

Writers in Residence



Spring 2022

Indian River JCF Cohort

For the 49,000 youth confined in a juvenile facility in the US.

For the 2,200 youth confined in a juvenile facility in Ohio.

These youth have been separated from family and friends. Many of them don't feel seen, heard, or understood.

Their creative writing in this text rewrites the stereotypes and biases of a juvenile in detention.

This is for them.



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Property of Writers in Residence Library

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Mission

TEACH.

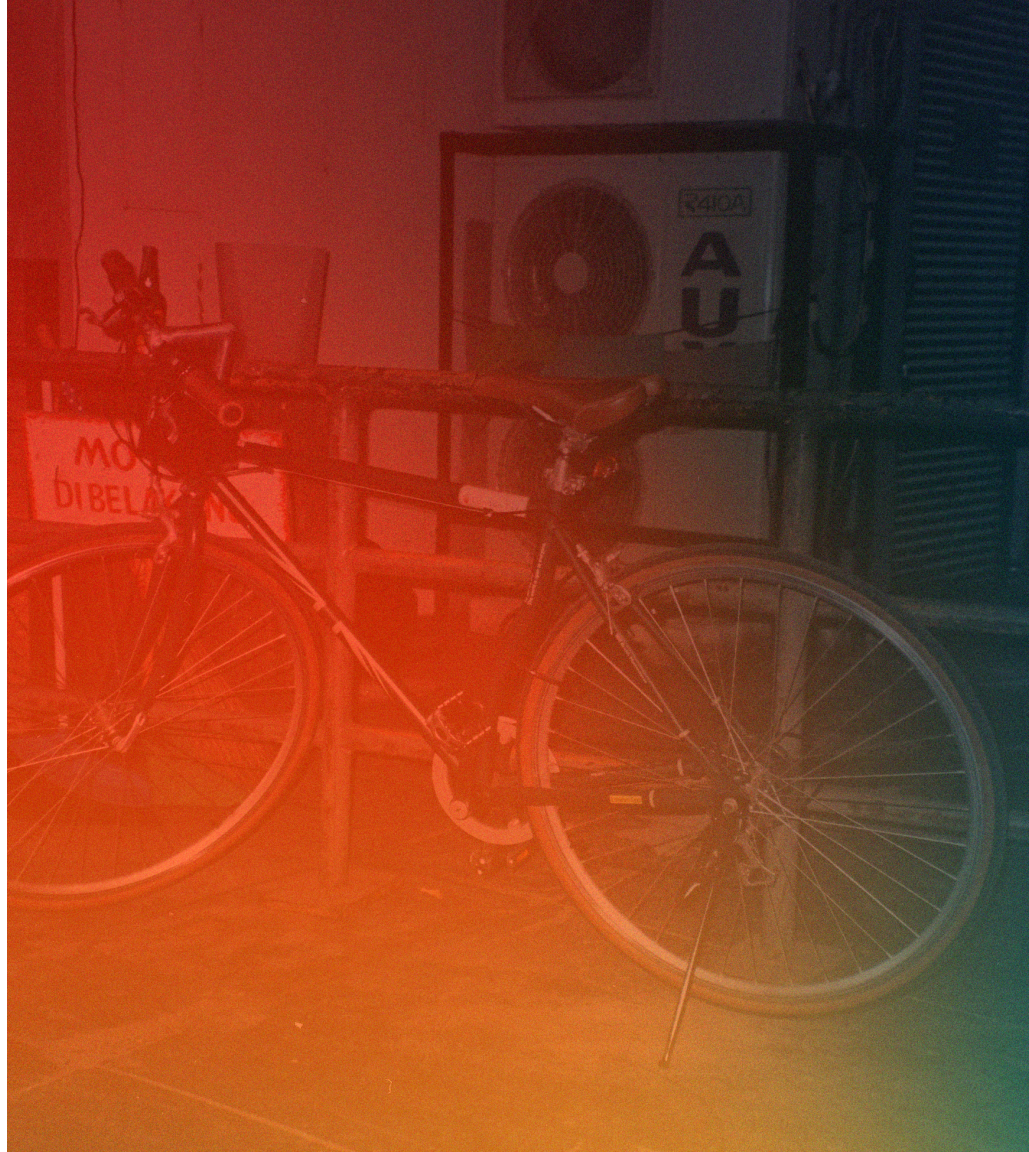
We teach creative writing
to youth who
are incarcerated.

