

A young woman with dark braids, some of which are accented with blue, is sitting at a desk in a classroom. She is wearing a light blue polo shirt over a grey long-sleeved shirt and has a lanyard with a badge around her neck. Her right hand is raised, palm facing forward, as if she wants to speak or ask a question. In the background, other students are visible, including a young man in a grey hoodie looking towards the left. The classroom has blue walls and windows.

iO InsideOut
Literary Arts®

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

I love watching the Great British Baking Show – the combination of camaraderie and competition, the creativity on display, and the wide range of intriguing finished “bakes.” That said, I often find myself disagreeing with the judges, especially when something “doesn’t look right” according to them. I know they are “experts,” but I’ll bet that cake would taste amazing. And did you see how much heart and soul went into making it?

This is something I’ve been thinking about in general when it comes to creative expression: is it better to focus on the product, or the process? And how does this relate to the work InsideOut does with young people?

Of course we want our students to strive for excellence, and we certainly celebrate them when their creative endeavors garner awards and accolades. That said, it’s not why we exist as an organization. We are here to give young people the tools and opportunities they need to find their own voices and share them – to create bravely. There is power and value *in the process* of making that stays with students long after the last line of the poem is written.

I know from experience that sometimes the end product isn’t what we hoped for: our drawing looks more like a dinosaur than a cat, our watercolor is a drippy mess, or our cake is sunk in the middle. (And by “our” I mean “my”...)

But if we let harsh judgment of the final *product* stop us from the *process*, we would be missing out on so many benefits – boosting confidence, reclaiming joy, or finding

connection with others. Even if our creations never see the light of day, through the act of *making* we learn and we grow.

As Dr. Maria Rosario Jackson, Chair of the National Endowment for the Arts, puts it: “*All people have the capacity to be creative, imaginative, expressive.*”

I could not agree more. Each year, as we publish thousands of student poems, we witness firsthand the magic of that creative capacity. And I am reminded why organizations like InsideOut Literary Arts are so important – we are not here to judge the quality of the poem, we’re here to celebrate the act of writing it and what is gained in the process: confidence, self-expression, and community.

Suma Karaman Rosen
Executive Director

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ABOUT INSIDEOUT

Through creative writing, InsideOut Literary Arts inspires and equips young people to think critically, create bravely, and share their voices with the world.

Since our founding in 1995 we have continued to pursue this mission, reaching more than 70,000 students in Detroit-area schools and publishing over 600 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 has the opportunity to be featured in a professionally published literary journal 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 **community programs** include collaborative workshops, installations, and performances across the city designed to engage diverse audiences in the ways that the written and spoken word can connect to and enrich their lives.

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 2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

IN THE SCHOOLS

OAK PARK ARBOR DAY

The 2022-23 school year held many extraordinary moments for InsideOut students. Elementary students in Oak Park culminated their special tree-themed curriculum, created by InsideOut Writer-in-Residence Jacqueline Suskin, on Arbor Day with a tree planting and poetry reading alongside their Principal and Mayor. “I felt that the blend of science and expression were a good pivot in these classrooms, giving students the chance to express their feelings about the natural world while also learning about the natural systems that they are part of on a daily basis,” shared Suskin. “Witnessing the students jump for the chance to read their poems aloud was so meaningful.”



Photo Credit: Radical Play / www.radicalplay.art

INSIDEOUT ALUM NAMED MICHIGAN POET LAUREATE

Newly named Michigan Poet Laureate Nandi Comer visited several InsideOut classrooms as a Guest Artist this spring, including her alma mater, Communications and Media Arts High School, where she attended the school's year-end publication party. Nandi was a student in InsideOut programs while at CMA, and students were excited to see the literary journal she edited when she was in high school and to hear about how those early experiences have shaped her trajectory. We are so excited for all the ways Nandi will be engaging schools and communities across the state as she shares her work and her love for poetry!



CITYWIDE POETS

DETROIT YOUTH POETRY SLAM RETURNS

After a three-year hiatus, the Detroit Youth Poetry Slam returned in May, drawing a full house to the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit. 15 youth performed original poetry for an opportunity to be part of the 2023 Detroit Youth Performance Troupe, which receives intensive writing and performance coaching. Cheering on the students were local performers and poets, Citywide Poets alumni, students' families and friends, and community members both familiar with and new to the InsideOut program.

The student poetry that was performed showcases the diverse identities of Citywide Poets participants, which are also reflected in the model texts used during the program: 75% of texts were authored by persons of color, 28% were LGBTQ+ authors, 16% were immigrant authors, and 8% were texts translated from another language.



