

THE
COMMUNITY
TABLE

THE 2025
ESSENCE PREP
ANTHOLOGY



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Students work has been edited as lightly as possible in order to honor their original voices.

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FOREWORD

WELCOME TO ESSENCE PREPARATORY'S COMMUNITY TABLE!

This past fall, my co-teacher, Daniel Ramirez, and I had the pleasure of leading Essence Prep's Writing Club for third and fourth graders. Over the course of this two-month workshop, we explored the idea of food as a means of bringing people together and building community.

In this anthology, you'll find recipes, tips on how to make a picnic better, and pieces about essentials for any feast.

Thank you to Eli Rodriguez for teaching us about the art of collaging and bringing an array of materials that the students used to bring their written work to life.

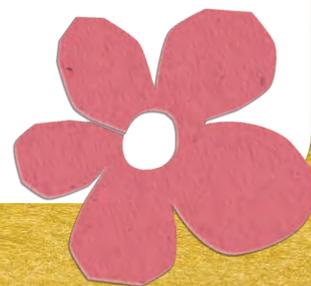
Thank you to Impact SA for funding this workshop and the making of this anthology.

Thank you to Essence Preparatory's staff for welcoming us and giving us the space to work and play with their students.

Thank you to the Gemini Ink Partner Classes Program and the entire staff at Gemini Ink.

Last, but certainly not least, thank you to the young writers of Essence Prep's Writing Club. Your playfulness inspires us, and your enthusiasm has brought us so much joy! Thank you for helping us create our Community Table!

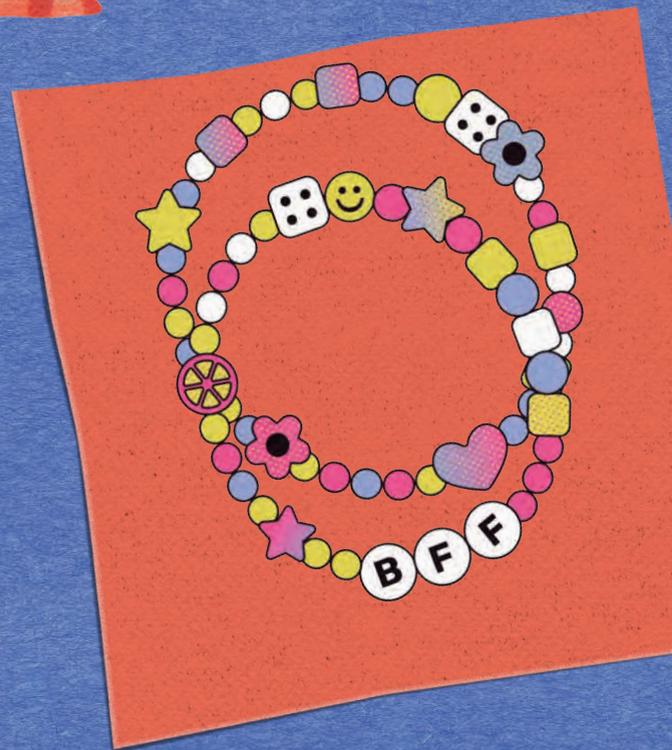
Asia Cofield
Gemini Ink Teaching Artist
2025



THE PICNIC

AVERY "RED"

I think the picnic will be even better with softball equipment. I can imagine everyone having fun and many even being a little competitive. It will make the picnic special because it will let us get all of our energy out, and whoever wins will get a bracelet made by me. I can even bring a tee and teach the people who don't know how to play. If some people don't want to play, I can have a bracelet-making corner where I and others can make bracelets.



RECIPE FOR A COW

AVERY "RED"

Roses are red
Violets are blue
And today I'm
going to teach
you how to
make an animal
That goes moooo!
First, take a body
then paint it
as white as snow
Next, add some black
spots as black as
a hole. Lastly, add a tiny
nose, two eyes as
cute as a button
and a mouth,
and now you have
a cow!



