

Writers Matter Newsletter

Letter from the Directors



What a year this has been! When we opened the school year last August, we could have never predicted how it would end. We are proud to enter our fifteenth year of providing a unique and innovative opportunity for elementary, middle and lower high school students to learn critical writing skills through the use of journal writing as a vehicle for self-expression, even in these extraordinary times.

As the saying goes, when life give you lemons, you make lemonade. We could not be prouder of the work our teachers have been doing with their students in the most unprecedented times and also the new innovation that has come as a response to the world events. In this newsletter you will learn about conferences that were attended, a new curriculum that was created, started an Art and Social Justice afterschool enrichment program, how we pivoted our summer camp to 100% virtual,

continued to provide professional development to our teachers and other original programs.

Additionally, we are excited to announce that Writers Matter is now its own 501C3 nonprofit organization and we just launched our new website. Please check us out at www.writersmatter.org to learn more about our program and current offerings.

Since the inception of the Program, over 25,000 students have participated. This year our program includes 17 schools, 70 teachers and over 3,000 students (grades 3-9). Our schools include both Philadelphia Public and Archdiocesan schools.

Student Writing Contest

This year, our writing contest was inspired by the preparation for the presidential election. During this time, there was so much focus on what divides us. Even in the time of a pandemic, we questioned if we are more united or divided? This year, we wanted to take the time to change the conversation to focus on what unites us. Students were asked to think about their personal life in regard to their family and friend, and what units all of them. We asked them to think about what are some things you can typically all agree on? Or think more globally, what are some issues in our world that you really think can bring people together? (Continued on p. 2)

Here are some things they were invited to consider as they wrote a letter, poem, essay or short or digital story about what can unite us:

- Think about the important people in your life, your friends, family, classmates, etc. Even though you like these people, there are often things that might separate you, thing that you disagree on or fight about and that’s OK. Having a difference in opinion is a wonderful thing and you should always use your voice to express it. But this year we don’t want you to think about what divides you from your family and friend but rather what unites you. What are some things that you know you can always agree on? What is one thing you know will always bring you together?
- Think about someone maybe you don’t get along with, someone who has even wronged you in some way. What is one thing that might be able to bring the two of you together, despite your differences?
- What is an issue that you think unites the world? What is something that can bring all kinds of people together? What is something that everyone can agree on? Why do you think this is a universal issue?
- What are somethings you can do right now to help bring people together and help them find a common ground?

The contest was opened to both the middle school students as well as the elementary students. Samples of the students’ work, as well as winning entries, are featured throughout this newsletter.



Contest Winners

MIDDLE

1st Place:

The Little Things (Henry)

2nd Place:

Her. (Feltonville)

3rd Place:

The Values Of Unity.
(Roosevelt)

The Jewels of Life (Feltonville)

Honorable Mentions

I Am From

“I Am From the Covid-19”

Uniting

The Unvanquished Truth

ELEMENTARY

1st Place:

People of the World (Moore)

2nd Place:

No Title (Lowell)

3rd Place:

A letter to the World (Henry)

Honorable Mentions:

I Am

What can unite us?

What Unites Us...

Elementary School Contest Winners
Grand Prize: *People of the World*



Dear People of the World,

The world is divided
 It's time to get united.
 Unity is the rainbow that stretches across the sky
 After a thunderous storm washes by.
 Unity is like a ray of sunshine
 There's nowhere it can't reach
 To the deepest part of the ocean
 To the tips of my feet.
 I hope for unity in my community
 In your community, too.
 Unity is respect, love, compassion, and support.
 Unity brings peace, happiness, friendship, and healing.
 We are strong when we are united
 Weak when we are divided.
 It is okay to be different
 You and I.
 Different race or religion
 And even opinion.
 Our differences should not bring hate or violence
 When it does, stand up and break your silence.
 We are one
 Under the sun, moon, stars, and sky
 United with the animals, trees, and seas
 Hug your family and friends and squeeze.
 People of the world remember,
 Never divided
 Forever united!

