

**IOW** InsideOUT  
WRITERS

# Summer

## 2021 NEWSLETTER

what's inside!

**IOW AWARDED  
SUPER BOWL LVI  
CHAMPION  
AWARD**

**IOW EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR JIMMY WU  
RECOGNIZED FOR HIS  
SERVICES**

- Featured in Good Morning America

**LEMONADA  
PODCAST WITH  
MAJOR CELEBRITIES**

**ALUMNI PROGRAM'S  
FEATURED WRITING  
CIRCLES**

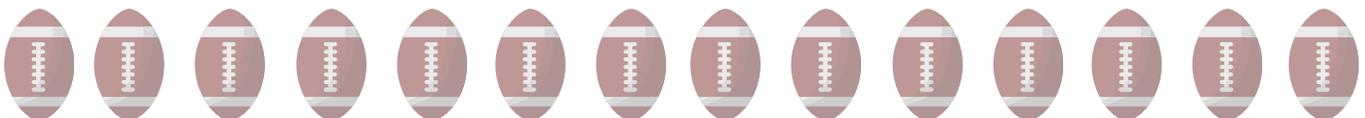
- *Analyzing the Inside and Out with Marcia Salvary*
- *What is Leadership with Lauren Dani*
- *Allies for Black American Co-Hosts Class with IOW*
- *The Power of Narrative with Sally Hamilton*

# InsideOUT Writers selected as Super Bowl LVI Champion Recipient

We are beyond thrilled that **InsideOUT Writers** has been selected for the **Super Bowl LVI Legacy Program** –“Champions Live Here”! We are one of the 56 local-non-profit organizations recognized for making a transformative impact in underserved communities across the Los Angeles region. Thank you to **Los Angeles Rams, Los Angeles Chargers, SoFi Stadium, NFL, Play Equity Fund, Los Angeles Sports & Entertainment Commission, LASuperBowlHC, LA84 Foundation, and Discover Los Angeles** for this incredible recognition and support.



For over 25 years, IOW has provided over 25,000 youth with healing-informed creative writing classes inside the world's largest juvenile detention system. Once released, we provide our youth with re-entry and case management services, counseling, weekly Writing Circles, housing referrals, drug and alcohol abuse treatment assistance, parenting workshops, employment skills training, and much more through our Alumni Program.



# Lemonada Media Podcast "Written Off" with Major Celebrities



After quite some time, we are excited that we finally were able to launch this podcast that features several InsideOUT Writers alumni members! Two of our incredibly dedicated and passionate board members, **Aaron Bergman** and **Jay Ellis**, began brainstorming this passion project of theirs dating back several years. We are so proud of what they've put together to share with the world. Special thanks to **Lemonada Media**, **Walter Thompson-Hernandez**, and **Black Bar Mitzvah** for amplifying voices and stories that must be heard. Please tune in for this 13-part series.

**To listen to the podcase use the following link or use the following QR Code**

Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/episode/0rQGTJo0OMLas4x7DWJAP0>



# Jimmy Wu recognized in Good Morning America's "AAPI Making History" Written by Wendy Nguyen

During my time working inside and outside of the juvenile detention centers, I met an unsung hero.



**Jimmy Wu** is currently the executive director of InsideOUT Writers (IOW), a nonprofit organization based in Los Angeles that provides trauma and healing-informed services to previously and currently incarcerated young adults. Jimmy turned his life around. He was incarcerated from the age of 16 to 29, and internalized his time behind cement walls to becoming now an agent of change, working in the exact space where he spent most of his young adult life.



In addition to his work at IOW, he is also a voting member of a historic initiative called the **Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) Work Group** formed by the **Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors**, where he voted on community safety strategies and was charged with helping develop a roadmap to prioritize reforms and solutions for all justice-impacted populations.

Moreover, he was also involved with **The Ride Home Program**, which is part of the **Stanford Law School's Justice Advocacy Project**, providing free and safe transportation, mental health services and re-entry support to nonviolent inmates sentenced to life under California's "three strikes" sentencing law. Personal journeys deepen into resolute purpose, guiding his mission to advocate for change -- Jimmy is an example of someone who turned darkness into light.



# Alumni Program Writing Circle Highlights

## SUMMER EDITION

### A Brief Recap of Our Virtual Writing Circles and Workshops

We have been so fortunate to be able to continue our Alumni Writing Circles virtually. This past year, we delved into topics that have included current events, creative writing, and deconstruction of the systems and ideals we have held societally. We have also continued our Virtual Writing Circle Workshops to allow our volunteer Facilitators to break into an idea over an extended period of time and allow our alums to do a deep dive into their understanding and experience of various topics.