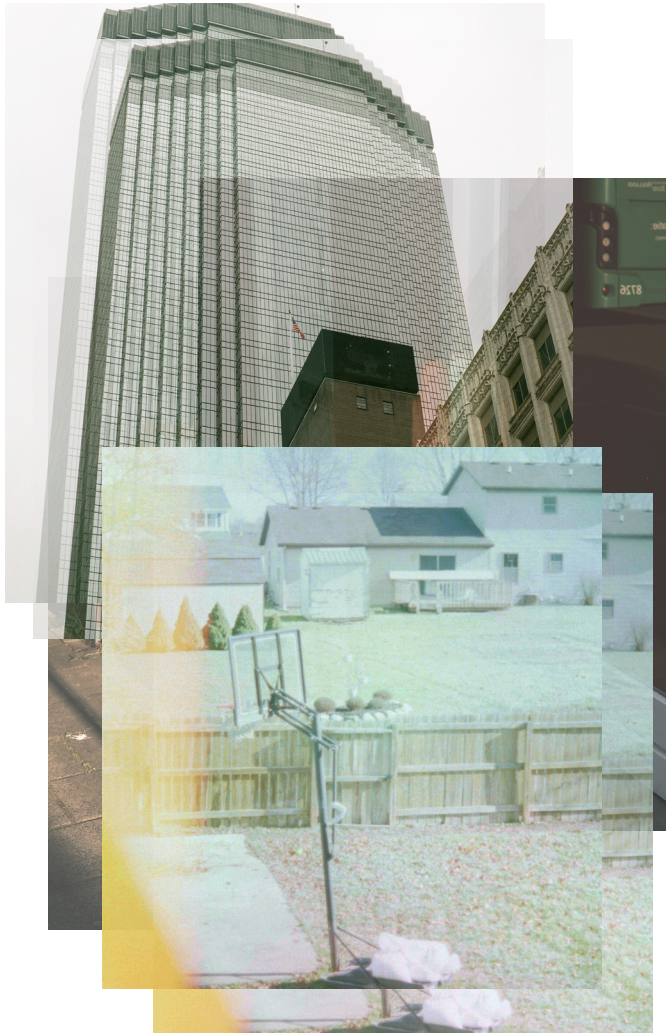
EMPOWER.

We empower our
residents' voices.

ASSIST.

We assist in their
re-entry.





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.

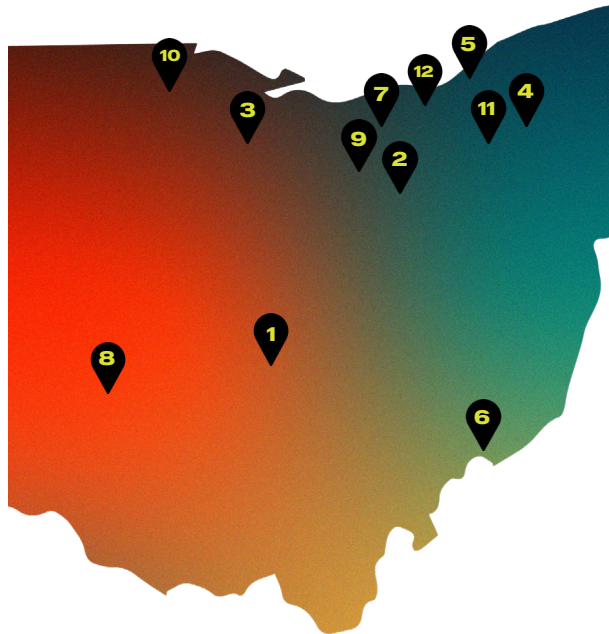
EMPOWERMENT. We believe that our residents can build their self-esteem, resilience, and power through working on their writing, their reflection, their communication, through the creative writing workshop experience.

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.

SCHOOLS



- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Capital University | 7. Oberlin College |
| 2. College of Wooster | 8. University of Dayton |
| 3. Heidelberg University | 9. Baldwin Wallace University |
| 4. Hiram College | 10. Bowling Green State Univ. |
| 5. John Carroll University | 11. Case Western Reserve Univ. |
| 6. Marietta College | 12. Cleveland State University |

Circleville JCF
 Montgomery County CAS
 Seneca County YC
 Portage Geauga County JDC
 Cuyahoga Hills JCF
 Cuyahoga County JDC
 Washington County JC
 Medina County JDC
 Cuyahoga County JDC
 Lorain County JDH
 Indian River JCF
 Wood County JDC
 Franklin County JDC

JUVENILE FACILITIES

Impact

To understand our impact on our residents, we survey them at every creative writing workshop.

