TAKING SHAPE

Chapter 510
Impact Report
2020–2021
DEAR CHAPTER 510 COMMUNITY,

I joined this board because Chapter 510 gives Oakland youth a voice to share their truth. I support Chapter 510 because it is an authentically Oakland-based organization committed to developing and publishing youth voices.

We are eager to share the following report highlighting our work in 2020–2021. Since the beginning, we’ve believed that writing is an act of liberation and we set out to establish an Oakland-based writing center for kids, steeped in boldness and courage. In the last year, Chapter 510 leaned deeper into its role as a cultural hub for Oakland—a home for radical educators, artists, and young thinkers. Despite the shutdowns and distancing imposed by the pandemic, we continued to write and publish and be together. We expanded our programming to include new multi-genre forms and we even wrote and produced our first album!

Looking back at these highlights from the year, I’m proud of the ways we provided an outlet for our youth, even virtually at times, to process the world around them, and to express the challenges and fear, and joys and successes of the last year.

We hope you enjoy reading our 2020–2021 Impact Report, and that you feel inspired and energized by the Chapter 510 community. Please join me by supporting this critical work.

Adrienne Timmons,
Board Member and Parent
2020–2021 By the Numbers
Chapter 510 has grown into a vital community resource in less than a decade. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, we persevered to accomplish many goals last year.

IN 2020–21, WE:

Provided over 750 youth with creative writing workshops and hosted 25 virtual events.

Published 27 books, including 8 novels written by middle school students.

Saw 95% of our students from MetWest High School admitted into college.

Hosted our MONTHLY teen open mic series, in collaboration with Youth Speaks.

Expanded into multi-genre forms including songwriting and screenwriting, and we wrote our FIRST musical.

Connected Oakland’s young writers to 40 local BIPOC and queer writers, illustrators, and musicians for mentorship and inspiration.

Looked to the future with a new 3-YEAR strategic plan.

Youth Served: 750

Total Programs: 14

Books Published: 27

Books in Manuscript: 4

Cost per Student: $963

Average Hours of Instruction per Student: 30

Mentors and Volunteers: 65

Paid Teaching Artists: 6
In the summer of 2020, Chapter 510 & the Dept. of Make Believe
Led by teaching artist Tiffany Golden, the students in Song & Story
pandemic, dream of a peaceful planet, and celebrate their strongest
professional musicians. The young songwriters bemoan the global
selves. Hope reigns supreme.
“These lyrics are better than a lot of songs out there. I’m
“With songs that uplift spirits and incite smiles,
youth. What makes this project powerful is the collaboration
between professional musicians and young poets. T ogether
excited by Chapter 510’s work and what they are doing
to help create and nurture the Oakland artist community.”
— Boots Riley, rapper, producer,
scrennwriter, film director,
— Maddy “MADlines” Clifford,
writer, musician and educator
•
and communist activist

By Arlita Michelle Bailey, Illustrated by Jessica Jones
By Ayanna Johnson, Illustrated by Nicky Rodriguez
By Bryan Palacios-Nolasco, Illustrated by Shuchita Mishra
By Aliyah Walker, Illustrated by Vanessa Mora Méndez
By Jaden Phelps Jiles, Illustrated by Breena Nuñez
By Sur’Hynes Briggs, Illustrated by Alan Clark

Multiverse
An Anthology
of Latinx Writers

If They Could See our Minds
Identity Poems by Oakland Youth

Motherland: Oakland
Poems Inspired by Home
Written by Third-graders at Hoover Elementary

