

# iWRITE Annual Report

August 2020 - July 2021



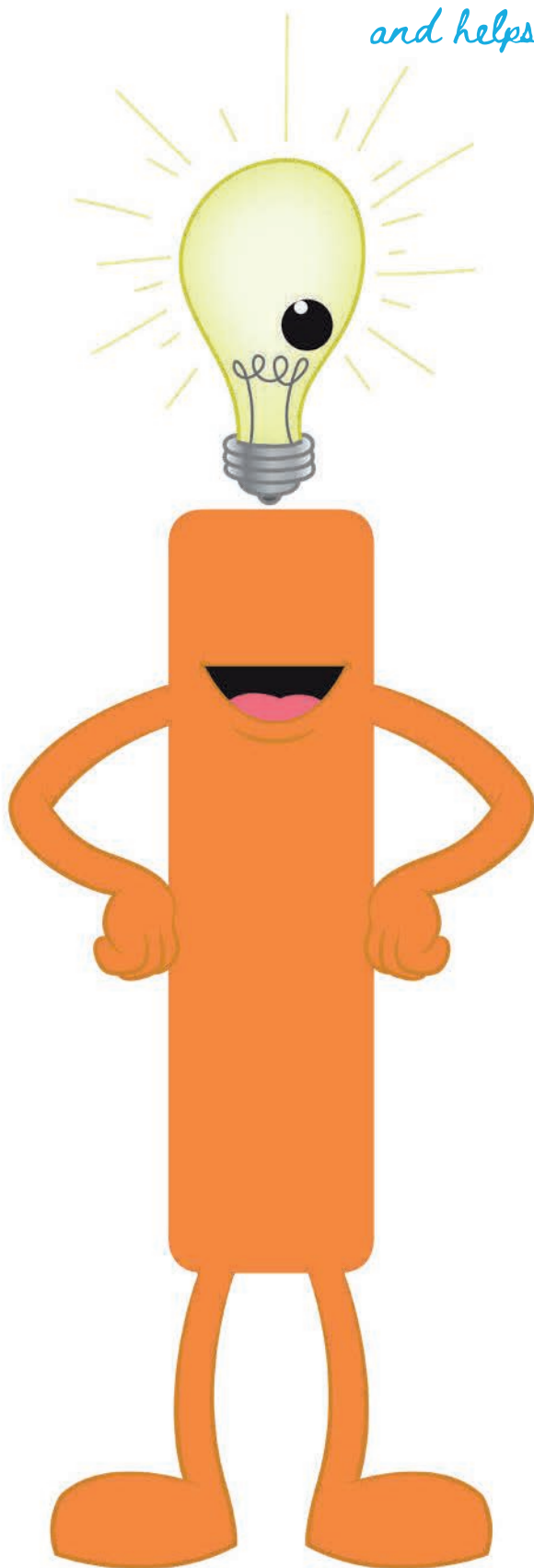
**iWRITE**

**Mindfulness Series**

**Adventure Writing Camps**

**iWRITE in Space**

*Every child has a voice. And every child deserves to be heard. But to truly be heard, children need to learn and grow as writers, which builds confidence and helps them excel in any subject.*



## **Our Mission**

Our mission at iWRITE is to build student confidence through writing.

## **Our Vision**

Through writing, students become more creative and confident, which opens the door to opportunities they never had before.

## **Our Values**

### **Every Child has a Voice**

We believe every child has a voice, and we want them to know what they have to say is important. We give every young writer opportunities for expression.

### **By Kids for Kids**

We take kids seriously and give them experiences that are often reserved for adults. Here, they can be known as a published author, a speaker, an editor, and a leader.

### **Diversity & Inclusion**

We actively break down stereotypes about who can become a writer, and reach out to every ethnicity, culture, religion, country, and socioeconomic group to make writing part of a young person's life.

### **Respect**

We respect the children, families, and educators in our programs. We also promote respect among students, working to prevent negativity and bullying, and instead, helping each child to feel proud of their culture and optimistic about their future.



## A MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER

Dear Friends,

Over the past year, your commitment to iWRITE and the students we serve has allowed us to enhance our writing programs to meet the needs of our kids during this critical time. We realized that our programming had to remain flexible as we continued to offer online resources and safe, in-person experiences. This past year also reminded us of the value in collaborating with our community partners. Partnerships mean shared resources, shared talent, and even more learning opportunities for students.