**Spreading my love,
 Sienna Fair**

**Learning Environment
 Providing Alternatives
 for Philadelphia Children**

L.E.A.P. is a partnership program between Writers Matter and Men Who Care of Germantown. Our goal is to provide alternative education learning environments for school aged children from the Germantown community of Philadelphia. These centers will provide a safe, nurturing and supportive environment for children to participate in public school-based lessons during the school day and after school hours. The centers are specifically designed for children and families who require additional learning support during the day and after school, have parents or caregivers working outside of the home and/or have no childcare. The centers will provide positive social, emotional, and academic support during these unprecedented times of COVID 19.

L.E.A.P will also provide a special curriculum focusing on many confusing and conflicting ideas/feelings the children have experienced since school closed in March 2020. As our children re-enter school, they may have unsettled feelings of trauma, loneliness, isolation, overwhelming emotional stress and separation issues with family, friends, and tragedies that occurred/experienced throughout this COVID 19 pandemic. As the students try to meet the challenges they have experienced through COVID 19 and BLM, L.E.A.P will provide necessary support services for them to better cope and have opportunities for social and academic success.



SECOND PLACE: *No Title*

I am a girl and my name is Day.
I am a girl who has a poem to say.
A short story about how
Things have changed.
I am just a girl but I'm not the same.
I started cheering once I was done with dance.
I used to wear uniforms
Now I wear pajama pants.
Every morning to class with juice in my glass.
Hoping this crisis doesn't last.
The Corona Virus has affected us all.
I miss going to school
And playing in the hall.
Washing my hands and playing it safe.
Wearing my gloves and putting a mask on my face.
Practicing social distancing
Facetiming my friends.
Waiting to go outside as soon as this ends.

Falling asleep during the day
And staying up all night.
Checking my homework with my mom
Making sure it's right.
Remaining focused
To keep my future bright.



THIRD PLACE: *A letter to the World*

May 25, 2020

Dear World,

What can unite us? I was thinking the same question then I stumbled on an answer. What can unite us through our differences during this tough time is COVID-19. COVID-19 has impacted us all. It doesn't matter where you are in the world, you could be on your step like me, you could be in your house, or you could be a hero fighting for your life or someone else's life, or you could even not be with your family which is a sad story.

What can unite us? I thought about it some more but it was harder this time so I thought again and I finally came up with an answer. We are all thinking about revolutionary ideas but few of us put that plan into a reality, some ideas may be stupid like putting bleach into the body, but they are all revolutionary, good or bad, it is an idea. One way for us to unite is to come together for a cure and take combative Global actions to slow the spread. We unite thru Social Media, doing Tic-Toc, and probably doing something unproductive or maybe something productive. I don't know I am just a girl sitting on the steps, but I thought of my future probably like millions of others. I can be one the few that actually put their ideas into a plan, something we all can do, think for minutes or hours, or seconds about how we can make a difference.

But what really unites us is the power that COVID 19 has given us to get past this, start over, think about what we are doing and the purpose with gives us the power that we need to feel encouraged, powerful, strong, and give hope to others not feeling like a victim but a survivor. With this strength, with we need to come up with a cure to help people and get past this pandemic. This strength and creating a feeling of togetherness is what can unite the world.

With Much Love,
Elijah Long

HONORABLE MENTION: *I Am*

I am strong
 I believe I can do anything
 I want to bring my best effort to my school work
 I am a person who believes that love can make people happy
 I feel positive about how life is going to be in the future
 I wonder if I can help anybody who needs help
 I worry that I am not doing my best sometimes
 I am upset that families are getting seperated at the US border
 I understand that standing up for other people and yourself is important
 I try to understand what different families are going through
 I hope that Donald Trump loses the election in November
 I am powerful with my voice

HONORABLE MENTION: *What Can Unite Us*

What Can Unite Us 6 feet apart isn't enough to keep us apart. We should have been doing this from the start.

What Can Unite Us this land of disease may be put at ease if we all just, "Stay in please."

What Can Unite Us face mask and gloves doesn't mean you're a thug you just want to show love.

What Can Unite Us big dreams and big things can be achieved if you just believe.

What Can Unite Us read your bible every day, get on your knees, and pray for the lord to keep your soul. Oh pray!

What Can Unite Us tragedies now turn into bad habits, how can we stop this madness.

