

# telling it



Arts-based interventions  
for change



**Ypsilanti Community Middle School  
8th Grade • Spring 2024**



# WELCOME

## to the Spring 2024 Telling It Anthology!

What a treat it has been to continue serving the 8th grade students that we first met nearly two years ago as 7th graders! They have grown to be such a creative, sensitive and caring group of teens. They support each other and dive into everything we explore together with enthusiasm and a willingness to process the issues and themes that are important to them.

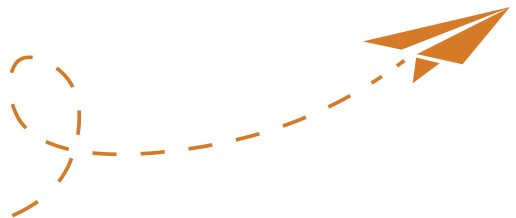
This past year those issues and themes have included transitions and closure, paying attention to how emotions serve as a barometer for our feelings, identifying the aspects of self that are confident and proud and those that are hurt and sad. The students have shared their triumphs and their challenges with us and have formed close bonds with each other and with the Telling It team members, especially our Resident Artist, McCrea Deezer, Lead Social Worker, Kelly Kundrat, and long-time volunteer, Adam Baird.

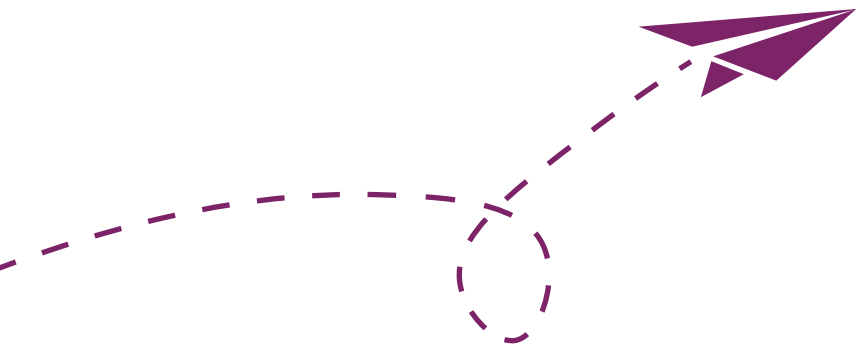
The following pages are full of some of the teens' creative writing and their portraits. There are photographs of candid moments from one of our sessions where we were using theater games to problem solve and to work on regulating those emotions that can overwhelm us.

The mission of Telling It is to prioritize the needs of young individuals by offering safe, uncensored, and judgment-free spaces. We strive to cultivate resilience, empower personal strengths, and provide an outlet for processing emotional struggles. We are grateful to the faculty and staff of the school. These include Dean Irvin and Mr. Olds, the custodians who help us set up the cafeteria each week, Mrs. Miller and the 8th grade teachers. An especially hearty thanks goes to Principal Davis who has supported our vision throughout this year. Most of all, an enormous thank you to the 8th grade students as they close one chapter and start a new one – all of us at Telling It wish you well!

We hope you enjoy this collection of the teens' creative writing and their memories of being in Telling It. It was truly an honor to know and be inspired by them.

Wish all good wishes,  
Deb Gordon-Gurfinkel  
*Founding Director*





## **I Liive**

I liive for music, video games and working out.

## **I Give, You Take**

I give my love and loyalty,  
They take it.  
They give time and food,  
I take it.





# Arianna

## I Give, You Take

I give, you take everything.  
You give, I take love.

## Favorite Telling It Memory

I like being able to express myself so I can't say I have a day that I enjoyed the most, but I like when they helped me with my relationship.





# A'rielle

## **I Am** *Animal as metaphor*

I am a dog.  
I am cute.  
I am friendly.  
I am fun.

## **I Liive**

I liive for my best friend Zero.  
I liive for my art, for my music,  
my guitar and for my violin.  
I liive for my honey and for my  
backyard.

