

Have you Heard?

An arts program for silent stories.

Because everyone deserves to be heard.



Greetings!

And suddenly it's fall and we're shaking our heads in amazement that 2022 has flown by so quickly. As always, so much has happened since I last checked in with you. Here's a quick roundup:

1. As we mentioned in the last newsletter, we used part of [ACT for Alexandria's](#) mental health grant to hire [Dr. Tasha Golden](#) for an online training titled "Trauma-Informed Practice for Artists, Teaching Artists, and Arts Programs" on September 8. She shared so much – so *much!* – vital information that it made all of our heads spin. Over the next few months we will decide how best to use the knowledge she shared to better serve our clients.

2. Our writing contest awards ceremony with the Arlington County Detention Center was live and in person after two years. Unfortunately I wasn't able to attend, and the ceremony was limited to just the winning authors and staff, but it's a huge, positive, post-COVID step and I hope we can have a full ceremony next year! Read on for details in our "Creative Corner." And speaking of, we expect to begin arts classes again with the Detention Center in 2023. Aside from a 20-minute virtual art class in August, we haven't worked with them all year. They miss us and we miss them, and we're all excited to return in January, both on site and virtually.

3. And now for the BIG news: that "we're expanding" statement in the subject line! Yes. We. Are. You know Heard was created intentionally to be small, agile, and replicable, so any community could adopt our "[5 Steps to Local](#)" (see illustration) model and create an organization that would fund artists to support people in need.

So, we are not expanding in the traditional way of adding staff and programs. Rather, the [Ohio Arts Council](#) and I, over the last year, created a process to replicate our Heard model to share with Ohio communities! Our initiative, called KickstART, rolled out on September 28 when we partnered with the Trillium Project in Portsmouth. That day we started our first of six virtual meetings in which I coach the Trillium Project team through each of the "5 Steps" plus a sixth-meeting wrap-up.

I can't reveal their project yet, but it is very different from Heard and proves that our model works. I am so incredibly grateful to the Ohio Arts Council team for believing in our vision, and for offering a matching grant of up to \$2,500 for each KickstART project. As of today it looks like we may launch a second project in another area of Ohio which makes my heart so happy.

Follow these five steps and you are on your way!



Thank you for all you have done for our Heard art team and the people we serve,

Jane

P.S. A heads up - **Giving Tuesday is November 29** this year. You will receive a request from us and I hope you will consider a gift. Your donation allows us to continue helping those in need know they are being heard. We need to raise just \$2,200 by the end of this year. And of course you can always [donate now!](#)

GIVING TUESDAY

Creative Corner - experience our clients' creations

This photo means so much to us, because it meant that we could actually celebrate our Arlington County Detention Facility writing contest winners in person. While Heard could not be represented, all three of our dedicated judges attended. Our very special thanks to them for volunteering to read and evaluate the entries. Thank you Jenny Sullivan, editor of [Arlington Magazine](#); [Dr. Hollynd Karapetkova](#), who is the Arlington County Poet Laureate; and [Dr. Sly Young](#), an educator, motivator, and entrepreneur.



And the winners are:

FICTION

1. "[Untitled](#)", Letecia Burch
2. Not published at author's request
3. Not published at Arlington County Detention Facility's request

NON-FICTION

1. "[Princess Can Prosper](#)", Mary Taylor
2. "[When I Met Jesus](#)", Michael Elliott
3. "[Untitled with Artwork](#)", Ashley Plummer

POETRY

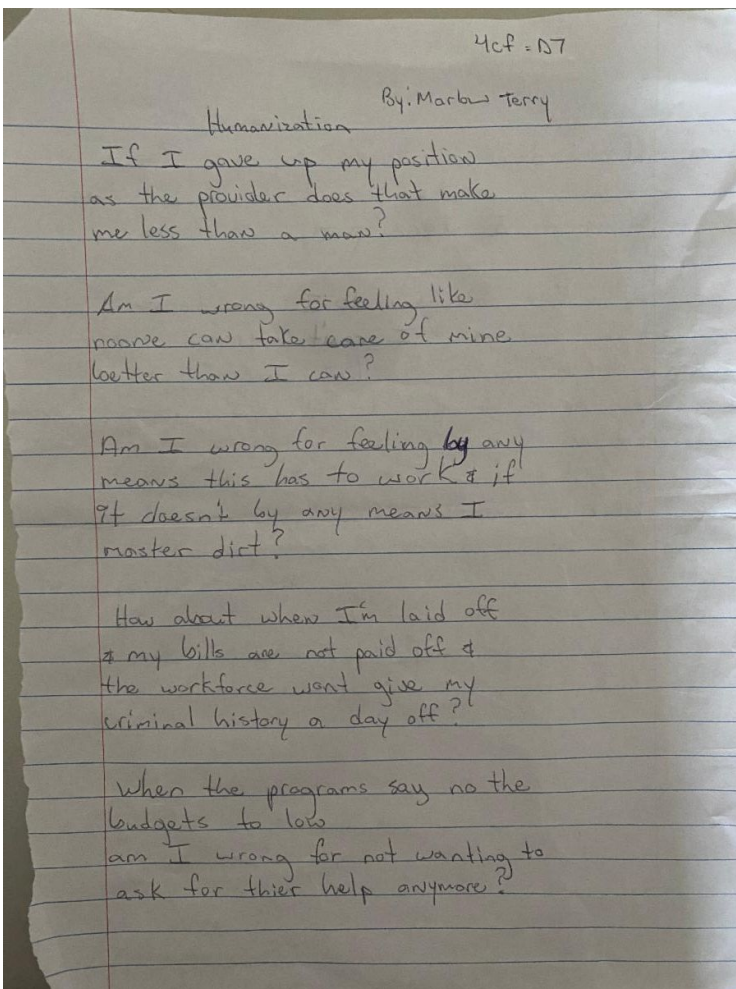
1. Not published at author's request
2. Not published at author's request
3. "[State of Mind](#)," Javier Davis

You can read the other entries on our website's [creative writing](#) and [poetry](#) galleries.



