

Writers in Residence



Spring 2022

Heidelberg University 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.



Table of Contents

BSG 20

Property of Writers in Residence Library

Item	Page	
Mission	4	01 08 97
Values	7	6 10 97
Schools & Facilities	8	
Impact	10	8 9 01
"Our Tomorrow: Beauty in the Sunrise"		2 15 02
Letter from the Cohort	13	12 21 02
Artifacts	14	
Acknowledgements	29	10 3 03

Mission

TEACH.

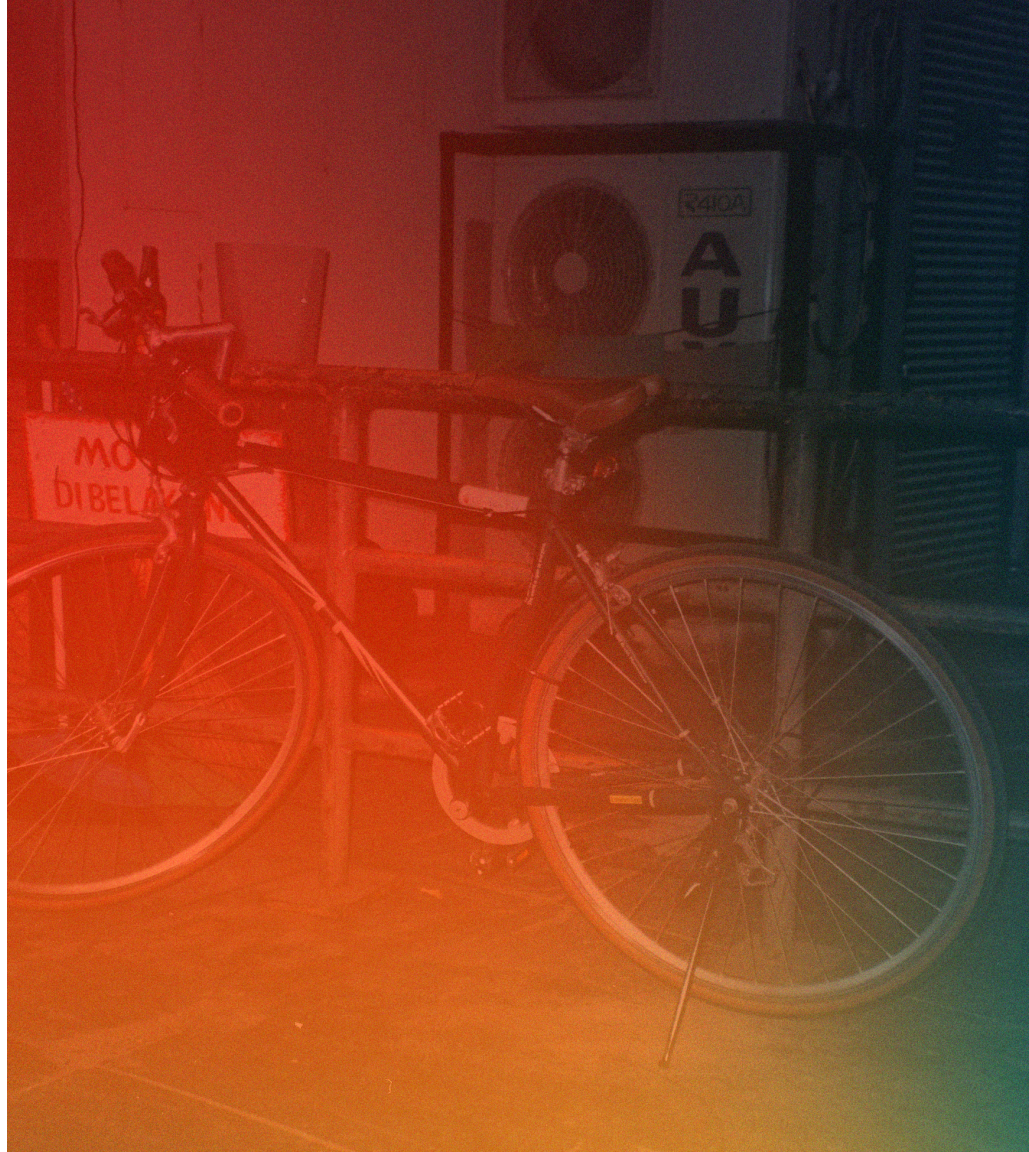
We teach creative writing
to youth who
are incarcerated.

