



2021-2022

ANNUAL REPORT

Finding Our Way

AMY ROSENBLUTH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This summer we introduced the theme, “Find your Way” and asked our community of kids and adults, how do you know which way to go? What do you bring with you on the journey, and how do you know when you’ve arrived?

We received responses in poetry and short fiction, essays, maps and pictures that reflect so many different ways of moving forward. We were inspired, as always, by the depth and passion that youth put out into the world, and by the energy and creativity teachers and other adults bring into their classrooms.

As we moved through year 11, we set a course based on what youth shared was important for them: more time to create together, new ways to create together and a focus on finding joy along the way. We brought with us an amazing crew of dedicated and creative staff and teachers and a living curriculum, one that has grown and deepened each step of the way. And, have we arrived?

Well, we reached the end of a successful and active year, having worked with more than 3,000 youth, in schools and sites across Greater Cleveland. We produced a hybrid Comic Con with 100 attendees, and we published a collection of teen writing and two anthologies of community work. Our staff has grown, our reach has widened, our stories have developed.

Thank you for being on this journey with us, as we continue to find new ways to move forward, offering our youth the space to grow and develop their creative voice

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Mission and
Impact

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MISSION

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

3,684
total youth
served

PROGRAMS - BY THE NUMBERS

During the 2021-22 fiscal year, Lake Erie Ink engaged 3,684 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



- 32 youth served at three locations during our Ink Spot After School Programs
- 98 youth engaged in 11 summer camps
- 157 teens participated in our Evening Ink programs, including Dungeons and Dragons Story Building, College Essay Workshops, a Teen Book Project, and NaNoWriMo, as well as weekly writing workshops
- 143 youth participated in 5 Weekend Ink workshops exploring diverse literary genres, including comics, playwriting, poetry, suspense, nature writing and paper arts



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



54 programs took place during the school day



37 programs took place during out-of-school time

Of the 54 school programs, 37% took place in the City of Cleveland, 41% in inner ring suburbs, 6% in outer ring suburbs, and 16% outside of Cuyahoga County






3,382 youth were engaged in...

868 hours of creative expression enrichment during the school day

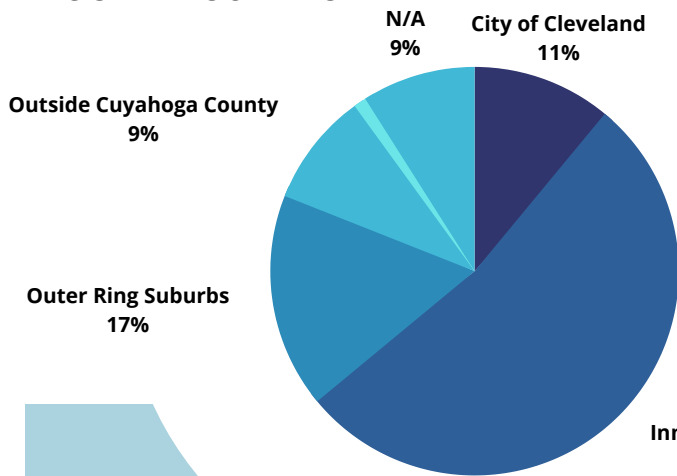
649 hours of creative enrichment during out-of-school time

2 "I write because it empowers me to do things I previously could not do. It makes me feel better. It lets me understand myself and others." -Ben, 8th grade

