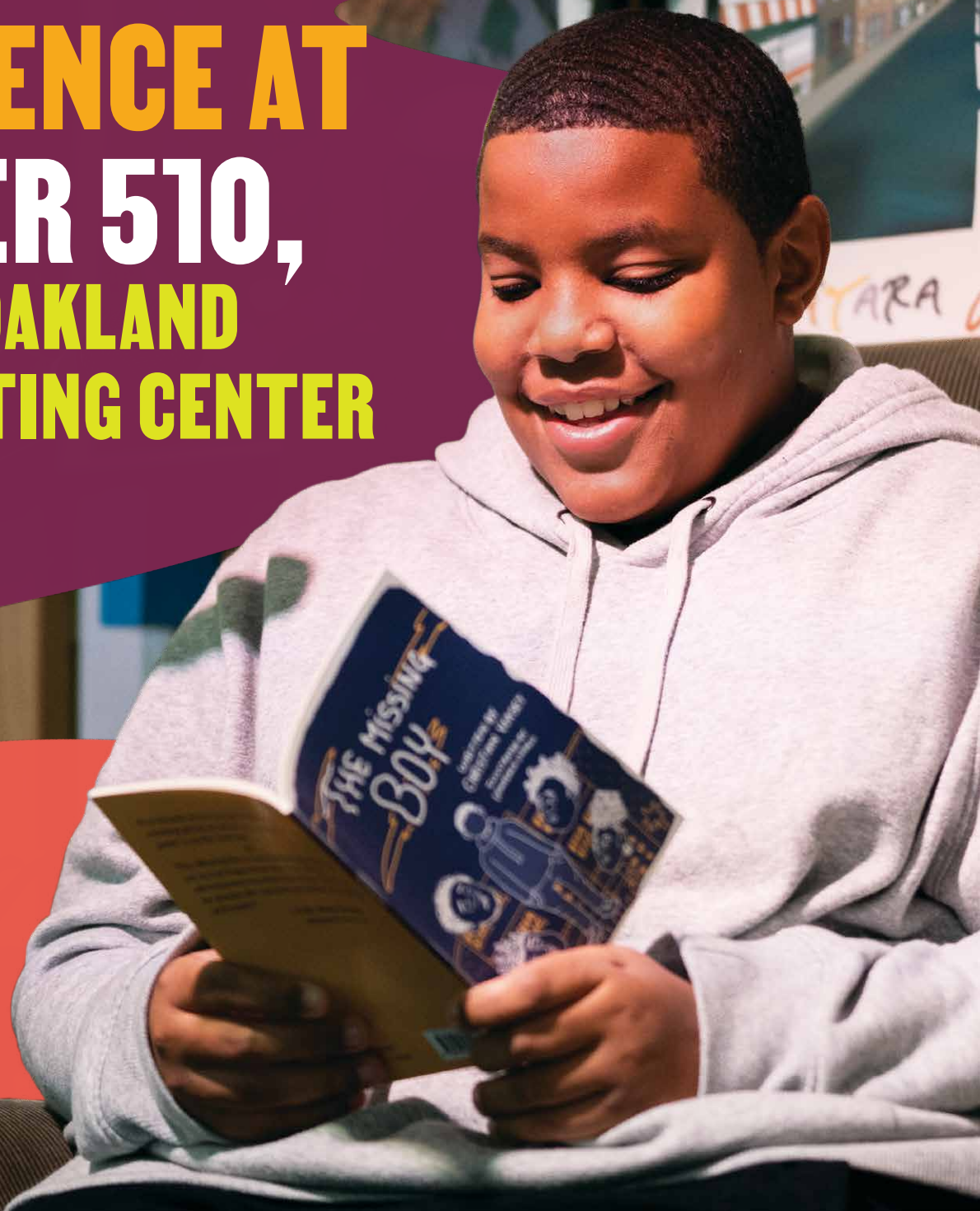


FINDING JOY AND CONFIDENCE AT CHAPTER 510, A MADE-IN-OAKLAND YOUTH WRITING CENTER

**2022–2023
Impact Report**



What students say about Chapter 510

Being able to be with my friends and teachers and learn about writing has been one of the best experiences of my life. Thank you Chapter 510 for helping me find myself through my writing. It means the world.

I learned a whole new form of expressing myself in words through writing.

I talked to new people and got [to know] what it's like to work on a podcasting project. It's a very fun after school activity.