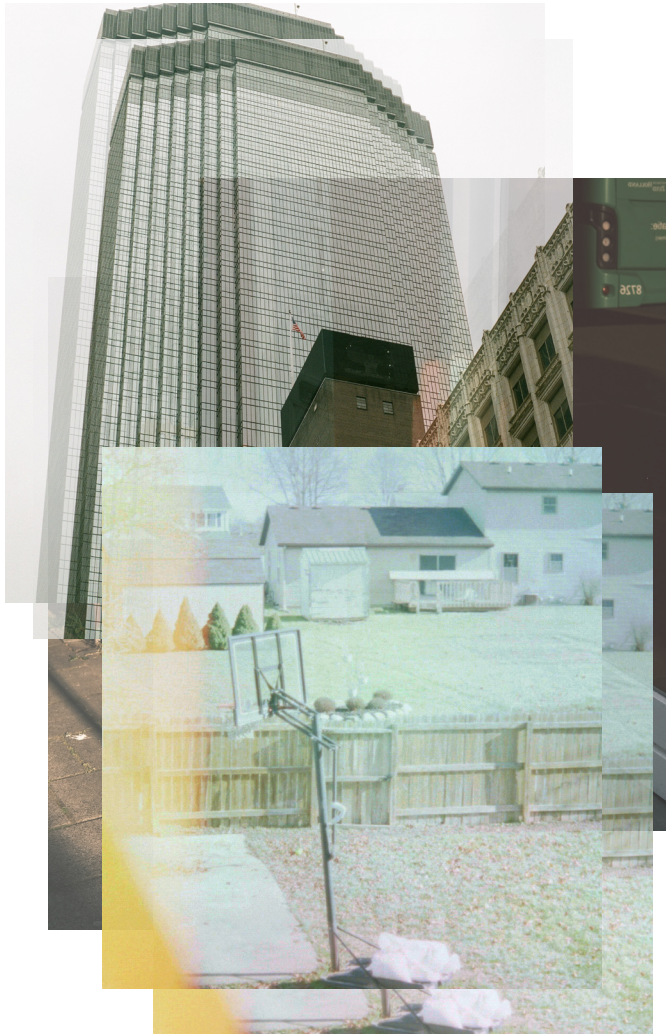
EMPOWER.

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.

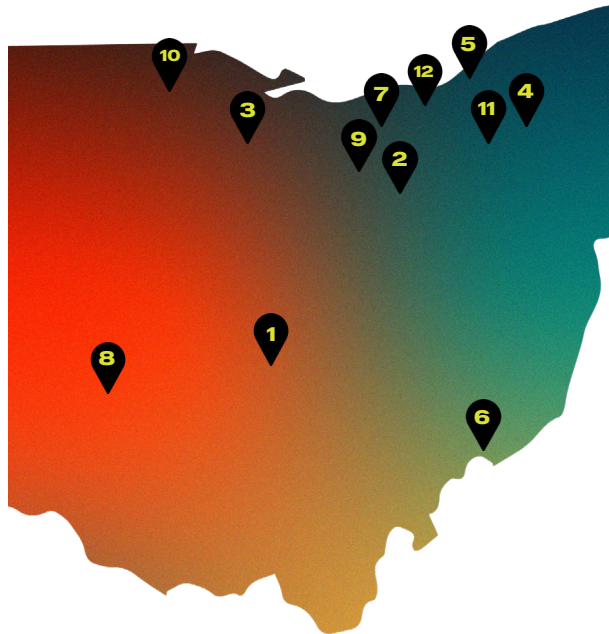
EMPOWERMENT. We believe that our residents can build their self-esteem, resilience, and power through working on their writing, their reflection, their communication, through the creative writing workshop experience.