# Alumni Program Writing Circle Highlights

## Analyzing the Inside and Out with Marcia Salvary



So often, our lenses are focused outward. What is coming at us today? Who are we fighting? We know well the worry lines and dark circles that marked the faces of our elders. It startles us to see those same lines marking our own faces year after year. We are often so rushed by the need for accomplishment, for safety, that we rarely pause and ask - away from the titles of who we associate ourselves with; child, parent, worker or maker - when do we turn that lens inwards instead?

Do we know of the sun inside of us or are we too blinded by the wounds we've left festering in the dark? Who are we really, and how are we going to heal? For our alums, every time they put pen to paper, their sun gets a little brighter and a little stronger. Thank you for opening yourselves up together and understanding the power of honest self-reflection.

## What is Leadership? with Lauren Dani

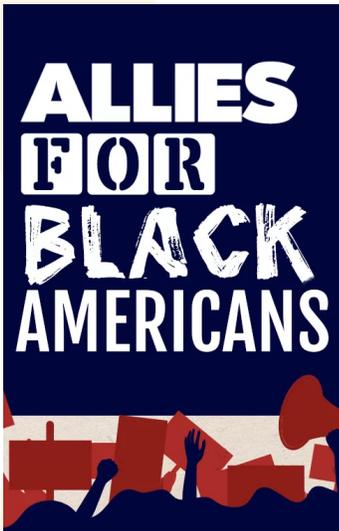
Our alums know better than anyone, leadership can be a solitary thing, a heavy blessing. When you decide to speak as the leader of the nation that is you, invariably there are people who don't want to listen. Family, friends, lovers who simply don't understand when you decide what is right for you now doesn't include what seemed right to you before. Sometimes growth is viewed as giving up. But sometimes, giving up is just moving on and allowing yourself to expand, to take up the space you deserve. Heavy is the head who wears the crown, they say.



Yet, as any true leader knows, the crown you wear is only heavy for those who aren't ready to wear it. Thank you to our alums for wearing your crowns so proudly and allowing us to be there to watch you shine. Thank you to our superstar facilitator Lauren Dani, for reminding us to stand a little taller and keep those crowns held up high.

# Alumni Program Writing Circle Highlights

## Allies for Black American Co-Hosts Class with IOW



How does one grieve? Everyday the grief is there, waiting and patient - but our time for it is not. We push it away, try to break it into reasonable chunks, but grief is too massive and too strong to be broken. So what do we do? We pretend it doesn't exist, grown men don't cry after all and what woman has time? But grief ignored can hobble and destroy, whole lives washed down the drain in its need to be heard. So why don't we listen? What are we so afraid of? When we finally give it a chance and let it in to sit beside us, rather than claw it's way past the wall we've left it to rot behind - we find a surprising companion. Grief simply wants it's space to be heard, for those tears to fall, before it fades into the world beyond. Just like any of us.

Thank you to **Allies for Black Americans** for giving us and the world that space to grieve for member after member of the Black community lost to racism with the *We See The Bloodshed: Week of Acknowledgement*. Thank you to our alums for grieving openly and with pride, for finding the peace and hope that grief so desperately wants to leave behind.

## The Power of Narrative with Sally Hamilton

It starts peacefully enough. A man sits forward, hands clasped, eyes focused on a space beyond. Maybe we're in a train yard, maybe we're in a car, maybe we're on a bench in a park - a setting that flits across our vision without a quarter of a thought. But with the stroke of a pen, that train yard becomes the sight of a massive explosion, mechanical beasts gaping open on their sides as the art sprayed on their doors is scraped onto the train tracks below. That car becomes a capsule speeding through space and time as a new father weighs the responsibility suddenly before him, should he turn back or go forward? The bench becomes the battle ground of good and evil, of free will versus expectation, versus pain. In the world between pen and paper, it is up to you to choose. Thank you Sally Hamilton for guiding us along such an incredible journey as we explored the power of a narrative. Thank you to our alums for once again, taking the simple and making it divine.



# iOW InsideOUT WRITERS

The mission of InsideOUT Writers is to reduce the juvenile recidivism rate by providing a range of services that evolves to meet the needs of currently and formerly incarcerated youth and young adults.

Using creative writing as a catalyst for personal transformation, these young people are empowered with the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully re-integrate into our communities becoming advocates for their future.

**PEN. PAPER. PERSEVERANCE.**  
*I write from the inside out.*

## InsideOUT Writers

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