What Can Unite Us Police will stop shooting innocent men just because of the color skin, and they wonder why we scream hands up and don't shoot while we're out in the pin.

What can Unite Us put peace and love in this world above so we all can show love.

What Can Unite Us stop all the crying and lying leave it all in silence so we can all shine on.

What Can Unite Us dark times won't stop us, we must start to unite us.

What Can Unite Us??

Can you tell me?

Don't Leave me waiting...

HONORABLE MENTION: *What Unites Us...*

Things have been so crazy in the world! We are living in a world where there is a virus outside. It is going around the city, country and the whole world. This virus can harm you and others. Since the virus called COVID-19 has been around, people have been told to stay at home. In America we are also dealing with a lot. President Trump is making a lot of decisions that are making people upset. Making them go crazy even! Even though it has been feeling like the world is so scary and everyone is divided, I have noticed that there are things that are still uniting us.

COVID-19 has kept everyone at home. Almost everyone. There are people who still have to be outside. Those people are called first responders and essential workers. They help everybody. They help us to get food, to get medicine, to get better if we are sick. Ever since I heard about people working outside with the virus, I have heard how other people are helping. People are raising money. They are making sure homeless people have somewhere to stay. People are making lunch and dinner for first responders. People are telling each other thank you a lot more. People are drawing posters with pictures and making videos to show that they care and that people are not alone. This is helping us to unite.

I think that people think being united means that everyone has to be on the same team and wearing the same uniform. That is not how being united works. Being united means you show friendship and love. Friends help whenever they can. Love brings us together no matter what the storm is. Even though it seems like there is nowhere to run, people are still around caring for each other. I know things will come back to normal soon. We just need to stay united.

An Enhanced Focus on Professional Development & Growth

Annual Writing Institute

On August 20th, we opened the school year to 42 enthusiastic Writers Matter Teachers for our 5th Annual Writing Institute.

This year we felt it was more important than ever to bring the teachers together before the school year started to talk about writing and more importantly the students. During this abbreviated workshop, the teachers learned about the RESET Curriculum that was created by their colleagues throughout the summer as a response to the pandemic and the BLM movement. You will learn more about the RESET Curriculum later in the newsletter. It was a wonderful event for all who attended and the appreciation and excitement for the support was evident.

Teacher Leader 4 Week Professional Development Course

This summer we offered a virtual professional development workshop that was well attended by over 30 teachers. The themes we addressed were writing in a time of COVID, writing workshop in a virtual space, creating a writing community in your classroom and in your school and how to continue to meet and support one another in a virtual space. We met once a week for 4 weeks. As a learning community we shared ideas and wonderings throughout our time together. It was especially beneficial for new teacher leaders and teachers new to the program yet benefited everyone who attended.

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Art and Social Justice Afterschool Enrichment Program

Thanks to the generous donation from Mari Shaw, the La Salle University Art Program and the Writers Matter program were able to team up and pilot an Art and Social Justice Enrichment Program for 5th and 6th grade students at Wagner Middle School and J. Hampton Moore Elementary school. This new program integrated lessons about art and social justice into the Writers Matter curriculum, with the goal of broadening students' capacity for creative self-expression, particularly with relevance to current social issues. As stated on the Writers Matter website, "through writing about their lives, the students find an effective emotional outlet at a time in their lives when personal expression and having their voices heard is so important." The goal was to encourage students to find historical and contemporary references for such expression in the arts, and encourage them to also express themselves visually, enhancing the educational impact of Writers Matter. They are working on a book to highlight the student work from this program.

Middle School Contest Winners

GRAND PRIZE: *The Little Things*

It's the little things in life that bring us together and give us joy. Like when you meet someone new at a workshop or on the street and find out that you both love the same band. Or have the same shoes.

But now that we must separate to stay healthy, those joys and interactions are gone.

So instead, we find different ways to connect and find comfort in those simple little joys.

I, for example, have found and hung to these small things that join us together with all of my might to keep from falling into the vast, wide void known as isolation. Like every Saturday evening, a few of my friends and I virtually watch a movie together.

And how my sleep away camp has done virtual campfires so campers can connect throughout the pandemic.

But as people are beginning to regain the little things that bring joy to our soles, we are also losing other things.

