

Writers in Residence

HAPPINESS
is my
MINDSET,



Oberlin College Cohort
Spring 2023

FOR the 49,000 juveniles
confined in detention centers in the US.

For **THE** 2,000 youth
confined in juvenile facilities in Ohio.

For the **WRITERS**
in residence this spring.

Many feel invisible,
voiceless, **AND** misunderstood.

May **THEIR** creative **WRITING** rewrite
the preexisting narrative
and **FREE** their voices from incarceration.

And for those no longer with us
but remain in **OUR HEARTS AND MINDS.**

This is **FOR THEM.**

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VISION & MISSION VALUES

We strive to reduce the recidivism rates of our residents and participate in the transformation of the juvenile justice system.

teach.

WE TEACH CREATIVE WRITING
TO YOUTH WHO ARE INCARCERATED.

empower.

WE EMPOWER
OUR RESIDENTS' VOICES.

assist.

WE ASSIST
IN THEIR RE-ENTRY.

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 & FACILITIES

ACTIVE (SCHOOLS)

1. Case Western Reserve and John Carroll Universities
2. Oberlin College
3. Hiram College
4. Heidelberg Univ.
5. Baldwin Wallace Univ.

ACTIVE (FACILITIES)

- 1a. Cuyahoga County JDC
- 2b. Lorain County JDH
- 3c. Portage-Geauga County JDC
- 4d. Seneca County YC
- 5e. Medina County JDC

INACTIVE (SCHOOLS)

- Bowling Green State Univ.
- Capital Univ.
- Cleveland State Univ.
- College of Wooster
- Marietta College
- Ohio Univ.
- The Ohio State Univ.
- Univ. of Toledo

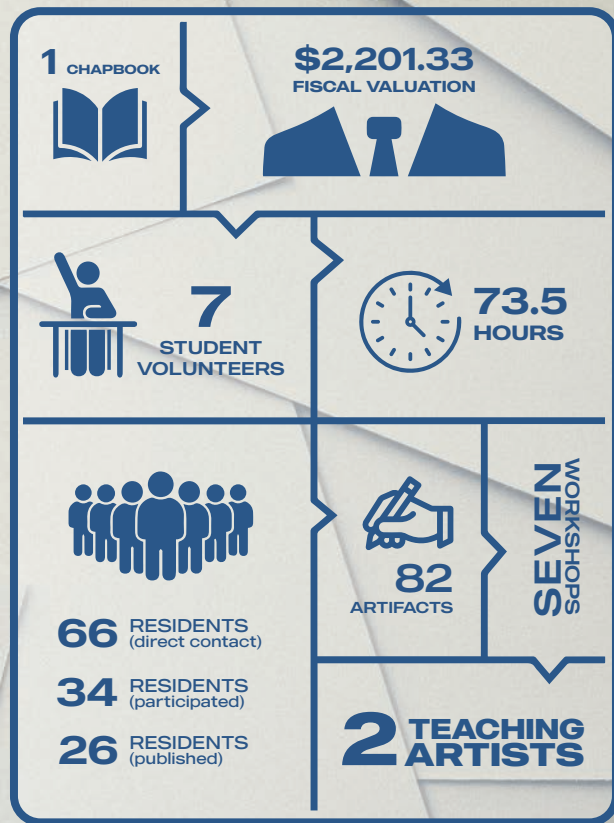
INACTIVE (FACILITIES)

- Circleville JCF
- Cuyahoga Hills JCF
- Franklin County JDC
- Hocking Valley CC
- Indian River JCF
- Lucas County JDC
- Washington County JC
- Wood County JDC

IMPACT

We compiled these creative writing artifacts and designed this chapbook through April of 2023 to ensure its delivery at the final workshop rested in the hands of every resident published inside. As a result, the outputs reported only reflect a fraction of this cohort's and the organization's net impact from this spring program season. We survey our residents before and after each creative writing workshop to understand our outcomes. These surveys give us quantitative and qualitative data so we can maintain a high-quality program experience.