IMPACT - BY THE NUMBERS

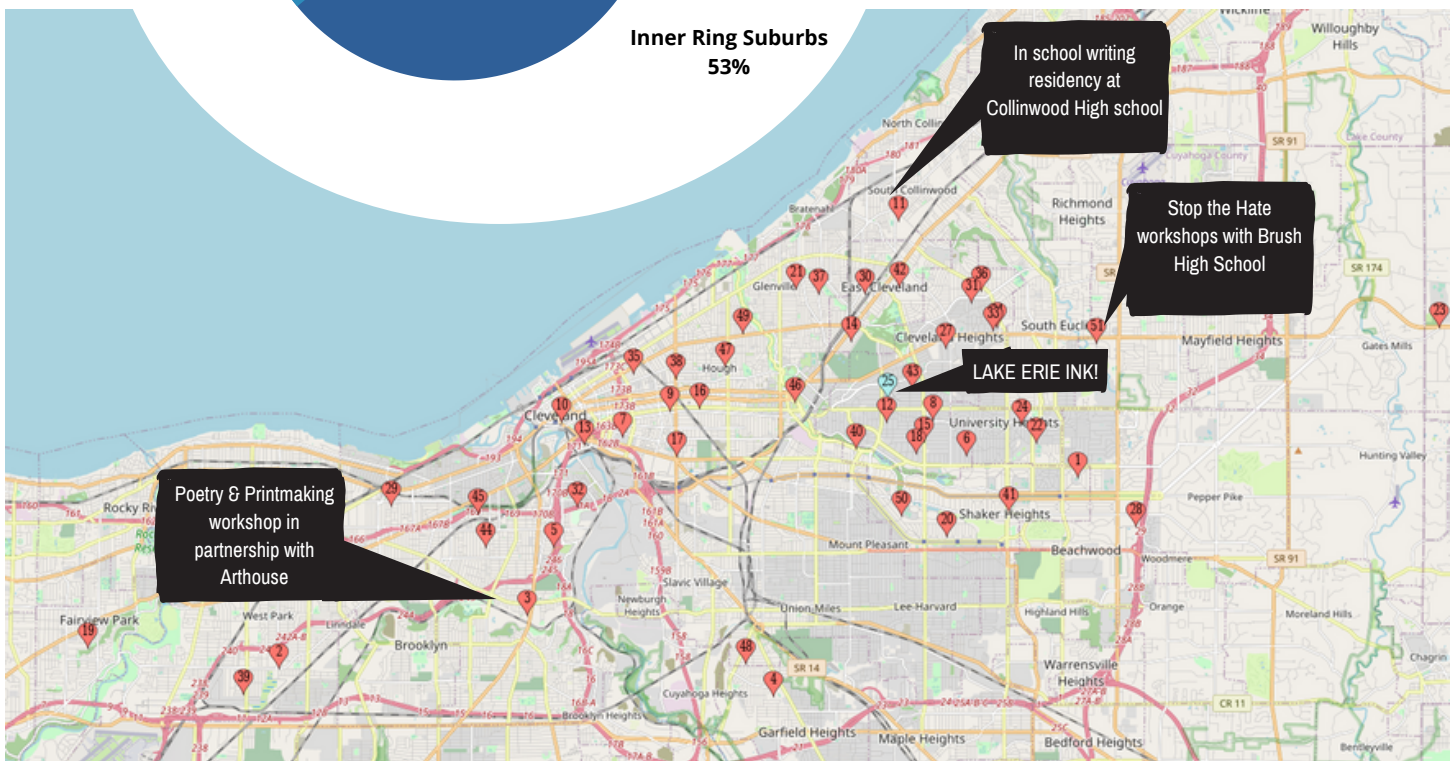
-  86% of youth reported learning new ways to express themselves creatively
-  83% of youth reported learning something new about writing
-  83% of youth reported that they made a positive connection with other people in the program
-  77% of youth would recommend Lake Erie Ink programs to other youth
-  74% of youth reported feeling more confident expressing their ideas

CORE PROGRAMS



WHERE WE GO & WHERE STUDENTS COME FROM

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

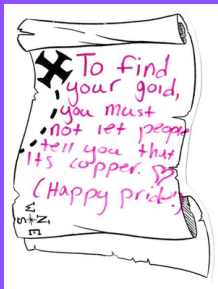
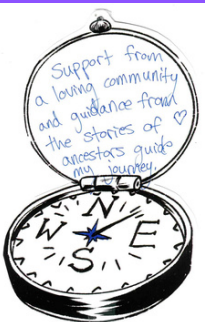


"I write because I have so many ideas that I love sharing, and because it really is a way to bring a character, a plot, a setting and an amazing story to life" –Sophie, 7th grade