In this report, we'll highlight iWRITE's collaboration with The Bryan Museum in Galveston and demonstrate why working together is adding value to students' experiences in both literacy and history. We'll also highlight programs that corporate sponsors have made possible and their impact on student learning. Annual commitments of every size ensure we are able to offer publishing opportunities, share the "i" The Guy writing curriculum, enhance online resources and host community programs just when kids need them most.

I also have to acknowledge our Youth Club and our alumni who have served as interns. I'm so proud of them and I love seeing their initiative and growth. There is something for every age here at iWRITE, and our older kids have truly become role models and mentors through their love of literacy. Many thanks to all of you for being a huge part of our mission to build student confidence through writing.

We are witnessing how the power of writing can truly shape a young person's life. We can't do this work without our donors, sponsors, and partners. I am truly grateful to everyone who has been a part of iWRITE's story.

In gratitude,



**Melissa Williams Murphy, Founder & Board Chair**

Melissa@iwrite.org

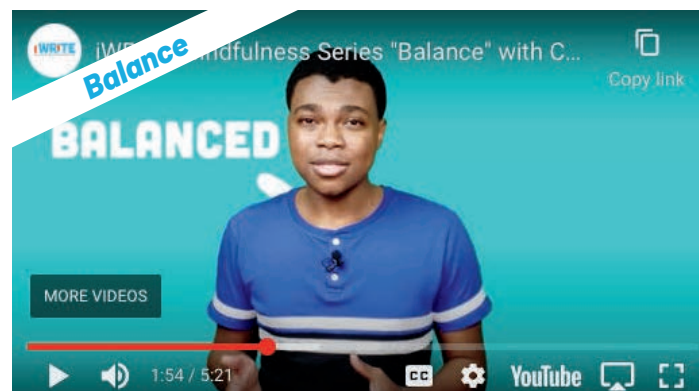
*Cover Photo by Wardah Ajaz*



# Mindfulness Series Promotes Mental Health

*There's no denying the pandemic has had a negative effect on student learning and emotional wellbeing.* At some point during the past year, nearly every student has experienced quarantines, disruptions in education, and the frustrations of being isolated from friends.

iWRITE continues to work hard to address both the gaps in learning and the social-emotional wellbeing of students. Chase Alexander, once a young iWRITE author and now an actor and speaker, collaborated with iWRITE and Phillips 66 to launch a series of mindfulness videos on iWRITE TV. The five episodes include: Gratitude, Visioning, Feelings, Balance, and Calm and can help lessen the anxiety of an unpredictable school year.



## PRACTICE MINDFULNESS HERE!

[Click Here to Watch the Videos](#)