TO LEARN MORE VISIT
writersnresidence.org/impact!



FOREWORD

Dear reader,

At the intersection of the arts, higher education, and the justice system, sits Writers in Residence, the only nonprofit in Ohio dedicated to creating space and time for youth in detention to reflect on their lives and express their feelings through poetry and prose during Creative Writing Workshops (CWWs). This original idea continues to anchor and propel us forward since our first pilot CWW in 2016 at the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Detention Center with the support of the Carroll Ballers.

We facilitate our weekly, in-person, or remote CWWs in the spring and fall seasons for 10-15 youth inside juvenile facilities. Every workshop lasts for 3 months and each session runs for 1-1.5 hours. We contract local teaching artists to educate our residents on different writing techniques, texts, and themes from authors that identify as BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, or Midwestern with a preference for Ohioians. We involve 5-10 undergraduate volunteers from the nearby college or university to participate alongside the residents as writers in the same experience.



Our CWWs accomplish these primary goals:

- Increase our residents' literacy levels and writing dispositions
- Build our residents' self-esteem, self-efficacy, and self-awareness
- Provide our residents with positive peer mentorship
- Publish our residents' creative writing into chapbooks to showcase and distribute within juvenile facilities, on campuses, and throughout the local communities
- Advocate for our residents by raising awareness and educating our communities about the justice system

Although our purpose, history, program model, and goals remain clear, the implementation of our CWWs for our youth persists with limitations and variables. Take, for example, the short amount of time in which our residents have to write, leaving few opportunities for revisions. The youth's creative writing artifacts that we publish exist unfinished oftentimes even though they would take advantage of the chance to edit their work if provided, especially as first-time writers. Finally, the juvenile facilities that we partner with operate in rural and urban communities, under strict and lenient supervision, and with staff shortages to name a few variables that affect our CWWs.

By overcoming these constraints and factors, we still empower our residents' voices. And for those reasons, I'm proud to present this chapbook: proof that freedom is possible and necessary.

Zachary Thomas
Executive Director

LETTER FROM THE COHORT

Dear reader,

One session, we were prompted to write poems about what joy means to us. This prompt was inspired by the poem "Joy," by Kevin Latimer, which is set in space—we were asked to create our own magical, poetic places of joy. As we all brainstormed and wrote and laughed about intergalactic oceans and celebrities in space, we imagined ourselves out of the facility and into a collective, creative space of joy. One of the residents remarked on how they feel they are constantly surrounded by negativity on the inside, and how important and powerful it was for them to imagine something so positive. This session illuminated how connective and liberatory the act of writing together can be—a thread that wove throughout the rest of our sessions. We are so thankful to the residents and cohort leaders for opening up and encouraging these moments of imagination as a way to connect across a divide, and express ourselves.

This semester, we were working with three different groups of students week to week, between the ages of 12-18 on both the male and female sides of the facility, so we got to know many different residents over the course of the semester. We led a variety of workshops, focused on writing personal six-word memoirs, writing about space, and writing first-person narratives.

Something that has stuck out to us throughout this semester is how the residents remind us of our younger selves, when we were in middle and high school. As we work with the residents we see their frustrations about getting started writing, anxiety about their friends laughing at their written piece, and pride when they write a piece they're excited about. The residents are curious, silly, and have a lot of learning to do and a lot of potential—just like any young person. Working with the residents makes us sincerely hope that we all work to give these young people the opportunities they deserve to allow them to fulfill their potential.

We are most grateful to the residents, for their welcoming of us into their lives, for their vulnerability and engagement, for all their conversations! We are grateful for how open they have been with us and their willingness to try something new and push themselves out of their comfort zone week after week. It's so special to see how they have grown from our first session. We are also grateful to Calil, Zach, Spencer, and the WIR organization for leading by example, for being steadfast in their kindness, support, and patience, and for making this special space for us and for the residents.