Because This City
A Poem Written by Oakland

Freedom Is
Songs by Oakland Youth, Illustrated by Dawline-Jane Oni-Eseleh

Secrets
By Arlita Michelle Bailey, Illustrated by Jessica Jones

Sunny
By Ayanna Johnson, Illustrated by Nicky Rodriguez

Unordinary
By Bryan Palacios-Nolasco, Illustrated by Shuchita Mishra

Full Snow Wolf Moon
By Aliyah Walker, Illustrated by Vanessa Mora Méndez

The Forgotten Secrets
By Jaden Phelps Jiles, Illustrated by Breena Nuñez

My Ninja Village
By Sur’Hynes Briggs, Illustrated by Alan Clark

Redefining Justice
Oakland Poems to Read and to Mail
Written by Fourth-graders at Hoover Elementary

The Big Adventure
By Mrs. Wetherford’s Fourth-Grade Class from Dover Elementary

The Haunted School
By Mr. Avila-Silver’s Fourth-Grade Class from Franklin Elementary

The Boxer and the Bad Witch
By Ms. Clark’s Second-Grade Class from Vincent Academy

Secrets of the Key
By Gerri Swift’s Fourth-Grade Class from Caliber Academy

San Skycisco
By Ms. Haines’s Fourth-Grade Class from Vincent Academy

Robin the Bear and Tony the Spider
By Kerstin Groop’s Fifth-Grade Class from Vincent Academy

The Candy Beach
By Ms. Ross’s Second-Grade Class from AIMS K–12

The Cutoff Christmas
By Marilee Simons’s Fourth-Grade Class from Franklin Elementary

Unicorn Panda and the Fox
By Ms. Grosvenor’s Second-Grade Class from La Escuelita

Bend Like Water
Poems by Oakland Sixth-graders, Illustrated by Breena Nuñez

Kiki, Emily, and Ashley’s First Adventure
By Ms. Prospato’s Second-Grade Class from Franklin Elementary

Sophia and the Magic Land
By Ms. Tania’s Second-Grade Class from Dover Elementary

The Bone Breaker’s Untold Tale
By Elise Frank & Kimica Bland’s Fourth-Grade Class from Caliber Beta Academy

The Dance Across Time
By Mr. Powle’s Fourth-Grade Class from Caliber Beta Academy
Organizational Highlights

ADAPTING DURING COVID-19
When the pandemic struck, we successfully pivoted all of our programs online, and throughout the year we worked hard to provide the same feeling of safety, creativity, joy, and celebration that characterizes our in-person programs. We were proud to hear from teachers and students that our online programming was among the most engaging for our Zoom-weary students, and provided a place for them to express themselves authentically during a time of such uncertainty.

We further supported our community by delivering books and supplies to 100 families during the shutdown, and by providing creative curriculum-linked learning content to teachers who were also overwhelmed (many of whom had their own children at home to care for while teaching).

STUDIO PATHWAYS EQUITY IN THE ARTS
Throughout the past year, the entire staff engaged in an intensive study with Studio Pathways, a Bay Area-based firm that trains organizations and schools to use arts-integrated transformative learning experiences to dismantle patterns of inequity. The focus of our practice was on learning and applying the key principles of Culturally Responsive Teaching, which include social-emotional learning, evolving project-based learning through creative inquiry, and centering the role of the cultural and contemporary arts for greater learning outcomes. Our Teaching Artists have integrated these skills to develop more inclusive and engaging curricula for youth, with a focus on equity.

“The confidence that exuded from the young authors brought me to tears”
—Maya Taylor, Principal of Westlake Middle School
ESTABLISHING OUR ROOTS
Chapter 510’s brick and mortar Writing Center on Telegraph Avenue closed during the early days of the pandemic. However, we landed a new beautiful space at historic Swan’s Market in Old Oakland, and spent the spring working pro bono with architecture firm Gensler Oakland to imagine and design a bigger, brighter space. When the facility is fully built out, we will have a new bookmaking studio, performance stage, comfortable space for writing, retail store, and podcasting studio. This highly visible space will be painted with colorful murals and will invite the Oakland community inside to celebrate our youth writers with us.
Events and Gatherings

We found some incredible opportunities to come together (in-person and virtually) during the last school year. Some of our events, celebrating the students, families, teaching artists, and broader community, are detailed below.

