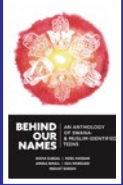




WRITE NOW:

Chapter 510 & the Dept of Make Believe
2019–2020 Impact Report



2019–2020 Publications List:

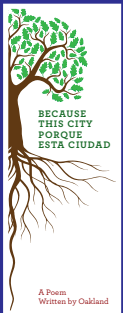
*Motherland:
Oakland Poems Inspired by Home*

*Behind Our Names:
An Anthology of SWANA-
& Muslim-Identified Teens*

*Because This City:
A Poem Written
by Oakland*

*510 Journal featuring
Samuel Getachew,
2019 Oakland Youth
Poet Laureate*

*The Teleport of
Oakland Youth
Voices (new online
literary magazine)*



BY THE NUMBERS

All together, Chapter 510:

- Inspired over **450** Oakland students to write with confidence and joy
- Delivered books and supplies to **100** families during COVID-19
- Provided **45** virtual writing workshops
- Hosted **13** public readings featuring Oakland youth
- Partnered with **4** OUSD schools
- Wrote **1** poem the length of a soccer field

DEAR FRIEND,



When we look back on this moment, what will we remember? What we did or didn't do. What we could or couldn't do. That everything changed.

Our impact report will reflect a year of change and resiliency. We opened the Westlake

Writers' Room, a dreamy literary satellite full of creative possibility. In March, COVID-19 moved our writing center online. During one school year fraught with police brutality, surges, fires, and fear, 450 young people found solace in their own stories and poems through Chapter 510 writing programs. Writing has more urgency in this new world.

When times get tough, I'll rise again
Write it out, pick up my pen . . .
Corona, go home!

—Nafissatou Ndiaye, age 8

Chapter 510 represents the very best of our Oakland community of artists, activists, teachers, poets, librarians, and parents. Yet it is the young poets, like Nafissatou and Aniya, who are able to help us feel what is happening and to be rightly enraged.

I will not lower my voice
I will not stop breathing
I will not lower my fist

—Aniya Butler, age 14

Whether we are in person or online, Chapter 510 is committed to anti-racism, anti-racist education, and publishing practices that are culturally responsive. We publish youth of color in programs led by paid artists of color who reflect the young community we serve.

Thank you for being a **force of change**. Thank you for supporting the voices that will lead us to repairing the future. Wishing you safety and bright light.

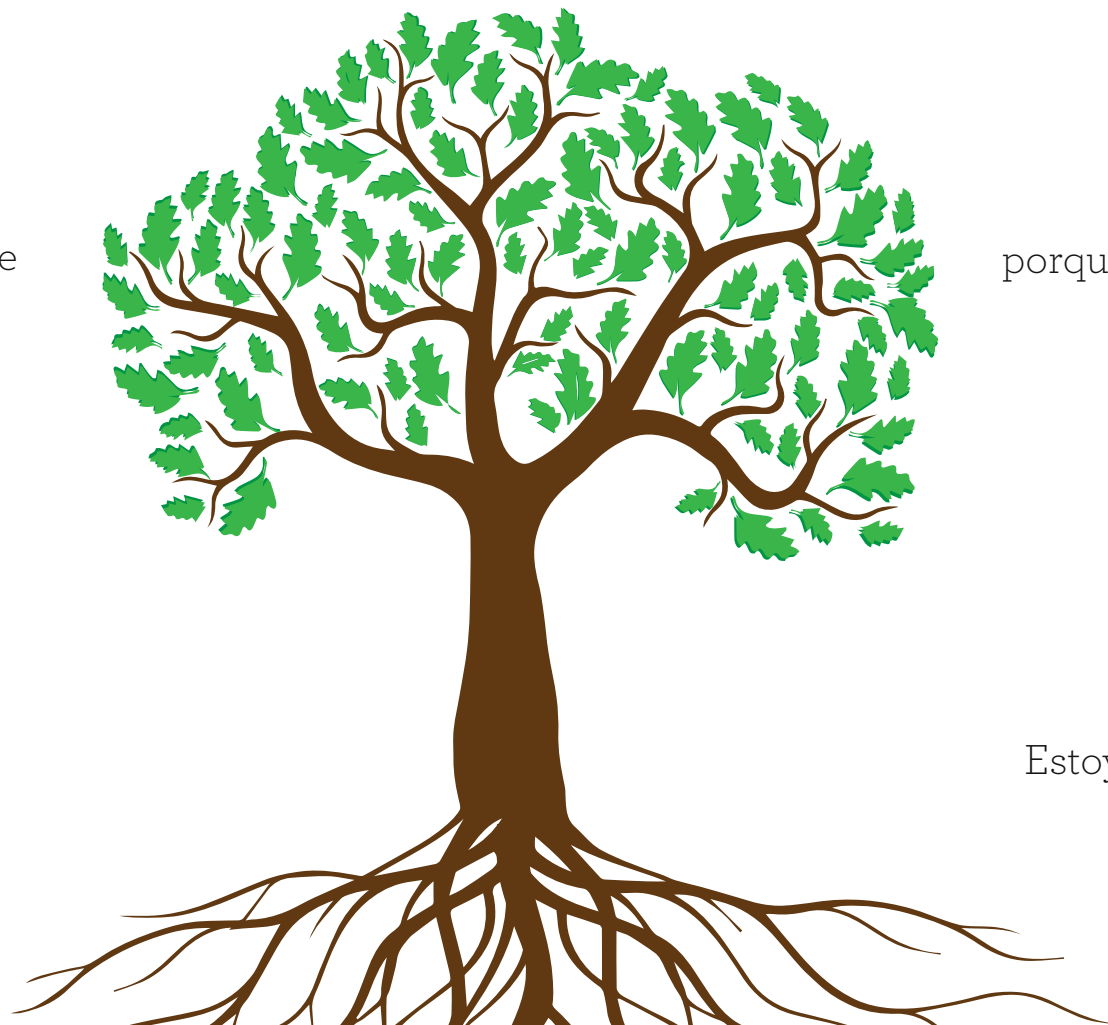
With gratitude,
Janet Heller
Executive Director