Oberlin College Cohort



untitled

I got to watch my self
I feel like am used outside

T.J.

untitled

It it what is shawty
My heart been broke so many times
Fried chicken is the best chicken
I want to keep my sister safe

T.W.¹

untitled

TV
Hungry
East

Kalm
Eggs
You perfect

Treat
Orange

Love
Ice
Food
Eek

I like
Skittles

Family
OJ
On
Dog

R.W.

untitled

Tears
Heart
Exelents

Key
Equals
Your

Triumph
Other

Lives
Irrelvent
Fearless
Elites

Intellagents
Says

Strong
Through
Realizing
Under
Good
Life is
Everlasting

K.T.

untitled

Trust
Honesty
Evolvment

K
Elavation
Y

Tribute
Openness

Loyalty
Intellagents
Food
Everyone

I
Saveor

Loyalty
O
Real
D

Great
O
D

T.W.²

untitled

The
Happies for
Everyone

Know you meaning
Everyone has a choice
Youth can be changed

Try your best
Over never stop

Love
In family
Forever
End ganse

Indepent
Solider

To
HELP
Everyone

Love
Everyone
Stay
Strong
Or
Notice the problem

D.P.

untitled

Trust
Hope
Empathy

Kindness
Empowerment
Youth

Truthful
Overthinking

Loyalty
Is
Forever
Expected

Improvise
Strong

A.P.

family tree / key

Try
Hard
Enough

Kids
Excited
Your

Taleted
Obviously

Loving
Intelagent
Funny
Even

In
Sad times

Family
Are
My
Inspiration
Loyalety
You are spechel

A.R.

untitled

The
House
Elephant

Key
Everything
You want

To
Own could be yours in

Life
I
Family is
Everything and life

Is
Smooth when you have

M
O
N
E
Y

I.O.

untitled

Truth

Have

Each others backs

Knowledge

Everybody ain't

Your Friend

Together

O

Love

It's me and my brothers against the world

Forever Loyaly

Even your family can switch up

In an instant

See no evil

L

O

Y

A

L

T

Y

Z.H.

untitled

Truth

Have

Each other back at all time

Keep it 100

Exercise each others brains

Your homie might not be yo homie

Together

Open

Live with good vibes around you

Inevitably might get into a bad situation

Family is

Everything

I always

Show up for my family

L

O

Y

A

L

T

Y

K.W.²

untitled

Truthful

H

Etelligent

Kazo

Eli

Yes

Trying to shoot baskets

OKC

Love

I honesty

Free me

Excellient

Inspiring

Seen Jayhiners

L

O

V

E

the famly

J.Q.

untitled

Truthful

Honesty

Etelligent

Kindness

Eli

Young

Talking on the phone

Outgoing

Loyal

Inspiring

Fun

Excellient

Ice

Sleep

L

O

Y

A

L

T

Y

R.A.

untitled

Teroky
Honeygrams
Everything Bagels

Kiwi
Eggnog
Yogurt

Toast
Oreos

Lemonade
Iced coffee
Flapjacks
Eggs

Ice cream
Slim Jims

French Fries
Orange
Omelet
Doughnuts

S.S.

untitled

The adventurs
Hard times
Emiering the things u have

Kind hearted people
Eating good food
Your life

To find a new path
Ocean an fonds

Love
Inseprelible friendships
Fun
Evil and good

Is the futur not the past
Sleep

L.K.

untitled

Brave strong outstanding fast smart
Live life die faster
Do you love me fr, or?
Set a goal higher than the last
Do all dogs go to heaven?

A.T.

untitled

music i hear explains emote
Love my ex girlfriends i miss her
Advice Dont run from pit bulls

R.C.

untitled

The key to life is
Hard work and dedication or sometimes even to actually say
Everyone has have a little self confidence and more to

Keep continuing in life
Expensive things always
Your people.

Too much crowd
Outgoing

Listening to music 24/7
Interested with algebra
Family is also a very important key to life
Eating out in any Cleveland restaurants.

Interested in like history.
SEAFOOD!