I honed my skills in a safe and secure environment. Thank you for giving me such an amazing opportunity!

I would definitely recommend Chapter 510 programs to others who are interested in writing and storytelling.

CREATIVITY. EQUITY. DEMOCRACY. OAKLAND.

Dear Friends,

Youth in Oakland don't often have a safe place to gather and express their creativity or a place where they can find caring adults to guide them to be exactly who they are meant to be.

At Chapter 510, our teaching artists and mentors work side by side with educators to provide a safe space and supportive community so Black, brown, and queer youth ages 8-19 can bravely write.

Here, youth have a chance to try new things, meet new people, and have a say. Youth come here to rewrite the future. Here's how:

- Queer-identified youth of color are writing Sci-Fi stories, imagining new worlds and new rules on the page.
- English Language Learners write memoirs, poetry, and more in our year-long creative writing and book arts class. Students' lived experiences are a part of their scholarly journey.
- Teens of color produce podcasts, claiming their place and announcing their potential and power. They conduct interviews, and engage in important placemaking dialogues.
- Black, brown, and/or queer artists are mentors, guiding young people as they become published authors.

We're proud not only of our joyful space, but of the growing body of proof that our graduates feel more joyful, confident, competent and creative after participating in our FREE programs. Read on to learn more about our first-ever impact evaluation and to gain insights into our transformative workshops.

Then, please share the word about what we are doing in Oakland to promote radical imagination, racial equity, and literacy.

Mike Armstrong & Patti Birbiglia
Co-Chairs, Chapter 510



Evaluating Our Impact

A FIRST-EVER EXTERNAL IMPACT EVALUATION BY RISE RESEARCH FOUND:

96%

96% of our after-school participants believe their writing has gotten much better at Chapter 510

96% want to do the work it takes to become a good writer

and **96%** feel more confident when they get feedback about their writing from our Teaching Artists and mentors.

Researchers will next evaluate our programs occurring within OUSD schools. Chapter 510 will take results and engage teachers, partners, and our board in strategy sessions about ways to integrate lessons from the study and apply them moving forward



A STANFORD UNIVERSITY PhD DISSERTATION ON CHAPTER 510 IS UNDERWAY:

Jorge Eduardo Garcia, a doctoral student at the Stanford University Graduate School of Education, began observing our workshops, Teaching Artists, and joyful pedagogy to understand their impact on students of color.

Garcia says: "I'm interested in rigorous learning, a profound world opening, a kind of challenging learning that doesn't shut down exuberance or excitement. How is Chapter 510 shaping the emotional and social experience of learning?"

His advisor is the acclaimed Professor Antero Garcia. He will begin writing the dissertation in the 2023–24 school year.

Year in Numbers

650 **Young People** expressed themselves by becoming published storytellers last year. They were 48% Black, 25% Latinx, 10% Asian, 5% White and 2% mixed race/other. The majority live in West Oakland.

11 **Intensive Youth Programs** connected students—from English Language Learners to queer youth—to a supportive writing community. All participants joined for free, met professional writers, and used their imagination to write important stories.

20 **Youth-Penned Books** — the most in a single year in our history— hit the printing presses last school year. Our authors expanded the number of books for and by Black, brown, and queer youth.

62 **Editorial Mentors** helped students write, revise, and finalize poems, stories, and sometimes entire novels! To ensure a mentor pool that reflects Oakland, we offered these mentors honoraria.



