

2018-2019

# ANNUAL REPORT

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## THE STORY OF A YEAR



**AMY ROSENBLUTH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
**ROBERT KOONCE, 2018-2019 BOARD CHAIR**

An annual report uses numbers to tell a story; we want our stories to give life to the numbers. This year more than 3,000 kids in the Greater Cleveland community expressed themselves in writing - through poems, personal essays, short stories, 'zines, and even book reviews. We saw young novelists and playwrights, illustrators and spoken word poets reveal who they are and what they see in the world. Lake Erie Ink teachers made the space and opportunity available throughout 56 communities for youth to take creative risks and share their ideas. So the important numbers, really, are the numbers of words the kids challenged themselves to write, the numbers of syllables in the haikus composed, and the total number of 6-word stories that youth and teachers shared about themselves.

As our story continues to develop, we are ever aware of our audience and of our publishers, those of you who believe in the power of writing and creative expression to open doors and inspire learning.

Thank you for your support and enjoy reading about our 2018-19 adventure!



# MISSION

Lake Erie Ink provides creative expression opportunities and academic support to youth in the Greater Cleveland community.

3,419  
total youth  
served

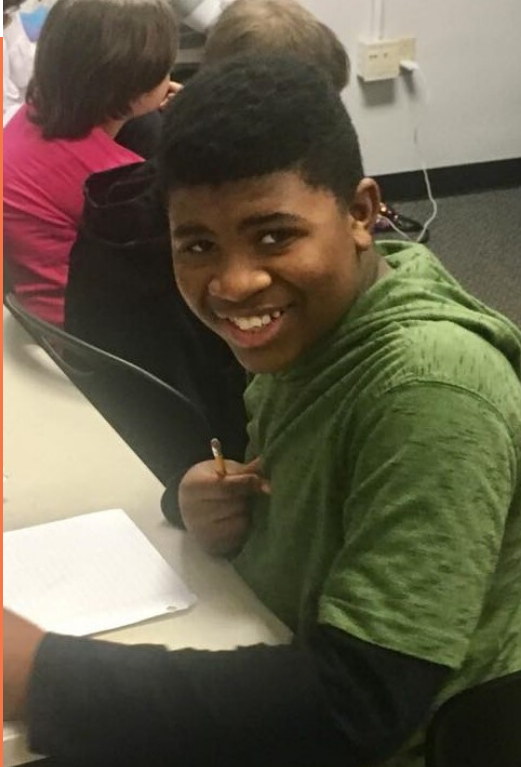
## PROGRAMS - BY THE NUMBERS

During the 2018-2019 fiscal year, Lake Erie Ink engaged **3,419** youth in creative expression programming to help them explore their creativity, build critical literacy skills, expand their community, and generate a positive habit of self-expression.

**Core Programs** → out-of-school time programs, which include after-school, weekend and summer creative expression opportunities

- 54 youth served at 3 locations during the Ink Spot After-School Programs
- 103 youth engaged in 9 summer camps
- 160 teens participated in open mic nights, evening writing workshops, a comedy club, college essay workshops and the Teen Book Project
- 182 youth participated in 9 Weekend Ink workshops exploring diverse literary genres

**School and Community Programs** → programs in partnership with schools and other youth-serving entities



A student writes a poem during an after-school program at Wiley Middle School

- Of the 69 programs, 65% took place in the City of Cleveland, 20% in inner ring suburbs, 12% in outer ring suburbs, and 3% outside of Cuyahoga County
- 2,942 youth were engaged in...