## **I Give, You Take**

I give love. You take love.  
I take gift. You give gifts.  
I give ideas. You take advice.  
You give jokes. I give laughs.  
I give food. You take my pets.

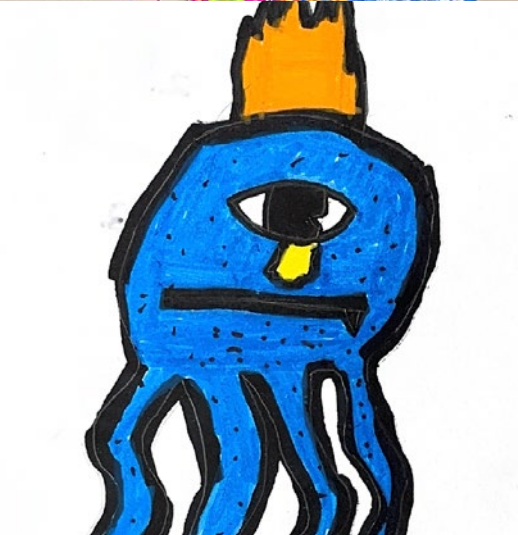
## **I Am** *Object as metaphor*

I am a pie car.  
I am interesting and I am funny.  
I'm going to drive to the beach.  
I'm leaving behind overthinking.  
I'm getting there with the help of  
friends and therapy!

## **Favorite Telling It Memory**

My favorite part of Telling It was  
every part. Everyone is awesome  
here (and today when we played  
three heads). Everyone here is  
really awesome and I am going to  
miss them next year 😞

My second best memory was  
listening to Jay and Zero rap  
battle. I also thought that when  
the Brazilian people came back  
that was fun.





# Brandon/Travis

## I Liive

I liive for thoughts of my dog. R.I.P Aspen (big grrrr)

I liive for my girl, music and my friends.

I liive for all of the things I could have accomplished.

I liive for my dad, my family.

I liive for food, drinks and video games.

## What I Feel

Bring my pack out the  
shadows

you tryna waste my dogs.

We take that logs

Get stronger

Swingin blades like claws

You serpents been lurkin

I move em

Any snakes

And I aint yuji

Them demons can't even

Change my mind

don't waste my tie

cuz damit

tranquil and manic

go hand in hand

hand to hand us man

and my homegirl let that

blam

wells unknown abyss

green surround me

got panoramic bands.

Wind up in my domain and

I vanish

Leave you in panic fam

Cannon max elephant

Long nose!! Wet yall

With them.

\*\*\*\*\*

SpontaneousCombustion

I might light up any second.

I got tree

I got wraps

It's a wrap

Then I rap.

Leme show up for dem

records.

Still shiny

Still wild

Still slidin wit no effort.

Ritual Retta

Pockets different cheesy

I took you

on a trip

to L.A.

Called it girls night

It's a sight

We gon be'all right.





# David

## Rap From the GOATs

I wake up every day  
Feel like Telling It.  
I rap my neighborhood,  
Never selling it.  
Rest I peace Kobe I'm saying it.  
I'm tryna become rich and famous.  
Curry in the kitchen and curry in  
basketball.  
I wake up for my music and I never fall.

## I Give, You Take

I give love.  
They take love.  
They give money.  
I give friendship.  
They take happiness, they give  
depression.  
I take depression.

## I Am

*Animal as metaphor*

I am a gorilla.  
I am strong.  
I am big.  
I am agitated.

## I Liive

I liive for music, games,  
school, Telling It.  
I liive for sports, god, food,  
drinks and writing.  
I liive for Halloween, Love  
and being famous.



## I Am *Animal as metaphor*

I am a wolf.  
I am known for having a  
luscious tail.  
I am THE BEST.  
I am a pretty attractive animal.

## I Liive

I liive for Harry Potter and I  
liive for Casplay.  
I liiive for Lune and for Zero.  
I liiive for love and I liiive for  
Cookie and Ahmiyah.  
I liiive for money and for  
Donna.

