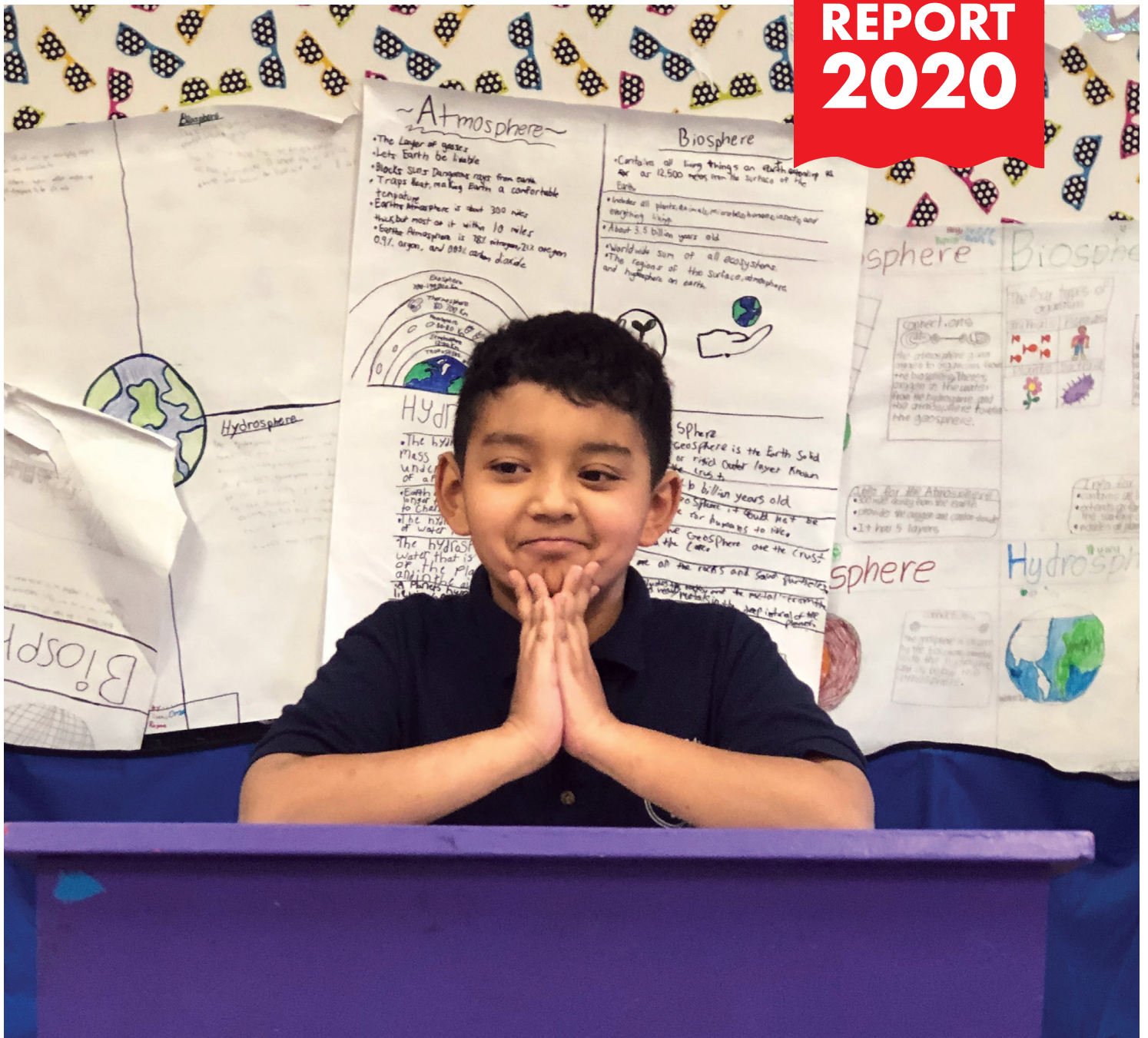


i25 InsideOut[®] Literary Arts

**ANNUAL
REPORT
2020**





LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

When we began this fiscal year, I was feeling excited and optimistic. We were ramping up for a year-long 25th Anniversary Celebration and preparing to launch an engaging new public event series called *Poetry for the People*. Needless to say, 2020 was not what I expected!

