Happy kids yelling trick or treat
Angry winds blowing the orange leaves
Lousy zombies on the TV screen
Lots of mobbing on hallows eve
Oatmeal and pumpkin and spider webs
Watching the walking on the day of the dead
Evening comes with a change of mood
Everyone runs as the bats zoom
Nighttime fund and we forget the rules

Justin F.
Unit ESU
11/19/22
A Story of A Kid That Grew Up in Watts

Did you hear about a kid that grew up in watts in the projects? He was raised around drug dealing, gun violence, and murders. He felt that it wasn’t safe in the area he lived in but besides that he knew that school was the best option for him. Make his dreams and goals a reality. He started doing what he had to do to get his grades up and take care of his family but after his thirteen birthday he made a bad choice to join a gang at a very young age. And by the age of fourteen he was in jail because of the wrong influences and bad choices.

As he walked through the doors of the juvenile hall, his thoughts started to manifest and his mind began to process what could have been different if he was giving an opportunity to make a better choice. But it was reality and there was no going back for now, but there was a faith and hope that always bring sunny days after the storm. He knew that he had let down the people that cared the most. After four days being in Juvenile Hall, he was released from C.D.P. and made a surprised arrival at home. As time passed by he started to do well in school, good behavior but after a while the gang life caught up to him that led him to return to jail.
The circumstances of life and desperation lead to a decision that he later regret it. But life, wasn’t so generous with him that forced him to commit a crime that would later bring consequences.

As he did his time for the crime, he waits for his faith and destiny to be decided. After court date and more court dates, the seconds, the days and months pass by which now have turned into 7 months. Sitting in my room, thinking what will destiny have for me as I eat this unpleasant food. The food is okay but not as good as my granny’s delicious food. Also, the rooms are very cold and small with limited space. For example, the covers they give us are not so warm and comfortable because I am still cold at night and they give us cover rashes (sp). But that’s how it is---you got to learn from your mistakes and do better being in here is not cool. Please don’t think CJH is like a home because its really not. I promise you I have been away from my mom, sister, and brother for going on a while now. I even spent my sixteen birthday in here wishing I can see my family right now and give them a big warm hug because home is really where it is being in here is like a dungeon, dark hole.

Bruce
Unit ESU
11/19/22
Many days I like to read
Anime is fun to watch
Not everyone likes manga
Geeky and nerds love to do both
Anime and manga not half bad

Justin F.
Unit ESU
11/19/22
I pray to God that I stay out of trouble and make it home. I want to make it home to my sisters and brother. Ever since I got in here I was letting tears out. I don’t worry about nobody. I’m trying to make it out. I want to finish school and get a job. I want to pay my mama’s bills. She ain’t got to worry about nothing cause I’m the man of the house. I’m trying to treat her like a queen. She is the love of my life and that’s always going to be.

Bruce
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11/19/22
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Miguel V.
Unit ESU
11/19/22
A man on a mission.  
A one-man army, solely focused on my responsibilities  
Focused on my improvement alone,  
For Selfish and unselfish reasons.  
I am motivated by those who stimulate and inspire me  
Unfortunately, I’ll have to leave those  
Behind who restrict me, fortunately It’ll lead  
To my improvement

Alfredo S.  
Unit Q  
11/09/22

Whatever happens I have no choice  
but to stay strong and disciplined.  
In order to fulfill my potential,  
This is my current mindset.  
No matter what I experience my  
Strength is unwavering

Alfredo S.  
Unit Q  
11/09/22
Don’t be disrespectful at all.
Over the week everything is okay.
My mother is very wonderful.
I can’t do more time in jail.
Nothing is okay.
I try to do my best.
Can’t stop crying but I have to.

Dominie F.
Unit ESU
11/19/22

Everything is gonna be okay.
Blick bak boo ba
All stuff is not that bad.

Riquelmi I.
Unit ESU
11/19/22
When my mom was here, she always understood me. Those nights when we didn’t have a place to stay. When you don’t have food and always getting hurt And now she’s gone I just wanna talk to her again, and hug her one more time, And just tell her that I love her and that We were always in the same shoes

Anthony F.
Unit K
06/13/22

Acquainted With the Night

I have been one acquainted with the night. I have walked out in the dark and back blacked out. I have cruised on my bike throughout the night. And received my first hiss under the moonlight. Riding back to my house in these empty streets, imagining the memory I just made while traveling and pedaling with my two feet.

David G.
Unit EF
08/15/22
Do you ever feel out of place?

Like somehow you just don’t belong and no one understands you.

Ain’t no one ever understand me. Every night I cry cuz no one understands my pain inside.

My heart. I fake my smile everyday but inside I’m so broken. I try to talk about my feelings but people don’t understand me. Every night I take a walk talking inside. I ask myself, “Why doesn’t anyone understand me? I go through pain everyday but try to keep my head up everyday. I try and try to make my days better. I lock myself in my room and let my pain out. By hearing music, talking about feelings, I try to make people happy by being there but no one ever helps me when I was at my lowest. But the only person who helped me keep my head up was myself because I left my pain on the side and I focused on my life trying to be a better person. I can be a better person and I believe in every one. You can get through this without no one helping you. Welcome to my life...