## I Give, You Take

I give, you take, I give you my  
best and you take only  
quarter of such.  
You give, I take, you give your  
emotions and  
I take them for what they are.

## I Am *Object as metaphor*

I am a spaceship.  
I am Kalakool  
And I am a recording.  
I am going to bomb.  
I'm leaving behind Zarkon?  
I'm getting there with  
explosions  
With the help of BUST!



# Hadiiza

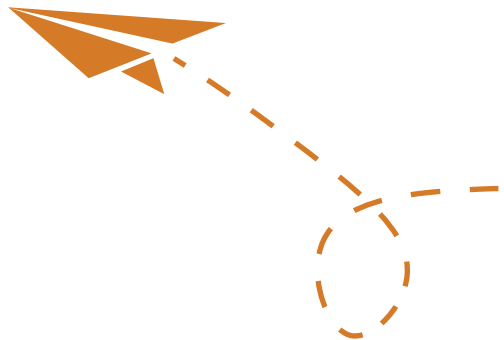


# Ja’Niah

## I Liive

I liive for Izzy, music and  
my dad.

I liive for Kalli, drumming,  
swimming and anime.





# Jay

## I Liive

I liive for my guitar, food and friends.

## I Give, You Take

I give, you take, you give, I take.

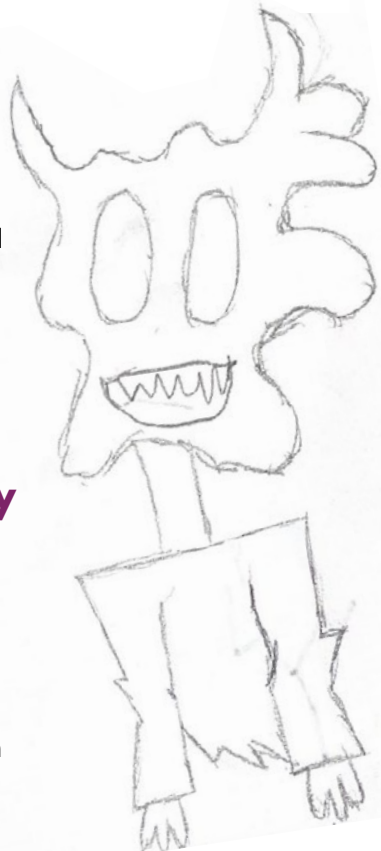
I give my heart, you take my heart and trust and support.

My Amazing Girlfriend!!!!

You give me you and support and you had to deal with my trauma.

## Favorite Telling It Memory

I like the freedom. My favorite memory is when we had all the food and drinks. It was really fun and I ate it all because I'm a big back. All the snacks every Thursday. The people are cool. Advice for upcoming 8th graders is to be yourself. I experienced positive change here. I'm going to miss Telling It. I want to go, but I don't want to go at the same time.



## I Liiive

I liiive for my family and my dog.  
I liiive for food, god and sleeping.

## I Give, You Take

I give, you take.  
You give, I take.  
I take money, games, toys, hover-boards, tvs, schools, guns and I give is chocolate, candy and love.  
I give Zaire food.  
Zaire gave me food.  
My candy goes to my friends.  
I don't know. That's all.  
I give myself sleep and food.



# Jeremiah



## I Liivve

I liivve for my best friend  
Hadiza and for CJ.  
I liivve for my little cousin, Inara  
and my little cousin, Lucian.  
I liivve for my boyfriend and  
girlfriend.

## I Give, You Take

I give, you take.  
You give, I take.  
I give my love, You take  
advantage.  
You give kiss, I take hugs.  
I give comfort, you take time.  
You give tears, I give my heart.  
You take my heart,  
I hold your pain for you.

## What I Feel

I see you, I hear you, but I can't get  
close to you.  
I feel your pain, but I don't know  
how to help.  
I don't want to see you cry, but I  
can stop crying myself.  
I know I need to let it go, but I  
can't help remember that cold,  
dark night.  
I see you...  
I hear you... but,  
I don't know how to help.  
I don't want to see you cry, but...