**KQED NIGHT OF IDEAS—JANUARY 28**
Two Oakland teenagers, Aniya Butler and Isha Clarke, wrote and performed poems for KQED’s 2021 Night of Ideas, in partnership with the San Francisco Public Library. This event brought together Bay Area thinkers, community leaders, artists, and visionaries for a festive online library takeover.

**WRITE YOUR ROOTS—APRIL 30**
On April 30, 2021 as we faced another spring in a pandemic, we sought the power within. What makes Oakland powerful? What makes Oakland, Oakland? What do we dream of doing when our masks come off? With these questions, we created the second annual Write Your Roots poetry form. In partnership with the Oakland Roots Sports Club and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Fellows Program, we shared the forms widely and invited all Oakland residents to contribute lines of poetry. We wove responses into one epic poem, gathered at our new location, and teaching artist Giovanna Lomanto shared it with the public over the mic. Oakland
Mayor Libby Schaaf proclaimed the last Friday of April to be annually deemed **Write Your Roots Day**. We translated the collaborative poem into Spanish and published it into a book titled *Because We Are Power*.

**WRITE NOW—JUNE 17**
In June of 2020, Chapter 510 gathered an amazing panel of writers and thinkers who deeply connect to Oakland. Chapter 510 poet and activist Isha Clarke interviewed Alicia Garza, Alexis Madrigal, and Roman Mars about how writing is central to organizing and making change. This was one of the most powerful online gatherings for our community. Isha stunned the audience with her power and her hope. It is Chapter 510’s practice to create intergenerational dialogue, and this one was extremely memorable.

*The people who live in Oakland make graffiti, make art, make In-N-Out, God and people and potholes and wormholes.

*We are history.

*Made of a team, we, together, are welcome and contributing, are the history and are history-makers . . .
**ART OF STORYTELLING: BLACK JOY—SEPTEMBER 24**

This was a virtual evening of performance and conversation moderated by writer and professor of poetry/social action and composition studies Daniel Summerhill, in conversation with two young writers from Chapter 510’s Black Joy poetry anthology, Samuel Getachew (former Oakland Youth Poet Laureate) and Elijah Hynson alongside their poet mentors. It included performances by award-winning writers Tongo Eisen-Martin, Darius Simpson, Vernon Keeve III, and James Cagney. This event was produced in partnership with Nomadic Press, and was featured on California Humanities’ website.

**FREEDOM IS ALBUM RELEASE—OCTOBER 22**

We moved our elementary music camp, “Freedom Is,” to an online format in 2020. Eleven students were paired with local musicians and groups such as Santos Soul, Alphabet Rockers and AshEL “Seasunz” Eldridge, and learned to write lyrics and songs. We released our first album with eleven songs and an accompanying songbook illustrated by Oakland-based artist Dawline-Jane Oni-Eseleh. Their songs deal with isolation, distance learning, and other pandemic-related themes.

“The curtain of night fell upon us, but my family still shines in the darkness. Even when it’s the hardest, we can help all lost causes.”

—from “Shine,” written by ten-year-old Ava Marie Smith with Hannah Mayree from the Black Banjo Reclamation Project

“These lyrics are better than a lot of songs out there. I’m excited by Chapter 510’s work and what they are doing to help create and nurture the Oakland artist community.”

—Boots Riley, rapper, producer, screenwriter, film director, and communist activist.
**CHAPSPEAKS OPEN MICS—MONTHLY**

Throughout the year, we offered our popular monthly First Fridays open mic event, which provided a safe and inspiring space for youth under 21 to practice performing their writing. These events averaged 50 people online each month, and provided opportunities for young writers to perform, listen to other youth writers read from their new publications, and be inspired by well-known under-30 poets like Gabriel Cortez, Tova Ricardo, Darius Simpson, Samuel Getachew, and others. ChapSpeaks is a collaboration with Youth Speaks’ teen writing program.
**Featured Student Writing**

