



Writers in Residence



It's Dark Outside
But There's No Reason
for Mourning

Fall 2022

Hiram College 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.

And for the youth no longer with us.
We call them our friends.
We know them by name.

This is for them.

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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.

RELATIONSHIP. We believe in fostering genuine, strong, and long-lasting relationships as well as walking with our residents as they navigate the path to re-entry.

DIGNITY. We believe that our residents deserve to discover and recognize their own dignity and self-worth through our creative writing workshops. We also believe that if we respect ourselves, our residents, and our student volunteers then we successfully lead by example.

COMMUNITY. We believe in the power of community. We continually welcome and accept our residents into our communities to promote 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.

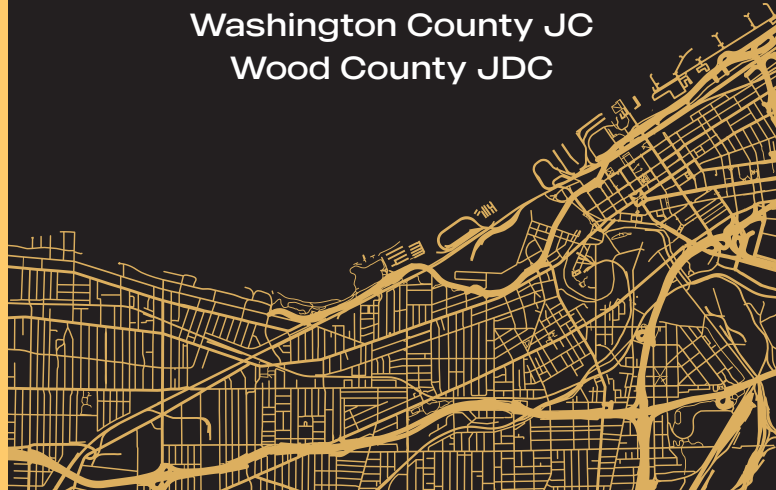
SCHOOLS



- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Baldwin Wallace Univ. | 9. John Carroll Univ. |
| 2. Bowling Green State Univ. | 10. Marietta College |
| 3. Capital Univ. | 11. Oberlin College |
| 4. Case Western Reserve Univ. | 12. The Ohio State Univ. |
| 5. Cleveland State Univ. | 13. Ohio Univ. |
| 6. College of Wooster | 14. Univ. of Dayton |
| 7. Heidelberg Univ. | 15. Univ. of Toledo |
| 8. Hiram College | |

FACILITIES

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



IMPACT

Our Creative Writing Workshops occur weekly in the spring and fall seasons. Each workshop lasts 12 weeks and every session runs for 60-90 minutes either in-person or remotely. 10-15 residents participate and 5-12 student volunteers from a local college or university engage with the youth. The experience is facilitated by a teaching artist from the community. Then, we publish, showcase, and distribute chapbooks filled with our residents' creative writing artifacts inside juvenile facilities, on campuses, and throughout the region at local businesses to raise awareness about the juvenile justice system.

We survey our residents to understand our impact. These surveys give us quantitative and qualitative data so we can continue to deliver a high-quality program experience. The Hiram College Cohort's chapbook was designed on October 18th, 2022, to ensure that the residents received this chapbook at the final workshop. As a result, the outputs reported only reflect a fraction of this cohort's and the organization's net impact from this fall program season.

To learn more,
visit writersnresidence.org/impact!

FALL TOTALS

- 50 RESIDENTS

- 11 Student Volunteers

- 83 HOURS

- \$2,865.85

Fiscal Valuation

- 26 ARTIFACTS

- 1 Chapbook

It's Dark Outside But There's No Reason for Mourning

Dear Readers,

This fall marks our seventh semester as a cohort, and it feels quite remarkable to see how things have changed. Of course, routine has come and gone, and come back again. In a world worn thin the last few years, it warms us to look back and realize how resilient our residents and students have been. It can be hard to give yourself props — often, one has no choice but to endure. Our residents this semester reminded us that we all deserve grace, and we all just want to feel loved.

