



**io** InsideOut  
Literary Arts®

**ANNUAL REPORT 2024**



## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

One of the best things about InsideOut’s mission – *to inspire and equip young people to think critically, create bravely and share their voices with the world* – is that it’s just as relevant now as it was when InsideOut was founded in 1995. In fact, I believe it’s even more valuable than ever.

That’s because we help young people reconnect with their imagination and “think outside of the box.” We help them discover their authentic voice inside, and bring it out. We show young people that what they think, feel and say matters.

On the eve of our 30th anniversary, I find myself thinking a lot about the future. What are the skills that young people will most need? Of course academic and self-expression skills will always be necessary – and I know our programming supports them – but these days I’m most excited about our ability to help youth see new possibilities. To help young people dream.

As InsideOut student Charisma Holly put it in her poem, “*If I Wake Up in Detroit 25 Years in the Future*”:

I can see  
a Detroit where  
my aunt parks at Walmart and her car  
does not get broken into,  
the Lions really do win the Super Bowl,  
and we finally fix roads.

As impossible  
as it all sounds,  
I know if we can hope,  
then we are capable of anything.

Dreaming is what makes change possible, and we believe in its power in the classroom and within our organization. It is what led us to rethink our programming: we’ve found ways to offer our programs for free to even more schools, we’ve reimagined our public events as sites for connection, and we’ve created new opportunities for teens to amplify their voices and gain leadership skills. It’s what guides us in building a strong organizational culture and supporting our community of artists. And it’s inspired us to find ways to center joy as we celebrate our 30th anniversary.

And it really is a joy to work for an organization that is so true to its mission. One that celebrates the young people we serve, works tirelessly to ensure our long-term sustainability, and continues to inspire imagination that can change a community, a city, or the world. Charisma said it best:

in the Detroit city,

The D  
has always been for dreams.

**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 75,000 students in Detroit-area schools and publishing over 650 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 2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

## IN THE SCHOOLS

### YA AUTHOR VISITS BOOKUP STUDENTS

A group of 6th and 7th graders flooded the library fresh off a field trip. Typically students would begrudgingly stroll back to the final class of the day, but these students had a mission: Meet the author.

Students at Carstens Elementary-Middle School had been reading *Simon Sort of Says* by Erin Bow during BookUp, an InsideOut and National Book Foundation program for kids to grow their book collections and thrive as readers in a literary community. Simon was a fictional kid living in a new town, making friends, and managing trauma from a school shooting. Many Carstens students, who had their own experiences of school lockdowns and pre-teen social challenges, could relate. Students gathered around visiting author Bow, her book in their hands, with eager questions. After the Q&A, students had a chance to read their poems to Bow, inspired by her character, Simon.



Photo Credit: Kahn Santori Photography

### DEARBORN STUDENTS SHINE AT THE DIA

In Dunya Mikhail's poem "The Artist Child" she writes, "– I want to draw the Earth. / – Draw it, my darling." A group of 3rd graders from Salina Elementary drew the Earth with their words as featured poets at the Detroit Institute of Arts in April during Arab American Heritage Month. Under the direction of Senior Writer Peter Markus and Writer-in-Residence Wafaa Mustafa, students explored Mikhail's poems and used them as inspiration to pen their own literary perspectives and share their dreams for the world they want to build. A rapt audience of fellow poets, parents, teachers, and art enthusiasts listened as each poet took the stage and read their poems with pride. The DIA has a history of showcasing amazing artists, and now Salina students and parents, many of whom were visiting the DIA for the first time, share in this legacy.

# CITYWIDE POETS

## YOUTH POETS BECOME YOUTH LEADERS

The InsideOut Detroit Youth Performance Troupe is about more than poetry; it's about building the professional skills of students through deep mentorship and leadership opportunities. Our 2024 Detroit Youth Performance Troupe took the reins in planning the Pride + Allies Open Mic, an event they've developed to celebrate LGBTQ+ creatives across generations. Faced with a need for a new venue for this event, students leaned into InsideOut's partnership with Next Chapter Books in Detroit's East English Village Community. This youth-curated event welcomed 50+ audience members, packing the venue and hosting the largest Pride Open Mic in our history. Students from the Troupe were invited to CBS Detroit for a segment where they read their poems and drove home the need for safe spaces through events such as these.



## DETROIT YOUTH POETRY CON GROWS IN YEAR 2

The second annual Detroit Youth Poetry Con, held at Wayne State University, hosted 80+ teen creatives together for a day of workshops, community building, and open mic opportunities. This year's enhanced workshops included a focus on creative career paths in the literary arts, music, and STEM. Responding to participant feedback, Poetry Con included more opportunities to share work through two popular youth-hosted open mics, which made for an energetic and supportive space for youth voice. A lively "convention" experience was cultivated through Decompression Rooms, Game Rooms, Youth Craft Vendors, a Free Library, and a "Fit Check" competition facilitated in partnership with our partners at Gucci. Our dynamic featured artists Ross Gay and Nandi Comer connected with students and performed at a Public Showcase held in the stunning new Hilberry Gateway Theatre, where over 200 attendees gathered to enjoy performances from Ross, Nandi, and our Performance Troupe.