719 hours of creative expression enrichment during the school day

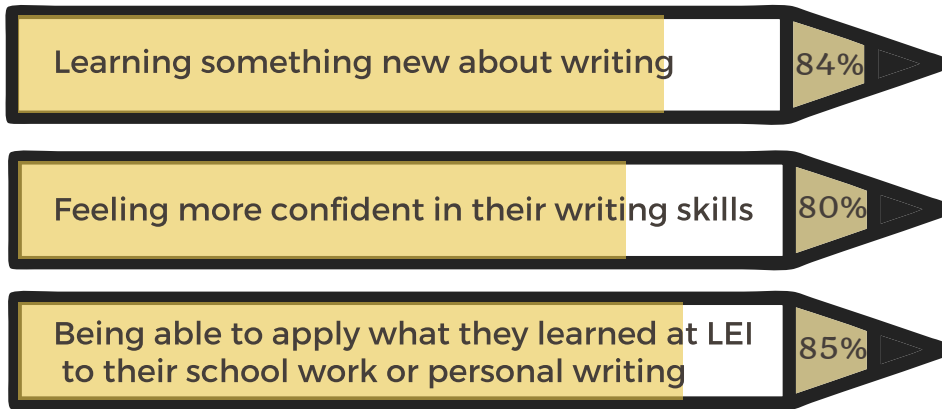


405 hours of creative expression enrichment during out-of-school time



# IMPACT - BY THE NUMBERS

Students reported...



## Youth Spotlight - De'Najh H.

De'Najh, a 7th grade home-schooled student from South Euclid, first got involved in Lake Erie Ink following in his brother's footsteps. His mother, Kei, said she was looking for opportunities for her sons that were both educational and fun. "De'Najh really likes it. He's made friends and he really takes to the program," she said. Since De'Najh started participating in Lake Erie Ink programs in 2016, his mother has seen him gain confidence. "And not just as a writer," she says, "but as a person too. He is much more well-spoken, especially in a crowd. He's also learned to associate with and learn from all different kinds of people."

De'Najh frequents Lake Erie Ink summer camps and has begun to participate in programs during the school year as well. "Lake Erie Ink gives De'Najh a sense of freedom and independence, and they come up with new, creative ways to get students interested in writing every year."



What are you most proud of?



"I write because it gives me a sense of accomplishment."  
- Arwen, 6th grade

# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

## Writing Residency at Mary M. Bethune School (Cleveland Metropolitan School District)

69 middle schoolers participated in a year-long writing residency where they wrote poetry, personal narratives, informational comics, literary analysis and argumentative essays, exploring themes like identity, change, choices and a hero's journey. Students learned revision techniques by exploring the entire writing process and ended with a final published work. Throughout the year, youth were supported by John Carroll University students who volunteered with Lake Erie Ink as writing coaches.

"We loved having a different spin on teaching... and my students are now not afraid of writing. Our state teaching in writing has grown 30% in the past four years of working with Lake Erie Ink."  
- Mary M. Bethune School Teacher



*A student prepares for a revision workshop led by Lake Erie Ink's Education Director Cynthia Larsen*

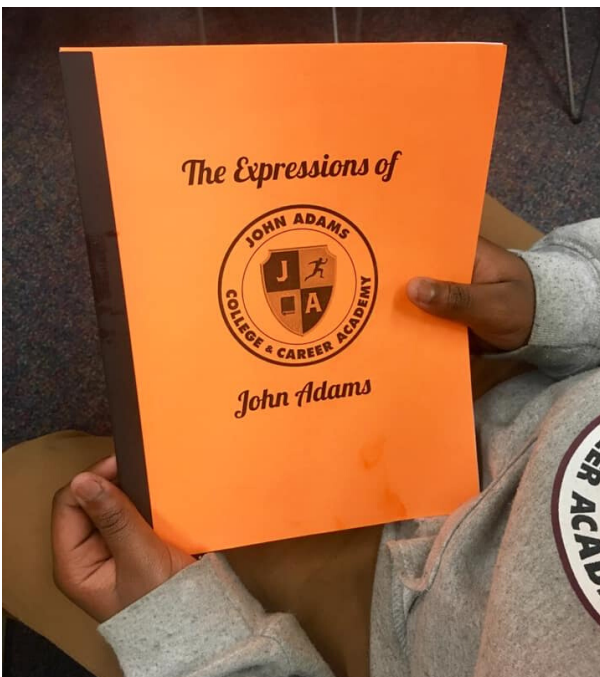
## Writing Residency at John Adams College and Career Academy (Cleveland Metropolitan School District)

53 high school freshmen participated in a year-long writing residency and celebrated their accomplishments by visiting Lake Erie Ink for an anthology release party where not only did they read their work from the newly published anthology, but they also listened to experienced young adult performance poets.

