

Elias Wynn, 17, was born in Hayward, California and moved to Oregon at the age of 3. Elias completed Write Around Portland's first workshop in partnership with The Inn in Southeast Portland. He is very excited about writing and draws inspiration from his favorite sci-fi and mystery books.



What was your first workshop like?

It was welcoming and it was great getting positive feedback from everybody. I arrived at the Inn Home for Boys the day before. I found myself surprised [about what I wrote]. I wanted to be better. I tried to make an image when I wrote.

What did you write about at first?

Early on, I wrote a lot about finding myself and my struggles that I dealt with growing up in the setting and lifestyle I lived in. Just because that had been my life until now didn't mean I couldn't make it better.

What do you mean by setting and lifestyle?

Growing up I was abused and moved from house to house and my entire life was just not very stable. So I found myself [in the workshop] writing about what happened without letting it get in the way. I learned about myself here. I was constantly encouraging myself and since I started writing here I started sharing what I wrote with friends and family. My mother was intrigued by my writing.

What did you like about writing in the workshop?

Here I could escape from reality. I was able to create any world I wanted with pen and paper. I had choices here.

Why did you keep coming back to the workshops?

I had fun. Each workshop was different with different ideas people shared and the atmosphere was encouraging and fun. I got to hear from other kids [at the Inn Home for Boys]. We would not have shared with one another otherwise.

What would you tell readers?

It's pretty easy to write when you're lost in your own world. Reality can be stressful. But dreaming can be overwhelming too when you struggle in certain areas of your life. With me and my life, I wanted things to change in a way that overwhelmed me.

What do you mean when you say "lost in your own world?"

In the real world it can feel like things are always laid out for me--school, work, cleaning, but writing here lets me live and make choices instead of everyone making those choices for me. Back when I moved from house to house people were making those choices for me--school, how much time I had with my friends. Here I was excited to keep finding inspiration. I was able to carry that creative mind set [out of the workshop] because in the workshop I felt so relaxed and being so relaxed helped me be more creative outside of the workshops.

What was it like sharing your writing?

At first it felt weird but then it was like hey, this is pretty cool. You could hear people getting insight into themselves at the very moment it was happening.

What did this workshop do for you?

It made me confident and proud of myself. When I chose my pieces for submission I felt confident and competent and was shocked by how far I'd come along as a writer in this workshop. It challenged me to go deeper into my struggles in life. I normally wouldn't write about that. If I can do this in this type of setting I can go even bigger and better.