BECAUSE THIS CITY

I am rooted here
because this city reminds me of who I want to be
is the only place that accepts me for me
provides my tension as well as my release
lets me be all of my selves
I love Oakland's flawed beauty
how its humanity, sometimes broken
is as visible as its oaks and redwoods

I am rooted in Oakland because Oakland

—From *Because This City / Porque Esta Ciudad:*
A Poem Written By Oakland. Oakland, 2020



PORQUE ESTA CIUDAD

Aquí estoy enraizado
porque esta ciudad me recuerda quién quiero ser
es el único lugar que me acepta como soy
me permite mi tensión y mi liberación
me permite ser todo de mi mismo
Amo la belleza imperfecta de Oakland
como su humanidad a veces rota
es tan visible como sus robles y secuoyas

Estoy enraizado en Oakland porque es Oakland

PROGRAMMING 2019-2020

Westlake Writers' Room at Westlake Middle School

On the last day of the 2018-19 school year, several rising eighth graders circled up in a storage closet in their library and described a room that would help them write. A bright space with comfortable furniture set up in two sections: one for resting and the other for writing. Thanks to incredible volunteer efforts from our generous friends at Gensler Oakland, their dream room became a reality.

On September 20, 2019 Chapter 510 opened our first-ever Writers' Room at Westlake Middle School. Throughout the year, 20 volunteer tutors provided writing support to 75 scholars during their English classes, lunch period, and after school. Every Westlake scholar visited the bright and comfy room—once a closet stuffed with debris. With intensive writing, bookmaking and publishing opportunities, Chapter 510 responded to the needs of students whose vision guided us to make a room to write.



“For me to have room to write, I need a quiet creative environment that helps me focus where I can’t get distracted.”