Since our very first visit to the Portage-Geauga JDC in fall of 2019, we've met many residents who have given us their time during a period in their lives where most people would not have the patience left to listen to our corny jokes. We've had the pleasure of both introducing residents to creative writing as well as working with established writers, and folks who fall somewhere in between. There is no question about the impact this organization has on all involved, on both the residents and on our cohort.

Our title, "It's Dark Outside, But There's No Reason For Mourning", comes from one of our residents' pieces about routine. It reflects an attitude that we saw present in many of our residents this semester, one of aspiration and awareness. We spent evenings writing letters to our great-great-great grandparents and future great-great-great grandbabies. We worked with future contractors, pro athletes, farmers, musicians, voice actors, and college students.

We wrote about ourselves. Consistently, residents questioned themselves and found answers. What is in their name, what does happiness mean? Our workshops happen for an hour every week, and residents make the most of the time each workshop by keeping focus and engaging themselves. We are grateful always for our residents (past, present, and future) for the vulnerability and effort they give.

Our workshop could not happen without the support from staff at JDC. They often participate with us, and encourage residents in their writing. We thank them for their continued advocacy for the residents and our program. This semester was brightened with the addition of our new teaching artist, Carrie, who designed and led our workshops. Her work helped us create a more efficient environment, allowing us more time for writing and connection. Her workshops brought in new ideas, new perspectives on well loved pieces, and a reminder of how this organization has grown. We thank her for leading with us this semester.

Hiram College Cohort



In My Hood

D.C.

In my neighborhood we think a lot about the pape and tryna
make it out whether it's a sport or a little side hustle

Untitled

A.C.

The smell of a farm.
Though it may cause you city dwellers some harm.
To me is really quite sweet.
Many days chilling on the porch is better than
picking the wheat.
In the distance you will hear my horses bray.
I mean, what can I say?
When I am baling hay.
I can't think of life being any other way.

Untitled

L.B.

In home, which is not physical, but mental so I can
always feel at home. I'm in my mind whenever I
want or when I need to. My home is with the spirit
of my dad which I wish could be physically, but at
least I still have him in my mind, and most
importantly in my heart.

Coffee

L.B.

The soulless,
bitter taste of death
that my spirit needs to
feel the most
pure emotion, joy.

Untitled

J.H.

Eyes as blue as the skies, my forever
and always, my one and only, my home.

Oh Akron

D.B.

Oh Akron Oh Akron.
Born and raised.
You always hear your gunshots.
Hope you don't get grazed
Hanini's their food is so good.
Gyros and subs, the food is great grub.
The spot is very hectic because it's next to a club.

LUC

D.C.

Damian came from the devil
Damian means a mad individual
Once named Damian I became a gangsta
who's in love wit the pape and females

Little Money Over B****es

D.B.

The name I go by the most
is Mobs or Big Mobs. How I got
that name came from when I started
making music two years ago and it stuck.

Untitled

J.H.

My name came from hate and distress
My name means anger and failure
Once named I became lost and blind
I taught myself who I was by embracing struggle
and poverty

ME!

L.B.

My name is from I.
My name means me.
Once named, I became me.
I taught myself who I
was by being
me!

Love Brings Pain

D.B.

I like to be far, I like to be near
I like to be close to happiness without
shedding a tear but love brings pain
and pain brings love they both bring
anger that you have to rise above
at the end of the day I just want
to feel loved

Need/Want

L.B.

I want to be happy.
I want to feel real.
I want the numb feeling
gone. I want my hope back.
But I need to be me!

"She"

A.C.

I want to be the reason you laugh, maybe even why
"she" laughs, I wanna be the reason "she"
stops crying over some dumb thing that happened,
I wanna be the reason "she" gets up and
looks forward to the day even if "she" needs to go
to some crappy jobs. I wanna be the reason
"her" kids smile and say their first word
or even take their first step. I wanna
be the reason "she" feels stable, safe, and
loved. The reason "she" smiles for the rest
of "her" life.

Forever Blessed

P.D.