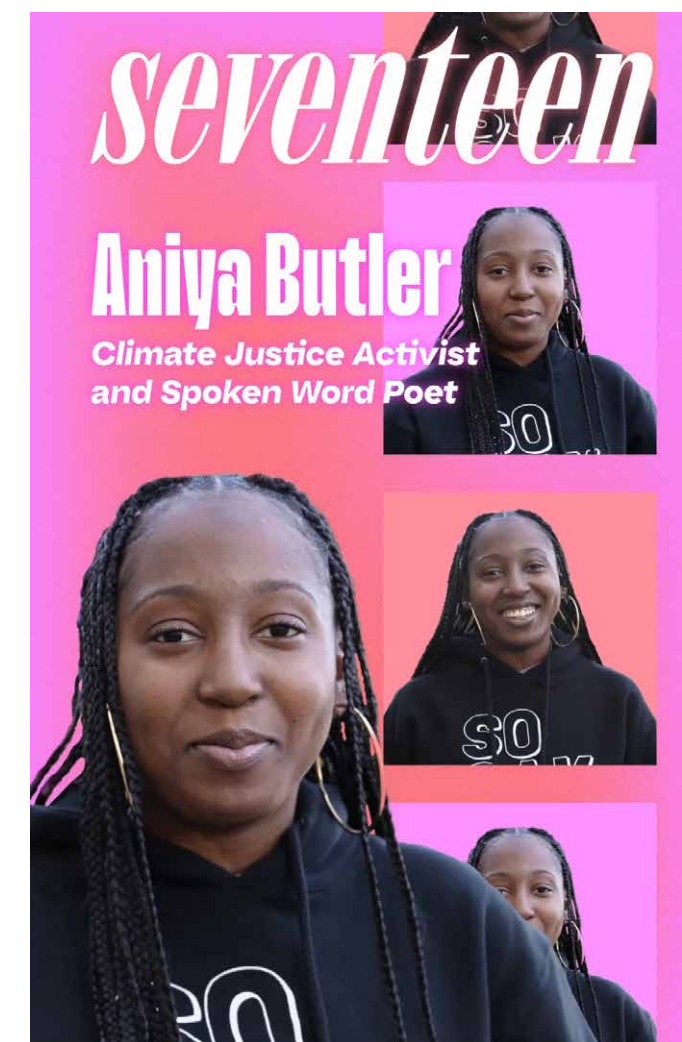
2 **Alumnae Earn National Recognition** — Alumna Aniya Butler, who we met at age 10 when she enrolled in a poetry workshop, was named one of Seventeen's 2022 Voices of the Year. At age 16, the acclaimed poet returned to Chapter 510 to lead our first in-person Open Mics since the pandemic in February and March 2023. Alumna Leila Mottley became a *New York Times* bestselling novelist for her 2022 debut novel, *Nightcrawling*, as well as a nominee for the Booker Prize at age 20.



3 **OUSD Schools** — MetWest High School, Westlake Middle School, and Hoover Elementary— hosted our programs onsite.

7 **Alumni** joined our inaugural Youth Advisory Board to gain leadership experience and produce our Teen Open Mics and edit our digital literary magazine, the *510 Journal*.

1 **International Award** — Global architecture firm Gensler awarded us its "Community Impact Award" for our Writing Center's beautiful, interactive space. Opened in 2022, our new Center promotes joyful writing, radical imagination, and meaningful connections so Oakland youth can flourish.



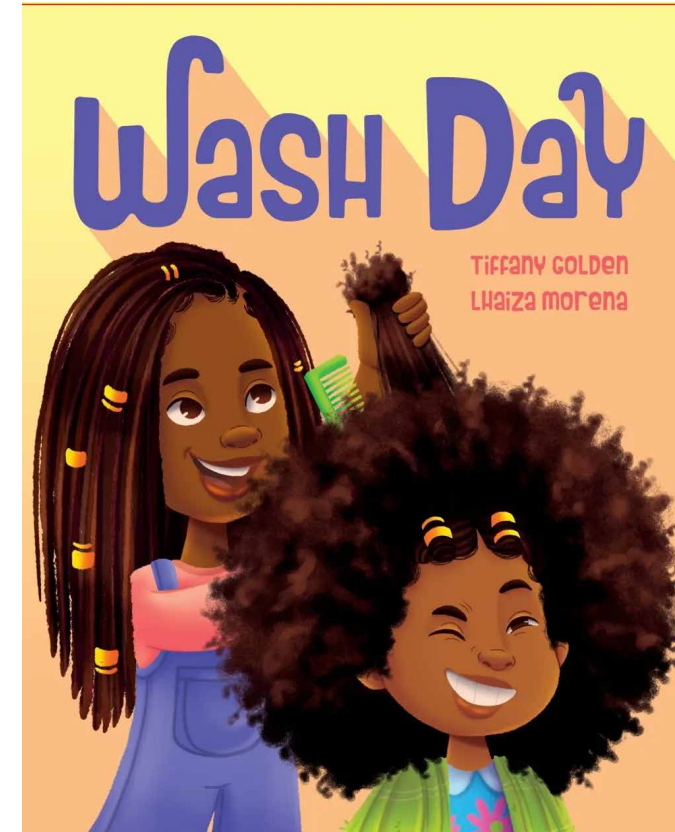
Spotlight:

TEACHING ARTIST & STUDENT EACH RELEASE CHILDREN'S BOOKS IN 2023!