**ALL-TOWN POEM**
Oakland is made of the real deal (he, she, they, them and those who care). We are Oakland. Oakland is Oakland is Oakland is Oakland is us, is not for praise or to please. Is safe ways to help, Oakland is made of the lake on Sundays, the hills and the valleys of beauty and hope, of earth, of a growing oak tree, of interstates, potholes and poets. Is painted boards of bright colors for warmth in our eyes, is geese pooping at Lake Merritt, swarming helicopters, is culture like ingredients in a stew, coming together to make something new—to make something new, to make something new, we make spiritual diversity of equality, Oakland is curious hearts, capable hands, Panthers’ legacy, resilience inclusion, hipness, pride, beauty, triumph screaming in the depths of the concrete, alight with footsteps of delightful cosmic creatures, nature, people, video games, nice communities of incredible and interconnected human beings.

**POEM TODO-PUEBLO**
Oakland está hecho de quienes se la rifan (él, ella, elle, nosotros y a los que les importa). Somos Oakland. Oakland es Oakland es Oakland es Oakland es nosotros, no es para elogiar o para complacer. Son maneras seguras de ayudar, Oakland está hecha del lago en los domingos, las colinas y los valles de belleza y esperanza, de tierra, de un roble en crecimiento, de interestatales baches y poetas. Es pintada de tablas de colores brillantes para dar calidez a nuestros ojos, son los gansos haciendo popo en el lago Merritt, enjambres de helicópteros, es cultura como ingredientes de un estofado, reunidos para hacer algo nuevo—para hacer algo nuevo, para hacer algo nuevo, nosotros hacemos diversidad espiritual de la igualdad, Oakland es corazones curiosos, manos capaces, legado de las Panteras, resiliencia, inclusión, hipness, orgullo, belleza, triunfo gritando en las profundidades del concreto, iluminada de pasos de encantadoras criaturas cósmicas. naturaleza, gente, videojuegos, comunidades amables de seres humanos increíbles e interconectados.
Program Highlights

**STORY APPOINTMENT FIELD TRIPS**
We held 12 storytelling field trips for 300 elementary students. We changed the format from one- to two-day events to include time for students to write individualized story endings, and held them online instead of in-person.

“Thank you for helping us share our story in this really really fun way!”

—4th-grade participant

**BEAUTY IN DIFFERENCE: WELCOME TO THE LATINX MULTIVERSE**
We partnered with Nomadic press to offer a 16 week online poetry and publishing program for Latinx youth entitled Welcome to the Multiverse, led by Oakland-based author and poet MK Chavez. This was part of our annual “Beauty In Difference” workshop, which is designed for historically underrepresented teens and provides an opportunity for students to explore their histories and identities. This program culminated in an anthology of the students’ poetry published by Nomadic Press, entitled Multiverse: An anthology of young latinx writers, released in June 2021.

“Wait wait wait, I’m not finished!”
—4th-grade participant

**SING MY NAME**
Eleven elementary students gathered online to write lyrics, develop songs, and create an entire musical, publication forthcoming in spring 2022. These young authors’ accomplishments and the volunteers who made them possible were recognized at a table reading in May 2021.

“Noooooo! There’s only one minute left in this zoom?”

**NOVEL WRITING WORKSHOP AT WESTLAKE**
Over the course of the 2020/21 school year we published, released and celebrated eight new single author novels written by sixth grade Westlake scholars. The Westlake Novel Writing Program was a two year long creative writing and publishing program launched in November 2019 during National Novel Writing Month. In the new Westlake Writers' Room designed by Oakland Gensler, each sixth grader produced a novel by the end of the 2020 school year. During the 2020–21 year of remote learning, we hosted online book releases to celebrate these young writers who were then seventh graders. Each community event featured two of the young novelists reading excerpts from their novels alongside their illustrators and mentors to an audience of their peers, family, teachers and all of Westlake staff.
School-based Partnerships

FRANKLIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
We developed a new partnership with Franklin Elementary School for Write Your Roots Day. Based on the success of the event, Chapter 510 staff were invited to conduct creative writing workshops. We are excited to continue building this partnership in 2021–22 by offering a poetry writing and mural design workshop.

WESTLAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP
Despite the pandemic, we held eight book release events between December and April to celebrate novels students had written the previous year. In the words of Principal Maya Taylor, “The confidence that exuded from each of the authors brought me to tears every month. It was a definite reminder of why I got into this work and what can happen when two organizations become family, have a shared vision, and move on making that vision a reality.”

METWEST HIGH SCHOOL IN-SCHOOL COLLEGE ESSAY SUPPORT
We continued to work with seniors at MetWest High School, helping them craft and refine their college admissions essays. 95% of the students we worked with was admitted to college.

HOOVER IN-SCHOOL
Bookmaker, poet, and teaching artist Perla Yasmeen Meléndez led a poetry workshop on the theme of Justice with fourth graders from Hoover. All classes took place on Zoom. Published in a book of beautiful postcards illustrated by Oakland artists, these poems were bound in a boxed set in December 2021.

I will look at myself
In the mirror
And it looks like me
But different
I look at my shadow
In the eye
–Julian
Chapter 510 is currently in a period of incredible growth, and in solid fiscal health, with an operating budget of $1,093,501 for 2021–22. Over the past year, we prepared a new strategic plan and moved into a new highly visible space in Swan’s Market, in the heart of Old Oakland. As we emerge from the pandemic and return to in-person programming, we are planning a significant expansion of our programs, almost doubling the number of Oakland youth we serve.

In October, we launched the final phase of our three-year, $3.5 million fundraising campaign, “Make the Space,” to support the build-out of our new physical location and our programmatic expansion.

Throughout 2021–22, we plan to serve over 1,100 Oakland youth, offer 25 writing workshops and 16 field trips, and publish novels, picture books, and collections of poetry.
### Financials

#### INCOME

**Contributed**
- Individuals $190,393
- Foundations $366,500
- Government $147,021
- Corporate $39,539

**Total Contributed** $743,453

**Earned**
- Space Rental $700
- Retail & Book Sales $4,966

**Total Earned Income** $5,666

**TOTAL INCOME** $749,119

#### EXPENSES

- Personnel $513,245
- Program $74,597
- Occupancy $74,160
- Professional & Admin $66,578

**TOTAL EXPENSES** $728,580
Donors and Community Partners

THE FOLLOWING GENEROUS FOUNDATIONS, INDIVIDUALS, AND CORPORATIONS INVESTED IN OUR PROGRAMS DURING THE 2020–2021 FISCAL YEAR.


IN-KIND DONORS
Adesso Strategies, IDW, Gensler Oakland, Twitch, Wordland

COMMUNITY PARTNERS
East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation
Franklin Elementary
Gensler Oakland
Hoover Elementary
Moxy Hotel
MetWest High School
Nomadic Press
Oakland Public Library
Oakland Roots Soccer Club
Oakland Youth Poet Laureate Program
Social Imprints
Studio Pathways
Youth Speaks
Westlake Middle School
Chapter 510 Volunteers

“Like people and movements and trees, poems have roots—complex networks of communication operating beneath the surface. So what happens when you unfurl a scroll of paper and invite a whole city to speak to itself? It throws itself a parade, it whispers chisme, it puts you on game, it tangles, it winds, it connects, it contradicts just like it’s supposed to. When a poem comes out The Town, we—especially we who are not from here—have a duty to listen.”

—Gabriel Cortez, poet, educator, and organizer

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 so Black, brown, and queer youth ages 8–19 can bravely write.

We are located in occupied Huichin, also known as present-day Oakland, on the unceded ancestral land of the Chochenyo Ohlone people.

546 9th Street, Old Oakland, CA 94607