If you've been following our journey – through social media, e-newsletters or conversations with staff – you already know how the amazing InsideOut Team responded to this year's myriad challenges with innovation, dedication and hard work. On the following pages you'll see a sampling of how we've continued and deepened our commitment to empowering and celebrating youth voice.

I'm proud of our ability to adapt – I'm certain it's one of the reasons InsideOut has reached our 25th anniversary milestone in the first place – but we've done more than just respond to short-term changes. In light of the effects the pandemic has had on students' education and social interaction, we've strengthened our focus on the important role we play in supporting students' mental and emotional wellbeing. Our program team has reviewed *every lesson* in our core curriculum to ensure they all address social-emotional learning. Additionally, we are investing in professional development opportunities for all of our writers to grow their skills in this area.

Perhaps one of the things I'm most proud of this year is our ability to connect with, and *grow*, our community, which in turn makes our long term sustainability possible.

In these pages, we're honoring every gift at every size this year. We know that ongoing support from our community has helped us reach this landmark birthday – many thanks to each and every person who has helped along the way!

After all we've accomplished in the past year, we are well-positioned to step into a brand new chapter: one that is full of creativity, compassion, and continued service to Metro Detroit youth. Here's to our next 25 years!

Suma Karaman Rosen
Executive Director

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ABOUT INSIDEOUT

InsideOut Literary Arts was founded in 1995 to inspire students to think broadly, create bravely, and share their voices with the wider world.

For over two decades we have continued to pursue this mission, reaching more than 65,000 students in Detroit-area schools and publishing nearly 500 school literary journals.

Nationally recognized as one of the country's foremost literary education programs, InsideOut's **in-school Writer-in-Residence program** places professional writers in elementary, middle, and high schools throughout Detroit to provide weekly creative writing workshops. Every student is featured in a professionally published literary journal at every school, every single year.

Our **after-school program, Citywide Poets**, engages teens in intensive artistic mentorship, publication, performance, and leadership opportunities. In this rigorous and supportive literary community, teens learn their words are powerful and embrace creative expression as a tool for self-development and civic engagement. Citywide Poets received the 2009 National Arts & Humanities Youth Program Award, our nation's highest honor for after-school and out-of-school-time arts and humanities programs.

OUR PROGRAM

- Grows self-confidence and effective self-expression
- Facilitates the writing process and builds critical-thinking skills
- Fosters artistic excellence through mentorship and practice
- Elevates youth voice in Detroit and beyond

io 2020 YEAR IN REVIEW

IN THE SCHOOLS

INSIDEOUT AT HOME

When schools closed in early March, InsideOut immediately took on the work of developing engaging creative writing lessons for use by students, teachers, families, and community organizations. Program staff worked with Writers-in-Residence to create over 75 “InsideOut At Home” lessons which address both academic and social-emotional content. Lessons span all grade levels and include a popular “InsideOut Storytime” video series which features Writers reading favorite picture books, including *Harold and the Purple Crayon* and *Life Doesn't Frighten Me*. Each video closes with an invitation to students to further explore the books’ themes through self-guided writing activities.



BOOKUP STUDENTS MEET ACCLAIMED AUTHORS

Students in BookUp, InsideOut’s interactive reading program, had unforgettable experiences with celebrated authors this year. Garvey Academy students met award-winning novelist Yaa Gyasi at a private Q&A where students learned about Gyasi’s experience signing a book deal and exploring her personal history through writing. Participants at Ruth’s House received e-readers preloaded with books, including the novel *Pet* by Akwaeke Emezi, a National Book Award Finalist. At a virtual visit, Emezi shared their experience as a published author and told stories from their childhood. Author visits invigorated students’ reading and helped them think of themselves as storytellers as well.