A RECIPE FOR A GOOD DAY

RODNEY

A lot of school
A lot of love
A bunch of friends
A dash of emotion
A pinch of kindness
And a lot of truth
A bunch of hearts like a cozy fire inside
Also a large bunch of creativity





A RECIPE FOR A BEST FRIEND

SKYLAR

I want a friend
who is nice
and smart
and kind
who doesn't lie
has lots of honesty and
is nice to your parents



Best
Friends



THE PICNIC WILL BE EVEN BETTER WITH FRIENDS

SKYLAR

The picnic will be even better with friends. They will make the picnic special because I love picnics with my friends, and being silly, and sharing food with them. We can have a dance party. They're going to say thank you. Lyla, Ashley, Raegan, and other people will want to dance with me. When I grow up, I will probably be a dancer.

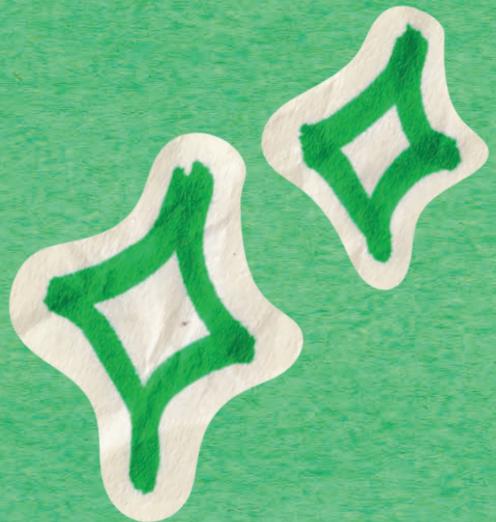




WHEN I GO TO A PICNIC

MADISON C.

When I go to a picnic, I will bring toys for kids, snacks, iPads, a phone, and speakers, but not too loud because I have sensitive ears. I will bring bug spray too. Skylar, Aidan, and I can race.



A RECIPE FOR A FRIEND

MADISON C.

First you need

A lot of kindness

a lot of loyalty

a lot of politeness.

Not mean,

kind.

A little bit silly like a cat or a dog

a pound of fun

likes to hang out

likes to play

likes to make new friends.



RECIPE FOR FIXIES

AIDAN

It's easy to make a fixie
all you got to do is take
a star and pray
for the fixie to come to life
and then it will come to life.





THE PICNIC WILL BE EVEN BETTER WITH FRUIT CANDY

AIDAN

The picnic will be even better with fruit candy. It will be better because it will be tasty. Strawberry!

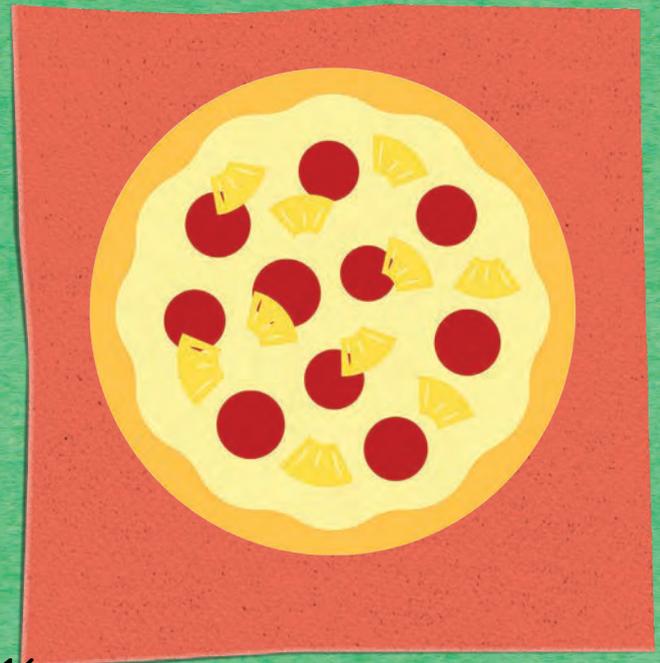
The picnic will be even better with a race. I will race my mom. I think I will beat her because she is slow. I will be happy when I win, and I will smile. Other people will want to race me.



