

# RYAN KEESLING

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1631 N. Drake  
Chicago, IL 60647  
ryan@freewritechicago.org  
773-412-5789

## EDUCATION

Northwestern University Kellogg School of Business  
Non-Profit Management Certificate Program

March 2017-Present

Northwestern University School of Education and Social Policy - Evanston, IL  
Masters of Science in Education

August 2004

National Louis University - Chicago, IL  
Reading Specialist Certification Program

December 2004

DePauw University - Greencastle, IN  
B.A. in English Literature

May 1997

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Free Write Arts & Literacy - Chicago, IL  
*Founder & Executive Director*

July 2000-Present

- Oversee daily operations and programming.
- Develop curriculum for arts and literacy workshops for incarcerated youth.
- Design and implement authentic assessment tools to measure student growth.
- Manage all staff and independent contractors.
- Build coalitions with city, county, and state administrations & private organizations.
- Serve as liaison to foundations and fiscal partners.
- Recruit and train volunteers.
- Manage databases for multimedia student portfolios & an archive of Free Write work.

Envisioning Justice Initiative - Chicago, IL  
*Hub Director*

2017-Present

- Serve as a programming liason between the MacArthur Foundation, Illinois Humanities, and arts organizations that work inside the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center.

National Louis University - Chicago, IL  
*Adjunct Professor*

Sept. 2007-Present

- Instruct Critical Literacy for Students with Disabilities for Masters of Special Education students.

Chicago Community Trust - Chicago, IL  
*Arts Infusion Initiative Steering Committee Member*

2009-2015

- Worked directly with leaders of the CCJDC, Chicago Public Schools, Chicago Police Department, Loyola University, and the Chicago Community Trust to design and implement arts programming for youth in detention.

Cook County Juvenile Detention Center - Chicago, IL  
*Staff Training Consultant*

2008-Present

- Train newly hired staff on the arts programming opportunities available to detained youth.

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## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE cont..

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| Chicago Public Schools - Chicago, IL<br><i>Arts and Literacy Curriculum Development</i><br>- Work with teachers and administrators to design high-interest, standards-based curriculum.  | 2003-2009    |
| Louder Than A Bomb Youth Poetry Festival (LTAB) - Chicago, IL<br><i>Free Write Team Coach</i><br>- Coach Free Write students to compose, edit, prepare, and record poetry to be presented at LTAB, the largest youth poetry festival in the world. | 2006-Present |
| Circles & Ciphers - Chicago, IL<br><i>Youth Mentoring Group Facilitator</i><br>- Facilitate creative writing and audio recording workshops for formerly incarcerated youth.  | 2011-Present |

## CONFERENCES & EVENTS

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|--|----------------|
| Create Justice Forum - Carnegie Hall, New York, NY<br><i>Presenter</i>                                     | March 2018     |
| Mitigating Evidence: Shifting the Narrative about Criminalized Youth - Albion, MI<br><i>Guest Lecturer</i> | October 2017   |
| Allied Media Conference - Detroit, MI<br><i>Presenter</i>  | June 2017      |
| National Symposium on Juvenile Services - Denver, CO<br><i>Presenter</i>                                   | November 2016  |
| Citywide Restorative Justice Conference - Chicago, IL<br><i>Presenter</i>                                  | September 2015 |
| American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting   Chicago, IL<br><i>Presenter</i>                 | April 2015     |
| Creative Resistance In A Prison Nation Forum - Chicago, IL<br><i>Presenter</i>                             | November 2014  |
| Growing Up Locked Down - New York, NY<br><i>Panelist</i>   | September 2014 |
| A National Call to Action - Ferguson, MO<br><i>Participant</i>   | October 2014   |
| Disproportionate Minority Contact Summit - Chicago, IL<br><i>Panelist</i>                                  | February 2014  |

## SKILLS

- Curriculum and assessment tool development and implementation
- Building coalitions across sectors that historically have not communicated with one another
- Working with diverse groups of people
- Facilitating public/private partnerships
- Assembling highly qualified teams
- Connecting with youth and centering their voices
- Implementing technology into curriculum
- Fundraising and grant writing