CITYWIDE POETS

PULITZER PRIZE-WINNER MEETS CITYWIDE POETS

Jericho Brown, who won the 2020 Pulitzer Prize in Poetry for his collection *The Tradition*, joined Citywide Poets for our best-attended Scratch the Page Visiting Writer Workshop Series ever! Nearly 50 teens from nine Citywide Poets sites throughout Metro Detroit learned from Brown in a craft workshop that challenged students to change the meaning of existing poems through erasure and imagination. One student called it “one of the best, most fun workshops ever.” We think so, too.



Photo credit: Xavier Cuevas



PERFORMANCE TROUPE TEENS GROW AS POETS AND PEOPLE

Four talented young women were named the 2020 Detroit Youth Performance Troupe, which is selected annually through a competitive submission process. From May through October, they received over 50 hours of mentoring, conversations with visiting artists, peer-editing and more, that helped them to thrive during this difficult year. Additionally, the Performance Troupe were featured at eight virtual events including a chapbook release party for their original collection *Close Enough to Touch* (find it on our website!).

IN THE COMMUNITY

LOUDER THAN A BOMB: ESSENTIAL WORDS VIRTUAL FESTIVAL

In its fifth year, InsideOur's Louder Than a Bomb: Michigan Youth Poetry Festival was revised in response to COVID. Noting the "essential work" of artistic expression during times of crisis and uncertainty, LTAB was renamed "Essential Words" and redesigned as a fully virtual festival. The week-long event included live facilitated sessions via Zoom, open mics on Instagram Live, and evergreen content on InsideOur's website, such as writing prompts and five "For Teens, By Teens" lesson plans created by InsideOur's Youth Advisory Board.



WRITE-A-THON CELEBRATES CREATIVITY FOR ALL

This August, InsideOur hosted our first-ever virtual Write-A-Thon as a safe alternative to our annual gala fundraiser, *Share The Light*. The unique, week-long event offered adult participants of all ages and backgrounds an opportunity to explore their creativity in the midst of the pandemic. From writing essays to postcards to daily haikus, participants experienced the power of their unique voice, just as InsideOur students do. It also engaged a wide range of supporters, from \$5 donors to corporate sponsors. Together we raised over \$39,000 from 518 individual donors!



INSIDEOUT CELEBRATES 25TH ANNIVERSARY

Since our founding in 1995, InsideOut has nourished the social and emotional health of over 65,000 young people. We have adapted and thrived through four presidential administrations and myriad changes in Detroit and our world.

During our 25th anniversary year in 2020, we spent time looking back and reflecting on the journey to inspire youth to think broadly, create bravely, and share their voices with the wider world. Here are some of the treasures we unearthed.



"Poetry doesn't require a big investment," says Blackhawk (teaching at Detroit's Henry Ford High). "You can do it anywhere, anytime."

Urban Idyll

Retired educator Terry Blackhawk turns eager Detroit high school students into passionate poetry pros

Gentle-spirited, soft-spoken, a child of the '60s with her dangling earrings and ethnic vests, Terry Blackhawk sits with the high school poets gathered in Detroit's State Theatre and reads an affectionate lyric about her declining 76-year-old father: "You've lost night vision. . . You confuse alleys, driveways. . . The students listen and sympathize, then bend to create their own father poems. Within 15 minutes, Joshua Bonds, 16, has his. He remembers playing baseball and

building "link-a-log" houses with his dad, but soon the boy is inveighing against the man who sired and later left him, asking: "What happened Papa? / Was it something I said / did / became?" Joshua's peers clap and cheer, call out favorite lines from his poem—and clamor to read their own. It is clear the kids have very different takes on fatherhood from Blackhawk, 53. No matter. They have been opened up by her. "I like writing. I like poetry," says Randaile