M.W.

personality

Life: Be a chill person or an energetic person
I'm a very chill person

H.S.

untitled

Life- Live Life to the fullest extent
Love- Learn to put yourself first
Food- Any cheesecake, All cheesecake right NOW
Advice- Always be honest with yourself
Questions- Why the Judge aint let me go?

M.Y.

untitled

Life: Conceal your emotions over expressing them

Love: Boundaries can go a long way if followed

Food: Stress eating over filling myself

Advice: Don't live ahead, day by day

Questions: Blinded by lies or shattered with truth?

Advice: Fit in or fit out you're yourself

Advice: Take life as a lesson not a priority

S.B.

untitled

Life- Live life to the very end

Love- Learn to put yourself first

Food- Any steak, all steak, right now

Advice- Always be yourself is key

Question- Can judge send me home soon?

N.P.

name

I am E. I got it from a singer. But

they call me R for short. I also go

by Strike/Striker. I like my nickname just because
it sounds good.

E.H.

untitled

Life

Don't take life for granted.

Love

Loyalty over Love

Food

Chop cheese will make you smile

Advice

Hard times don't last forever,

I turned nothing into something remain humble
and keep your composure

Questions

Prefer McDonald's or Wendy's breakfast?

J.G.

stay acting violent

I am Sav. I got the name the first time
in jail at twelve years old. The way I would describe
My name is Stay Actin Violent. Being forever about money
made me chase it to the fullest. In the process
of earning my name I proved that even being so
young I go in for anything! The reputation followed me
forever for the good and bad!

M.Y.

how i got my name

I am cool kid
I got my name by parents
My dad and mom love my dad name
My sisters on my mom is
so great

R.C.

untitled

I am H. It comes from the Bible. They
call me H cause I got it from H. I
feel good cause it's from the Bible
Because it teaches about god.
And god gives Hope

H.S.

the name peso

I am Peso. I got my name
because I be getting hella money and
also I am half Mexican. I got my nickname
when I was around 13 and started
doing things in the street. My friend who I
look at as my big brother and look up to
gave me my name.

W.B.

thrill

I think the meaning of my name means I'm rare. My cousin helped name me. She's nice and wants me to do good. She's real caring and a person who looks out for her family. I'm thrill and good at talking business. Nice doing business with you. I'm a one of a kind

J.G.

untitled

I am D. I'm from Elyria. I got a tat of no hand outs. I got a son that has the same name as me.

D.H.

my meaning of name

I am A. I wanted to know what my name meant so I looked it up on Google. It means I am a loving person, sweet, a fighter, handsome/fine/cute/hot. I am a strong person, nice and talented.

A.R.

ab my name

I am D, I like the way it sound it sounds cool. If I had a kid I would probably make him a Jr., if it's a girl I really dont know what I'd name her to be honest the mom would have to that or we can do it together

D.Y.

real writer

I'm on a planet I don't know where
Somewhere but everywhere I
Can see my old planet out
Of nowhere it blows away as
I float away in a glare I land
On a comet and blow away into
Outer space as it fell seamless
I sleep on air

A.T.

sleep

I'm in the air.
It's so bright anywhere.
Will Smith's here
slapping me in the air.
I fall asleep tired.
Joy because I wasn't
able to sleep, but now
I did.

J.H.

untitled

Floating in space got strucked
by lightning became a god and
Got Rick and Morty shot their space shipe
down

R.C.

stuck in space

I'm stuck in space viewing earth from a space station.
Very relaxed and quiet until out the corner of my eye
I see a space monkey with red eyes looking intimidating.
Quick!
Call Rick + Morty. I can't defeat him myself. Three vs one
Sounds easy right? The space monkey realizes he's out
numbered
And calls for backup. Sav and Rick + Morty win the fight
Now we run space!

M.Y.

i'm in space

Like the orbit of the earth
I'm going to keep going
Like the raise of the sun
I have everything I need
I have some of what I want
I keep a constant schedule of phone calls
All the support I need
Is what I have
I'm in space
My smile as bright as the stars
The struggles of life are as weightless as the gravity
But yet I'm still as strong as the ship of what
I came upon of.