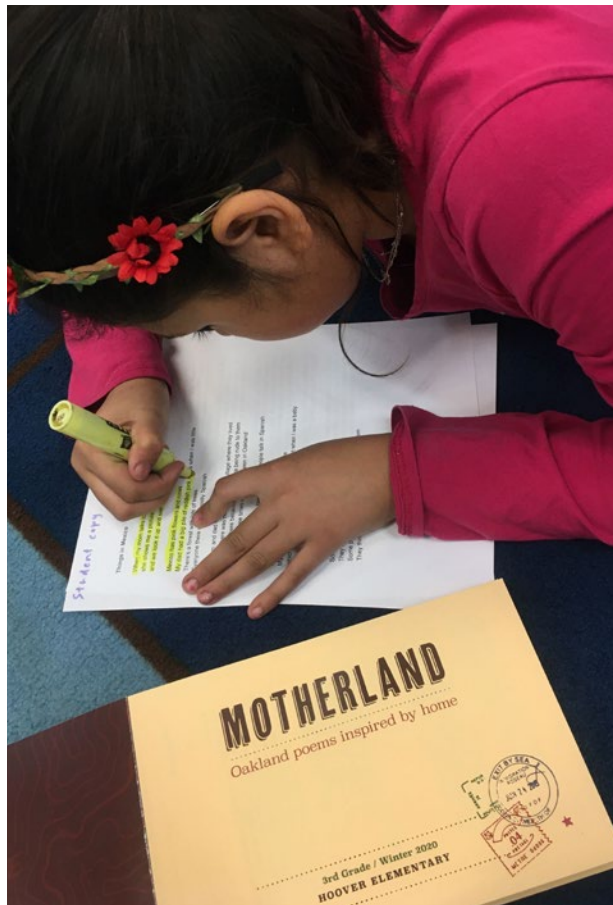
—JayIn Wade, 8th grade Westlake scholar



“Chapter 510 has been a tremendous asset to our school community. They have transformed and reinvigorated our library into a space where scholars can be creative and free to express themselves.”

—Maya Taylor, Principal of Westlake Middle School

In-School Book Project at Hoover Elementary School



We have a special relationship with Hoover, our neighborhood elementary school. For the 2019–20 in-school book project, bookmaker, poet, and teaching artist Perla Yasmeen Meléndez led a project on the theme of motherland. 3rd grade students wrote poems to the places and people they call home. What came forth were poems of memory, comfort, grief, and delight.

Perla designed a beautiful accordion-style book and translated the poems into Spanish. The chapters live inside envelopes with author portraits illustrated by each author. The book is magical and includes a letterpress cover in collaboration with Anna Kingsley of Pickypockets Press. Each young author stamped the cover of their own published poetry anthology. *Motherland* was released and celebrated at our First Friday event on March 6, 2020.



In-School Book Project at MetWest High School

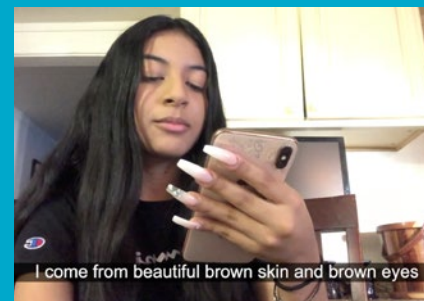
In 2020, Chapter 510 published an anthology of debut poetry written by twelve ninth graders from MetWest High School. Boldly introspective, the poems form a kaleidoscope of selves. Wisdom and strength are here; as are fear, grief, and healing. The title itself suggests the impossible: *If They Could See our Minds*. We can't know the inner worlds of these youth, but this is a beautiful glimpse.

“A poem is a door that allows us into a heart, and maybe it helps some to see their own minds. This is the power of poetry—especially that written and read by young people.”

—Ericka Huggins, activist, educator,
former political prisoner & leader
in the Black Panther Party



Identity Poems by Oakland Youth



Epic Poetry Day with the Oakland Roots

Over the course of two legendary days in fall of 2019 and spring of 2020, Chapter 510 invited Oakland residents of all ages to put pen to page and write poetry about motherlands, superpowers, growth, and love. In partnership with Oakland Roots Sports Club and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, we spun every submission into one collaborative work of art. This voluminous poem rose up from the roots of Oakland. *Because This City*, published in English and Spanish, is the symbol of resiliency during the pandemic. Written both in person and online, it uplifted our entire community and brought joy and magic during a time of worry.



“You don’t know where you are going if you don’t know where your roots are from. This book reminds me of my own roots.”

—Jonathon “Jonny” Orozco, Oakland Roots #98



Beauty In Difference:

Behind Our Names

*An Anthology of SWANA
(Southwest Asian and North African)
& Muslim-Identified Teens*

Behind Our Names is a collection of poetry that deep-dives into self discovery by asking difficult questions about family, community, and the histories that sculpt us. Led by poet and teaching artist, Sarah O’Neal, the poems resist definition and earnestly ask the reader to listen in more complicated, attentive, and nuanced ways as the authors grapple with the complexity of cultural identity and self identification.

*you are free from the burden of being onstage
of acting for an audience of unnamed strangers
of singing a song you did not write*

—Nishat Sheikh

Behind Our Names is the third in our series we call “Beauty in Difference” in partnership with Nomadic Press. Released on June 30th at an online book release celebration, these poems are guides to someplace deep within our human experience that only youth can see.



**BEHIND
OUR
NAMES** AN ANTHOLOGY
OF SWANA-
& MUSLIM-IDENTIFIED
TEENS

AISHA ELBGAL | NOEL HASSAN
AMIRA ISMAIL | KEA MORSHED
NISHAT SHEIKH

College Essay Writing Tutoring Program

For the seventh consecutive year, Chapter 510 supported college essay writing for MetWest high school seniors. Over 15 volunteers and staff provided essential tutoring and mentoring in the fall. Getting into college starts with a strong and confident voice. Nearly 90% of MetWest high school seniors were admitted into college.