*Photo Credit: Photos by Radical Play / [www.radicalplay.art](http://www.radicalplay.art)*

# IN THE COMMUNITY

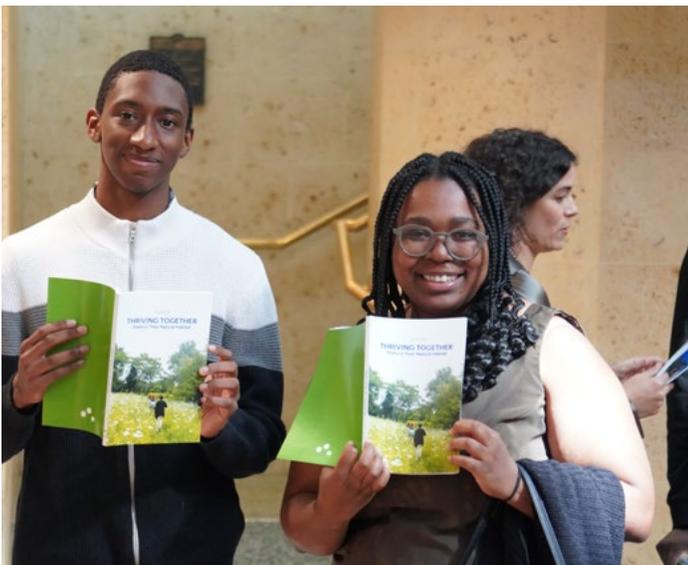
InsideOut's Community Programs reached 1,503 adults and 1,530 youth in our 2023-2024 program year. This work included an array of partnerships and public programs which provided opportunities for audiences to experience poetry and self-expression in meaningful ways in their own communities. From public events like *If the River Could Sing* and our Sonnet Slam, to workshops and performances with a host of community organizations, including Alternatives for Girls, Brilliant Detroit, COTS, and Center for Success, we engaged new communities in opportunities to explore the ways that creative writing can connect to and enrich their lives.

## INTERGENERATIONAL WORKSHOPS



Our partnership with **Hannan Center** broadened to include more intergenerational conversations, workshops and performances. Participants wrote and shared poems and stories that rendered their personal histories and the creative and cultural links between generations.

## THRIVING TOGETHER



For the last four years, InsideOut has worked with the **Detroit Zoological Society** to offer Thriving Together, a program for young poets and environmentalists. The program culminated this year with a published anthology of student work and a reception for students and families.

## DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS COLLABORATIONS



*Photo Credit: Kahn Santori Photography*

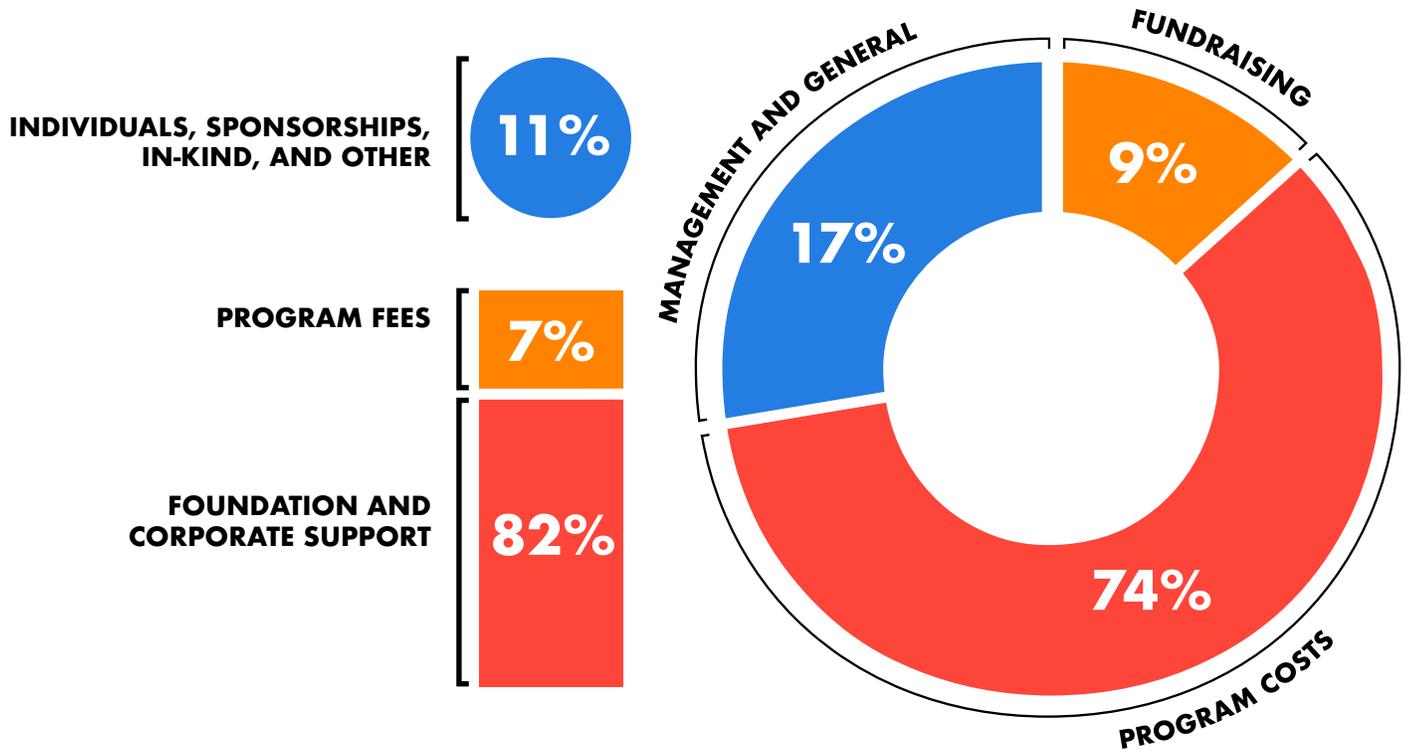


*Photo Credit: Kahn Santori Photography*

InsideOut's long-standing partnership with the **Detroit Institute of Arts** continued with two immersive opportunities to experience the exhibition *Regeneration: Black Cinema 1898-1971*. A hands-on creative writing workshop led by theater artists gave a group of teens and adults an opportunity to explore the objects, film clips and themes and write creatively. Some of Detroit's finest youth and adult poets showcased new poetic works inspired by visits to the *Regeneration* exhibit at a performance the same month.

# FINANCIALS

Oct. 1, 2023 – Sept. 30, 2024



## INCOME

|   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
|  Individuals, Sponsorships, In-Kind, and Other | \$282,617          |
|  Program Fees                                  | \$193,431          |
|  Foundation and Corporate Support              | \$2,204,779        |
| <b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>  | <b>\$2,680,827</b> |

## EXPENSES

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
|  Management and General | \$267,316          |
|  Fundraising            | \$130,701          |
|  Program Costs          | \$1,126,913        |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>  | <b>\$1,524,930</b> |

# 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>

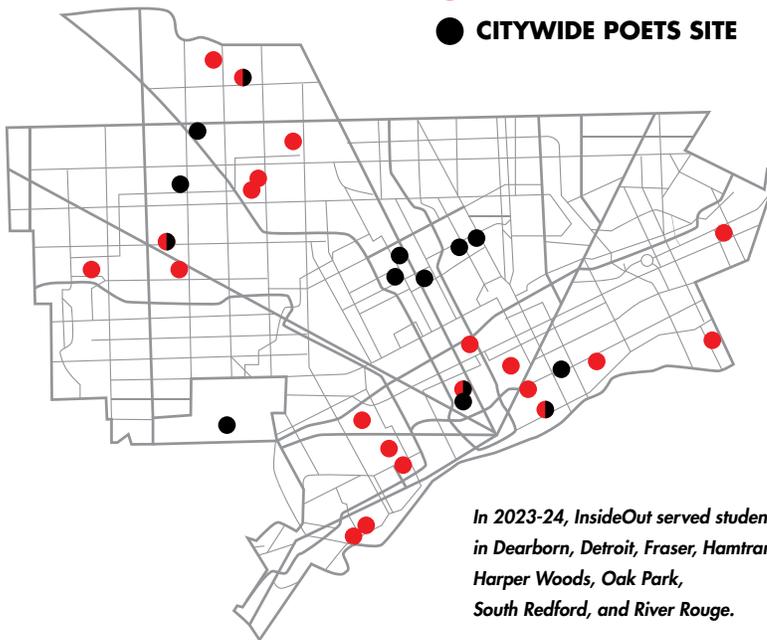
The list reflects all gifts during our fiscal year of 10/1/2023 to 9/30/2024.

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](http://www.radicalplay.art)

- SCHOOL RESIDENCY
- CITYWIDE POETS SITE



In 2023-24, InsideOut served students in Dearborn, Detroit, Fraser, Hamtramck, Harper Woods, Oak Park, South Redford, and River Rouge.

## 41 WRITERS-IN-RESIDENCE

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

## 3016 STUDENTS

were served in grades 2-12 at 38 schools, community sites, and virtual spaces in Metro Detroit.

## 97% OF TEACHERS

surveyed said this program positively impacted their classroom culture.

## 90% OF TEACHERS

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

## 96% OF STUDENTS

liked having InsideOut in their classroom and 97% of teachers said they would like us back in their classroom again.

## OVER 3500 LITERARY JOURNALS

were distributed to students, teachers, and families.

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