X.W.

rocket rider

I'm in space
I'm riding a rocket
Its pulling my arm out of its socket
I see Kevin Hart
screaming like a baby wanting his mommy
But the real reason he's crying
is because he's my biggest fan
who wants a good tan
We have a good funny chat. It felt like I was living
in a money house

J.S.

celebrity crush

I'm in space, my celebrity crush (Cardi B)
throws stars at me that's full of love
Then we hug and disappear. It feels
unimaginably.

E.H.

untitled

I'm floating on a camel
I see Mordecai and Rigby
I hear a submarine coming
They shoot explosive bombs
I try to run but they hit my camel
My camel transformed into a big Goliath
It started to destroy everything
I commanded it to stop
And everything was fine

Anonymous

untitled

My big brother came
and got me from my step dad's house and
we went to space and played football, I looked
to my left and saw my guinea pig and to my
right, the rest of my family.

J.J.

space jam rim

In outer space it
will feel weird. Gravity there is more less
cool/ happy/ strange cuz we are jumping around
I feel good jumping around. Mike Tyson
punch me off the moon. That hurted LOL!!
A breeze I seen lots of birds in space
Jumping and flying at the game time
eagles ostrich jumping

A.R.

untitled

It's too dark to write. I want to see my
Mom want me. She can't want me for me.
The DH in we can't too. In the air we're the family.
I'm playing tag.

J.Q.

untitled

I go to space, I'm in space for like ten minutes and all of a sudden I see a lot of land animals and I also see a lot of water animals and then they just start to go to war, and its land animals and water animals going to war. For the water animals there are sharks, Dolphins, whales, sea horses, squids, octopuses, fishes, turtles, And other sea animals. For the land animals there are elephants, tigers, zebras, birds, lions, wolves, pigs, cows, sheep, horses, wooly mammoths, foxes, hyenas, and other land animals.

I.O.

girls jumping around the space with me

The space would be weird for me because I never went out of state, But it will be fun if i try to go to the space because Im gonna see all the stars and the Moon, but probably the sun but we can't go in front of the Sun because it would burn. Rocky punched me out and I went to the Moon. And plus see rocks, birds, fast stars, water, clouds, dolphins

D.P.G

untitled

Life: Life is pain, pain is life. Without pain there is no life. Without life there is no pain.

Love: One was found. One was lost. One was given. One was gone.

Food: food is the way you think of yourself

Advice: be there for yourself and don't doubt who you are.

Questions: are others there for you or there for themselves?

L.K.

my lifestyle

The Lifestyle I started with wasn't the best.

I started coming to Jail at a young age and got involved in all the wrong things. I've made many mistakes some more intense than others, but a mistake is still a mistake.

But where I started doesn't mean that is where I'm finishing and I made the choice to better myself. Plenty of Long nights incarcerated provided lots of time to think and plan, basically start to get my life together. Even while fighting the charges I'm accused of, I'm still refusing to give up. Now I'm in the process of graduating and changing my Life for the better.

M.Y.

untitled

Life for me Aint Been No Crystal.

Stair. It's Been Cold Nights, Rainy days

Hungry Night's But ive Always told myself. Hard times

Dont Last Long. #freeVJ!

A.H.

untitled

I like dogs and fishing.

J.H.

sprinkles don't come to all

I want to help.

Life for me ain't been all sprinkles.

Sprinkles come and sprinkles go.

there's big sprinkles,

there's small sprinkles,

even some of the same sprinkles,

even faded sprinkles from past events.

With the joy that comes with sprinkles,

also sometimes brings bad things.

but don't get intimidated

If you believe

you can make more sprinkles.