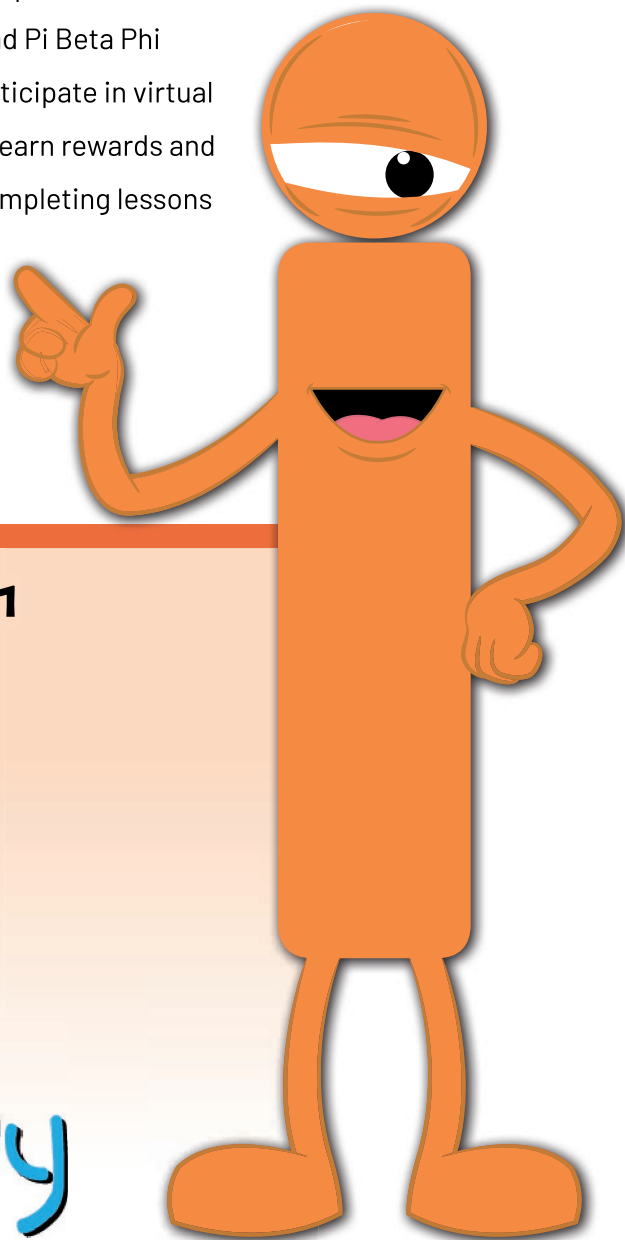


# "i" The Guy Supports Virtual Learning

*This past year, iWRITE launched its Online Writing Center (something that was planned as part of iWRITE's expansion, even before COVID-19) and brought its popular mascot and cartoon character, "i" The Guy, to the internet.*

The "i" The Guy Creative Writing Program guides elementary students through the entire story writing process and creates a positive association with writing. The curriculum encourages self-development by connecting fictional story conflicts with real-life problems. With support from Phillips 66, students received bilingual, English/Spanish journals and enjoyed writing workshops, illustration lessons, and classroom support.

Now, the story-writing curriculum has been customized for interactive learning, and students are even able to see their own characters come to life through professional illustrations and publish their work online. Thanks to multiple partners, including Phillips 66, Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation and Pi Beta Phi Foundation students readily participate in virtual lessons because they're able to earn rewards and points through gamification. Completing lessons means rewards, from badges and challenges to bonus rounds and leader boards, to deliver a fun and meaningful learning experience.



## Thank you to our 2020-21 "i" The Guy Schools!

Chancellor Elementary, Alief ISD

Chambers Elementary, Alief ISD

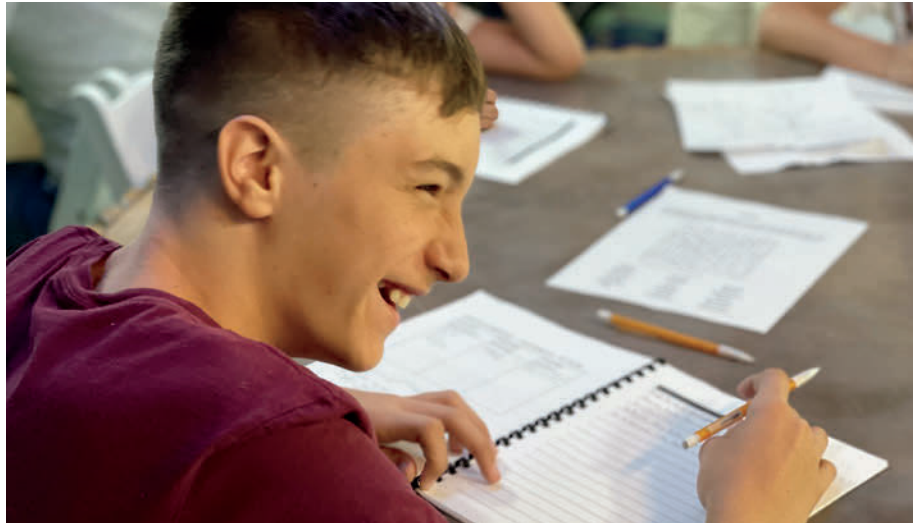
Horn Elementary, Alief ISD

Spring Branch Elementary, Spring Branch ISD

Lula Bell Goodman Elementary, Fort Bend ISD

# "i" The Guy

# Summer Adventures in Creativity with The Bryan Museum



## Adventure Writing Camps with The Bryan Museum



SUMMER CAMP 2021







*This past year, Summer Camp meant exploring The Bryan Museum's art and artifacts. Students created comics, toured galleries, and wrote the stories of Texas with a little help from our illustrator, Ryan Shaw.*

Special visitors inspired students' imaginations with stories of Galveston and Texas history. Highlights included visits from Calypso, the friendly pirate, from locally run Pirates and Ghosts, 5th Circuit Judge Jennifer Walker Elrod explaining how Texas law came to be, Justice Ken Wise telling tales from the Texas Revolution, and real-life cowboy Jim Hodges teaching campers how to rope.

Each day, campers interacted with the Museum's collection through touchable artifacts and story prompts to ignite their imaginations. Campers were encouraged to enter their stories and poems in the Guinness World Record contest – coming in 2022 – for the largest published book in the world.