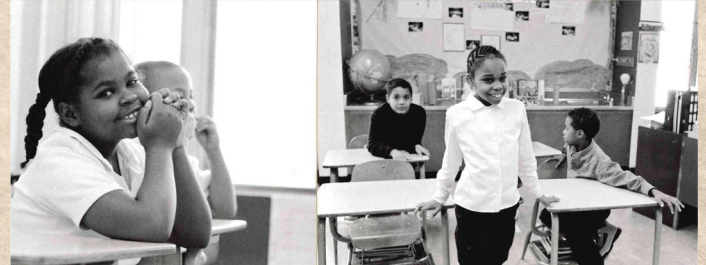
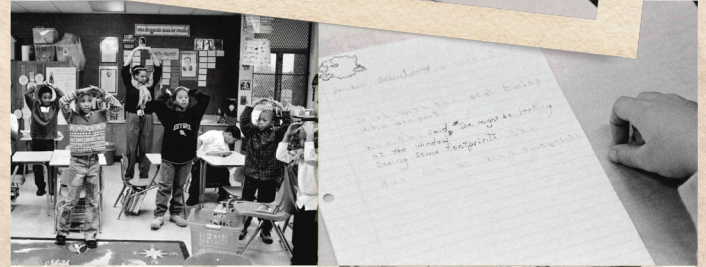
Hughley, 18, a senior at Henry Ford High School. "And Dr. Blackhawk makes it all come alive."

This year some 1,200 Detroit teenagers will take part in InsideOut, a creative writing program started by Blackhawk in 1994. Her idea is to help budding poets blossom by placing professional writers in 17 of the city's public schools to guide, encourage and even celebrate self-expression. "You want writers with passion who can engage students—get them passionate too," says Blackhawk. Supported by corporate and private donations, InsideOut also publishes an elegant-looking literary magazine at each of its schools. These journals contain "the best student writing I've ever seen," says Robin Reagler, who heads the highly regarded Writers in the Schools program in Houston.

"Poetry teaches kids like few other things do. The feelings just come out,"

PHOTOGRAPHS BY TARO YAMASAKI

PEOPLE 12/14/98 117



In 1998, just three years after Dr. Terry Blackhawk founded InsideOut Literary Arts, People Magazine featured the program in its pages: "Poetry reaches kids like few other things do. The feelings just come out," says Blackhawk... "Plus, it's a wonderful foundation for all writing—you learn to distill thoughts, to choose just the right word to capture the experience."

While many things have changed in our 25 years, seeing beautiful student faces always makes us a smile. Photographs here from 2004, as captured by Elayne Gross.

INSIDEOUT LITERARY ARTS PROJECT

Organization marks a decade of helping youths

By ANTONETTE D. GRIFFITH
FREE PRESS SPECIAL WRITER

The InsideOut Literary Arts Project recently held its 10th annual fund-raising gala at the Gem Theatre and Century Club in Detroit. Terry M. Blackhawk, InsideOut founder executive director described the evening as "a cre-scendo of words."

Nikki Giovanni and poets took center stage with Detroit Free Press columnist Desiree Cooper serving as emcee. The program highlights included readings from elementary school contest winners, Citywide Poets (a teen after-school group), InsideOut alumni and special guest, Nikki Giovanni. Approximately 200 guests par-

ticipated in a silent auction featuring works of metro Detroit artists. The event raised over \$25,000.

"It's a pleasure to support such an outstanding organization and attend an event of this caliber," said Bacon Gallery (Detroit) owner Anthony Bacon who donated three of his creations.

The InsideOut Literary Arts Project is a Detroit-based non-profit organization, that has sent some of Detroit's best-loved writers and artists to Detroit's public schools since 1995. The project is designed for teens and preteens, providing opportunities in media writing, production and media literacy. For additional information, call 313-965-5302 anytime.



From left, InsideOut supporter Helen Dove Jones, board member Sterling Jones, writer and author Nikki Giovanni and Detroit poet laureate Naomi Long Madgett attend the fund-raising gala.



We reminisced about our 10th anniversary gala in 2005, where we celebrated with acclaimed poet Nikki Giovanni and readings by InsideOut's talented students. We missed celebrating our 25th in person, but were wow-ed by the support shown by more than 500 donors during this year's Write-A-Thon.

