No bicker

Alone again everybody left,

So many people gone it's nobody left

They try to talk to me but all I say

Is no bicker

# Life Problems

JG

The knife cuts my throat

I lost my breathe cause the gash

I cause my own death

I can save my last breath

With a better past

# **Late Night, I Can't Sleep**

MB

Waking up outta dreams

Cops chasing me

Tryna focus because of my dreams

# Road Runner

SB

I was on the run

Tryna make away for the green

Car hoppin can't do it again



# Again, Again

MW

As past blood sheds thin

The wind blows far from present time

We still wake again, again.

# Steps to Success

MW

Set goals

Get money

Be the king, not the peasant

I will achieve my goals

I will be a CEO

Do what needs to be done

Be successful

# Untitled

HB

Gotta be successful

Gotta get a job

# Untitled

SB

I wish somebody told me to do right in school. Stay out of jail, follow your dreams, stay outta the way, get money the legal way, dress right. My goal is to get my own business, apartment, and when I turn 18 get my own car. I want a wife and a son that plays sports and gets good grades.

# Unspoken Street Codes

VJ

Hey, you don't have to rob to get what you want

You don't have to kill to get a name

You don't have to be a class clown to get some smiles

You can go to college instead of jail

You can sell clothes, not drugs

You don't have to be black or white to get respect

You don't have to be a savage to fit in

# Untitled

MB

Keep doing your best and you are heading for success.

Complete my education by maintaining motivation. Stay out the system and I ain't tryna be the next victim. Ima do good, Ima do right. It ain't over, I'm still in this fight.

# Positive Vibes

JG

Get my master's degree

Engineering, full ride for free

I'm gonna catch a bfree

And I got the key for the Mercedes Benz

# Untitled

KR

Your locks are nice one  
of the real if I say I got you that's  
100. Plus, if I consider you my brother  
I'll never switch up, you don' have to  
be a crazy person. Love yourself, believe  
in yourself more than what anybody  
else thinks



*unravelings  
from the soul*



Dear reader,

As we became more comfortable with the program, we began to love the concept behind the program even more. When we think about this spring season, every moment with our residents was special because the residents would feel comfortable enough to share about their lives. We enjoyed watching the residents grow after each session, becoming leaders among their peers. One of the residents encouraged another youth near him to really open up by sharing his own creative writing and responding to the discussion questions. These were some of our favorite moments because we realized that this program helped the youth.

There are so many residents from very different walks of life that put effort into writing these pieces and it's really beautiful to think about just

how unique each piece really is. We ask that you please keep in mind how much courage it took for these youth to share their work and how personal some of the pieces are. It wasn't easy for them to disclose personal aspects of their life, but we believe that this program helped them all grow and become more confident in their work.

We feel incredibly grateful to participate in this program and to engage with youth from different walks of life than us. This opportunity also really opened our eyes more by forcing us to confront some of our personal biases. We appreciated hearing stories from the youth's perspective and know that this experience was helpful and fun to some of them. Life moves very fast, so it's easy to forget about all the people around you who are different. Hence, the title of our chapbook, "Unravelings from the Soul" that suggests the different types of creative writing included in this chapbook because they're all so different and created by so many different personalities.

Heidelberg University Cohort



# Untitled

PP

My friend and I would  
always ride four-wheelers and have fun outside.  
We also would always work on our ATVs.  
Every time I was at his house, we  
would also go swimming.

Me and my best friend went to New York  
and there were lots of people. We went to  
stay at a place and have a party.