The fun weeks ended with a showcase for family and friends. Each camper performed original skits they had written and danced to songs about Texas.





# Celebrating the Art of Equality



*Visual artist Reginald C. Adams organized the Juneteenth Legacy Project in Galveston, and iWRITE partnered to help host the celebration's first writing contest.* Using the theme, "Diversity over Division," young people engaged in a conversation about what "absolute equality" means to their generation. The contest winners were announced on Juneteenth (June 19, 2021) and their works were displayed at The Bryan Museum throughout the summer.



[Click Here to See More Photos and Learn About the Winners](#)



# Discovery Writing with the iWRITE Youth Club



*Youth Club leaders Eshaan Mani, Alex Zhang, and Mariah Adeeko visited The Bryan Museum for discovery writing sessions.* Eshaan explained, “We were provided with a series of historical artifacts (Eisenhower’s hat, an original rodeo patch, etc.) with no context and were filmed while working together to make an educated guess about what the item was.” Afterward, the team submitted a short blog post for publication.



[Click Here to Read Their Blog Post](#)

# iWRITE in Space

*In 2020, iWRITE celebrated 100 newly published young authors in its Space-themed anthology. Josephine and Ibrahim Firat chaired the virtual event, which opened with space trivia, and included guest appearances by retired NASA Astronaut, Col. Bill McArthur, who logged 224 days in space during his career.*

Actor Matthew McConaughey applauded the students for their accomplishment and shared a video message encouraging students to keep writing. "Being a writer or an artist means you get to share a piece of who you are with the world," he said. "And it's an unforgettable feeling getting to hold your book for the first time, right?! So hold on to that and keep reaching for the stars because this is just the beginning!"

Contest sponsor H-E-B also hosted a virtual author's panel to highlight the work of Star authors. We are grateful to H-E-B and everyone who made this event possible.



Col. Bill McArthur with iWRITE  
Founder Melissa Murphy





**AUTHOR PANEL MODERATED  
BY LISA HELFMAN**

71 years of publishing kid authors & illustrators  
**iWRITE**  
VIRTUAL BOOK SIGNING BRUNCH