Like being able to freely stand side by side.
Or kiss slowly.

These are things that, for some people, can't be cured by the little joys in life. For some people, not being able to go to work and school or not being able to cough into your elbow without a face covering on can never be able to be replaced by connections and virtual calls.

I can relate in my own ways.

I can relate in not being able to see my friends each day at school. I can relate in being sick of virtual calls. I can relate in being hungry for the touch of another person's skin against mine. To walk down the street next to my friends, arms brushing each other as they swing side by side.

To being tired of my family.

But in the darkness, there always is a light.

I feel as if I know more about these people I call my family. I feel that I know more about my friends' lives and who they are. I feel that all around me, my neighbors are growing closer. I am growing closer to them as well.

So what if my community may have been changed due to this pandemic? So what if I can't turn this project in at school using my bare hands? In the end, it's the simple little pleasures in life that keep us going. Like that song that comes on the radio that you love. Or the funny story your friend sends to you.

So, I told you how my community has changed. How it has flipped into something that could be from a sci-fi movie. And how I use the little things in life that keep me calm and sane. Like writing this poem. Or looking at pictures of my friends. Or even the soft, cool moonlight that blankets me each night.

And if there is one thing I wish for you to think about after reading this is how you are kept sane in these tough times.

It could be anything.

You could take up a different hobby.
You could start to redecorate your bedroom.
Or you could be like me.

You could focus on the little things and cherish them. It doesn't matter. But just remember that the little things are the sweetest in life.

And they always will be.

SECOND PRIZE: *Her.*

She was it all. She was the beginning. The only thing we first saw when we opened our eyes. Or saw when we looked out the window. She was everlasting. She was the flower and we were the petals. She had danger inside of her but never gave us any. Just her beauty. She was home.

It was until now that we fidget with our fingers in fear. The cold night hugs us, telling us it will never be okay. We know that but spring gives us hope, so does the summer day. But, it's words whisper in my ear to look out the door and see it in me. Let it vibrate in my body as a pulse. Never will we forget how it spread along the unknown. In the forbidden forest. In the forbidden practice. Just to go around unnoticed.

It makes me feel as if I'm in a parallel world now finding out the true meaning of my world's existence. Was it the dark past or the rotten grass that united us all? It was her. The smile she left in the meadow. Sun lightly kissing her fair skin. Her brown eyes telling it's meaning. Her healthy touch never left my cheeks. Now all I feel is the empty color of my skin, of my home. Can it ever return back because we begged on our knees? Do we have to lose all of our mind for you to finally disappear?

It was the first time we could blame others for this. The first time we could blame them for us losing her. Then, why does it hurt to blame them for this? Is it her telling me it's not their fault but... something bigger? Something brutal and ruthless like bullets. A battlefield. The human's weakness and strength. The one thing that makes our bones shake. What costs thousands of lives to prove...victory? Is that why you're gone? The reason why we have no choice but hide behind others?

I can see it clearly. Her smile, her laugh. I can hear her telling me to fight this darkness. That it was never in the forbidden forest. I just needed to look harder to see the light. To see her standing right next me. Telling me she was with me the whole way. Told me there were others like me who felt the same way of her being gone, but wants us to stay together and fight the dark... the loneliness. Fight it united..

EVENTS & PRESENTATIONS



In November 2019, Dr. Kimberly Lewinski and two other Writers Matter teachers, Kelly Ann Coughlin and Lori Odem, attended the National Council for Teacher of English Conference in Baltimore, MD. The Freedom Writers were celebrating the 25th anniversary of their book so they were excited to hear Erin Gruwell give the keynote address and then met with her after. She was so thrilled to hear about the work we are doing with Writers Matter and hopes to visit us in Philadelphia in the near future. They also presented the work they've been doing with Writers Matter, the title of their presentation was *Stories of Urban Students Increase Agency and Change the Way We Teach*. In this presentation they shared how writers Matters teachers use student writing to help

them find their voice, share their stories and unleash their power to impact the lives of others and their own.