# Untitled

BL

I went to this party and when I opened the door, I  
noticed her first out of everyone that was there,  
and all the fun/great memories came flushing back in  
like no time had passed

She and I went to France and saw the Eiffel tower  
and tried new foods and had a wonderful time  
Like no other

# Untitled

DP

(Lie)

I like being around my little brother, he is always hungry

(Truth)

I wanted to be that kid that grew up with  
his mother and played at the playground

# Untitled

Z

My best friend is good at talking  
to me, like no matter what  
I do she supports it and she  
never gives up on me

My best friend is never  
there for me. She says  
she hates me

# Green Springs, Ohio

PP

I always like summer best

There's fresh cut grass

Animals all over

Nice neighbors

The sound of rain

Neighbors playing music

Family cooking food

Walking barefoot outside in grass

# Hometown

BL

I always liked summer best, spending time with friends and family

Feeling the warm air hug my body like a winter coat

Listening to the cars drive by

On the water flow down the river

Tasting the warm cheese from the pizza roll while sitting outside  
of AJ's



# NW Ohio

EA

I always like summer best because I like the warm weather

# Untitled

DR

I am a mental mystery box.

PTSD settles in fast, then realization.

I was a happy person then.

My past does not define me.

We can have Halloween on Christmas.

Only you can make you happy.

# NW Ohio

NB

I always liked summer  
Best because of the  
Frogs at dawn and the  
Cicadas at night  
It's very peaceful and  
Smells fresh you  
Can hear the coyotes  
At night and see the  
Deer grazing during  
The day you hear  
The chickens clucking  
And the dogs barking  
You hear the trees in  
The wind and smell  
Fresh cut grass while you sit  
Outside enjoying the  
Sunlight on your skin

# Untitled

LC

I am

tall

smart

funny

energetic.

# Untitled

TP

I am strong, positive, friendly, brave, short, into sports,  
a good-listener, respectful.

I am positive every day I wake up 'cause if I'm negative,  
you won't get nowhere.

# **Brown is the Color of my Skin**

AG

Put me in a pan and put the  
ingredients in the pan because I don't remember  
What they are. I can smell it when it's  
Cooking but when I take it out of the oven  
I just want to hurry up and eat it. Once  
I put it in my mouth after it cools down, I  
Get greedy and eat all of it, brownies.

# Untitled

AM

You taste so good when you're juicy and crunchy.

You smell so good when you get served to me on a plate.

You taste so good when you have hot sauce and ranch on top of you when there's smoke coming out of you.

You taste good on Thanksgiving when you're smashed down with gravy on top.

You have an amazing texture in my mouth.

# Fish

MM

The smell odor of the lime tasting,  
Soft, warm flavored. Throw me in the  
Oven like I was a fish in the water. And  
Take me out and look at the masterpiece you've  
Created: Perch Fish



# Marbled Masterpiece

DZ

You fall apart in the mouths of younger kids, and you're covered in rosemary and mushroom. You are top class and you cost a lot, more than your siblings. You have perfectly marbled skin; you give off a scent that brings everyone in a barbeque together. You are so delicate and it's easier for older adults to eat you. You're not too chewy and you have rosemary and mushroom glaze mix with your fat, and you glisten with that glaze pouring over you.

# All Hail CHICKEN

JK

You are cooked in many different forms and styles.

If fried long enough, your breading makes the most

Satisfying crunch when bitten into.

If fried just right, you have the perfect amount

Of juiciness and crunchiness.

You are astonishingly mouthwatering when cooked  
into enchiladas.

When I order you in the form of boneless wings

At bubs, you are the perfect golden brown, if mixed

With parm-garlic sauce, you taste even more amazing

Thank God there's rice with your flavor because

The mixture is like heaven in my mouth

You make tacos even better which says a lot

You are all I order when I go out to eat.

I can never go wrong with ordering you.

# Life

DG

Life is boring, oh no, our table, it's broken

# Ant Hype Up

AG

I'm athletic and smart and people already look up to me even though they have no idea what goes on in my life. I hype myself up when I listen to music or when I get too much energy. I am going to have a great future, but it might take some time. When people tell me I can't do something, I do it anyways!!!

# **You Got This Just-Ice. Rock On**

JK

You are uniquely stunning, you are filled with potential. Don't let anything stop you. You are capable of accomplish whatever you dream. Don't let others drag you down. Get in your zone and block out anything trying to distract you from your goal. Have faith in yourself and believe you can. Optimism and hope go a long way. Stay true to yourself.