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

Our Tomorrow: Beauty in the Sunrise

Heidelberg University Cohort



Dear reader,

When we look back on our experiences, we remain grateful and honored for the chance to interact with the residents who trusted us and felt enough comfortable in the Creative Writing Workshop to share their stories on how life impacted where they are now. It was amazing to see these youth come out of their shells as we progressed through the program. One of our favorite moments this season involved music when the facilitator and the residents started talking about their favorite artists. We learned about so many new and talented musicians, and we were able to relate to each other through music. Then, another core memory that will carry with us related to sports where everyone debated about what activities are or aren't sports. The residents were so engaged! These experiences helped the youth look at certain topics and issues from a different perspective, which is exactly what we are asking you to consider while you read this chapbook because there is a little bit of everything in here, from aspirations to raps about food, no matter the topic, the residents wrote from their hearts.

It is important to understand that the youth may not have had the opportunity to put their thoughts onto paper before this program. It is important to also realize that their contributions mean a great deal to them because it captures a lot of their thoughts that go on inside their minds that they may not feel safe saying aloud yet. The youth were able to positively express their feelings, accomplishments, and somber experiences. Our Creative Writing Workshop is a free space for the residents to release their emotions through poetry or prose.

For many of us, writing is a very positive practice of self-exploration and learning. We are thankful to have witnessed the residents learn this skill for themselves. It was truly inspiring to see how acceptance of someone's creative works made them feel more confident and more willing to participate and share again. This experience has not only allowed us to grow as people by letting us see from different perspectives and find confidence in our abilities, but it has also taught us to be more encouraging and that the best support sometimes comes from just listening.

Heidelberg University Cohort

Untitled

OK

Playing football brightens my day
Boy give me one let me say
I will play for days

Untitled

JM

Freedom is my precious
The flag they paid for it all
Will never see home

Untitled

CV

Noodle soup good for soul
I got heartburn bad chest ache
Milk made pain vanish

Untitled

AE

Before night comes in
Every good day ends in sunset
With a good night kiss

Untitled

GC

When playing video games, there are good and bad players. One day I met a person who was very bad at the game. I decided to give him tips and teach him how to be better and more respectful during in-game matches. I felt like I was a helpful person in the gaming community.

Another time I was feeling positive power was when I "saved" a slightly hurt bird and helped protect it until it could fly again. I felt power over its life and used that to save it.

Untitled

AE

I feel the most power when I'm the one in charge of the house or the kids or everything else. Growing up I was always left alone so I had all the power in the house. I could do whatever I wanted without getting in trouble. I did this from 5 years old to 15 years old. If I wanted to walk around town at 3 AM I would walk around town.

Untitled

BB

One time when I felt powerful was when I got something that none of my brothers got and I felt like I had power over who got to play with it and when they would get to play with it but then after teasing my brothers I lost my power over that toy.

Untitled

CH

Space is simply
bad for a frog
ribbit

Untitled

DG

A time I felt positive power was when I got out of the youth center last time because I was ungrounded from everything because my parents thought I needed a "fresh start" and I felt in control because we were getting along and I had an opportunity to change my life for the better. Obviously that wasn't the case considering I'm here again but everyone deserves a second chance I guess.

That Day's Plan

AE

Me and my friends were hanging out about to order some food when 2 planes wrecked outside my house. We called the police. They hid in the plants. The pizza guy brought bottled water and pop with caffeine. After we finished eating, we went shopping. We bought shoes and hair dye. When we got home we watched TV and played the game system.

Ball

OK

One time me and a high school baseball player were playing baseball with no cap and that is no cap.

Space Farm

BB

I'm in the atmosphere outside of earth in space I see
a pig fly by in a fighter jet with chicken little in a
Space suit
we are free to be
here we praise to see
a farm go by.

Got me Bent

NB

My brother said he's gonna
Wake me up early and I told
Him you got me bent don't
Even bother. The next day
He told me he's gonna wear
My shoes to school I told
Him you got me messed
Up wear your own shoes

Us Thugs in Space

Anonymous

I am floating in space
my brother throws
a football at me
and then I broke it off
an asteroid look like football
and our plant is rainbow
colored.