In February 2020, Dr. Kimberly Lewinski along with two Writers Mater teachers, Aubrey Stewart and Carl Jackson presented at the Association of Teacher Educators Conference in Atlantic City, NJ. The title of their presentation was *Bringing Words to Life: Integrating STEAM and Writing Workshop, Imagine the Possibilities*. They shared their work from the Writers Matter camp hosted at La Salle University last summer. They spoke about how they came together as a community and challenged the traditional educational systems to value the power of youth culture, voice and technology. They demonstrated how they integrated the Writers Matter program with STEM and writing by engineering a 3D world of their writing and coding Ozobots to tell their story.

THIRD PRIZE: *The Values of Unity*

During a major crisis, like this one, we are more united together. As we are keeping our distance to stay safe, we are still together as one. While we're in this time of a crisis we are being powerful, strong, and confident to get through this.

I think this is a universal issue because this virus is spreading worldwide every day. Around one hundred thousand people have died over the course of three months. Lots of families are losing family members, lots of friends are losing friends, and lots of couples are losing their loved-one due to this crisis. Also, people are getting infected and spreading it to others around them. In my family, in the course of bad situations and happenings, we sit down and have discussions about how to work the situation out and figure out if this is even worth fighting, arguing, or breaking apart from each other. We as a nation and a global community need to come together like a family. In this crisis of the world globally, there are some careless things going on. We're in a frightful catastrophe and people are still continuing gun-violence, hate crimes, robberies, and hit & runs. But all together, we just need to stay confident and focus on finding a way to bring the average number of cases down. I know this sounds as if we are dividing, but as this is happening, we are staying strong and spreading love throughout the world.



Amidst this virus, we are still united because of two things: love and respect. Those two things mean “a feeling of extensive admiration for a person or something; well mannered and good-natured”. These two things bind the people of America and other unions closer than ever. If we learn to respect others and objects that are the property of others, that'll help integrate us even more strongly. When we give those values, more values like friendship, understanding, communication, and companionship give us the strength or energy to give love and respect for each other and also the world. This makes the world go round, and as it does us people on earth unite.

When we are divided from each other that helps us unite. It makes us stronger than what we should be. This sounds like a contradiction, but when we are apart, we long to be together more. “What unites us as human beings is an urge for happiness which at heart is a yearning for union”-Sharon Salzberg. We need to stick together as family no matter what happens, through thick and thin, even if we're hit with the biggest asteroid in history we just have to unify with the others of the world.

Other than LOVE, RESPECT, and US DIVIDING, we are also united by patience, the freedom we have earned throughout these years, culture of all kinds, the music we hear and feel, the toleration on this planet, and more. For example, Helen Keller says, “Alone We Can Do So Little; Together We Can Do So Much”. Unity brings us together to make us be there with one another, not as standing by them but during times were there with these people (in our soul), of the world ; together we are ONE and will stay one no matter what, nothing can divide us not even the biggest dreadful disaster that happens. We are one and will endlessly be one.

THIRD PRIZE: *The Jewels of Life*

Things that can unite us, I call *the jewels of life*.

A chuckling husband with his pouting wife.

A roaring fire, lit ablaze.

A family together, singing in praise.

Tell your brother you like his painting,
Listen to his stories instead of complaining.

Make time for your sister who loves to chat
even though you're really an antisocial brat.

Our own families may feel abnormal until we
realize they're not immortal.

Little things along the way that make our lives
less grey. The jewels of life they help us to...
Dodge the mistakes millions make every day.

Time strolls by and waves at you, you don't
even see him 'til something's due. Wake up
early; take a stroll. 'Give it to them' until they
can no longer bear... Listen to the birds sing a
chorus of carols.

Smell the orchids, feel the sun. Pump your legs
as fast as you can run.

Let your lungs crave the air.
Sink your feet into damp sand.
Walk with someone hand in hand.
Stop talking and learn to listen.
New found knowledge makes your eyes
glisten.

Sit by the window on a rainy day,
read a book inside a New York cafe.

Laugh and smile, joke and play.
Love your life no matter the age.

Learn to thrive, not just exist.
Learn to love and don't resist.
Keep your friends close, and enemies closer.
Knowing that they'll be many posers.
Ignore the hate, and surpass them all.
They'll be looking up at you with awe.
Be friendly, but protect your trust.
Punch someone, if you must.
Just have a balance, don't be a dunce.
And don't forget this--
You only live once.