Who is Fran really? We may never know. She wears a mask. And let's be real – most of us do at one time or another. The difference is that Fran, a resident of our Heard program partner [Friends of Guest House](#) is brave enough to admit it. Listen to her. Do you have her courage? [Listen to her original spoken word story.](#)

Thank you to our Heard spoken word teacher [C. Alexandria-Bernard Thomas](#) for bringing and wringing the unvarnished and unedited truth from our Heard clients.



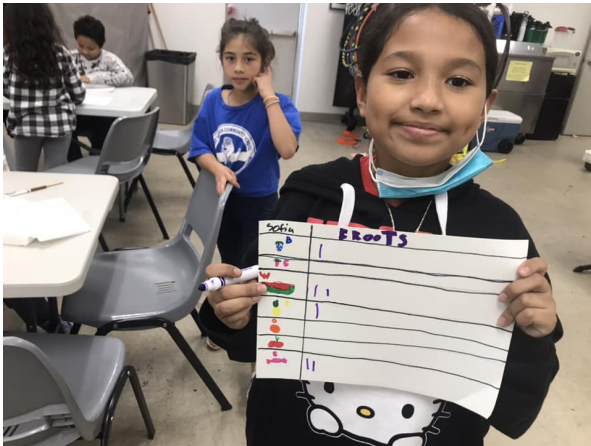
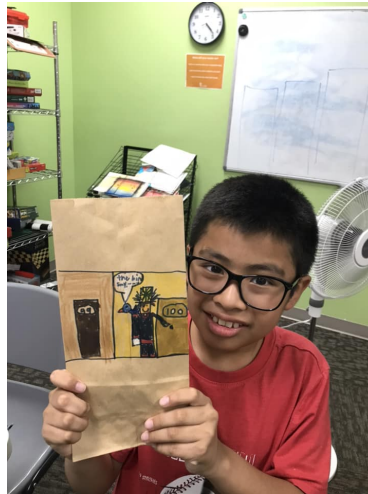
October 8 was the [Alexandria Arts Alliance](#) city-wide "Party for the Arts" and Heard was there for it! Our Heard artist teacher, Emmy award-winning actor and producer [Mike Baker](#), read the three winning poetry entries from our July writing contest with the Alexandria Adult Detention Center. He emailed:

"First I mentioned the names of many great poets who wrote from prison. Then I did an excerpt from Miguel de Cervantes from prison from memory and demonstrated how close to the quality of Cervantes your writers are....and how these voices deserve to be heard. There was a nice applause at the end." Mike, you are the BEST! Always, always, above and beyond!

"Humanization" by Marlow Terry was the second place poetry winner in our 2022 writing contest with the Alexandria Adult Detention Center. You can read [Terry's entire poem here.](#)

Since our Heard artist [Sharmila Karamchandani](#) started Fun Fridays at [Casa Chirilagua](#) when the school year began, the 38 or so kids she works with eagerly wait to see what project she brings. We know this because when a scheduling conflict caused a few kids to miss her class, one little guy had a meltdown at his desk. And why wouldn't he? Each week Sharmila figures out how get nearly 20 kids to produce something fun, creative, and interesting in 25 minutes, then she takes a short break and does it all over again.

We've compiled a short "best of" here. Can you match the photo to the project?



- A. Divers-city: creating inclusive buildings. This is a superman school where kids learn how to become superheroes.
- B. Flying saucers from paper plates. This is a party saucer. No reports of abductions.
- C. An owl from a toilet paper roll. (We're all saving our TP rolls now in case she needs more).
- D. Straw painting.
- E. Abecederians (I had to look that word up).
- F. Another Diver-sity building from a boy who always includes a bird in his drawings. Always.

Our Artist Showcase

When Betsy Allen contacted me a few years ago to join Heard, how could I resist a fellow Buckeye — especially one whose journalism degree is from (THE!) Ohio State University? And, who grew up in a

little town near my grandma's?

Betsy has also earned an MFA in fiction writing and an MA in English from George Mason University, where she now serves as an adjunct faculty member. Her short stories have been published in several dark fiction anthologies. Her work has also been featured on two podcasts: *Between Acts* (immersive performances of original theatre works) and *The Night's End* (dramatic readings of short horror stories). In addition, she helps to edit *Crow's Feet*, an online publication on aging well, and periodically hosts its podcast, including the [most recent episode](#).

Betsy is a unique addition to our mighty team of creative writing teachers, mixing fiction with journalism, along with a dash of critical thinking exercises. Recently, working with our partners ALIVE! and Friends of Guest House, she challenged students to think big: to imagine opening their dream businesses and write about how to promote them.

She believes in the power of stories—to transport us, to show us what has been and what could be, and to help us recognize our shared humanity.



For Betsy's latest birthday, she was told to pack a suitcase for a trip somewhere in the United States. The surprise? A hiking trip through Utah's state parks! When she's not whisked away on mysterious vacations, she indulges in a crossword puzzle obsession and frets about her children and grandson.

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Hess Collins Family Fund

and generous donors like you!

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Your donation supports our artists, who foster creativity, confidence, self-worth, and life skills to adults who are underserved, unknown, and unheard by offering them artistic expression through experiential instruction and participation. **We are grateful for your support. [Donate online through our secure website.](#)**



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