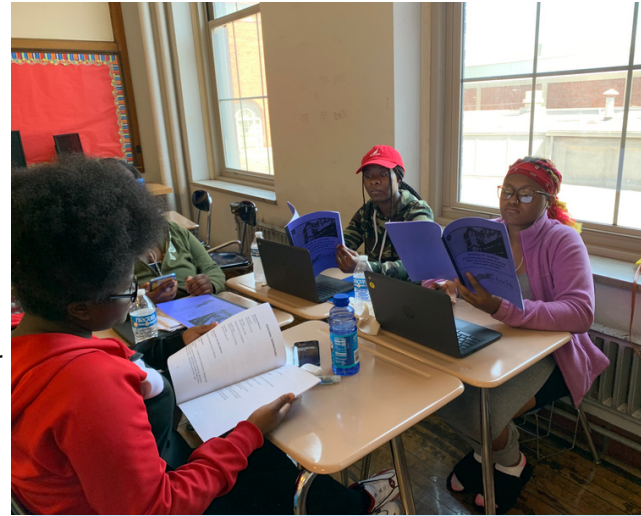
PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Creative Community Challenge

Lake Erie Ink hosted our fifth and sixth community challenges in 2021-22, with the themes of Growth and Finding your Way. The Community Creative Challenge works to inspire the community around a common theme. Following submissions, we had a storefront display on Coventry and created an Anthology of all the submitted work. We had 24 people ages 11-65 participate in the Growth Challenge and 22 participants, ages 13-80, in the Finding your Way Challenge



Voices for Change: We facilitated 6 session workshops in 17 classrooms in 4 Cleveland Metropolitan School District High Schools as part of our Voices for Change program. Topics included Identity, Community, and “Change”. Projects focused on students’ vision for a world they would like to see, including creating new rules for their community and changing the narrative of stories that the students are currently seeing in their world. Refocusing on the positive helped to remind the students that their voice can make a difference. We were able to bring local Cleveland author, Echo Brown, into one of the classes to discuss her book, Black Girl Unlimited. This was a powerful experience for the students to interact with a professional author and see what a future in writing could look like.



“New World”

by Layla O., East Tech High School

In the new world every black kid would be free
free from all of society
free from being racially profiled
Everybody would be united as one
I mean after all the only thing that’s different is the skin tone
Youths in today’s world aren’t allowed to be their true self
One (us) will always be in the wrong.
The little kids would have something to live up to
they will be cops, detectives, lawyers,
without the world making them feel like they don’t belong.
And they will not be discriminated against.
We will see more black/mixed families making out the hood & Striving.
Our voice will be heard, we will be treated the same.
This is our new world.

Teen Book Project

Members of Lake Erie Ink's teen editorial board worked together to identify a theme, gather submission of original teen writing, and compile work into a professionally published book. Their 2022 publication - Blur - featured the voices of 55 youth from diverse backgrounds and communities across Greater Cleveland.

College Essay

28 students participated in 11 College Essay workshops where they explored the writing and revision process of a personal narrative

"I really enjoyed the sensory brainstorm as it gave me a couple different avenues of creative writing approaches to explore." - Teen participant in College Essay workshop

Creators Club

28 students participated in 11 College Essay workshops where they explored the writing and revision process of a personal narrative.

The best part about the program was "making new friends and drawing art!" - Creators Club Participant



Connection through Creativity

207 students in 5 Middle/Elementary schools in the Cleveland Heights University Heights school district participated in creative writing residencies

"The students... have shown such growth in a short amount of time. They can think of connected ideas and events to write about. Their writing is now including more details and their vocabulary is expanding. They are beginning to be able to paint a visual picture with their writing and be reflective on their personal writing. They have truly grown in their self confidence as a writer." - 2nd Grade Teacher



Comic Con

100 comic enthusiasts participated in our first hybrid Comic Con this spring, featuring a virtual discussion with Justin Reynolds, author of "Spiderman, No Way Home" and 16 in-person comic artists

Workshops, Panels & Special Events

- 2 virtual featured evening speakers: Terri Libensen & Juan Fernandez
- 2 virtual speakers: Justin Reynolds & Jeff Sorning (Nickelodeon)
- 1 Virtual Panel & 5 Virtual Workshops
- 19 in person workshops for youth and teens
- 1 in-person Teen After Party