# You Can Do It

MR

You can do it. No matter how many are doubting you or saying you can't do it, you can do it. You're smart and have potential. Today's going to be a good day, things will get better. Stop being an enemy to yourself, keep your head up and always remember you can do it.

# Frame

MM

Stand in your frame, screw the crowd,

Meaning, be who you want to be, and do what you want to do.

Don't be thinking about what others want or what you think  
other people would do. Stand in your own frame. Screw them.

**“The first function  
of poetry is to tell  
the truth, to learn  
how to do that, to  
find out what you  
really think”**

**— June Jordan**



*the family  
is a bonfire*



Dear reader,

Being able to meet with the residents in person this fall was extremely motivating, and always left us full of energy. Something the twelve of us will always remember is their eagerness to hear about our lives, engage in creative discussions, and of course, put words to paper. Even through face masks and a loud HVAC system, the residents managed to make connections and to find a piece of themselves in a room of strangers from a college they knew nothing about. To say the least, we believe that with them we found a piece of ourselves too — which goes to show just how much everyone can learn from those who maybe aren't so different from them. Face to face interactions in the facility allowed for more personal connections and more inside jokes between everyone.

Throughout our time together, we had

some really fun workshops. In week 2, we listened to each other's plans for how we would achieve our dreams. For week 3, we tricked each other with two truths and a lie. During week 4, we shared some descriptive poetry about our hometowns. It was great to hear that everyone felt like home was somewhere special, usually influenced by loved ones. As a cohort, we're proud to say that we felt at home talking with the residents — they made it worth the trip off-campus every week. From discussing how Kool-Aid pickles are made and laughing over food that is "bussin," there are moments that certainly made our interactions homely.

Finally, we want to thank the residents for taking part in the workshops, even when they weren't sure they wanted to. Writing, and especially sharing can be emotionally draining. However, many residents left their thoughts in the post-workshop survey, saying they enjoyed the environment of "passion," and "respect." The title of this chapbook, "The Family is a Bonfire," comes from a resident's metaphor of family — and something that the rest of us felt sounded just right.

Hiram College Cohort



# Untitled

CK

I like how goofy and hyper my brothas are.

I like how confident they are.

I really hate how my brothas act.

# Untitled

RC

My best friend is able to do whatever and always wanting to do new things. We are going around the United States and Canada.

Me and my best friend have never gotten into a fight because we agree on everything.

# Untitled

BS

Murky water to escape. I can't breathe

Eight legs. Venomous bites

# Untitled

CK

When I was nine I got lost at Chuck E. Cheese and I was very scared.

When I got caught up I was nervous and shook up.

I didn't like not knowing where my people was and I couldn't find them.

I looked and seen them outside my window.

# Untitled

JJ

People told me to drive under a haunted tunnel. When I did, my check engine light came on.

I heard my cat scratching at my door. But I realized my cat died two weeks ago.

Samuel L. Jackson creeps me out. He always says "I got my eye on you."

I got a text message. But I was in the country and there was no service.

I was driving on the racetrack... then Dua Lipa said I was levitating... levitating away.

# **I Went for a Walk through the Graveyard, and Came Across My Own Gravestone**

RC

You're born with a tattoo of your death date. It was yesterday.  
You hear your dad call your name. He died four years ago.



# Two Line Horror Story

CH

I looked out the window, and the stars were gone, and when I looked out the window some more there was a weird sky outside. As I paid more attention, I saw the creatures moving outside by my back door. And they were the most hideous creatures I have ever seen. Think of a killer clown but with no eyes and eight spider legs carrying guns on its back and spitting venom out of its mouth. Then I got up through and ran into another situation!

# TE's Halloween Poem

TE

Halloween, scary costumes, late night scary movies

Leaves flying around, scary decorations

You get so scared you run

Walking around with your

Family having fun and

Eating all the candy

And getting so full

You go to sleep

Because you're so full

And exhausted

After the kids go

To sleep have a

Couple drinks and

Have fun. Halloween

There are so many costumes

That you can be anything

So scary that people

Scare you to

Death you

Pee your pants.