**ESHAAN MANI**



**CLARA DAVIES**



**DRAYDEN WILLIAMS**





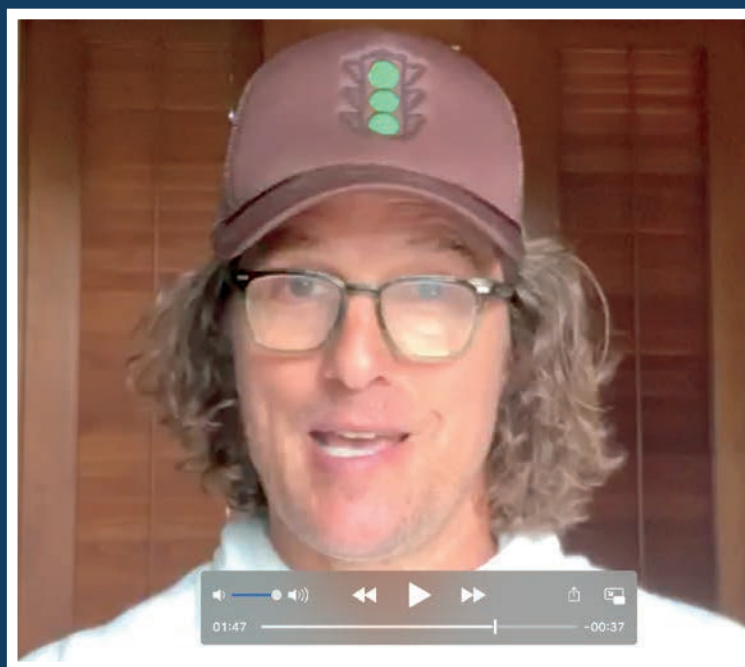
**CHARLIE HOUGH**



**ARIANNA PAPADAKIS**



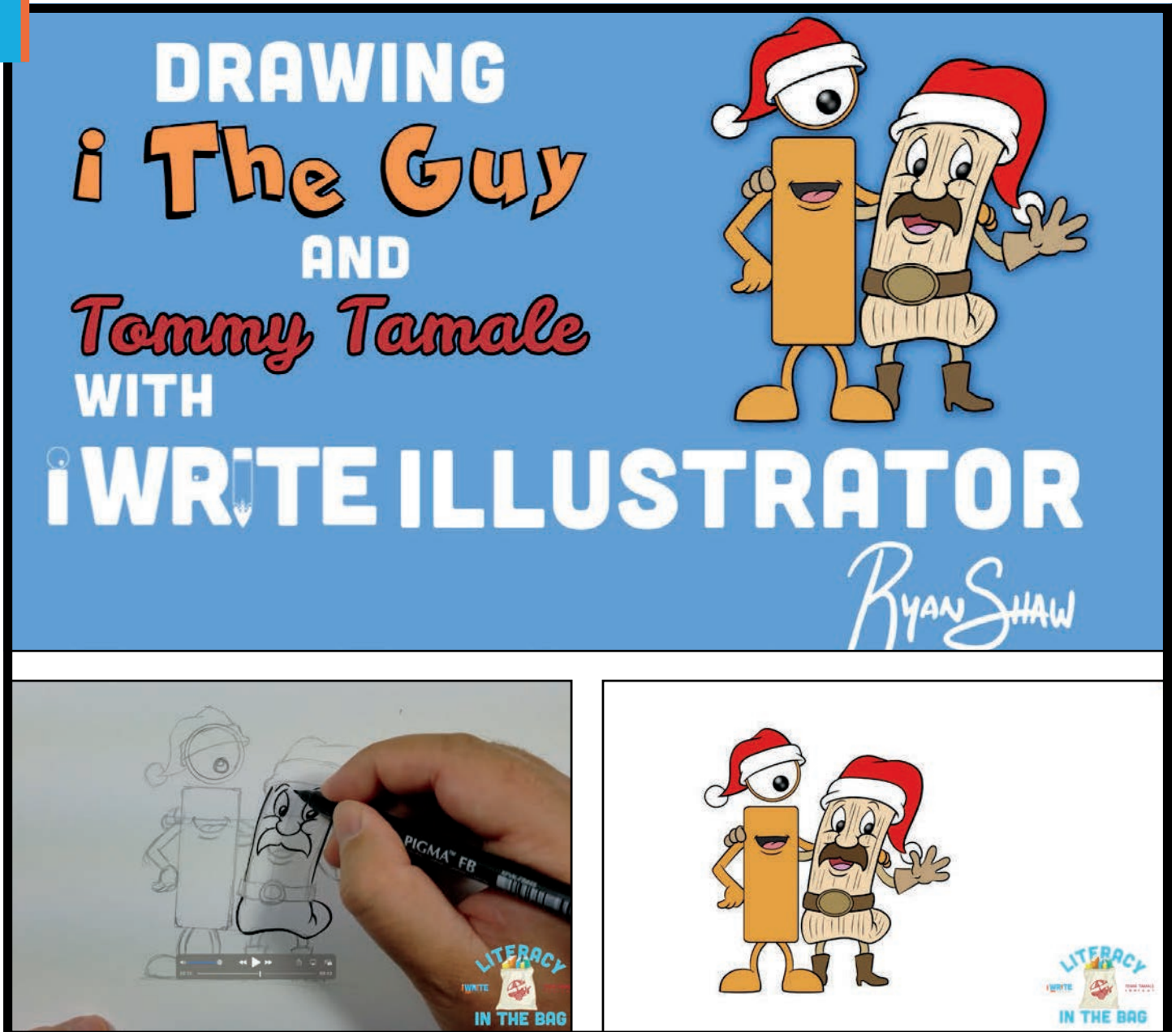
**SANJANA SHAH**



[Click Here to Watch the Video](#)

# Literacy in the Bag

***iWRITE has partnered with Texas Tamale Company for the past six years for its “Literacy in the Bag” event.*** The 2020 book drive also went virtual, but the entire team worked harder than ever to support students in literacy.



[Click Here to Watch iWRITE illustrator Ryan Shaw Teach Students How to Draw](#)



# iWRITER Magazine

*iWRITE's Youth Club is a dynamic group of students who host workshops, publish the iWRITER magazine, and collaborate on projects to promote literacy.* The club and the iWRITER are organized by kids for kids, and the goal is to highlight and share young voices.

Here are a few excerpts from the past year's magazines that examined social issues, celebrated diversity, and helped students prepare for another school year impacted by the pandemic.

## From "Keeping Up with the Youth Club" by Katie Giveon, January 2021



As we face the uncertainty of a new year, the Youth Club would like to challenge you to go into that uncertainty with the mission of doing good. As we choose to serve and encourage, we positively affect not only our lives but also the lives of others. Through these actions, we can make 2021 the year in which we don't just stand up again but come back stronger.