THE PICNIC WILL BE EVEN BETTER WITH PIZZA

LAZARUS

The picnic will be even better with pizza because it is delicious. I like pepperoni and pineapple. I also like bread and tortillas. People will be happy. I know they will be happy because they will be jumping up and down. They will shout, "I love pizza!" They might be chewing it like a dog chewing a new chew toy. If not, they might chew it like garbage, then I might get disappointed, but that's okay. I still have like a dozen more people who do like it, but I'm happy either way. The end.

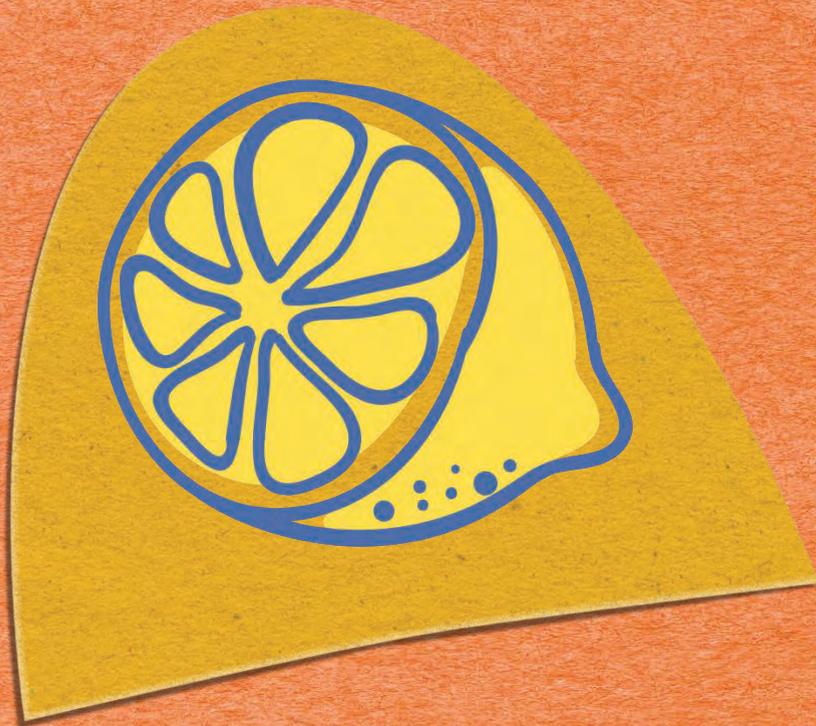




THE PICNIC WILL BE EVEN BETTER WITH FUN

ARIANA

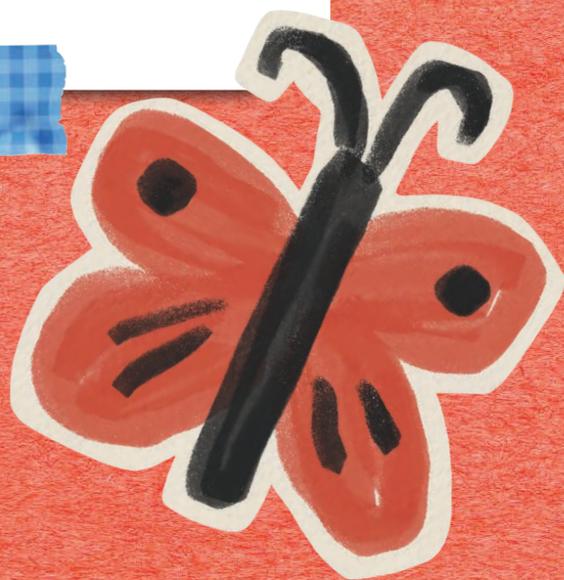
The picnic will be even better with fun, laughter, & a good time. I can imagine everyone drinking my lemonade. When my people gather, it's not a feast without lemonade. It smells sweet and tangy.



HOW TO MAKE A GOOD DAY

ARIANA

First you can go say hello
to a friend
or you can take a walk
with somebody
or you can watch TV with a sibling
& play outside.





THE PICNIC WILL BE EVEN BETTER WITH FUN

NYOTA

The picnic will be better with fun games!! I can imagine everyone laughing and playing while having fun. Fun is also very, very, VERY important. Everybody likes fun, right? It will make the picnic special because if you don't have fun, then it will feel like a doctor's office.