Tiffany Golden, aka "Ms. Tee" at Chapter 510, says igniting student creativity, and making safe space for their voices—especially for and with Black children, is important to her:

"Storytelling for Black children plants the message that their voice matters. Visualizing and creating a world with their ideas deepens their social belonging. My job is to nurture each child's curiosity and model what it's like to give and take when in a creative space. That's when the magic happens."

Golden is a published children's book author who uses love and humor to shed light on the challenges and joys of childhood from a Black perspective.



In *Wash Day* (Mayo Clinic Press Kids, 2023), Golden explores the beauty and tradition of wash days through the eyes of Jelaya. Initially, Jelaya can't think of a worse way to spend the day. That is, until her big sister Jasmine explains that *this* wash day will be different.

In *I Want to Be Big* (Page Street Kids, 2023), Golden tells the story of Jaiceon, who wishes he was bigger. But as he grows, the situation gets out of hand, and Jaiceon starts to wonder if being small wasn't so bad after all.

Jorge Eduardo Garcia, who is a doctoral student at the Stanford University Graduate School of Education, has participated as a mentor to a student in one of Golden's workshops. He says:

"Observing Tiffany allowed me to see acts of care over and over. I talked to her about it, and she explained how she's kind of running an algorithm! Tiffany is deliberately noticing quiet voices, shy voices, and loud voices. She is noticing darker-skinned Black students and lighter-skinned Black students. She is taking note to gently subvert unfair hierarchies of race and participation! She uses her role to tend to students and insist that each child's voice gets heard."



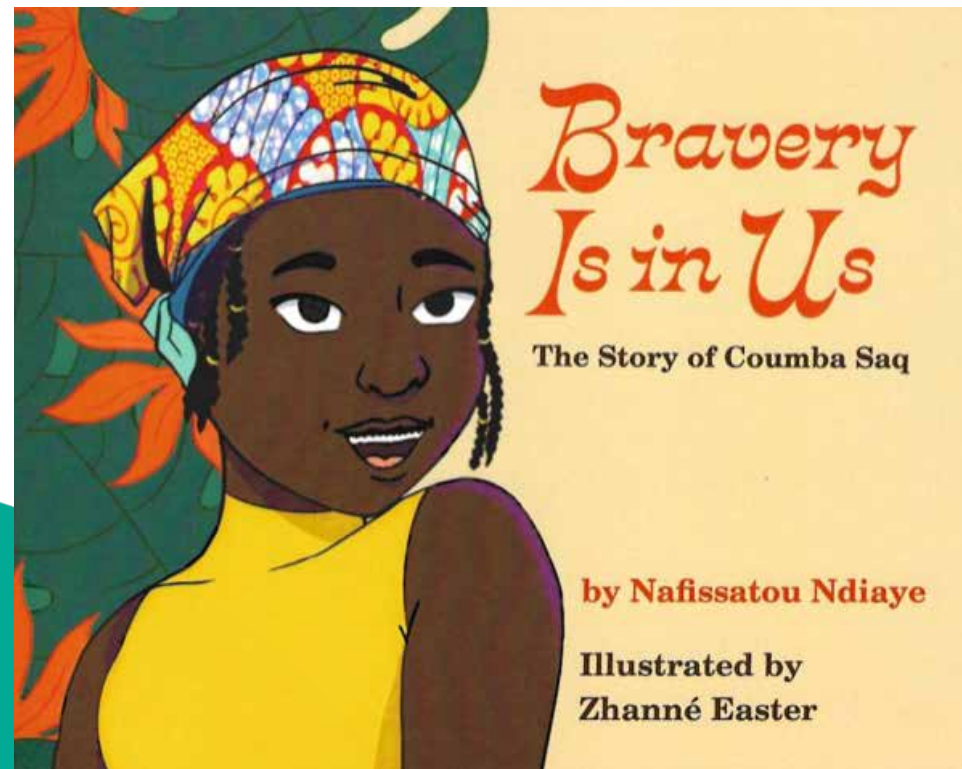
LAST SCHOOL YEAR, GOLDEN LED:

- A visual storytelling course for young Black and brown students in grades 3–5 who want to create comic books or a magazine.
- A mystery novel-writing workshop where each student, aged 8–10, writes their own story and readies it for publication with an editorial mentor and illustrator.
- A novel coaching program for one exceptional writer, Nafissatou “Nafi” Ndiaye, then aged 10.