Photo Credits: Radical Play / www.radicalplay.art

IN THE COMMUNITY

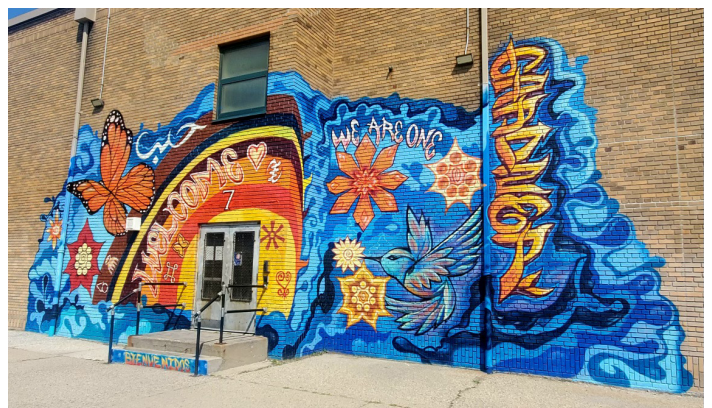
COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING TAKES ROOT

In 2023, Community Programming expanded beyond our pilot Poetry for the People initiative to include programs for new audiences, as well as deepened connections to community partners and signature events.

During Pride Month in June, InsideOut led a two-part writing workshop in partnership with Affirmations LGBTQ+ Community Center that focused on the power of personal and collective storytelling. Another unique community project included the design and installation of a new mural at Gardner Elementary School in Detroit. The mural was created in partnership with Live Coal Gallery and classroom students. It frames the main entrance and welcomes students each morning with colorful imagery representing the school's languages and cultures.

We expanded the ways poetry intersects with the environment, visual art, social justice, and identity through our ongoing

partnerships with Hannan Center, Detroit Institute of Arts, and Detroit Zoological Society, as well as signature events which now include an annual Sonnet Slam in partnership with Shakespeare in Detroit, *If the River Could Sing: A Celebration of Writing and River* in partnership with the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy, and Detroit Youth Poetry Con, a daylong conference for teens featuring a public performance showcase.



DETROIT YOUTH POETRY CON LAUNCHES

The first-ever Detroit Youth Poetry Con brought together teens from across the city for a day of creative writing and performance workshops, community building activities, and opportunities to share their writing on the campus of Wayne State University. Vitality was on display at every turn: a lunchtime open mic with 20+ sign ups and roars of applause, a special workshop with MacArthur “Genius” Fellow and best-selling author Hanif Abdurraqib, and a full house at the newly-opened Detroit Public Theatre to witness InsideOut youth poets alongside our featured guest. InsideOut alum Wes Matthews led the Q+A with Abdurraqib, who he names as one of his heroes. As one student said of Poetry Con, “My favorite part of the day was actually the ENTIRE DAY; the students, the people, the poetry and sharing work.” The Detroit Youth Poetry Con was presented with support from the NBA Foundation.

90% of students

reported learning something new at Poetry Con
(e.g. new skills, ideas, techniques, or authors)