X.W.

good feelings

Love my mom pray I make it
so she leave the hood.
My moms is cancer free
When I get home, she'll be happy to see me
I miss my brother long wopp my brother
I fell in love with this girl
She was my lover, she did me wrong
Why did you leave me? It's been so long
I look in your eyes you got a beautiful smile
To keep you happy, I tried it all
I miss my little sister too much
When I get home, I can't wait to give her a hug
I smoke my pain away, it ain't worth it

Anonymous

co's

H is bald.
My lawyer called
I eat rice
with spice and H has lice

Cdog is cool
also old school
He can rap
H smells like old sap

Cdog is nice
I thought of H's house
He is as fast as mice
I imagined H in a blouse

J.H.

zone

I up 2s and drop 3s
see a opp stg he cant see
cant crashout like frank some you wont believe
it a opp run up on me im heat.

I.S.

lost boy 😊

Yeah I'm a lost boy I'm from da hood
Baby solo dime keloque keloque tu quieres hacer
en esta noche yo me enamored y me contagie
como dice anuel Real hasta la muerte mami
Perdoname se que te falle contia en que yo
cumbiare...Baby te extraño quisiera verte como
los dias de ayer perdoname porque se que te falle
Quisiera veer a mi hermano M and told
him stay out da way. I got a Baby on
da way I'm just trying to change.

Anonymous

to my momma

I got lk gave that to my momma
cause she pray for me every day.
I said I kicked the stroller cause
it was a sunny day. When it comes
to my family I don't play a lot of
games but you don't test me
so scared you tell the cops to
arrest me.

Anonymous

untitled

free All my Brother's up outta that Jam,
When i was 13 i Became the man Just
a young Boy im coutin up Bands
im Ridin Round wit yo Girl she a fan
Dont speak on S Cause stuff
Will Get tragic keep spinning till
you in a casket

A.H.

million and billions / hills

Pop me a pill let's run up a mil. I
Told my momma let's move to the hills
Like ok ok let's just run up millions ok okay time to
run up billions

A.R.

untitled

I was in the streets as a youngin. My
momma couldn't tell
me nothin. I was out there sellin papw
gettin buckets. I was out there selling clamming.
I was tryna get me some money no one
trying to help me, label trna sell me

J.Q.

untitled

being in and out of homeless shelters
no matter the conditions rainy stormy weather
the nights got better
even tho momma couldn't settle

pops got caught up with the feds and made it
hard to even offer beds
but at the end of the night me and lil bro
had to get fed

as I grew old pops ended up dead
me and lil bro made it out safe
and made my momma days

K.W.¹

untitled

Thing

H

E

Kind and smart

Evaluate

Y

T

Quav

Loyalty

I work

Funny

E

I am a good listener

Smart

I'm on my way to the garden

R.C.

loyalty

T - Trust is not given its earned

H - Home real soon

E - Everyone vs You

K - Keep to yourself

E - Everyday grind

Y - You only got yourself

T - To sold to fold

O

L

I

F

E

I

S

L - Life Life to the fullest

O - original

Y - you only life once

A - Always on 10

L - Learn from everything

T - Trust is earned

Y - Young

M.Y.

untitled

T
H
E

Kill your regrets
Even
Young

T
Out

Loyal
In yourself
Faif
Everyone

I
Set Back

To

Win and don't look back at a loses.

H.S.

untitled

The
Hero
E

K
E
Y

T
O

L
I
F
E

I
S

Real
E
S
P
E
C
T

N.P.

untitled

fast as he could they both raised their sword's
one -two - three. Both of them swung Lockhart
was blasted off his feet smashed into the wall
slid down on the floor Do you think he's
all right Who cares

If I wanted to stop it would have been
too easy looking murderous enough demonstrating
you'd like to help me

D.P.

untitled

Azkaban could be here
Who remains to be seen
If, I shall step aside.
"No!" Calm yourself,
So none could miss words.

J.B.

untitled

Harry wanted to peer through the shop
and touch the Draco I said play stupid Malfoy
Bent down look at his son who made disappear
A man Behind the counter said Mr. Borgin
I must show you items at home these
Poisons

A.P.

untitled

Mr. Lucius Malfoy stood into Hagrid's hut, Get outta my
house, And what exactly do you want with me, Fire was
still blazing, it's time, attack now

Dumbeldore can't stop them, they won't like it at all
there'll be killin' next!