Golden says: “I’m so proud to be a part of Nafi’s literary journey! She has six books under her belt currently, and hundreds more to go!”

The young student wrote *Bravery is in Us: The Story of Coumba Saq* (Chapter 510, 2022), an illustrated tale of a young girl born with mysterious gifts, to great fanfare.

Upon its release, The African American Task Force at OUSD bought 50 copies of the student’s book, distributing it to members. In Spring 2023, they awarded Ndiaye the Victor McElhaney Memorial Student Award for her contribution to the Oakland Arts community.

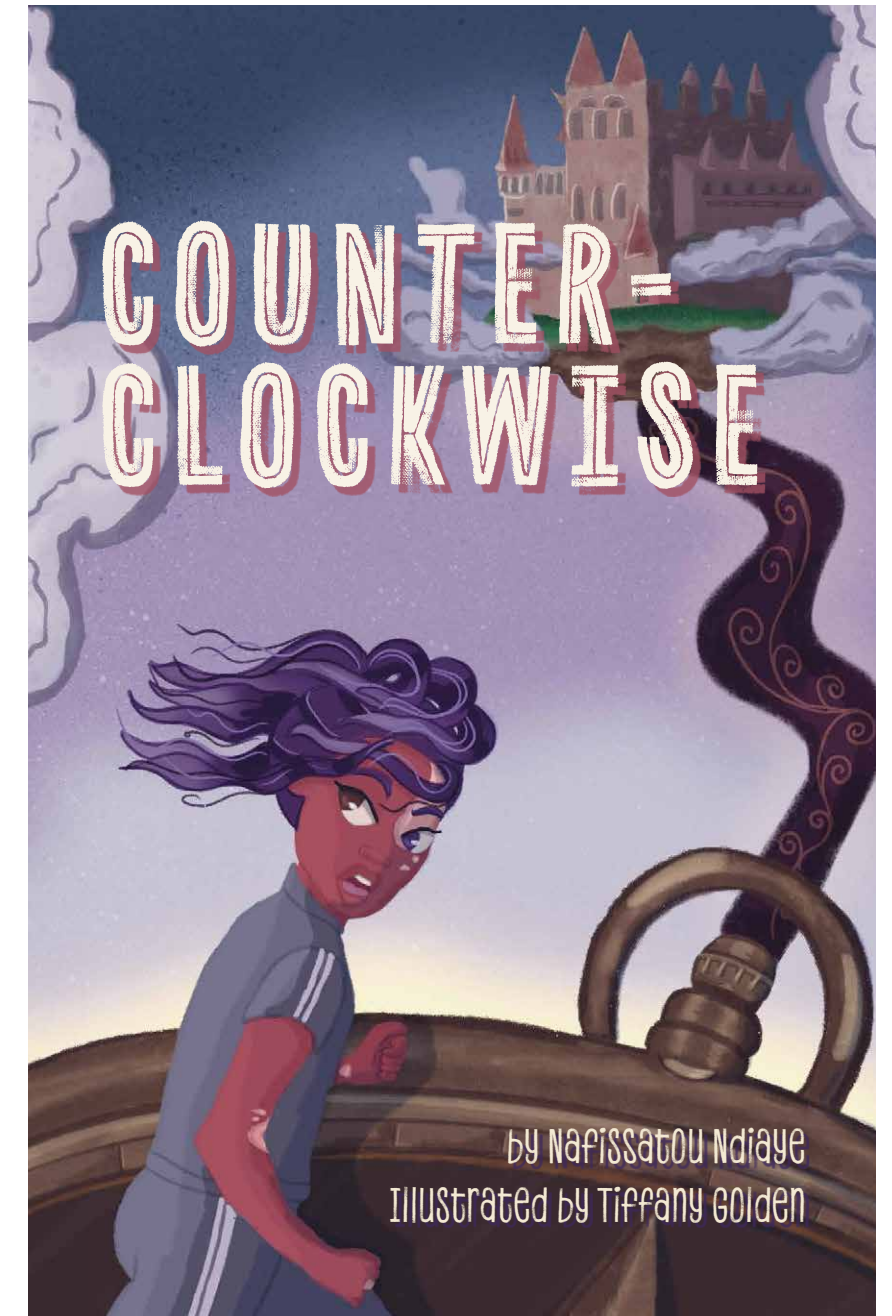


Ndiaye’s next release is a novel called, *Counterclockwise* (Chapter 510, 2023). In it, 14-year-old Angera Blackwood inherits her grandfather’s pocket watch and a world full of trouble as she’s sent on a quest to find three magical items.