But don't get sad when I beat you in UNO! Yes, I'm talking to you, Mr. Daniel! I will bring UNO, Sorry, Monopoly, chess, and many others. I love games. I'm a pro.

What will you bring?





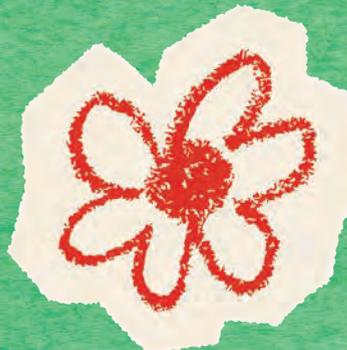
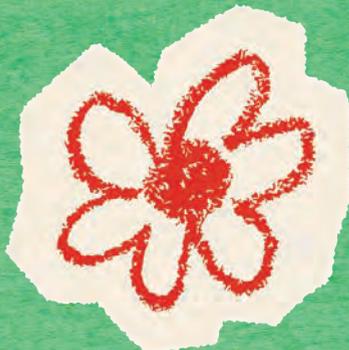
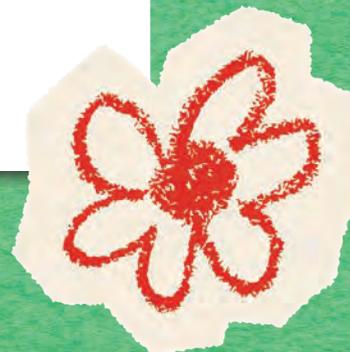
A RECIPE FOR A WEEKEND

NYOTA

A recipe is easy to make; all you do is simply take:
a pinch of sunshine,
a sack of lazy,
a handful of food,
a dash of TV,
and a tub of fun.

It's okay if you do a little bit of play.

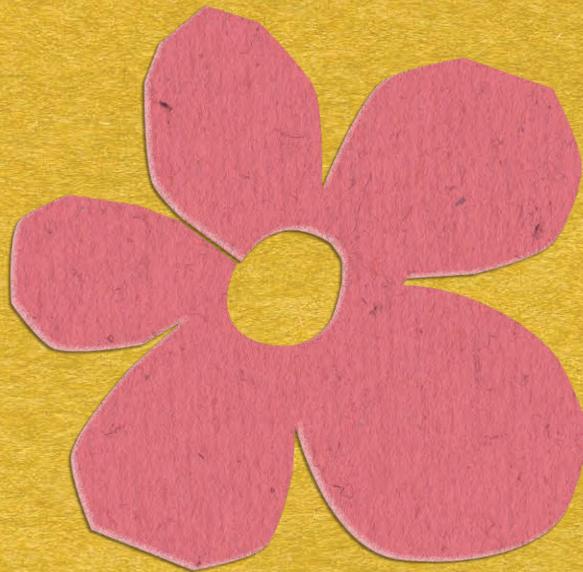
Make sure your friends are as nice as a flower
and your bedtime is late!



IT'S NOT A FEAST WITHOUT ME

NYOTA

When my people gather, it's not a feast without me! When dinner is ready, I go smack, smack, smack. I have short hair as pretty as a peacock. I speak English like most. When it's time to go, I get a little sad and go wah, wah, wah, but I remember we will do this later next year. The secret ingredient is my pretty face that is as shiny as a gem.



WHEN MY FAMILY GATHERS

BREONNA

When my family gathers
it's not a feast without
pork ribs and
hot and spicy links.

They look red,
brown,
hot,
with Orin's barbeque sauce.