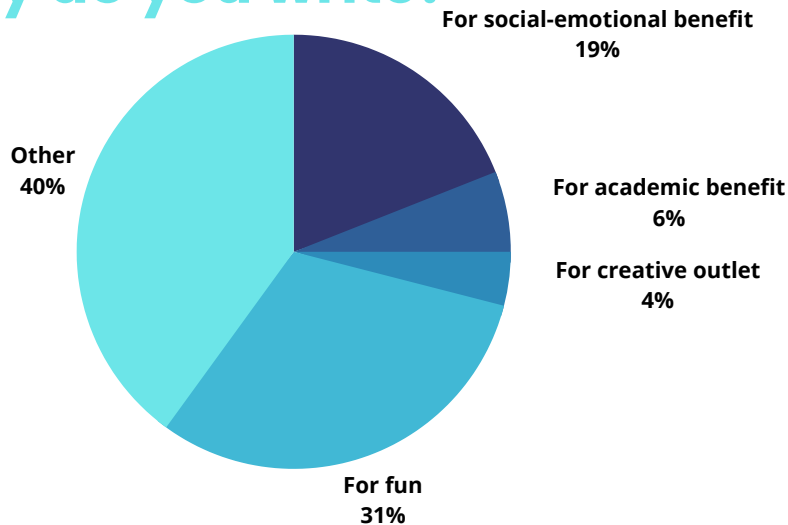


Mini Comic-Fest

We hosted a Mini Comic Fest in September featuring workshops and a Q&A with 3 different comic artists. We had 18 students join us for the full day event, centered around the creation of comics.

"I write because it's fun, and it helps me sort out the tangled power cord mess that is my brain" -Avalon, 9th grade

Why do you write?



WHAT DID YOU LEARN WITH LAKE ERIE INK?

"Lake Erie Ink programs open many different doors, and allow youth to express themselves through their creativity, and possible make new friends"
-Jailynn

"This program taught me not to be afraid to stand in front of people and do something I may love in the future"
-Jayden

"I learned about sharing what I was working on, and I learned how to continue writing consistently, and I learned that I can finish a novel"
-Adele

If my voice can sing
by Judith C.

If my voice can sing, what else can it do?
 My voice can stand up to bullying
 My voice can change the world
 My voice can make a difference
 My voice can inspire others
 My voice can make a change
 My voice can make my mother proud
 My voice can stop hate
 My voice can make someone's day
 My voice can turn someone's frown upside down
 My voice can change the future
 My voice can do anything

Program Partners

- Advantage Cleveland
- America SCORES (multiple sites)
- Arthouse
- Baldwin Wallace University
- Beth Shalom Temple
- Boys Hope Girls Hope
- Center for Arts Inspired Learning
- City of Cleveland Recreation Centers
- Cleveland Compassion Tours
- Cleveland Heights-University Heights Libraries
- Cleveland Heights-University Heights School District
- Cleveland Institute of Art
- Cleveland Metropolitan School District
- Cleveland Public Library
- College Now
- Communion of Saints Catholic School
- Creators Collective - CLE Opera Theater
- CTAG- Closing the Achievement Gap
- Cuyahoga County Public Library
- David's Challenge
- Dobama Theatre
- East Cleveland City Schools
- Fairview Park City School District
- Girl Scouts of Northeast Ohio
- Lakeshore Intergenerational School
- Lutheran East High School
- Maltz Museum
- Mandel JCC
- MOCA
- MyCom Youth Network
- Oberlin College Arts Center
- Open Doors Academy
- Rainey Institute
- Scranton Road Ministries
- Shaker Heights Public Library
- Shaker Heights City Schools
- Urban Community School
- University Circle Incorporated
- University Hospital Health Scholars



Board of Directors

- Alex Leslie, *Chair*
- Annie Zaleski, *Vice Chair*
- Kari Mirkin, *Secretary*
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- Manuel A. Alvarado, MBA
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- Ben Forman
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- Claire McBroom
- Suneeta Mutter
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- Lisa Rosenthal
- Past Chair*
- Stephen J. Werber,
- Member at Large*