M.Y.

untitled

Malfoy prudent regard Delight Selling? certain
respect, yet the Ministry grows ever more meddlesome.
poisons

R.C.

untitled

Still smiling looking at him as he
turn to face the silent crowd one - two -
three both of them swung their heads
dazzling flash flew off the stage Do you
think he's alright who cares unsteadily
to his feet standing on end that was a
Disarming charm miss brown yes show
don't stop let

K.T.

untitled

Neither of us will be aiming to
kill, of course
I wouldn't bet on that
Both of them swung
them at their opponent
"Do you think he's all right?"
"Who cares?"

N.P.

untitled

stepped into the shop
before turning to his son and saying
"Selling?"
Harry felt a hot surge of anger.

H.S.

untitled

Narwhals look unreal, but they exist.
The stars shine my name like bright lights
I am at the store food store I am trying to find
a car 😊
Sometimes Doritos just hit.
Maybe the sound I hear is the giant cicadas
To be honest I went to space to find me a shark
When the weather gets nice, I love to go for walks with
friends.
The Xbox controller grew legs & ran away.
I am on a plane where is my car I say when I wake
Happiness is my mindset, but peace is my goal.

A.R.

untitled

If I don't go to school because I broke my leg
Then I will get rich and move out of state
If pigs could actually fly
Then I stayed up all night
If I get a bad haircut before a job interview
Then I learn how to wholesale houses
If my mom gave me a billion dollars
Then I would buy all the chocolate in the world

T.L.

untitled

In the trees, I hear a cow mooing moooo...
I need to be home for a shower
I like when spring comes so you can smell the flowers
Whoosh! In a flash, the sky turned to cat-eye gold.
I am in the water I am trying to find a cat.
Roadkill is so common in Ohio and I hate it
Butter-yellow flowers grew from the vines tree.
I want to go home crap I fell on my butt
Fire alarms are so loud.
Just like that, Jack Black appeared.

A.R.

untitled

Then I would learn to rollerskate
If I weren't so colorblind
Then I'll go bald for 5 years
If I forgot who M was
Then prince charming would come
If I went to church every week like I was supposed to..
Then I would meet Lebron James
If my eyes fell out of my head
Then we would play twister
But I don't know how to drive

T.L.

untitled

I am really bored I need chicken
My grandma used to say that food tastes best when you're hungry.
A Hershey Kiss jumps from my pocket & runs away.
I am at the car dealership I need a boat
I used to celebrate Easter but now I don't.
A lightning strike, like the sound of a cymbal.
In the DH I sit in my room then I hear get on the wall!!!!
I like driving in the car with friends
The floor caved in, turned to lava – eek!
I got a big car I am riding to pick up my crush she say
boy get out of here

A.R.

untitled

If I took a salsa dancing class
Then I would travel to the moon to eat ice cream
If today I finally stop buying lottery tickets
Then I found \$10 on the ground
If my shoes had holes in them
Then yogurt would be made of moonrocks
If I spoke Chinese
Then I can become president
If I gave myself a tattoo
Then Kermit the Frog would appear

T.L.

untitled

I can't believe that meatball came so fast
Then I seen my good friend
It was thunderstorming, except the rain was snakes
If you try hard enough, you can freeze time
I love the water when it's bright blue
There's a secret tunnel beneath my house and it's filled
with tiny goblin men
I think I'd like it if I could buy a new smile at the store.
I love sports especially playing on the court
We planted all my bobby pins in the garden + they grew
into a city

I.S.

untitled

Then I will win a swim race
If my house started flying to space
Then I could dance to salsa music
If I had enough money to buy lunch
Then I'll find a wife by 25
If I went totally broke
Then we would fall in love
If I had to choose a name for my car
Then I would have a great life after all the
madness

T.L.

untitled

It is a nice blue sky in today's atmosphere
The trees were doing cartwheels and dropping leaves
everywhere
You'd think after all these years I'd have figured out how
to milk my koala.
I see the sun I think I love it it's fun
My sister tied all of my shoelaces together last night
They say the more you sleep the longer your tongue gets
I like to play basketball
The cardinal has been nesting in my hair for 2 weeks now
I think I'd like it that way

I.S.

untitled

If I step in dog s**t
Then watermelon is better than cereal for breakfast
If you went to the gas station
Then palm trees would sing lullabies
If I could stop seizing for 5 minutes
Then I'll buy some shoes that make me fly
If I shaved my hair completely bald
Then we'd watch Romeo & Juliet
If I was 8 feet tall
Then I become an NFL coach

T.L.

untitled

I was drinking chocolate milk on the moon.