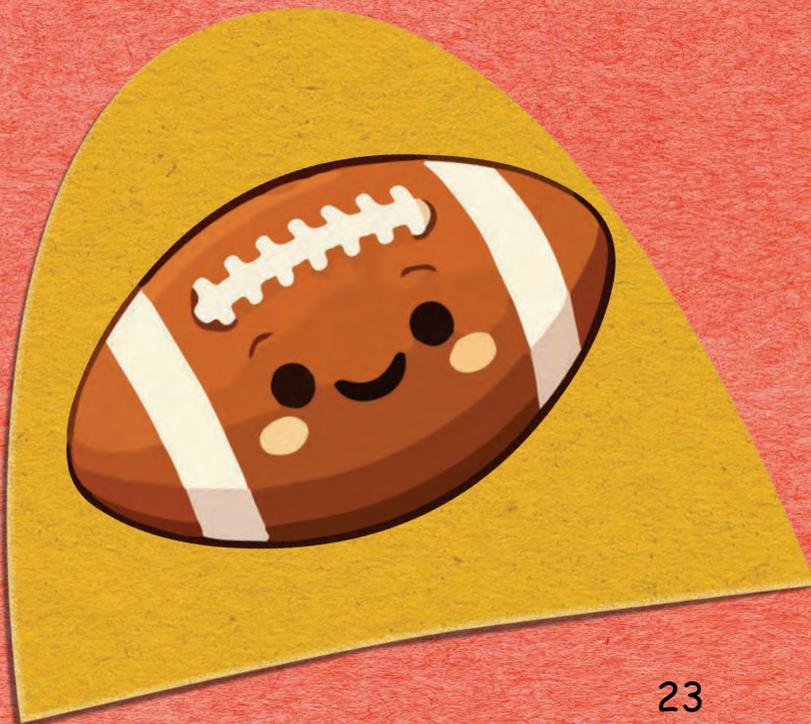




RECIPE FOR AN ELEPHANT SANDWICH

KELVIN

We need a sun
and kindness
and 40 footballs.
For the sun
you need it to heat up
the sandwich.
We need kindness
for the food.





WHEN MY PEOPLE GATHER

KELVIN

When my people gather, it's not a feast without good and tasty and delicious vanilla ice cream. It tastes like whipped cream. It smells like whipped cream.



GRANDMAS ARE AS SWEET...

MORIAH

Grandmas are as sweet
as a piece of candy.

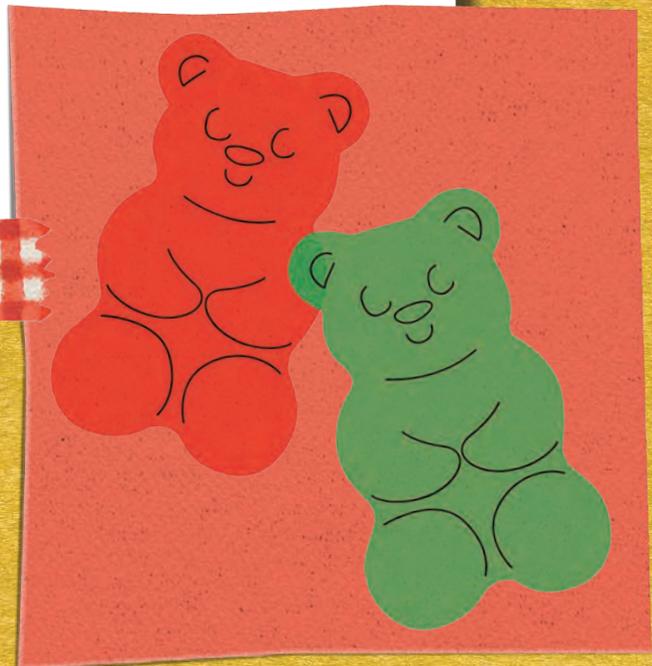
Chicken nugget is as crispy
as fresh cut grass.

Birthday cakes are as fluffy
as cotton candy.

Bicycle is as wiggly
as trying to stand
on one leg for 33 mins.

Jordans are as clean
as a wet mirror.

Beds are as comfy
as a pillow.



THE PICNIC WILL BE BETTER WITH UNO CARDS

MORIAH

The picnic will be better with UNO cards.

I know I can be super competitive, but I'll try not to be that competitive. It will be hard, but I can do it, I hope?

Me and you can play, and I hope we can still be friends. Don't be surprised if I yell or scream. I just want to have fun. I'll see if we are still friends. Hope you have fun losing. I mean, have fun at the picnic.