## From "The Steps to Storycrafting" by Austin Lopez, April 2021 Issue



I've heard a handful of writers say that they love editing, but I always despised it. Either you end up with a piece that is unpolished and sloppy, or you never stop editing. As author Gene Fowler said, "A book is never finished; it's abandoned." You could spend generations upon generations perfecting one poem, even one tiny haiku, if you wanted, but there comes a point when you have to say "enough is enough." This varies greatly on the writer and the piece, but for me, editing typically takes twice as long as the rough draft process.

## From "Cardinals and Choristers: A Music Teacher Making Magic" by Sanjna Pandit, July 2021 Issue



"I really believe in the power of perspective. Instead of complaining about the circumstances, I reshaped my thoughts," [said Music Director Phillip Sammons]. "The ability to record a concert [during the pandemic] could also mean the opportunity to showcase my students' creativity and love for music in a new light. Looking at the music I chose for the concert, I discovered an inherent theme – birds. Birds represent freedom – an escape from life that tethers us to a harsh reality." In Sammons' words, they proved "beautiful music can be made under any circumstance" and "singing is vital to a happy, healthy life!"

[Click Here to Visit Their Website](#)

# iWRITE Youth Club Officers



## Boys and Girls Club in Cabo San Lucas

*The Boys & Girls Club in Cabo San Lucas (Club de Niños) used technology to keep their creativity flowing with "i" The Guy this past year!* The kids collaborated on stories and illustrations and shared their work online!





# 2020-2021 FINANCIALS AT A GLANCE



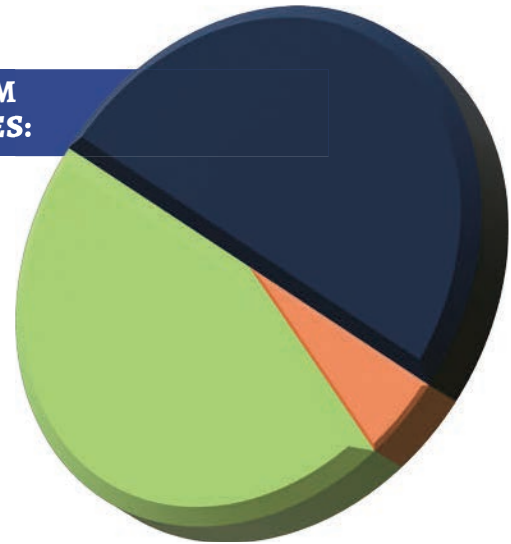
AUGUST 1, 2020 - JULY 31, 2021

## PROFIT AND LOSS

<b>\$269,350</b>	-	<b>\$292,132</b>	=	<b>[\$22,782]</b>
REVENUE		EXPENSES		NET INCOME

Program Percentage: 82%

## PROGRAM EXPENSES:



## PROGRAM EXPENSES:

■ Writing and Publishing Programs	\$120,744
■ Instructional Programs	\$11,614
■ Program Operations	\$107,853
<hr/>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$240,211</b>

## iWRITE Sponsors



BARBARA BUSH  
HOUSTON LITERACY FOUNDATION



# SUPPORT

# iWRITE

# TODAY!

## Give Now

Your support allowed us to offer the programs you just read about in this report at a critical time for kids. And with the documented learning gap caused by remote learning and the pandemic, the needs will be even greater in the months ahead. **Please donate today.**

- \$100 makes it possible to bring the "i" The Guy creative writing curriculum to an economically disadvantaged classroom - one hit hard by the pandemic.
- \$500 provides a scholarship for a live summer camp or workshop, allowing the student to regain lost literacy skills through personalized learning opportunities.
- Monthly giving allows us to stabilize our revenue and plan new projects to address the learning gaps.

**Please give now** and help us reach even more kids and classrooms with creative writing journals, mindfulness activities, and powerful partner collaborations that ensure new learning opportunities for kids throughout the year to come.

WE'VE MOVED



## New Office Means New Opportunities

We're excited to be part of the inspiring co-working community at SheSpace just north of downtown. It's a central location that will allow us to host more workshops and easily collaborate with our partners. **Come see us!**



2799 Katy Fwy Suite 250  
Houston, TX 77007

713-893-1461

[www.iwrite.org](http://www.iwrite.org)  
[info@iwrite.org](mailto:info@iwrite.org)

Follow us @iWRITElit