# Untitled

BS

Trapped in cold brick walls

Confined in cold solitary

Waiting for open spaces/room

Old weathered pages

Knowledge is plentiful

Scarred in memory

# Hills on Mill

RC

The time is now here  
To make a haiku about nothing  
Sorry it's not something

No words; confusion  
Different is no more here  
Lips seal themselves shut

Snow covered houses  
Brisk, clean smelling ice comes down now  
There's hills everywhere

# Untitled

JH

Cold quiet jail cell,  
My thoughts bouncing off the walls,  
I am not alone.

# Untitled

ZS

I really like dogs

And also watching anime

I like working on bikes with my dad.

I like going on trips

With my family and

Young marines.

# Untitled

CK

Sike Sike motor bike

Love Kool-Aid pickles

I'm not even gonna lie to you.

Can't read, can't write, Kent State?

I like Naruto

Sike, Sike motor bike

Sike Sike motor bike

Sike Sike motor bike on a kite

Sike, Sike motor bike

# Haikus

]]

I'm C.J dippa  
And my raps are super slap  
And your feet will tap.

My raps ain't nothing  
That is just the beginning  
There is more to it

My feelings and love  
That is all I rap about  
It's all that I know

Here is my new rap  
This rap is called "Call Me King"  
This sh\*\* is bustin'

I will rap it, too  
I will rap it tonight, man  
My rap is good, too



# Brother Basketball

DP

Basketball means a lot to me. It helps me stay focused and have fun with my friends. I help my little brother get better than I was. My little brother means a lot to me. He likes to follow what I do, like playing games. He likes calling people b\*\*\*hes on the game and it is funny when he ducks on his little hoop. He's like his big brother.

# Different Words for Mad

CH

Free me out the box

I want to go home right now

Free me out the jam

Mad, irritated

I am frustrated right now

Mad, irritated

# Family

ZS

The family is a bonfire

You get the warmth for when it's cold

Also, you gather around and watch

You also get light when it gets dark

# Untitled

DP

The family is the best at what they do for me.

Like my siblings we got a very good bond.

# Family

CH

The family is the people that I can  
Go to when I have a problem.  
The family is the people that  
Will have my back through thick and  
Thin. Even though I have my  
Ups and downs I know my family  
Still care for me, and at the  
End of the day I know I can always  
Go back to them and not be  
Judged.

# Untitled

]]

The family is everything  
From birth to afterlife  
To brothers and sisters  
To aunts and uncles  
Love and affection  
To laughs and fun  
To school and work  
To report cards and  
Paychecks  
To dinner gatherings  
To Easter egg hunts  
Like I said  
The family is everything  
Don't ever forget that.

# Untitled

CK

The family is everything. They're my strength. They help me out when I'm down. My family supports me if I'm right or wrong they support me – through anything. The love for my family is like the ham juice on my turkeys.

# Untitled

RC

The family is where the heart is  
When there's late night phone calls  
Late night designated drivers

The family is when a bad day turns good  
While coming home after being drunk

The family is carrying you out to your  
Own car to drive you home.



# Untitled

BK

1. My favorite color is bright red.
2. Used to be called little red
3. My favorite drink is pop
4. I will be 16 very soon
5. I will be tall very soon

# Untitled

CK

1. My favorite color is royal blue.
2. My favorite drink is strawberry abewater.
3. I am a MLB in football.
4. I have two blue nose pitbulls.
5. I hate black cats with a passion.
6. I will be a Paleontologist someday.
7. I was a very loving kid.
8. I love my mother and brother.
9. I got stabbed when I was thirteen.