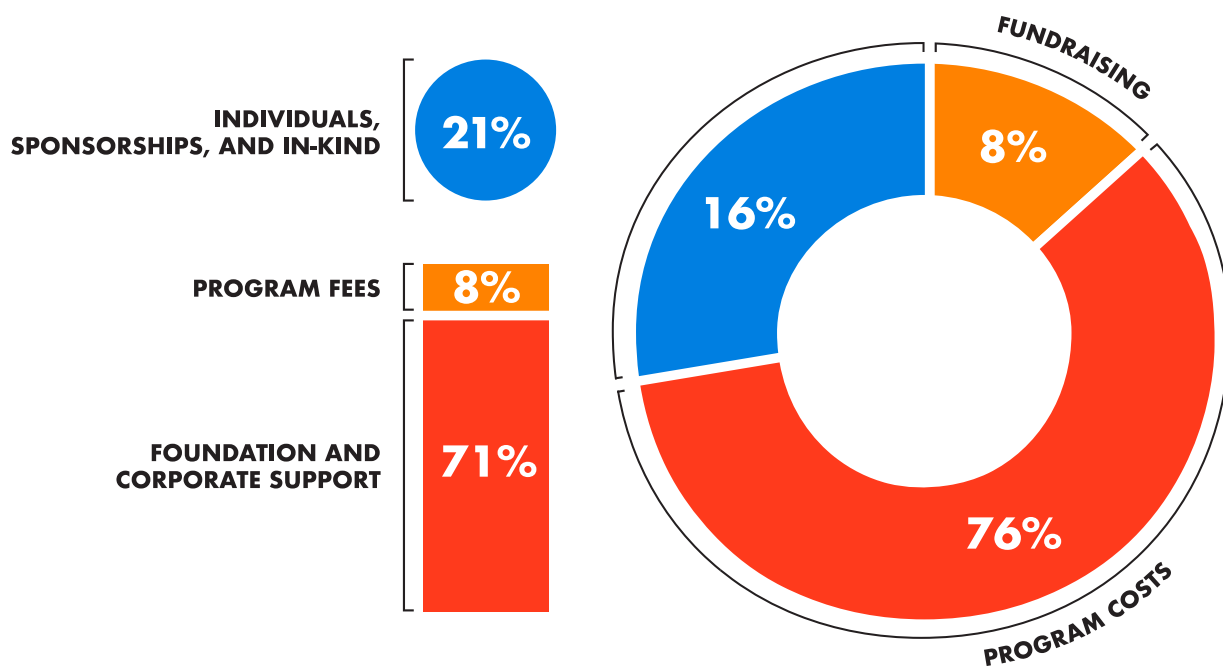
Hearing about the myriad paths and successes of InsideOut alums is always gratifying. When alum Michael R. Jackson won the Pulitzer Prize in Drama in 2020, it was an especially proud moment for our team. As Michael humbly shared in a video testimonial, "I credit InsideOut with all of my success."



This moment in 2009, when the White House awarded InsideOut the highest honor in youth arts programming, the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award, remains a bright spot in our 25-year legacy.

FINANCIALS

Oct. 1, 2019—Sept. 30, 2020



INCOME

● Individuals, Sponsorships, and In-Kind	\$301,770
● Program Fees	\$116,795
● Foundation and Corporate Support	\$1,008,402
TOTAL REVENUE	\$1,426,967*

EXPENSES

● Management and Administrative	\$157,661
● Fundraising	\$78,156
● Program Costs	\$743,829
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$979,646

*This reflects \$295,000 in multi-year grants that are restricted for FY22 and later.

THANK YOU!

InsideOut is proud to acknowledge our donors, funders, partners, and friends.* This generous support inspires Detroit's young people to explore and share their unique voices.

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Contact John Randolph at (313) 577-4601
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2846

STUDENTS WERE SERVED
in grades 2–12

at 43 schools and libraries in Metro Detroit

● SCHOOL RESIDENCY
● CITYWIDE POETS SITE



92%
OF TEACHERS
said InsideOut consistently
uses strategies that
strengthen student
engagement with writing

17 **LITERARY JOURNALS**
(2326 copies) were printed and
distributed to students, teachers,
and families

4017 **AUDIENCE MEMBERS**
experienced the authentic voice of youth through public
performances at multiple venues, including the Detroit
Institute of Arts

40 **WRITERS-IN-RESIDENCE**
delivered high-quality programming from
their expert point of view as professional artists

In 2019–2020, InsideOut served students in Dearborn,
Detroit, Oak Park, Redford, and River Rouge.

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  /insideoutliteraryarts