HONORABLE MENTION: *I Am From the COVID-19*

I am from Covid 19.
Where we hide
like turtles under their shells
waiting to come out until we are being set
Free.

Where people are getting
Killed by this virus
until then, we are turtles hiding away.

The covid 19 is serious
We're barricaded in houses
I say barricaded

If we're going to be stuck in our houses,
at least have a friend with you
during this

Long journey.

I say coming down the stairs
"Who's knocking at my door?"

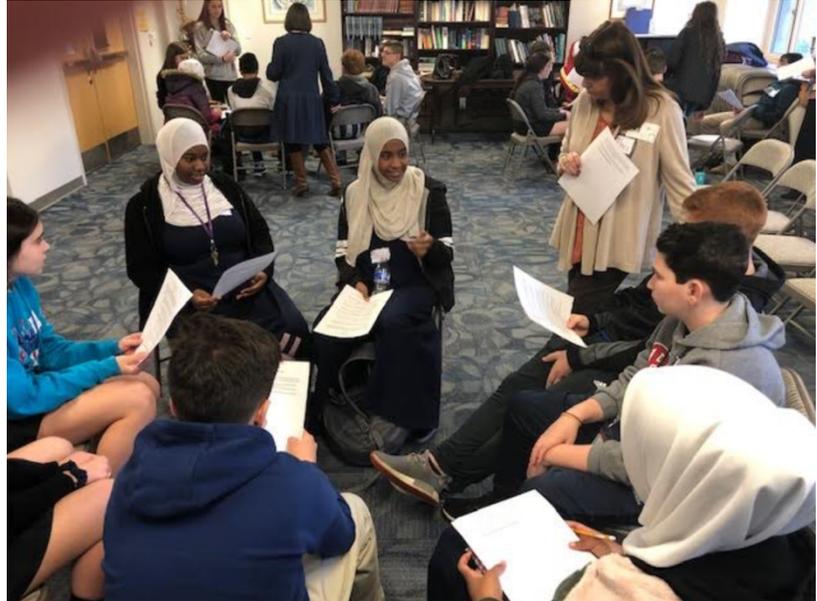
It's the Covid 19

I say, "I don't want you here.
You're ruining people's lives.

Step back and leave.
You don't belong here.
Go away.
You've caused chaos!"
Covid 19, we're afraid
we're afraid
we're afraid
You've put us people through so much pain
and struggle
but we've found a way to overcome you
by staying strong
And staying in our houses
and wearing masks and gloves
To all the people who have the Covid 19,
we need you to fight.
Remember, we are stronger than the virus.
If we lose, we get back up and fight again.
There's no stopping us
We're invincible
We can't be touched.

Writers Matter – Communities (WMC)

The Writers Matter Interfaith Initiative (WMII) has been successfully bringing together 8th grade students from St. Christopher’s School in the Somerton neighborhood of Philadelphia and from Jack M. Barrack Hebrew Academy in Bryn Mawr, in the western suburbs of Philadelphia. For the first two years of this program, 2017-2018 and 2018-2019, students from the Al Aqsa Muslim Academy in the Kensington neighborhood of Philadelphia was also a part of this program but was unable to participate during the 2019-2020 school year.



Because of COVID 19 and Black Lives Matter (BLM), and keeping in mind of the ever-changing educational challenges that lie ahead in the 2020-2021 school year. We re-evaluated what specific issues we would need to prioritize in our schools specifically related to all faith-based and secular communities, WMII saw the need for a more responsive and flexible program. WMII, now called Writers Matter: Communities (WMC), has been reorganized to include additional goals, participants, and educational opportunities.

In September, our first 8th grade students from a K-8 public school in Philadelphia joined the two faith-based schools. Their teacher is a veteran of the Writers Matter program, so she is very familiar with the writing-related goals of WMC. In addition, by including 8th grade students from a public-school class —students who represent many faiths, races, and ethnicities—the objectives related to interfaith understanding are expanded to include racial and ethnic understanding. Also, students



from the public school add additional socio-economic diversity to the current participant group.