Well, that seems a little strange that your crocodile ran away.

I love the way the stars shine at night

I'm swimming in the biggest bowl of pasta on Earth

I've never been all the way up to the top,

I favorite the solar eclipse.

My hair is made of cheese, and I eat it as a snack every day

Close your eyes and and make a wish

Make a wish I might do a flip.

And then it was all a dream

I.S.

At Writers in Residence, we intend to support our youth from the moment we meet them. As they explore their voice in our CWWs, we also assist them while they prepare for their reentry process.

We launched the Reentry Mentorship Initiative (RMI) in 2022 to help our residents create personal goals, develop valuable life skills, and continue to build their self-esteem. Throughout the 12 weeks of the CWWs, we inform our youth about the RMI, emphasizing that they have the opportunity to engage with an adult mentor from their home community. For residents who express an interest, we coordinate with the juvenile facilities to contact their guardians and then connect them with a mentor.

The youth and their guardians create target goals to pursue over 12-18 months. Then, our mentors work directly with their mentees to build relationships and develop life skills. We have helped residents with school work, acquiring GEDs, practicing driving, applying for and securing jobs, continuing their exploration of writing, and persevering through the challenges of reentry. We believe that a mentor consistently shows up for our residents, walks alongside them, and empowers them to reach goals they want to achieve, and to help them feel confident throughout their reentry process.

GOALS:

- Provide our mentees with positive peer mentorship to cultivate their trust in others and themselves.
- Build our mentees' self-esteem, self-efficacy, and self-awareness.
- Facilitate the design and implementation of our mentees' reentry care plan that details SMART goals for them to be successful.
- Connect our mentees to local social services and community resources including education, employment, housing, transportation, food security, and physical and mental health support systems.
- Create a safe and confidential atmosphere for our mentees to grow and learn alongside their mentor.

To our readers, the stories that appear in this chapbook from our residents are powerful, and as they continue to grow and head back home, those stories don't end. We are always looking for adult volunteers who are passionate about mentoring one of our youth to thrive in their home community. Scan the QR code to apply!

INVOLVEMENT:

- Meeting for 2-4 hours every month with a mentee.
- Reporting on engagements and accomplishments with a mentee.
- Cultivating a relationship with a mentee for 12-18 months.

To our former residents, we want to hear from you and pair you with a mentor who will assist you with whatever services and resources you need through our RMI. We know that the reentry process is difficult and uncertain at times. Mentoring places a trusted and reliable adult in your life so you can become the best version of yourself. A mentor will listen to your perspective, encourage you to discover your voice, figure out your future path, and then work with you to find the tools to achieve your version of success.



Reach out to us at
info@writersnresidence.org,
writersnresidence.org,
 or any social media platform.

And a special thanks to the following:

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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- Residents and Juvenile Facility Staff
- Student Volunteers, Transcribers, Cohort Advisors, and Mentors
- 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!



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WAYS TO GIVE

**THIS CHAPBOOK IS ONLY AVAILABLE
IN EXCHANGE FOR A DONATION.**

Your support directly benefits our youth
through education and reentry.

\$10 – This gift covers the cost of a chapbook printed by
Outlandish Press in Cleveland, OH.

\$100 – This contribution allows a local teaching artist to
facilitate a creative writing workshop at a juvenile facility.
Or, this gift matches a resident with an adult mentor in their
community.

\$300 – This donation sustains the organization's daily
operations to provide its programs and initiatives.

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



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