# Untitled

RC

1. I am having trouble doing this
2. I can do math with fingers
3. I like cars more than life
4. I miss my girlfriend right now
5. I miss my daughter right now
6. I want my own bed now
7. I will be the best dad
8. I don't like cornbread man
9. I want to go to work

# Untitled

ZT

1. I miss my life
2. I miss my girlfriend and my family
3. I love my family, stay strong

# Things I Learned from my Life

RP

1. Once a friend, now a brother
2. Broke my heart again and again
3. Miss my dog, I love her
4. Sorrow always is a painful beginning
5. Learn and live but always forgive
6. Don't ever give up on yourself
7. Keep pushing through, pain never lasts
8. I love you mom stay strong
9. Never let yourself give up easily

# Cleveland, Ohio

BS

I always like summer best  
Going to the beach on a hot day  
Listening to the birds chirp  
The sounds of the waves crashing  
The busy traffic up the hill  
Walking the busy streets  
The soaring buildings  
The great water display  
The colorful lights  
The crowded streets busy with festivities  
Assorted cultures about  
And it's all home  
Home to me and many.

# Untitled

CK

I always like winter coats

You can eat Taco Bell

Listen to rap music

You see kids with shovels

Feel of soft snow

Talk to the peoples

Drink some good drank.

# Untitled

TE

I like Halloween because of my birthday. Pizza shop is dark at night, McDonalds is different colors. Taco Bell is a good food place and it's on a main road. Yuca is a fun place to go to. My friends are fun to hang out with and do stuff with. My family is loving and on my birthday, they gave me a lot of stuff. I always see school busses all of the time. Akron is not a good place, well not the best place but I like it because it's my hometown. I always hear a bus. On Halloween I like doing pumpkins and having fun with my family.



# Untitled

RC

Nothing to see

It's not fun

Leave while you can

My road floods

All the time

The cows go poo

The horses clack

# Untitled

JH

I always like winter best because I enjoy the cold air and calm days. Christmas reminds me of a cheerful time, and I enjoy the smell of peppermint. I enjoy Christmas plays and lights and times spent with the ones I love.

# Untitled

DC

I always like fall best because of the change of the leaves that tell me my birthday is coming up. My birthday is October 20th, and my birthday is right next to Halloween, and I love candy, especially KitKats.

# Summer in Cleveland

CH

I always like summer best in Cleveland because I feel connected to it but also it is sunny most of the time. I like to go outside and chill with my friends. Not only do I go outside, but I also like to go up to the high school and watch football. I always go downtown and the only way to get there is by the bus, but I hate to always have to pay.

# Untitled

ZT

My dad had a big box of marshmallows and it was cool to see on a picture.

# Chinese Food

CK

Kool Aid pickles they taste sweet and sour.

They look nice when they shine off the Kool Aid.

Heard about them from my Granny.

# Untitled

CS

Pizza stuff crust

Peperone and

Cheese with

Black olives

That is my

Favorite pizza

# Sushi

]]

Sushi is so great  
But people want to  
hate. At first fish  
Are slimy, so handle  
Them so kindly.  
The sensation of  
The rice, it  
Feels, just, so nice.  
The sushi is  
A little sticky.  
But don't be  
So picky.  
The sizzle  
On the  
Fryer.  
Oh, we  
Got a  
Cryer.



# Untitled

TE

Taco Bell it tastes so good

Taco Bell the smell is a good smell

Taco Bell the sound of it from the wrapper

Taco Bell when you look at it when you open it

The memories when you get full

And when it's so good

Every time I get Taco Bell is with my brother

Taco Bell craving; we have the tacos

# Hamburgers

CH

The meaty smell you give off  
That sizzle and pop of the grease  
That juicy meat as it turns brown  
When I pull you off the skillet  
You fill me with joy  
When I bite into you  
You send me back to a hot summer  
Day in the backyard on a day  
So perfect for a backyard  
barbecue.

# Untitled

CH

I go crazy like a monkey.

My siblings are monkeys.

# Untitled

CK

When I get high in football,

I feel like I'm flying like a harpy eagle.

When I fight I feel mighty like a tiger.

# Untitled

IM

When I was in Florida for vacation we had a beach day. As I was playing in the waves, I felt a sharp burning sting sensation. I started crying, turned, and saw I had been stung by a jellyfish. This had made me very afraid to go back into the water; just because something bad or scary happens to you, shouldn't mean you have to quit having fun or living your life.

# **Raccoon Attack**

EG

I was attacked by a raccoon on a dark night. I was headed out the door after taking the trash out and then it leaped for me screeching and then I kicked it like a football and ran for the door.