Staff

Leadership

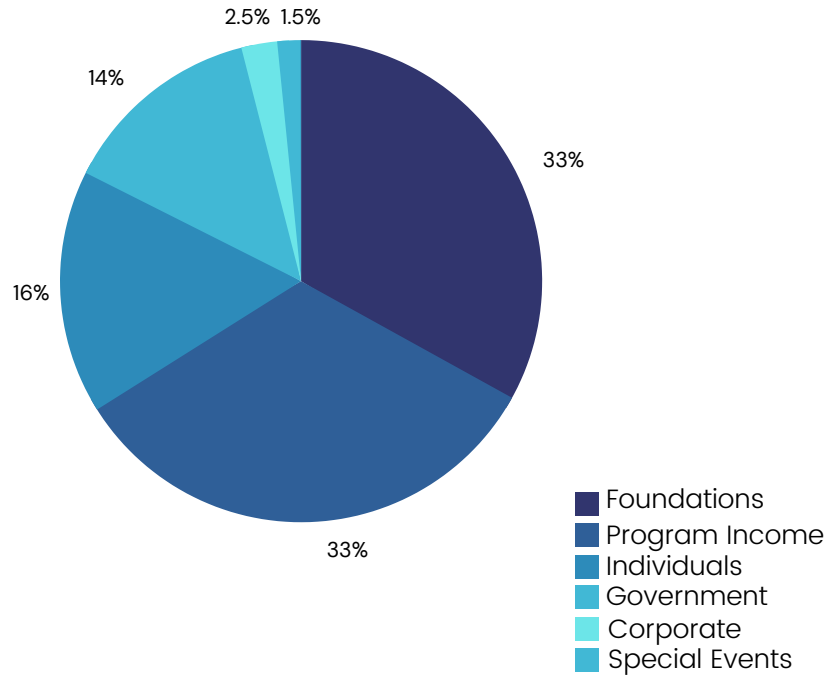
- Amy Rosenbluth
- Executive Director
- Charisse Bailey
- Director of Programs
- Cynthia Larsen
- Education Director

This year, 40 volunteers and interns contributed 417 hours of service



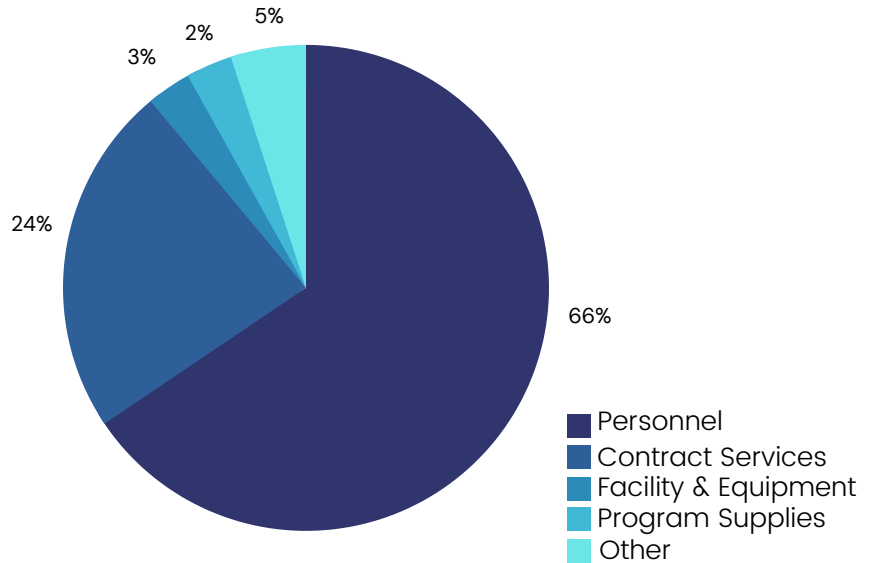
INCOME

\$397,020



EXPENSES

\$421,949



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

Foundations & Government Support

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City of Cleveland Heights, Community Development Block Grant Program
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