What advice would you give another student about writing?

"Try hard and write from your heart and fill yourself with joy." -DJ, 9th grade

"Don't give up on your ideas even though times get hard." -Normonte, 9th grade



*A student receives their original work printed in a bound anthology at the John Adams culminating ceremony*

## LEI celebrates National Novel Writing Month

19 young writers wrote 114,290 words at weekly writing workshops in November during National Novel Writing Month.

## Teen Open Mics

80 teens shared their original poetry and prose in front of an audience of their peers.

Lake Erie

"LEI has given me many opportunities to network and perform in front of a variety of audiences. I am grateful that I was able to share my voice with so many others and be able to tell my stories through poetry." - Anonymous teen

## Teen Book Project

Members of Lake Erie Ink's teen editorial board worked together to identify a theme, gather submissions of original teen writing, and compile work into a professionally published book. Their 2019 publication - Illusions and Reality - featured the voices of 53 youths from diverse backgrounds and communities across Greater Cleveland

"I loved working together with people who are passionate about writing, learning behind the scenes about publishing, and being able to share my writing and get published in a book." - Teen Editorial Board Member

"The Lake Erie Ink Teen Book Project has given me and other poets an opportunity to share our work and be published. PUBLISHED!! That's a priceless experience." - Newly published teen writer

## Club Create at the Cleveland Public Library

Taking place at multiple library branches, Club Create's weekly writing workshops gave 155 youth the opportunity to participate in creative writing projects focused on language enrichment.

"Working with LEI gives students something positive and productive to do after school. LEI instructors kept students engaged and excited. With LEI I was able to understand students' strengths and weaknesses with writing and reading." - CPL Jefferson Branch Librarian



*A student gets an idea for the end of her short story*

What It's Like Being an Artistic 14-Year Old by Daveon W.

It's like your mind is always aflutter, while your body isn't.

It's like always having ideas, but you can't use them all...

It's like expressing emotion through art on paper.

It's like enjoying the eyes of others while they glance at

your soul.

# CURRICULUM SPOTLIGHT

## Comics Projects

### Comics play an important role in building literacy skills for young learners

Last spring, 148 youth from across Greater Cleveland gathered at Lake Erie Ink for a day-long Kids' Comic Con where they learned to write and draw comics from professional writers and artists. Lake Erie Ink knows the value comics bring to young readers and writers beyond this annual event and teaches comics year-round during programming as a result.

More than doodles and punch lines, **comics teaches critical literacy skills**, such as dialogue, sequencing, narration, and character development. The relationship between the captions and drawings "demands that their creator better understand the concepts they are presenting," says LEI Education Director Cynthia Larsen.

**Comics are accessible to all learners.** Comics can be the perfect format for kids who are reluctant to read or write, who have learning differences, or who are visual learners. They can also be a critical challenge for non-visual thinkers to clarify generalized descriptions and focus on essential details and action.

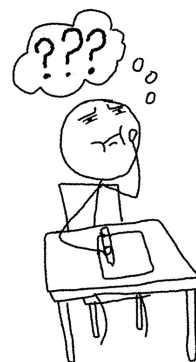
**Making comics instills life lessons in young creators.** LEI Creative Arts Teacher Nicole Rossa explains, "Comics allows illustrators to closely examine facial expressions and ultimately how to read emotions in real life."

“Comics blends real world experience and knowledge with magical thinking and humor and makes us all better writers.”  
- Cynthia Larsen, LEI Education Director

4th graders created informational comics to present what they learned about water biomes



A special education class used 5-panel autobiographical comics to write "The Story of Me"



7th graders used comics to brainstorm incidents and their responses in preparation for writing a personal narrative about "change"