# The Time I Went to Sea World

KM

One memorable moment/interaction I had with an animal is when I went to Sea World with my family. My family and I, except for my mom, went to go see the killer whales. My dad was holding me up because I was only four years old. One of the Killer whales sneezed on me, there was snot and boogers all over my arm and my dad had to wipe it off.

# Untitled

RC

Snakes slither with the river



# Letter to Larry

LD

Dear Larry,

Don't go to jail. Don't screw up. Make sure you swing on the swing more. Hangout with mom more and get more sleep (shut your phone off earlier). Enjoy yourself more. Get better friends and don't let them down. Stop smoking. Be more careful with your glasses.

# Letter to my Child

GR

Don't go to jail, try to be good and stay out of trouble. When you feel like giving up the most, try your hardest because it will always get better. When you lose motivation try to find anything that will keep motivating you because when you're not motivated you will get locked up and have to leave the people you love, which will hurt you and make you hate yourself, so stay motivated and do good always. Be on your best behavior, make money the legal way, stay away from people that will bring you down and keep the people that care around you always.

# Letter to JaVeon, 10 Years Ago

JS

Dear JaVeon,

When you get older don't be around people that are doing bad, walk the other way and stay in school and don't go to jail. Listen to your parents and stay in sports and do better for you. Just stay out of trouble and be a good person, you really are. Enjoy your freedom while you're young.

# Letter to Kaleb

KM

Dear Kaleb,

Make sure to watch anime but take some time off. Be sure to be more brave and make sure to follow your dreams. Try to learn martial arts and train to use a sword/katana.

# Letter to my Child

A

Hey, I just wanted to tell you not to get caught up in other people or small things that happen to you or other people. Do not overreact when something big happens either.

**“Each of us is more  
than the worst thing  
we’ve ever done”**

**— Bryan Stevenson**



*band of brothers*

Dear reader,

In a matter of six short weeks, we really can't stop thinking about how quickly we connected with the residents because of their humor that brought our group to life, creating immediate friendships. When the residents genuinely engaged themselves in the activities with us, these were some of our favorite moments, along with everyone's ability to balance serious and silly moments.

We will always be grateful for the opportunity to engage with such a unique community of residents. We feel blessed with being able to

hear the innermost thoughts and reflections they presented in their work as well as the similarities we have found in each other throughout this experience.

Please consider how much hard work, time, and dedication the youth put into their creative writing while you read this chapbook. You should also know that our residents are leaders and writers in each of their own ways, which inspired this collection's title. The residents exhibited such great camaraderie and support in all of our sessions both in the ways in which they seriously contemplated each other's works and made lighthearted jokes throughout our workshop.

Mixed Cohort at the Indian River JCF





# Six-word Memoirs

RM

1. I was heartbroken, now I have found true love
2. Money is not hard to make
3. Remember hard times don't last forever
4. School is a way of finding success
5. You can always overcome obstacles.

# **I Always Like Winter Best When it Snows**

RM

And the wind always blows. My girlfriend likes to cuddle

We watch movies under the covers while we snuggle.

The white girl's store don't ever stay busy

All you hear is gun sounds

But it is safe in my city.

# Six-words Memoirs

TS

Funny, athletic, tall, chill, articulate, handsome

I can't breathe! I can't breathe!

Life is what you make it

# Six-word Memoirs

DB

Confident, athletic, handsome, articulate, strong, funny

# Season

DB

I always like summer

Because I smell fresh food

And the flowers bloom

I always like summer

Because I go to the park

And that's when the run starts

# **I Always Like Spring**

ZC

It's a season that brings my friends out more, then the summer comes around the corner. My birthday is here and central is open so now let's get the dirt bikes going.

I always liked the spring, it brings out the waves, hard times don't last even though they treat us like slaves.