These surveys give us quantitative and qualitative data so we can provide our residents with a high-quality program experience.

Our Creative Writing Workshop occurs in spring and fall seasons for 12-16 weeks. Each session runs for 60-90 minutes either in-person or remotely via Zoom or Teams and consists of 10-15 residents, 5-7 student volunteers, and 1 teaching artist. Then, we publish, showcase, and distribute chapbooks filled with our residents' creative writing inside juvenile facilities, on campuses, and throughout the local communities to raise awareness about the juvenile justice system.

Visit writersnresidence.org to learn more!

FY 2022

Average

78 residents
5 student volunteers
56 hours
\$1,680 valuation

Total

621 residents
36 student volunteers
449 hours
\$2,242 valuation
8 cohorts

Year to Date

Average

34 residents
7 student volunteers
82 hours
\$2,148 valuation
5 cohorts

Total

1,403 residents
195 student volunteers
2,356 hours
\$63,776 valuation
12 cohorts

Toward the Truth: Empowering Excellence in the Men of our Future

Indian River JCF Cohort



and bonding above all else.

You should know that the residents were constantly in pursuit of the truth— about themselves, about the world, and about us. They were brave and honest, and in doing so, helped us all to understand the world a little bit better. Which is why we entitled this chapbook: “Toward the Truth: Empowering Excellence in the Men of our Future.”

We are grateful to have worked with such a diverse group of residents, student volunteers, and teaching artists. Everyone comes from a different background and has a story to tell, and we all learned from each other through conversation and writing. We are also thankful that our residents questioned us, pushed our thinking about the works we read and wrote. We are so grateful for the ways that they supported and encouraged us to share our own stories just as much as they shared theirs. They truly allowed us to create a community, and that will stick with us forever.

M2 Indian River JCF Cohort

Dear reader,

Each resident has lived an extremely unique life compared to us. There is no way for any of us to have full insight into each resident's life, but we must appreciate their contributions that they wrote to share some of their life stories.

One of the special moments that we will always carry with us involves seeing the residents claim their own voice as we worked together throughout the creative writing workshop. Some of the residents started the program quietly and became more confident as our sessions continued. It was also great to see how resilient the residents were as some changes were made along the way. Their willingness to get vulnerable and be honest with one another is something that will stick with us forever. The residents formed friendships and inside jokes and invited us into their bonds and world. When we think of this workshop, we think of friendship

Life

JA

1. I'm a citizen from the United States.
2. Live by your fullest nomatter what.
3. I always think outside the box.
4. Break the laws, there are consequences.
5. Think about all positive things everyday.

Untitled

RB

Get out and get a job
Get out, finish school and work
I love playing basketball; it's fun
Don't put your trust in everybody
Life's a puzzle, put it together

Untitled

RP

Life goes on, don't give up.

Untitled

KB

Question: Is forever really forever?

Food: don't look at your plate halfway empty, look at it halfway full

Love: don't let your guard down and you won't be hurt as bad

Life: There's people with the same problems as you

Untitled

JJ

Does love hurt or heal you?

Dream, create, build, destroy, struggle, remake!!

Think like you. Behave like others.

Give respect, get respect, learn respect.

Untitled

MW

Life is good and could be better
don't want closure, just want love
lost in my thoughts, finding myself
too much to bare, still going
open to talk, just listen please

Untitled

NL

Life: Respect my life in my city
Love: Find your soul mate in life

I'm grinding for this very life
Love to give, hate to receive

Untitled

DR

I thought that maybe you could teach me how to have faith and hope
in myself.

Untitled

LS

Advice

- I am honest, but will lie
- Play the system as a game
- Keep on moving. Never move backwards.

Life

- Don't take life as a game

Love

- Loyalty, respect, responsibility, truthful, love, family

Advice

- Keep on moving, never move back.

Untitled

NC

It was good while it lasted
hard times don't last
greatness

Untitled

KB

Do not waste your time
Time does not wait on anyone
So use it wisely

I've been left before
It doesn't hurt as much anymore
Learn from your mistakes
Practice what you preach
Preach what you're sometimes feeling
Go off your feelings

Untitled

NC

I'm in space
Chilling like I do
In Cleveland looking at lil baby
On the B.E.T. awards and
A goat start attacking
him. He still alive but
I don't care I'm in space

Untitled

JJ

I'm in the air
floating. I just seen
A dog on the moon
Am I dreaming? I
Hear music, kids
At the ice cream truck
Laughing, playin. It's the Best Feeling Ever.