90% of students

reported that they would attend Poetry Con again

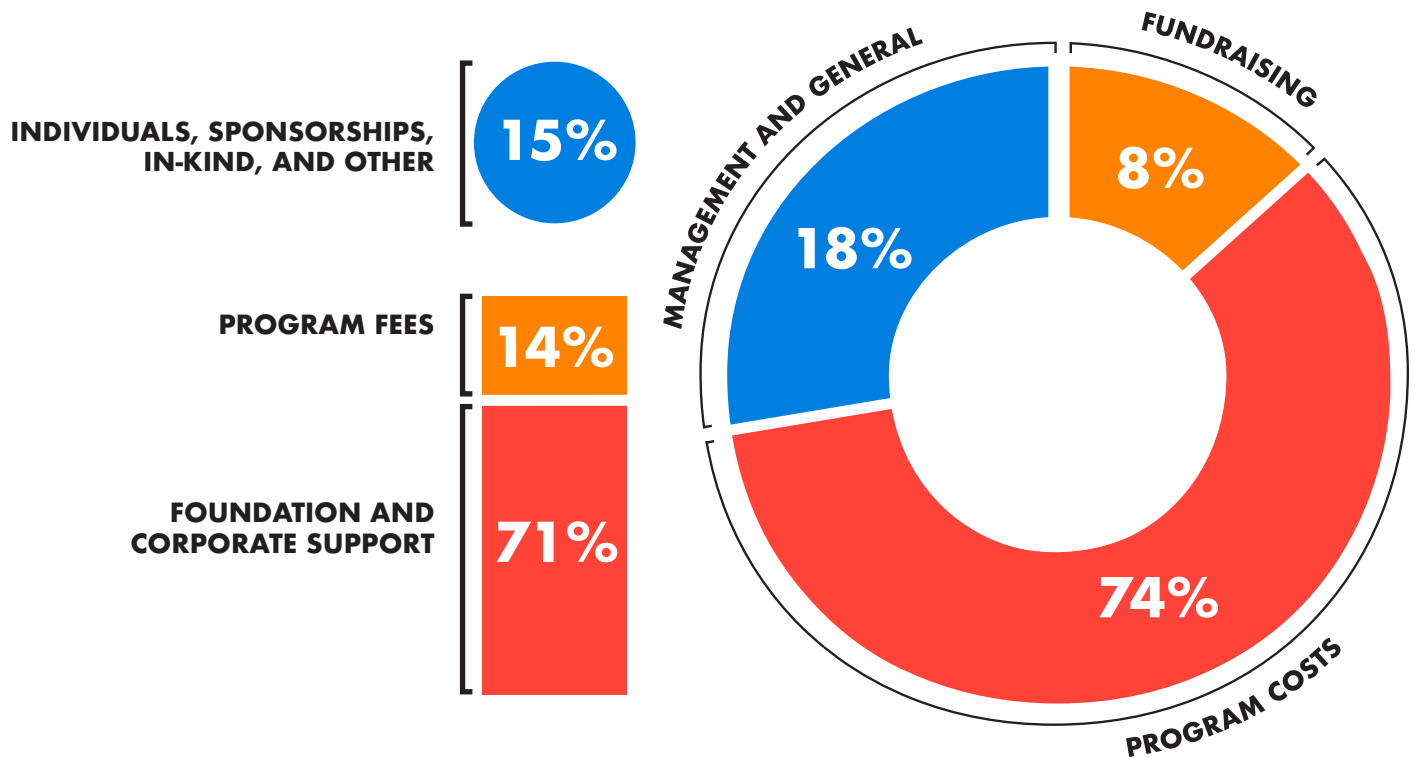
175 total

youth and adults attendees at the Hanif
Abdurraqib Public Showcase






FINANCIALS




Oct. 1, 2022—Sept. 30, 2023



INCOME

 Individuals, Sponsorships, In-Kind, and Other	\$251,594
 Program Fees	\$239,177
 Foundation and Corporate Support	\$1,180,584
TOTAL REVENUE	\$1,671,355*

EXPENSES

 Management and General	\$243,249
 Fundraising	\$107,258
 Program Costs	\$986,044
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,336,551

*This includes a net increase of \$308,700 in funding restricted for future years, not for use in FY23.

THANK YOU!

InsideOut relies on a network of generous donors, funders, partners, and friends. Our work is impossible without our community – in order to recognize every donor and partner, regardless of the size, we've moved our full donor list online at <https://insideoutdetroit.org/annual-report>

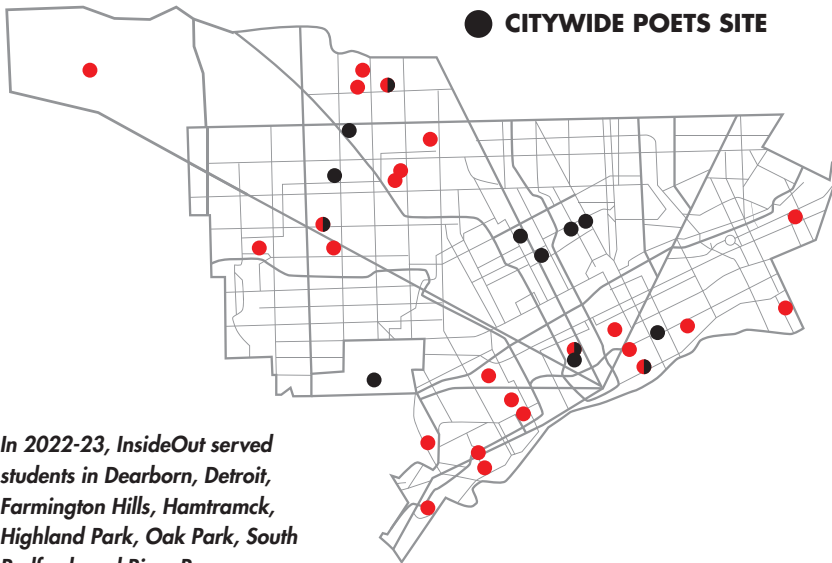
The list reflects all gifts during our fiscal year of 10/1/2022 to 9/30/2023.

Join us in celebrating the generous support of our community, which inspires and equips young people to think critically, create bravely, and share their voices with the world!



Photo Credit: Radical Play / www.radicalplay.art

- SCHOOL RESIDENCY
- CITYWIDE POETS SITE



In 2022-23, InsideOut served students in Dearborn, Detroit, Farmington Hills, Hamtramck, Highland Park, Oak Park, South Redford, and River Rouge.

4,074 STUDENTS

were served in grades 2-12 at 42 schools, community sites, and virtual spaces in Metro Detroit.

100% OF TEACHERS

surveyed said this program positively impacted their classroom culture and increased their students' sense of community.

89% OF TEACHERS

said their students' writing skills improved because of our program.

OVER 3,500 LITERARY JOURNALS

were distributed to students, teachers, and families.

93% OF STUDENTS

liked having InsideOut in their classroom and 92% of teachers said they would like us back in their classroom again.

45 WRITERS-IN-RESIDENCE

integrated social-emotional learning (SEL) concepts like self management and social awareness into every lesson plan.

InsideOut Literary Arts • 5201 Cass Avenue Prentis Hall, 3rd Floor, Detroit, MI 48202 • 313-577-4601 (office)
info@insideoutdetroit.org • www.insideoutdetroit.org