Ndiaye says, “I wrote the book for my younger sister. She is 7, and she likes to hear stories inspired by our family’s roots in Senegal. When we read books together, she likes to ask me a lot of questions. I can’t wait to read this with her!”

When asked about her assessment of Chapter 510, Ndiaye says, “It is a space where I learned to talk to new people. It is really welcoming.”

Reflecting upon Ndiaye’s emerging writing career, Golden says: “Nafi is a powerful example of what is possible when students in Oakland are given the resources they need to express their inherent creativity. She will go far.”



Program Accomplishments

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROGRAMS

- Django Riley, 10, spoke at the Bay Area Book Festival alongside celebrated author Dave Eggers in May 2023. Riley had participated in "Stardust Stories," a Spring picture book program. [Photo].



- We offered our first-ever comic book program to young students interested in combining illustration and storytelling to great success. Students produced a zine.

- Third graders at Hoover Elementary created a magic deck of biographical cards highlighting hometown heroes from the past to the present, including Fred Korematsu, Feng Ru, and Favianna Rodriguez.



- We published stories by students in grades 3–5, including:
 - The Man in the Black Trench Coat* by Emily Cho
 - Coco Learns from Ava* by Sophie Cho
 - Magicon* by Mattie Chukwudebe
 - The Good Or Bad Rob* by Raquia Izaath Dilshad
 - Bravery Is in Us* by Nafissatou Ndiaye
 - Chubby, The Last Golden Salmon Catcher* by Jaylen Perry
 - Dunkin's Bravery* by Danielle De La Peña
 - Making Friends* by Zofia Wang
 - The Seven Elevens* by Jamison Turner
 - Too Many Taxes* by Simbha Shiromi

MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAMS

- School administrators at OUSD's Westlake Middle School invited Chapter 510 to launch its first-ever year-long course within a school. Students, all of whom live in households where English is not the primary language, contributed to an anthology with either a memoir-style piece or a fantasy story. What's more, the school had hoped 25% of enrolled scholars would pass the English Language Proficiency Assessment of California; we were thrilled to see 66% of students reach this goal!

- Queer identified students of color each learned about Black and brown Sci-Fi/Fantasy writers, wrote their own stories, and socialized in our "After Origins" program. In the coming year, the program, which results in a published anthology, will go from one semester to two due to positive student and parent feedback.
- We offered a 16-week poetry and publishing program led by published Teaching Artists Giovanna Lomanto and Duane Horton to guide

middle school students in writing poetry. Each student selected four poems for publication.

- We published stories and anthologies by middle school students, including:
 - What about Ur Friends?* By



Catherine Wallace

The Missing Boy by Christian Veasey

The Ghost Guardian by Su Myet Tun

Was It You? By Violet Wu

The Missing Case of Rose Gutierrez by Sarah Guerrero

The Ghost Detective by Ka'tara Jackson

Just A Game by Jamara Mabrey

Our Hero by Maya Makonnen

Empowered Origins: A Fantasy and Sci-fi Anthology by Queer Youth of Color in Oakland

Fire at your Fingertips: A Compilation of Poems by Oakland 8th Graders

HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS

- We held our first-ever podcasting program for teens: "Oakland Belonging: The Voices of Swan's Market." High school students of color from across Oakland produced a walking audio tour, a podcast series, and an anthology about the first racially-integrated retail space in Oakland.



Adults interested in storytelling and placemaking took notice:

- The Kenneth Rainin Foundation commissioned a video on the students' project
- The *Oaklandside* reported on the students' exploration
- The American Institute of Architects invited program leaders to speak at their national conference in June 2023

- Seniors at MetWest High School met with volunteer mentors one-on-one over 6-8 weekly sessions to develop college essays. A team of Google employees partnered with Chapter 510 to ensure that each student had a personal essay coach.

- Our second cohort of teen podcasters interviewed, wrote, and designed a podcast series on social-emotional issues impacting Black and brown youth, called "The Fish Bowl."



