

Program Partners

Jewels Returned Writers Circle is a playwriting program developed by Playwrights Project for individuals who have experienced incarceration. Participants create fictional plays in which characters overcome obstacles in pursuit of their dreams. The program encourages mindful consideration of individuals' motivations, the use of non-violent problem solving skills, and recognition of our ability to redefine ourselves beyond the labels imposed by others.

The program is supported by the **California Arts Council** and the **California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation**, who recognize the rehabilitative power of the arts and are bringing arts programs into correctional facilities statewide.

Playwrights Project is a nonprofit based in San Diego that empowers individuals of all ages and backgrounds to voice stories through theatre, inspiring individual growth and creating meaningful community connections. Its playwriting programs and theatre productions emphasize the importance of communication and amplify the voices of underserved communities.

Triton Underground Scholars is a program that supports incarcerated, formerly incarcerated, and system impacted people to pursue higher education at the University of California, San Diego. Triton Underground Scholars was initiated in 2019 to build the prison to school pipeline through recruitment, retention, and advocacy for incarcerated, formerly incarcerated, and system impacted students.

Playwrights Project
Where Stories Take the Stage



Jewels

Returned Writers Circle



Trinity Theatre
Mission Valley Mall
1640 Camino Del Rio N. Suite 129
San Diego, California

September 6, 2025
11:00am – 1:00pm



About the Program

Welcome to Playwrights Project's *Jewels* Writers Circle, a writing group for individuals who have returned to the community after incarceration. We know that jewels are precious and are formed over many years of intense exposure to pressure and environmental factors. Yet, when we look beyond the rough edges, polish them and craft them, we discover something beautiful and priceless. This group is comprised of human beings who have similarly been exposed to circumstances, environments, and pressures that have shaped tough outer shells into precious gems. Because of those journeys, we have valuable gifts to offer.

During our writing sessions, *Jewels* writers developed and workshopped short one-act plays. Each playwright created unique characters striving to achieve something of importance in their lives. Writers served supported one another, reading aloud work in progress, citing details in the writing that successfully communicates the writers' intent, and asking questions to help each writer strengthen their play.

Today, professional actors perform "cold readings" of the scripts. The actors will hold the scripts as they perform and will not have costumes, props, sets, or lights to help tell the stories. Instead, the audience is invited to listen and focus on the writing.

Many thanks to the playwrights for their excellent work and abundant creativity and to the actors for bringing the characters to life. We are grateful to those who supported the implementation of the program, especially the California Arts Council Impact Program and the City of San Diego Cultural Affairs Department.

Please help us celebrate the writers and improve the program by sharing your opinions in the post-show discussion and by completing the enclosed survey.

And, let us know, if you'd like to take part in a future playwriting program and let your wisdom shine.

Plays and Playwrights

The Rewrite

Damian Busby

Waiting Without Hope

Peter Crates

Stray Cat Scared

Steven A. Gonzales

The Silenced Voices

Joaquin Mena

Who's Going to Kiss Me This Time

Kwamin Stewart

Actors

Nancy Batres

Monique Gaffney

Brandon Kelley

Arturo Medina

Joaquin Mena

Teaching Artists

Cecelia Kouma

Damian Busby