61 were new faces

148 youths attended the 2019 Kids' Comic Con

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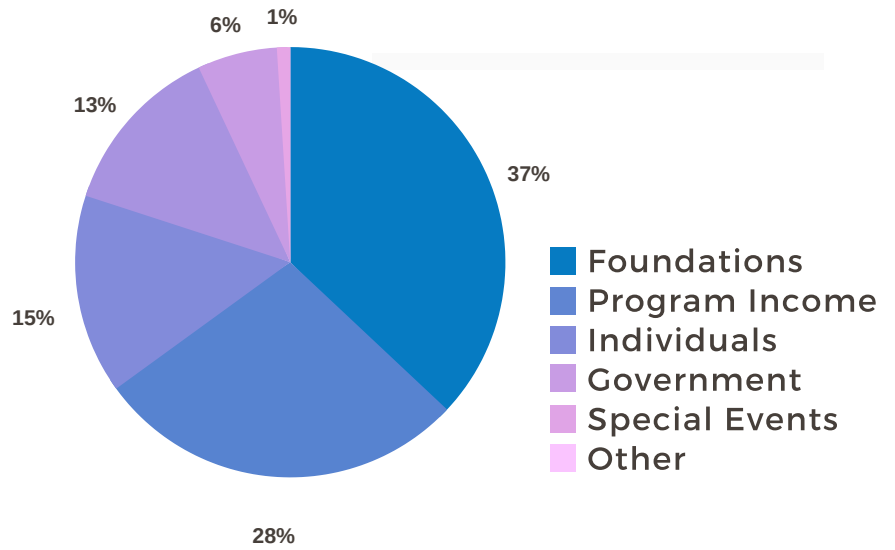
AMY ROSENBLUTH  
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33 volunteers  
 contributed 934  
 hours of service  
 throughout the  
 year



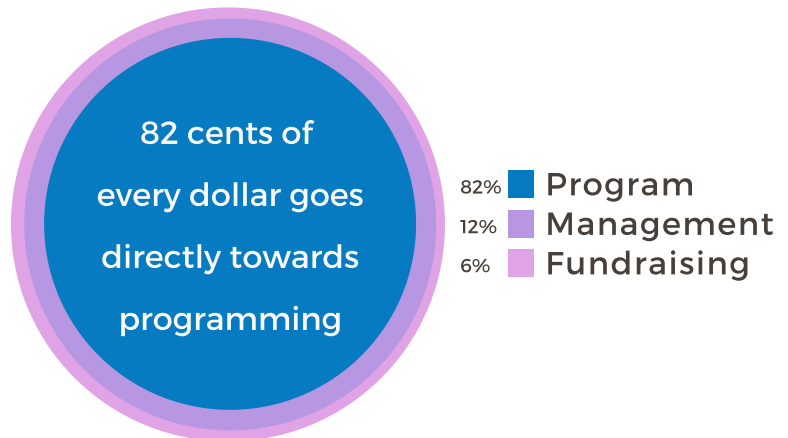
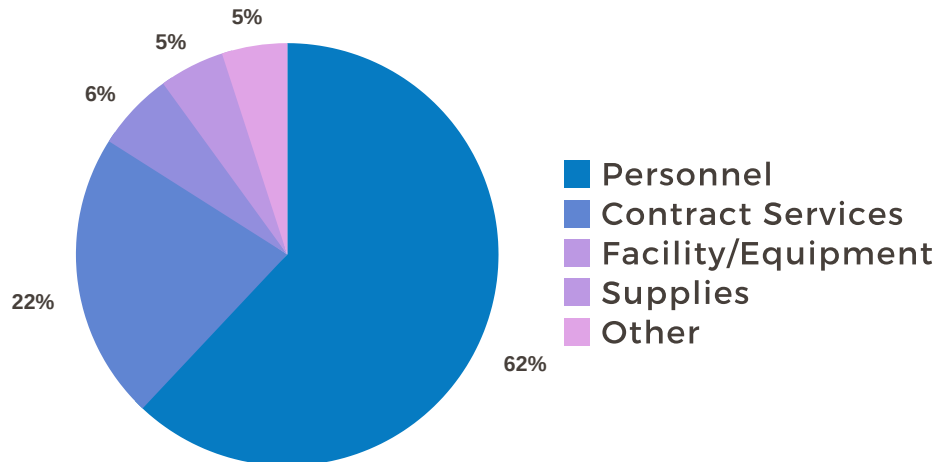
# INCOME

\$388,696



# EXPENSES

\$347,978



# Thank you to the following supporters for believing in the transformative power of creative expression:

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