This new Writers Matter: Communities model can demonstrate how different communities not only listen to one another, but also how a new cooperative community can be created among adolescents. These 8th grade students are our future. Even though WMC would involve a relatively small number of students, its focus on writing, listening, and understanding is a step forward.

Honorable Mention: *I Am From*

*I am from remembering
 I am from remembering the past so that it doesn't become our future
 I am the future
 I am from making sure our past doesn't repeat or run in a loop
 I am the youth
 I am a teen that will soon evolve into hope
 I am from evolving into a bigger and better future
 One that ends hatred, fighting, And inequality
 I am from watching my 8th-grade year disappear
 I am from not being able to leave the house without a mask
 I am from not letting a day go by without hearing about COVID 19
 I am from being stuck in the house with nothing to do
 I am from having everything close due to a virus
 I am from not being able to meet my friends at the park
 I am from having nothing but school work
 I am from equality
 I am from making sure that everyone feels safe
 I am from pain and regret that I lost my 8th-grade year and everything that came with it
 I am from having a Mom that always has my back
 I am from mending the past so that we can have a bright future*

Honorable Mention: *Uniting*

Uniting is a powerful thing
 Uniting works in many ways
 Means combining together and linking anyways
 Thru struggles we find our way back
 Even if that means agreeing on something wack
 We may not agree on everything but that's ok
 But we can agree on our safety in the world today
 Virus on every corner and we know to stay away
 We can agree on protective mask and Lysol spray
 Staying away is how we can unite
 Going to sleep and praying at night
 Hoping tomorrow is going to change
 Day by day we're losing rage
 Instead of being angry we're getting sad
 Thinking about the effects and we're not glad
 Watching the news for more fright
 Them telling us how many died that night
 Wondering how long this shall go on
 We've been on quarantine for months what's going on
 We know our safety is important but what's next to happen
 At Least we have each other and staying out of action
 Uniting is powerful and now you see
 Us being healthy during quarantine
 We can unite for our safety and well being
 Something we all want and should be seeing!

Honorable Mention: *The Unvanquished Truth*

Beware of who you should trust
 Friends can become enemies
 As like siblings can be separated from each other
 Family can be broken like a mirror that is shatter into pieces
 Aunts and Uncles fighting for what they think is best for the child

Life starts to get rough if you don't try your best to succeed
 Dreams can become broken if you don't follow your heart
 Wishes can be granted if you believe in them
 Jobs can be easier if you experience it before
 The future awaits to reveal it's true self, just be patient until it does

Moments can be a fantasy, not always reality
 Memories are just pieces that flow within you until the end of time
 Happiness taken away too soon, like losing a loved one
 Depression is a trap - endless pain that can never be forgotten
 Tears streaming down your face...what emotion do you show?

Family nights - having a blast, being true to yourself no matter what is going on in life.
 Parties - celebrating small life moments to show our love to the people who matter most.
 Conversations - always speak openly and truly to someone. Lying will get you nowhere fast.
 Holidays - creating bonds with distant relatives, lasting a lifetime.
 Someone once said, *"The smallest things always matter so make it count or you'll live with regrets."*

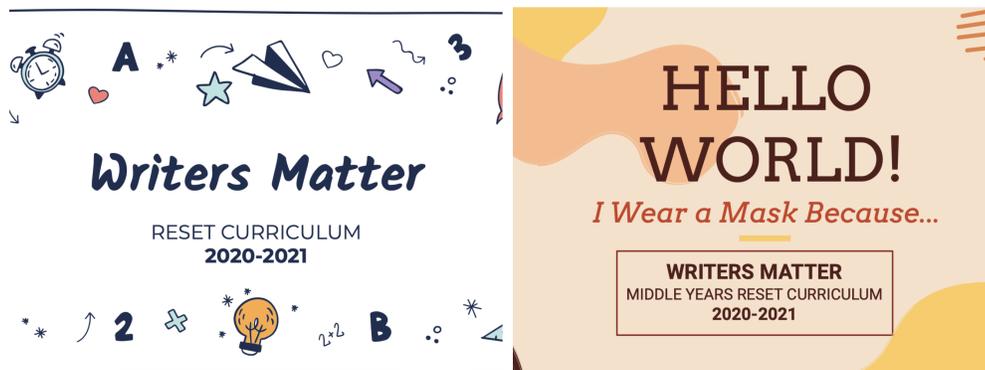
Summer Writing Camp at La Salle University