# Six-Word Memoirs

ZC

Funny, smart, laid back, calm, athletic, handsome

# Two Truths and a Lie

RM

Me and my best friend love watching movies

We always go out to eat together

When we're together we always have fun



# Two Truths and a Lie

TS

I pay attention to people closely

I have people whose entire soul and presence irritates me

I'm ok

# Two Truths and a Lie

SM

My best friend came at six in the morning to pick me up  
hours away

My best friend is a piece of poop and doesn't care about any-  
one but himself

# Two Truths and a Lie

DB

I came back from a different state not having anything and my brother/best friend pulled up and gave me what I needed. I was at my lowest and my brother backstabbed me and took my money when I was out doing something.

# Two Truths and a Lie

ZC

Me and my best friend were so close I would let him wear any  
of my clothes, I would have let him live with me

We used to go stay the night at our female's house

I shot my best friend and killed him because he snaked me

# Ode to Steak

SM

I'm sorry that we kill you to just  
Kill you again. I like you better when  
My AI's around. They say you're expensive but  
To me you're cheap because without you  
There would be no me.

# Untitled

TS

Thank you peanut butter and jelly for always being there  
And being so good and peanutie as well as being  
Able to be around for so long.

# Untitled

ZC

I love you food, you taste so  
Good to me with the brown sugar  
And marshmallows and you  
Have a pie and I can't wait  
To eat you again.

# Ode to Cheesecake

DB

You are so good, every time I see you I just  
Wanna eat you, you normally come in eight,  
And only seen on holidays. If I had the opportunity  
I would eat you every day. People like putting  
Strawberries and chocolate on you but I like you just  
The way you are, you obviously can't talk  
But I would imagine your voice to be  
Delicate and sweet.



# **I Moved Out the Trenches Like I Made it**

RM

Jump on my wave you gone drown cause you hatin

I swim through my money like it's a lake

When I say that I love you it won't be fake

# Untitled

SM

Ya I pray to God

So the devil tryna get even

# Traumatized

DB

Traumatized, pain built deep inside, she swore she would  
Ride time went on then she left my side, my heart  
Went ice, it turned more cold when she said she  
Gone, if you love me back then you shouldn't have left  
Cause I've been movin on

# Affirmation Poem

RM

I am a great person

I am a very hard worker

I have a realistic future

I am a great athlete

# Affirmation Poem

ZC

I want to be a great role model

I want to see a better me

# Affirmation Poem

DB

This is a temporary time in life

Hard times don't last

You are a strong growing individual that has potential through  
the roof

If you had to pick someone for your daughter it would be you,  
You could be a star one day,

I would put my trust into you anyday.

I know you would never betray me,

You are a leader, not a follower.

# **I am a Loving Child and Father**

SM

I am a real person

I am not scared and fear nothing around.

Chase your dreams

I am a good looking fellow

Keep it 100

# Untitled

DB

I am talented

I am confident

I am self-motivated



# Untitled

ZC

I am a caring person

I am a lover boy

I am a hard worker

# Untitled

B

I am a caring person

I am helpful

I am positive

Experience is what we name our mistakes

# **Affirmations About Me**

RM

I'm very smart

I'm very athletic

I'm very energetic

# Untitled

TS

I am a hard worker

I am mindful

I am a visionary

Most of our days wasted are those in which we have not  
laughed

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- Residents
- Community Partners and Juvenile Facilities
- Student Volunteers
- Cohort Advisors and Academic Institutions
- Special Guest Authors and Artists
- Staff and Contractors
- Board of Directors
- Donors and Community Members

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- The Cleveland Foundation - Anisfield-Wolf Book Award, Cleveland Black Futures Fund
- The Sisters of Charity Foundation - Ministry Leadership Program
- The Fowler Family Foundation
- The Ohio Arts Council

# By donating to Writers in Residence, you allow us to...

Provide writing materials, technology, personal protective equipment (PPE), snacks, chapbooks, and teaching artists for our creative writing workshops.

Support our residents who are re-entering society with very little or zero access to social services and resources to prevent them from recidivating.

Educate our local communities and government officials about the juvenile justice system's traumatic effect on our youth to enact reforms and alternatives.

**To donate, please visit:  
[writersnresidence.org/donate](https://writersnresidence.org/donate) or scan the code below**



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