First Fridays

Chapter 510 hosts family programming during Oakland's monthly First Friday events. These have been well attended



(100-150 people per month), and offer opportunities to try one's hand at creative writing, listen to young authors read from their new publications, and hear from community favorites like author and former Golden State Warriors player Adonal Foyle.

Words Like A Charm After School Teen Writing Workshop Series

Under the guidance of their teaching artist Maddy "MADlines" Clifford, teenagers from all over the Bay Area gathered on Zoom. They wrote poems with courage, honesty, and raw talent. Our final session was an open mic for all of the students to share their work within their writing community.

Story Writing Field Trips for OUSD Elementary Students

As an easy introduction to making writing fun, our storytelling field trips have been a hit with educators and students alike. Our magical bureaucrats guide students through a super fun storytelling process where they get to be the authors of their very own books. Over two online sessions they learn narrative, write a collaborative story, and complete their very own endings. The sessions are live-illustrated by professional Oakland illustrators. We deliver the final printed books to each student.



FROM THE FUTURE TO THE PAST

I have a front door and a back door
My mom walks me to school every day
I see a bridge and the cars drive on it
There's no water under it
I smell stinky stuff sometimes,
the breeze air, there's garbage outside
Pretend you're out of Hoover,
and you go straight
All the way straight
Until you hit the gas station
And then three houses, and I live there

—Eric



DEL FUTURO AL PRESENTE

Tengo una puerta principal y una atrás
Mi mamá me lleva a la escuela todos los días
Veo un puente y los carros manejan sobre él
No hay agua debajo del puente
A veces huelo cosas apestosas,
la brisa del aire, hay basura afuera
Pretende que estas fuera de Hoover,
y vas recto
Todo recto
Hasta que das con la estación de gasolina
Y luego tres casas, y yo vivo ahí

—Eric

*“My son is so excited
about writing after
Chapter 510 came to his
school. He’s really been
practicing and taking
himself more seriously.”*

—Guadalupe Canchola, Eric’s mom



THE BUREAUCRATIC

Income		Expenses	
CONTRIBUTED			
Individuals	\$121,823	Personnel	\$386,234
Foundations	\$277,078	Professional Fees & Teaching Artists	\$41,728
Government	\$173,311	Occupancy	\$53,335
Corporate	\$18,433	Programmatic Supplies & Publishing	\$39,635
Contributed Income	\$590,645	General & Admin	\$50,132
EARNED			
Space Rental	\$5,475		
Retail Sales	\$2,030		
Earned Income	\$7,505		
Total Income	\$598,150	Total Expenses	\$571,064

Our organization and work is shaped and informed by Oakland's community. Chapter 510 could not exist without the support of our generous donors, volunteers, teaching artists, board, and staff. Thank you for continuing to make believe with us as we help our students learn to write with confidence and joy!

CHAPTER 510 2019-2020 BELIEVERS

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 Jahan Khalighi, *Programs & Volunteer Manager*
 Janet Heller, *Founder & Executive Director*
 Jessica Blair, *Development Director*
 Margie Chardiet, *Publications Manager*
 Rae' Chel Stanley, *Program Associate*
 Tavia Stewart, *Founder & COO*

Teaching Artists

Darius Simpson
 Gabriel Cortez
 Leah Yael Levy
 Maddy MADlines Clifford
 Perla Yasmeen Meléndez
 Sarah O'Neal
 Thaddeus Howze
 Tiffany Golden

Artists

A'Darius Bell
 Aisa Villarosa
 Alan Clark
 Alicia Garza
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 Anna Kingsley
 Arthur Johnstone
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*dare to be here, in the sky
smiling with all our bones
and daring to
come home*



OAKLAND
YOUTH POET
LAUREATE
2019

FROM *FLIGHT*,
BY SAMUEL GETACHEW, AGE 16



MAKE ROOM
TO WRITE

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Whole Foods

Chapter 510 is a made-in-Oakland youth writing, bookmaking & publishing center. Our teaching artists and volunteers work side-by-side with educators to provide a safe space and supportive community for Black, brown, and queer youth ages 8–19 to bravely write. Our vision is that every young person in Oakland writes with confidence and joy.

We believe that writing is an act of liberation. When young people write and get published, they transform themselves and their communities.

Chapter510.org
546 9th Street
Oakland CA 94607