I am from Cincinatti Ohio

CH

I am from a place where there's a lot of bandos
I am from a place where you walk out the house
and hear gunshots. I am from a place where it's kill or be
killed. I am from where there's high speed chases and
robbing people at gunpoint. I am from where you gotta stay
on yo pivot

Bussin' Days

CW

I'm in a very bussin' bussin' mood today. Off to bussing my kids to
school today, so they're not late.

Untitled

AB

I am from where I see
cars driving fast. Food smells in
the air and hearing cars
Driving

Untitled

AS

I am from walking in abandoned buildings
where no one would find us.
I am from a place where u can't trust
ur neighbor cause they will rob u
without a second thought.

Untitled

NB

Mom you left me too soon
It was way past noon
I stayed by your side even when you was blue
I stay loyal, so imma live it up for you

The Knockout

CH

the clock was ticking
I had my guard up
there was 1 minute
left he swung I
weaved his left
hit em with a
right hook then
Dropped back he
was stumbling he
started leaking
then he dropped
his guard I
came in and
dude with a
2 piece put
em to sleep

I am from... Tiffin

NP

I am from a place where bullies thrive

I am from a place of fighting

I am from a place of death

I am from two parent doing their best

I am from a place of crime

Untitled

CH

Smack 'em wit the pistol left his forehead

Wit a knot ride for my dawg like

Like bike pegs try to run

Then both legs get shot

Neva' changed up on the gang always

Kept it 100 if you my brother then I

Got you and you can call me I'm

Coming I gotta I gotta make it out the city I came down with that money

I am from... American St

MM

I am from speed chases and being held at gunpoint.

I am from where if you have the wrong color on it

would get bad. I am from where Police barge in

homes looking for people who have warrants. I'm from

where a single mom has to take care of 5 boys.

I am from living the fast life

I am from Detroit MI.

Untitled

CH

Wind chilled

Windbreakers shrieked

Sneakers squeaked

On the court

Hands were sweating

Acing the ball

rackets slipping

Untitled

AB

Hike the ball was snapped
I hit my block and started
my route which was a right
angle he faked it to the wide out
and threw to me I caught it
and took off CB got low but
I got lower and smoked him

Untitled

ZC

I was told there was a boxing match with me that night. I was not prepared.
The guy was 23. He had been boxing for 4 years. I had only been fighting
for a year.
Thought I was going to lose but I put bruh on his flat. I beat him by 3 points.
He was my weight, little shorter than me.

Al's Mask

AB

Mom. Everything is okay.

Untitled

XA

Honestly it just gives me
Something to do
And allows my lungs to
Clear out
it takes my mind off of
My current situation
it allows me to get healthier
for the time being

Emotions

NB

It's okay to show your
emotions, they don't need
to hide. Sometimes they
need to be let loose, so
they can be revived.

It's important to allow
yourself to feel them,
If you don't you may
become confused, just
let your emotions
flow and everything
will be mellow.

Back to the Cellblock

AB

Fast-forwarding time to pass this hard time
Clock never stops to keep ya head up
No evidence so I gotta beat the case
Little Debbie's is a must on my commissary

Invisibility

XA

If I could have any power it would be invisibility
I'd turn invisible and be gone for eternity
No one would ever see me again and I would just mind my business
I wish I could do it and just say good riddance

Untitled

CW

You be coming in my room like a butterfly
That hatched out of a cocoon, sometimes
I want to smack you with my shoe.
But I don't want to get hit by you.

A Letter to Her

ZC

When I talk to my girl I pretend to act like I am okay
and that I am not hurting inside and that
is why I always have a smile on my face
and how I really feel about her and let her
know how I'm feeling and my thoughts.

Untitled

J

When I talk to my mom I pretend to be okay
so I don't take time out her life that she
won't get back. I want to tell her how I
feel inside but I'm afraid she'd brush it off.

Truth

XS

When I talk to my family I pretend to be happy
so they don't have to worry about me or my feelings.

Thoughts and Truths

AE

You may see yourself as small and weak,
I see you as big and strong.
You see yourself as fat,
I see you as the perfect weight.
You think you're ugly,
I know you're beautiful.
You think you're stupid,
But I think you're very smart.

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.