My time in space

MW

My family and I are in space/
And I see a lamborghini in front
Of a house on the moon. I also
saw my friends. I was floating
And I bumped into brown.
I saw Beyonce performing to
Aliens. It was loud music playing
But I'm not sure where it's
Coming from.

Tap Into Your Senses

JA

1. I feel all positive energy
2. within this room and zoom visit.
3. I see all hardworking people
4. This is a great influence here.
5. This is a great opportunity
6. do what you have to do.

Untitled

JJ

What we do today
Matters most not tomorrow
Laugh now and cry later

Untitled

RB

When do you feel most powerful?
I feel most powerful when I speak things into existence.

When do you feel least powerful?
Inside jail or anywhere else where my freedom feels taken.

Untitled

LJ

Keep a positive mindset
Don't lead up today
Stay ten toes down

Untitled

K

On the stage again, only
this time, I wasn't
Practicing. I was in
Front of hundreds
Of people. I was
The voice of the
School and wrote
A speech. I was
Nervous, but also excited.
With all these emotions,
I didn't notice I was
More than halfway through it.
People clapped, listened, agreed, &
Disagreed. But I felt something
I never felt before: power.

Below space

RB

I'm in space
With Teyana Taylor
Inside a UFO and
We nearly floating
Into a plane
Nodding to the music
Eating fries

Untitled

KB

If I understand, I will say, "type sh-."
If I don't, I would say, "what type sh-"

Is you on I usually use my
voice recorder because I don't
Like to type sh- on my phone.

My girl tryna argue I told
Her that the type sh-
to make me leave you
alone

Story

JJ

Once upon a time, there was a kid with
An issue of losing control when
Authority would confront him. Everytime he would
Get himself in trouble. Until one day, he met
His emotions and they told him where he would be
Headed if he did not gain self-control.

Untitled

HA

I am from an active place where kids are there running.
Screaming, playing, just enjoying life. I'm from where
kids wanted to make a name in the streets.
Where kids got involved with drugs, sex, guns way too early.
Where there's bloody faces kids making dreams becoming
Reality where the street life is becoming the only life we care about
When all we ever want any more is money for people to
Care and be there for us.
But at the end of the day all I remember is staying out
Of school and stop running away out of my dorm house.

Untitled

MW

When I showed my brother how to drive
I felt like I was in power because
I had to show him everything. How to
Press the gas and the break. I
Showed him everything and it felt
Good.

Untitled

NC

When I showed my little sister
How to ride her bike.
It wasn't easy, but it
Was not hard. I taught and gave power.

Untitled

MW

My friend Calip had on Gucci shoes and an outfit. I
said, "that's pressure."

Pressure makes diamonds.

Untitled

NC

Corny means to always either to go over or always to not have things
go your way.

I'm talking to my friend
Marquan. He stated, "money talks,
bad girls walk," and I stated, "that's
corny."

Untitled

JJ

I am from midnight.
I am from Georgia
Where peaches grow on
Trees. I am from cookouts
And block parties. I am
From babies crying and
Kids fighting. I am from
Black queens and kings. I am
From her and she made me.

South Lorain

HO

I am from the streets of the southside of Lorain. Where when trying to get snacks and foods, you had to steal from the corner store. Where you're innocent and still get chased by a stray bullet. Where if you're not known, you don't get proper respect. Where you're defined by the side you're from, no matter if you're involved or not. I'm from a place that can take you far away from your family and not show love 'til you're in the dirt. A place where you have to trust yourself to stay alive. Where you're home alone cause your mom's at work all day. And your dad doesn't want anything to do with you. Where you gotta have a gun wherever you go. Where you live by something you die by that same thing. However, I'm from where the Lord is my savior and family is strength.

Untitled

RB

I called my friend. He said,
"call me later." I said, "fashoo."

So me and a couple friends were going out to a
Show. So they ask me why I have a watch on I
Said, "for show."

Untitled

JJ

Do you understand what I'm saying
Type stuff. Like why you always
Preaching when I don't like this type
Of stuff

Untitled

HA

I am from Cleveland.
I am from my mom's stomach.
I am from a place where there is no sleep.
I am from a place where you have to keep a gun to be safe.
Here I am.

Untitled

LO

I am passionate about faith. I'm passionate about this 'cause having
faith can boost someone's confidence and tell them that they're not
alone.

I'm passionate about the family I'm soon to have.

Where I'm From (WIF)

GM

I'm from Cleveland where everybody has a gun.
I'm from the projects where gun violence, fighting, and gambling.
I'm from the valley where stuff gets real.
I'm from where I had to beat the streetlights.
I'm from a big family where we stick together.
I'm from eating chicken.