- We piloted our first-ever Youth Advisory Board. Participating youth received honoraria for leading Teen Open Mics in May and June and editing our *510 Journal*, an online literary magazine.



Where We're Headed

As an arts, literacy, and youth organization, we're about to enter into a period of strategic planning. We're seeking co-conspirators as we:

ENHANCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH

- * Expand the reach of our students' published titles
- * Infuse arts, creativity, and racial equity into all we do
- * Mentor, convene, and celebrate Black, brown, and queer youth

REFINE OUR BUSINESS MODEL TO INCREASE OUR RESILIENCE

- * Increase sales at our Dept. of Make / Believe storefront
- * Earn more from the rental of our magical space in Old Oakland
- * Attract more sponsors and donors who support youth creativity and literacy in Oakland

IMPROVE AND EXPAND OUR PROGRAMS

- * Improve and share our writing pedagogy
- * Expand our writing programs into more OUSD schools, especially at the elementary level

The Bureaucratic

INCOME

Contributed

Individuals	\$330,375
Foundations	\$455,475
Government	\$269,909
Corporate	\$95,095

**Total
Contributed \$1,150,854**

Earned

Retail Sales	\$31,429
Rental Income	\$5,637

**Total Earned
Income \$37,066**

TOTAL INCOME \$1,187,920

EXPENSES

Programs	\$821,589
Development	\$284,779
Operations	\$248,569

TOTAL EXPENSES \$1,354,937

Chapter 510's FY 2022-23 ended in a deficit due to an investment in Human Resources and evaluation.

Community Gratitude

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!

STAFF & TEACHING ARTISTS

Ashley Benitez-Garcia,
Dept of Make / Believe Store Clerk
Elena Botkin-Levy, Teaching Artist
Alexandra Céspedes-Kent,
Director of Development
Margie Chardiet,
Program & Publications Director
Tiffany Golden, Teaching Artist

Duane Horton, Teaching Artist
Janet Heller, Founder & Executive Director
Azusa James, Program Associate
Vernon Keeve III, Teaching Artist
Jahan Khalighi, Program Director
Anna Kingsley, Teaching Artist
Julia LaChica,
Dept of Make / Believe Store Clerk

Giovanna Lomanto, Teaching Artist
Marabet Morales,
Community & Programs Manager
Jenny Ramos, Intern
Tavia Stewart,
Founder & Chief Operating Officer
Tania Quintana, Program Associate

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* New board members joining in 23–24:

Apur Patel, The Clorox Company
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James Sampson, iHeartMedia

WRITING MENTORS

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Oakland Public Library
Oakland Roots Soccer Club

Oakland Youth Poet Laureate Program
RISE Research & Evaluation
Stanford University Graduate School
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Westlake Middle School

DONORS AND FUNDERS

Illustrious Supporters

(\$75,000 and up)

California Arts Council
City of Oakland Cultural Affairs
Oakland Fund for Children & Youth

Epic Supporters

(\$50,000 and up)

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Philanthropic Ventures Foundation
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Lauran Weinmann
Vita Wells

Magical Supporters (\$20 and up)

We thank the many donors who supported our youth programs with monthly and one-time contributions up to \$999. It takes a village!

In-Kind Supporters

Adriane & Mike Armstrong
Bombera
Sarah Rich
& Alexis Madrigal
Martha & William Slavin
Michael Witlin Associates, Inc.
Michael Wong

“Chapter 510 offers a ‘home’ to young Oakland artists ... where they can find a creative community.”
—Boots Riley

“Chapter 510’s poets demand us to ‘make believe’ that this is the world as it could and should be.”
—Ellen Sebastian-Chang

MISSION & VISION

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.

CHAPTER 510 PROGRAMMING

We believe that writing is an act of liberation. When young people write and get published, they transform themselves and their communities; succeeding in school, work, and life.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge that the land we are on today is the traditional and ancestral homelands of the Chochenyo Ohlone people. We are located in Huichin, also known as Oakland, on the unceded territories of Chochenyo and Ramaytush Ohlone peoples, who have continuously lived upon this land since time immemorial. We recognize the historic discrimination and violence inflicted upon Indigenous peoples in California and the Americas, including their forced removal from ancestral lands, and the deliberate and systematic destruction and genocide of their communities and culture.



CHAPTER510.ORG
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