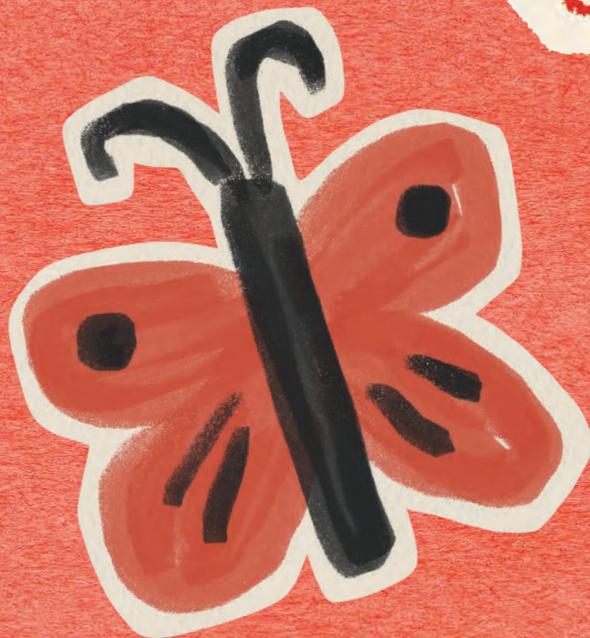




THE PICNIC WILL BE EVEN BETTER WITH FRIENDS

MADISON K.

The picnic will be even better with friends. I'll be full of laughter and talking, playing different games. Eating with my friends makes food ten times better in my heart. Laughter with my friend makes tears of silliness. But don't worry. I will introduce my silly awesome best friend that I've known for six years. That's why I'm going to bring a mystery friend.



HERE'S HOW A GOOD FRIEND AND A MANGO ARE ALIKE

MADISON K.

A good friend and a mango are just alike
A mango is sweet just like a good friend
A mango grows like your relationship with a good friend
Mangoes are just as colorful as your friend
A mango gets rotten as a fly, but your friendship stays alive!



WHEN MY PEOPLE GATHER

MADISON K.

When my people gather, it's not a feast without chicken. The secret ingredient is love & it's very crunchy, a little greasy, a little brown on the outside, white on the inside. The chicken is as crunchy as a step in grass. That's why you may want to go to our gathering!

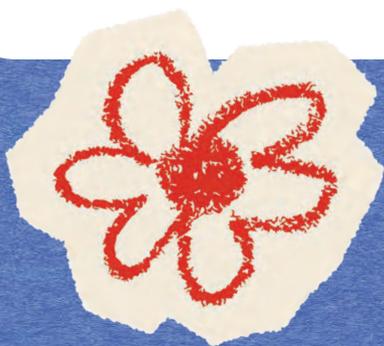




THE PICNIC WILL BE EVEN BETTER WITH SWINGS

LARISSA

The picnic will be even better
with swings.
I like to put my tummy on them
and pretend like I'm flying.
I love to swing fast and high.
So fast that I can
fly in the sky.



RECIPE FOR A GOOD FRIEND

LARISSA

A good friend is easy to make.
All you do is simply take
someone who is kind
or grateful.
Someone who does
experiments in science
with me.



RECIPE FOR MY FAVORITE THINGS

LARISSA

Takis are hot like the sun
Ice cream is cold as ice
Cats are sweet as a cloud
Birthday cake is as sweet as my mom and dad
Playing Roblox is as fun as playing with my sister



THE PICNIC WILL BE EVEN BETTER WITH TAG

JULIANNA

The picnic will be even better
with tag.

I run fast like a cheetah.

We can
play
freeze
tag
too.



TAG!
YOU'RE IT!

TEACHING ARTIST BIOS



ASIA COFIELD is a storyteller and educator originally from the Shinnecock Nation on Long Island, New York. She holds a Master's in Teaching English from Brown University and holds the moon, cozy blankets, and her community close to her heart.

DANIEL RAMIREZ has been an educator of all sorts for almost 15 years. His time in Montessori education showed him how creativity is a tool for deeply connecting students to their overall learning. A writer and artist himself, this led him to seek out Teaching Artist opportunities where he guides students in storytelling, poetry, and puppetry, and other art forms. He is a native San Antonian who loves exploring the crystal streams of Central Texas (and is always crossing his fingers for more rain).