Untitled

HR

I am from where there's nothing but fields and trees.
Where kids chase thrills for fun.
I am from where, as you get older, pills are the only thing that numbs.
I am from where kids die young and you gotta keep a gun.
I am from where if you're broke, you stay with a gun and the only way
to get rich is to become the plug.

Untitled

GM

I am passionate about sports because I like putting on a show and
seeing the amazing things I can do.

Hope to Survive

HR

When I die I hope I find peace
Far from Earth where the angels sing
but I cross my heart hope to survive
because I'm too young to die
but if I'm gone before I wake
mom stay strong because I'm in a better place
in our hearts we're not far apart
because you were there from the start.

Family Life

LO

For my people that hold each other together
For my people that are going through a hard time 'cause of a loss
For my people that only have themselves
For my people that love their family
For my people that are scared to stand out
For my people who grow up seeing abuse
For my people who hear gunshots and blood
This is for me to better myself and the people that need help
This is for me to love my neighbor
This is for me to change my community
This is for my life

Untitled

JJ

Uncertain about what I am passionate about.
I love my family because they are all I got.

Untitled

LO

Maybe you could teach me to be more humble, to be the best.
You can teach me to let the past be the past, to stop hiding in the shadows.
Teach me how to forgive myself.

Untitled

HA

Hey, I thought that you could maybe teach me to be a better person,
to see life through my eyes, to be my own person, and to just be me.

Hey, I thought that you could maybe teach me to just realize that it
doesn't matter what everyone thinks because not everyone will like
you.

Untitled

GM

Hey, I thought that you could maybe teach me the importance of
being a man and taking care of my kids.

Untitled

JH

Hey, I thought that you could maybe teach me the importance of chasing
my dreams because I could've been doing what I want instead of
being forced to do something I didn't want to.

For My People

JH

For my people that live in Winton Terrace that get treated like we're
not the same as any other human. We get treated like we're animals
and the police look at us like we did something wrong as we walk to
our houses or stand at the bus stop. Our community is full of talent
and each and everyone deserves a chance.

Untitled

JR

Hey, I thought that you could maybe teach me how to be a better brother.

Untitled

DB

Hey, I thought that you could maybe teach me to be respectable, honest, and follow my goals in life.

Letter to Loli

LO

Hey, can I ask you a question?
I wanna ask if you love yourself? Rn
I don't. I'm afraid of the world and the feelings
I carry. I hope you can love yourself the way you
Deserve. Also do you have a family? I have one
But my baby Anakh passed away that took my heart.
I still believe he's still here. Last question,
did you tell mom you love her everyday.
She's our world and made your life
The best. Be safe.

For My People

GM

For my people who own pitbulls, they are the most dangerous dogs but sweet.

For my people who play football, they can express their feelings on the field and not on the streets.

For Mom

HR

She tells me that she's really in love.
But I wonder if I'm really enough.
Because I always seem to mess things up
And piss you off, even when I'm looking out I mess that up.
How I don't get it? I'm tryna give you my soul you see no ugly in it.
You done killed all my depression you don't get it.
I hope I killed all your depression, I hope I did it, hope I did it.

Letter to My Older Me

GM

Dear McClenton,
10 years from now
I hope you made it to the NFL and become
successful, I hope you find a way to be
the person you wanted to be.

Untitled

DR

Dear Demarcus,
10 years from now
I hope you made it college by following
your dreams and are going to the NBA
and are being there for your kids.

Letter 2 Myself

HR

I hope you said goodbye and good riddance
To your never-ending abyss
And found inner peace in the finer things,
I hope you got everything you wanted
And did the things they say you couldn't.
When you look back on your past remember you were just a child.
And even in the hard times don't forget to smile.

Acknowledgements

We want to acknowledge the following
individuals for their time, energy, and
resources devoted to Writers in Residence:

- Residents and Juvenile Facility Staff
- Student Volunteers and Cohort Advisors
- Staff, Teaching Artists, and Contractors
- Board of Directors, Community Partners, and Donors

It takes a team to achieve what Writers in
Residence does, so thank you to
everyone involved!

When you donate to Writers in Residence

Your contribution sustains our Creative Writing Workshop with teaching artists, writing materials, snacks, and chapbooks.

Your support assists our residents who are reentering into their communities with limited access to social services including housing, employment, food, health care, and education.

Your generosity educates our local communities and government officials about the juvenile justice system's traumatic effect on our youth.

**Visit writersnresidence.org to donate
or scan the code below.**



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