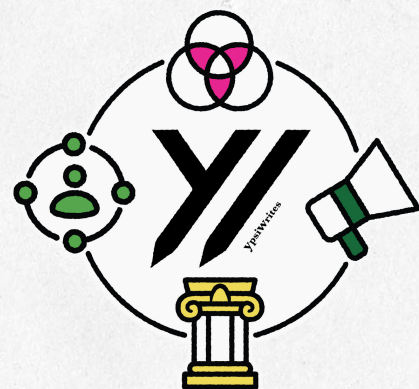


INSIDE YPSIWITES

A Newsletter for Volunteers and Friends



A Note from Ann and Cathy

As YpsiWrites expands its programming—from one-to-one writing support to workshops to community partnerships—we continue to be very grateful for our volunteers, supporters, and patrons. We could not do this work without you! We want to thank, especially, the many donors who so generously contributed to our fall crowdfunding campaign. Because of your trust in YpsiWrites, we can continue to pursue our mission to support all writers in the Ypsilanti community. Thank you all.



YpsiWrites Writers Room

YpsiWrites is excited to introduce a new dynamic space for writers called the Writers Room. Modeled after similar rooms in Iowa and Detroit, the YpsiWrites Writers Room will provide writing space to the Ypsilanti community on a regular schedule throughout the year.

With an in-person launch goal of Fall 2022, the Writers Room is offering three virtual kick-off events. The first was February 12, and upcoming events will be March 19 and April 9. These run from 10–11:15am. To register, please use [this form](#).

Cathy Fleischer, co-founder of YpsiWrites, says the goal of the Writers Room is to bring writers together. "At each Writers Room event, we'll provide something for everyone, like time for individuals to focus on a project or get feedback from other writers, or for groups to collaborate," said Cathy.

The intent is for the Writers Room to become a room-on-the-move. Eventually, writers may gather virtually and/or in different locations in Ypsilanti (cont.).

Visit the [YpsiWrites website](#) to submit a request to get assistance with any kind of writing!



Interested in providing writing support, developing programs, or assisting with YpsiWrites' social media? Sign-up [here](#) to volunteer with us!

Get connected with us!



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YpsiWrites Writers Room (cont.)

During each session, volunteers will offer resources such as prompts, activities, and writing guides, and also provide what writers need most: time and space to write and to share that writing with others.

The community's feedback will help grow and adapt the Writers Room over time. For example, some may wish to form genre-based rooms for poets, fiction writers, or memoirists.

"Two pillars of the work we do at YpsiWrites are Community and Inclusivity," says Brent Miller, one of the volunteers imagining and creating this project. "The Writers Room will be a fabulous way to realize those values and bring people together in a welcoming place."



Board Member Spotlight: Darryl Johnson

YpsiWrites welcomes its newest board member, Darryl Johnson! Darryl is the founder of I'm Third Ministries and the executive director of Mentor2Youth, a community-focused, nonprofit organization that prepares Washtenaw County K-12 students for success in school, work, and life.

Darryl initially connected with YpsiWrites' cofounder, Ann Blakeslee, at a Parkridge Community Center meeting in Fall 2019. He then collaborated with YpsiWrites to produce virtual leadership and resume workshops for Mentor2Youth's teen counsel during the COVID-19 pandemic. Darryl sees his partnership with YpsiWrites as one that inspires his kids to "be who they are and write how they would write."



"I'm always looking for spaces and places that can enrich the academic lives of the people that I serve," said Darryl.

In 2021, Darryl received funding from the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation's EmpowerMENT Fund for Mentor2Youth's Raising Royalty program. The fund was established to support Black men and boys in Washtenaw County and is now being used to provide mentorship and career-building workshops to middle school boys.

"If we prepare the soil, we know we can raise amazing adults," said Darryl.

The Raising Royalty program uses a chess analogy to demonstrate how mastering the game of chess is similar to understanding aspects of our character and mastering life skills. Each of the six chess pieces translates to a core pillar: purpose, love, business and financial literacy, wisdom, community, and discipline. He said, "If you start kids thinking about these different aspects of life, then we can use the game of chess to show them how to bring these pieces back together."

As a preacher, mentor, and father, Darryl considers himself a "storyteller" and has cultivated a youth community that he wants to serve for a lifetime. Darryl says his goal as a writer is to start a blog to share Mentor2Youth's story and illustrate their vision, as well as set an example for young writers by expressing himself more openly and confidently. "Mentoring is my hobby. It's what I do and I'm the happiest when I'm doing it."



YpsiWrites Spring Programming

Hungry for Humor? Feed Your Muse. Do you enjoy humor? Would you like to incorporate more of it into your writing? You don't need to be a comedian to write "funny." In this workshop, you'll learn tips for sprinkling humor throughout your writing. Join us for writing prompts and exercises and leave with a recipe that will feed the humorous side of your muse.

Facilitated by Angela Verges, a humorist and author of the books *Menopause Ain't No Joke* and *Laughter H.E.L.P.S.* Angela has shared humor through blogging, women's retreats, stand-up comedy, and other venues. She used to sing in a women's choir until they realized she could not sing and stopped asking her. She believes everyone has a story to tell. **Saturday, March 12, 2022, 10 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.** [this workshop will be virtual via Zoom; you can register [here](#)]

YpsiWrites **Writers Room**. Join us March 19, 10 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. for our next virtual Writers Room. Write and have opportunities to share or get feedback. Register to participate [here](#).

Locks, Keys, and Freedom: Staged Readings of and Events Focused on Muriel Rukeyser's musical, Houdini. YpsiWrites is inviting submissions for a poetry challenge and portable poetry wall. These events will take place in March, with an event at the Riverside Arts Center on **March 24, 2022**, where we will feature the poetry from the challenge and a staged reading of Rukeyser's *Houdini*. To submit a poem, use this [form](#), and to register for the event at Riverside Art Center, use this [form](#).

Creating a 3-panel Comic. Do you have a memory or a favorite character you would like to write about and draw? In this workshop, we will work together and bring in information from Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics* to create 3-panel comics. You don't need to be an artist; anyone can draw a stick figure and icons. Who knows, maybe this will be the beginning of an epic tale. All ages and all artistic abilities are welcome!

Facilitated by EMU Lecturer Pam McCombs and YDL Librarian Scott Marlowe, who are both comics enthusiasts. **Wednesday, May 11, 2022, 6 p.m. to 7:15 p.m.** [this workshop will be virtual via Zoom; you can register [here](#)]

YpsiWrites will also be supporting and providing writing prompts for the **Embracing Our Differences** exhibit that will take place in Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor this spring.

And you will be able to pick up or download an YpsiWrites reading guide for the **YDL Family Read, American as Paneer Pie.**

Finally, look for our **Writing from the Heart for Mothers, Grandmothers, and Significant Caregivers**, coming mid-April.