I always wanted to please people around
me, but not understanding what would make
me happy, I learned sometimes you gotta
put yourself first because you don't know
when it's your last, but now I learned
it's not for the people I please, it's
for how I make of life and without that
there is nobody, but sometimes it just
feels good to please the ones you love
because you never know when the end
will come.

Ball Is Life

A.T.

I wanna be the ball to
score for my team and miss
for the others to bounce
really fast and win games

Dear Human

R.H.

Dear human that is dead was life cool when you were
alive 100 years ago. And how was it. What did your
animals look like? We're the Phones really like bricks?
How were sports played back then. What were your
shoes like? How much was gas? Because now it's like
\$20 a inch. How was your/the hair? What was the food
like? How were movies? Were there color in the movies?
How was school?

Great Granny

C.D.

Dear grandma Carol I miss and love
you a lot I wish you were here right now
to tell me I not doing the right thing.
I really miss your Christmas and
Thanksgiving. I have a question how did
you live to 107 years old that's
f***in crazy

Old Times

P.D.

Dear,
Memaw,
Since you left us the family tore apart after
you passed it is crazy if you never left us
everyone would still probably talk to each other
and would be perfect you will always be
the best memaw and I love you!

Rest In Peace

D.M.

Dear uncle Joey you are very
similar to me in a lot of ways, you probably
Had to go through a lot I remember
the great times you loved playing video
games with me like overwatch and Brawlhalla
you would love the new overwatch 2
you bought me a mini fridge for Christmas
and you would always stop what you're doing
and take off work to help your family
just like me. We are also different
in many ways your love of football
showed me that I want to play football
even though I hate football Dear Uncle
Joey I love you, you are finally home
Rest In Peace, Love Daniel.

Daytime

P.D.

Wake up in the morning, go to sleep
At night I brush my teeth twice a day
I shower once a day before breakfast then after dinner
I like to rest in between

My Day

C.D.

I wake up, I check my phone, I take a shower on
my own, I get dressed, I spray cologne, I make my lunch
filet mignon

Chilly Hallows Eve

J.L.

Waking up, on a chilly fall morning
It's dark outside, but there's no reason for mourning
Getting out of bed
Is difficult they said
But for me it's easy as pie
Standing up, and happy to be alive
Getting ready, however steady
Waiting for the chilly October air
Driving to be happy, no destination needed
Blasting music, and being me

Swiss Cheese

P.D.

You make me feel happy when I'm sad so you
make me a peanut butter and cheese sandwich
but after that gotta spray cologne for a good smell

Ode To Jail

C.D.

When I wake up and take my first breath
you're there, you make me feel sane, you're there
when I'm feeling sad and horrible pain, when I'm in my
room all alone, watching the rain, I regret all the time I
wasted and sadly didn't gain, I wish I ignored all
the bad influence and hopped on the train, I
wish I listened to my family instead of putting
them through pain, looking at the big image
they tried to put in my brain

Ode To God

D.W.

Oh sweet lord
I love the faith that you give me
How you pick me up when I'm feeling down
How one minute I'll be feeling things won't be better
Then just a prayer later I'm full of hope
Knowing everything is okay, Oh sweet lord
I love the faith you give me

Strawberry Babe

J.L.

I love the way
you sparkle in the
 sunlight,
How you're full
 and red,
Like a strawberry
 moon
You're there when I'm
 happy,
You're there when I'm
 sad

acknowledgments

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, Production Manager, and Printer
- Board of Directors, Community Partners, and Donors

*It takes a team to achieve what we do,
so thank you to everyone involved!*

And a special thanks to the following institutions:



Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards*



ways to give

This chapbook is available in exchange for a donation.

Your support directly benefits our youth
through education and re-entry.

\$5 - This gift covers the cost of a chapbook printed locally in Cleveland, OH by Outlandish Press.

\$50 - This gift allows a teaching artist from the community to facilitate a creative writing workshop at a juvenile facility. This gift also helps a resident become matched with a mentor.

\$100 - This gift sustains the organization's daily operations to provide its programs and initiatives.

Visit writersnresidence.org/donate to
give or scan the code below.



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