We were extremely excited to sponsor the first ever Writers Matter "Virtual" Summer Camp in partnership with La Salle University. Over 90 students attended the three week "Going for the Gold" camp where they engaged in integrated STEM activities throughout the day. Dr. Kim Lewinski along with three Writers Matter teachers, Aubrey Stewart, Carl Jackson and Kelly Ann Coughlin, integrated the Writers Matter program with STEM.

This year they focused on mentoring the Graduate Students at La Salle in online platforms for integrating writing into the curriculum. The students were engaged in learning through the creation of Bitmoji classrooms and using various platforms such as JamBoard, graffiti wall, google docs and many other learning tools. We are busy reimagining a hybrid version to offer again this summer.



RESET Curriculum



Given the challenges our students and the world faced these past several months and the uncertainty of what is yet to come for the new school year, Writers Matter gathered a group of teachers who worked together to rethink the curriculum for the beginning of the school year using a developmentally-oriented approach. They knew we couldn't just go back to where they left off. The world is different and certainly so are our students and some of their needs.

The Writers Matter teachers, in consultation with Bob Vogel, Kimberly Lewinski and Trent McLaurin, designed a writing oriented distinct curriculum to best help the students restart school after a very chaotic few months. The program takes into consideration the many challenging experiences the students faced during these unprecedented times. The curriculum was specifically designed to engage students and help them **"RESET"** back into school mode. The curriculum focuses on the many confusing and conflicting ideas and feelings the students have experienced since school closed in March.

We felt as they re-enter school many unsettled feeling of trauma, loneliness, isolation, emotional stress, issues with family and friends experienced throughout the COVID experience and BLM will be of concern. The curriculum was created to be used and adapted in any way the teachers feel fits the needs of their students. The slides can be used as is or copied and pasted into other slides they are creating for their students. We hope it will help the teachers start to talk about some of the traumatic events that have taken place in a safe, collaborative and supportive way.

Elementary lesson topics include:

- What it means to be safe
- Things that make you smile
- The skin I'm in (focuses on who YOU are)
- Where do we go from here?

Middle Level lesson topics include:

- Kids are talking about the Corona Virus
- Who's behind the mask (analyzing the different uses and meanings of wearing various masks)
- The skin I'm in (learning to embrace who they are)
- The Plan-demic (examining past situations of a pandemic and civil rights to reflect on their own thoughts and feelings)

We are extremely proud of the teacher leaders' work. The team members included:

Kelly Ann Coughlin - Moore, Carl Jackson- Henry, Allison Chorneiko – Lowell, Joan Carter- Stanton, Sara McCann –Lowell, Lori Odum – Penrose, Aubrey Stewart – Feltonville, Ann Olvera – Stanton, Tamara Green - Our Lady of Consolation, Charlena Watson – Mitchell

To access the programs, you can find them at www.writersmatter.org under materials for learning.

Consider Giving To Writers Matter

Please consider making a contribution to Writers Matter. Your contribution goes directly towards the purchase of books and writing materials for the students, as well as for afterschool programs.

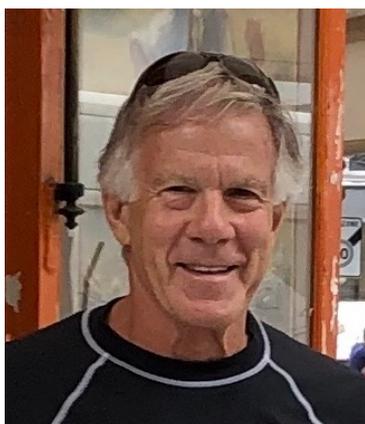
Please send tax deductible contributions to Writers Matter - Attention: Bob Vogel, 2021 Green St, Unit 1, Philadelphia, Pa. 19130. If you have any questions, please contact Bob Vogel.



Special Thanks To....

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A heartfelt thanks to these special individuals for their vision to help those less fortunate than themselves.



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