Albert P.
Unit K
03/15/22
Today is filled with hate and anger and laughter. And today is built on my struggles I caused which no one cares about, so I thug it out by my lonely and everyone moves on with their life. There is hatred in the air and wherever I go I see pain and struggle and I hear cries of people and I want to help, but when my brother had that knife in his chest no one helped, just left him to die. At night I lay my head down and I reminisce about my brother but sometimes I would rather have died with him or at least been with him. I wonder if anyone tried to help him but I know he left alone. Sometimes I want to say, “F*** the world and f*** everyone in it.” But tomorrow there’s a better day to come. Or maybe peace will come in my heart and I will be at peace with my brother 1 day.

Marc M.
Unit R
Mistreatment

This land is our land. While we cannot achieve true peace we are at least free but are we really if you think about it? There is black and brown hate everywhere you go and you gotta lay low. When you’re white, you got more rights. You gotta decide. If you wanna get along with each other, if you don’t there is chaos. But why? Aren’t we all brothers? There is no need to fight. You can go left or right. If you have color, the police will judge you by your skin color. We should be equal and share the land with equal rights. Good nights will come young and dumb but the police have no right to kill us if a person of color breaks the rules. Now if they are White, then they have a higher chance of going free.

If you go to your homeland, you will see that White people are treated like tourists and travelers but they are free to room around. They are provided respect when they move to our countries. But in the US they act racist. There are good people in every race.

Henry DeLeon
Unit EF
When I was young, I wasn’t a regular kid. Some adults would say I was bad. I did everything regular kids did. I went to school, played outside, I might have gone to the library. The only thing that set me apart from most kids was that I had a temper and I liked to fight. I didn’t really care about anything. If someone wronged me, I’d get revenge without a thought. Now, I don’t like to fight.

Over the years, I’ve learned to manage my anger. I don’t get angry as easily. I’ve had to just walk away from certain situations. I feel like in the future if I put my energy into sports instead of fighting and other negative things, I could be more productive in the world and help people instead of tearing them down.

Gaddafi B.  
Unit K
Once upon a time, when I was a young boy, I was well-behaved. I was not stealing or lying. I was a very good kid and my family really loved me. But when I started stealing, they stopped caring. The man I want to be now is to be a professional football player and graduate from college to become a successful man and start my own business and have my own family. I want to have two kids and I also want to start my own clothing line so I would be able to pay for my kids to go to college. When I pass away, I want my kids to have something to remember me by and be able to pay for their kids' college. I want a family. I want to live in the hills. I want my kids to be able to live on their own and be able to be independent and do things on their own and not have to depend on anyone. I want them to be able to pay things on their own.

Anthony L.

Unit K
Inside is a kid
Outside is a man
But inside or out he always had fans
He was always running wild
He never had a plan
He thought, it is what it is
And would say he does what he can
But eventually he lost hope
He couldn’t even stand
His parents did dope
He was getting torn into strands
But then he passed 17
saw at 18 it’ll be clean
He wanted to get to a point
where he could visit evergreens
But they won’t let him out
and he still won’t pout
But he’s losing his focus
And the pains getting potent
He feels like he’s drowning
in a super-deep ocean
He speaks from his heart
but they all think he’s mean
but he’s forever thankful
for the ones on his team
He’s done with his anger
he let out all the steam
But it feels like all his goals and success
were all just a dream

Domestic C.
Unit R
I feel like I’m alone all the time.
But my little sister makes me feel like I’m not.
I never really had nobody to go to when I felt like that.
But I realized that sometimes its better to be alone.
I wish I could be with my sister.
She makes me feel like there’s a purpose in life.
I just wanna make her happy and see her happy I wanna get outta here.
I haven’t seen my sister in about five weeks and it really hurts.
I wonder how she is doing.
I hope she is okay.
Me being in here really made me realize how much family really means and it’s important to bond with family because you don’t know when it’s your last time seeing them.
I feel like I let my sister down.
I’m supposed to be a role model to her and I failed at that.
I always wanted to be in the streets and be with my friends.
But didn’t realize my lil sister really needed me.
I pray every night that I can see my sister one more time when I get released.
I’m gonna spend all the time I can with my sister.

Javion K.
Unit K
10/24/22
I wonder why
Why I feel this pain inside
Why I have this chaotic mind
haven’t been the same since my Queen
died
Now I’m wondering when will I see the
outside
The outside of these walls
Until then
My will be with the ribbon in the sky

Angel M.
Unit R
A SPECIAL THANK YOU

We extend our gratitude to the staff at Probation headquarters, Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile Hall and Central Juvenile Hall. ... and to our current teachers who continue to inspire, guide, and encourage our students to express themselves one word at a time.

Our current Teaching Artists

Katherinne Gamez  Michelle Gubbay
Shane Jones       Natalia Orendine
Kate Wells        Monica Vega
Ana Lilia Barraza Rodrigo Guardado
Jacques Edeline   Olivia Carrasco
Susan Cuscuna     Amanda Wilgus
Lauren Dani
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.