

Writers in Residence



Fall 2021
Hiram College 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.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mission and Vision	4
Our Values	5
Colleges & Universities and Juvenile Facilities	8
Outputs and Impact	10
 Hiram College Cohort	
“The Family is a Bonfire”	14
A letter from the cohort	15
Artifacts	16
 Acknowledgements	62
Donate	64

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
2. College of Wooster
3. Heidelberg University
4. Hiram College
5. John Carroll University

6. Marietta College
7. Oberlin College
8. University of Dayton
9. Cleveland State 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

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

*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

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We want to acknowledge the following individuals below for their time, energy, and resources devoted to fulfilling Writers in Residence's mission and vision because without them nothing would be possible:

- 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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We also want to express our gratitude for our Graphic Designer, Jordan Mondell, who produced this contemporary, high-quality chapbook that elevates our residents' creative writing.

Finally, we want to recognize the support from the following grantmaking institutions:

- 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 or scan the code below**



Writers in Residence is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization incorporated in Ohio.