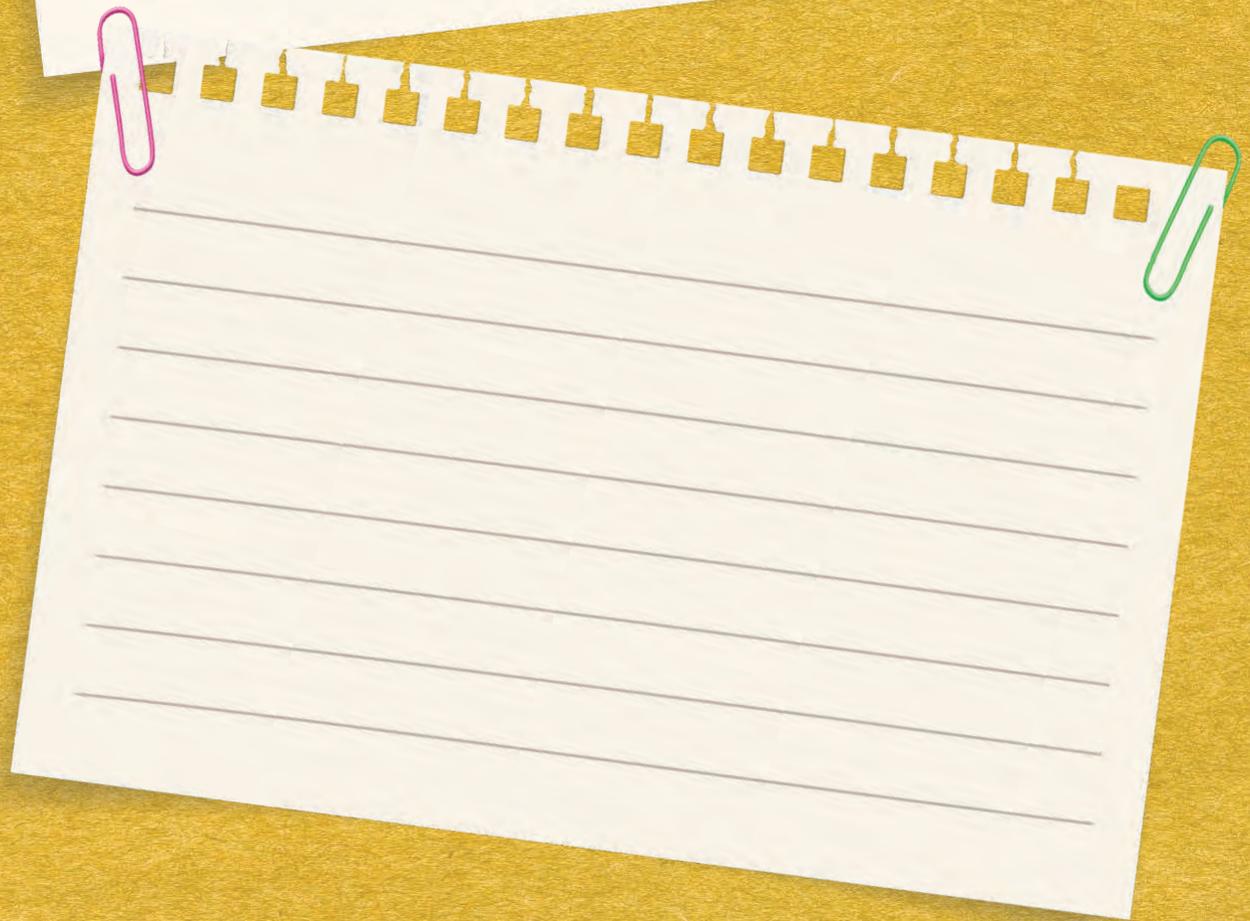


AUTOGRAPHS









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PROMPTS FROM GEMINI INK!





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Gemini Ink's mission is to teach the craft of writing to people of all skill levels so they can bring their stories to life.

We envision a world where all people experience the power of the writing arts. We provide creative writing workshops led by published writers at our offices and in diverse community settings. We also host free public readings by nationally and internationally recognized authors, open-mic nights, and a mentorship program. We believe in the power of the written word to transform lives and are dedicated to nurturing the imagination, building language skills and encouraging a strong sense of human connectedness in people of all ages.



San Antonio's Writing Arts Center
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our partner classes