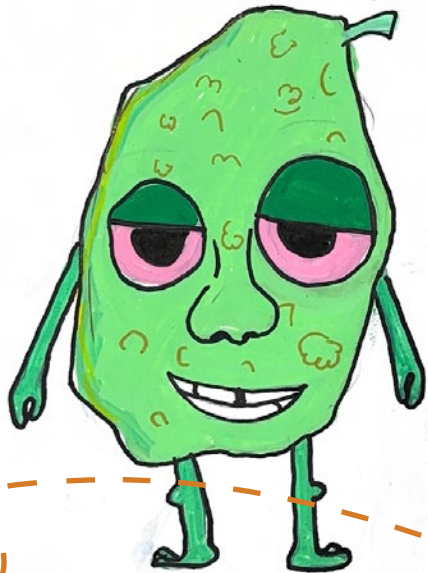
Lynne



# Maddy

**I Am** *Animal as metaphor*

I am a snake.  
I am sneaky.  
I am venom.





# Noah

## **I Am** *Animal as metaphor*

I am a dinosaur.

I am a nice tall dinosaur, and nobody  
makes fun of me because I'm  
short.

I am a caring dinosaur.

I am a good dinosaur.

## **I Give, You Take**

I give, you take.

You give, I take.

I give you my love and you take it  
and you hurt me.

You give me a girl I wanted and  
need in my life.

And I took it for granted and I'm  
sorry.

## **I Am**

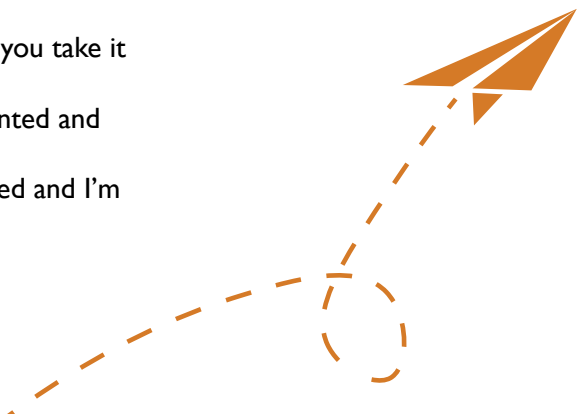
I am a Noah.

I am fine asf, smart, hell,  
And I am a boy.

I am going to show everybody  
that I can go do it.

I'm leaving behind all the  
bullshit from people.

I am going there with the help  
of my god and my girl and  
My confidence.





## I Liive

I liive for my dogs, for my music and for my mom and pops.

I liive for my brother and for roblox.

## I Am *Mode of transportation*

I am a stoner van.

I am the embodiment of weed.

I am going to my smoke spot.

I'm leaving behind Breeze pros.

I'm getting there with the help of weed.

## Class of 2013

"Mom, I'm tired"

I'm just tired of life and sometimes

I need my mom.

"Sometimes I just need to be close to my mom."

"Mom, I'll be quiet. It would be just to sleep at night."

"Can I sleep in your house to-night?"

Sometimes when my mom is mad,

She'll make comments like, "when

I die"

Or other things.

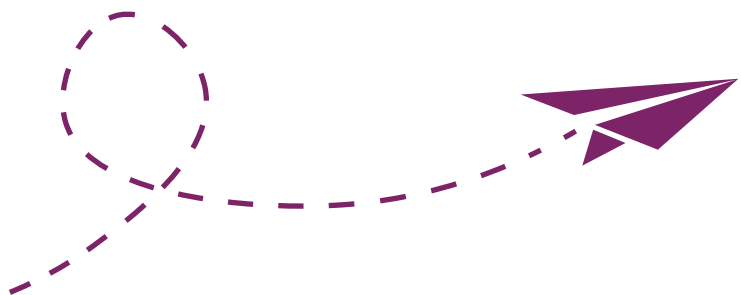
I don't want to leave my mom but one day,

I'll have to leave too.

"and, I'll leave once I figure out how to pay for my own life too"

# Omiria

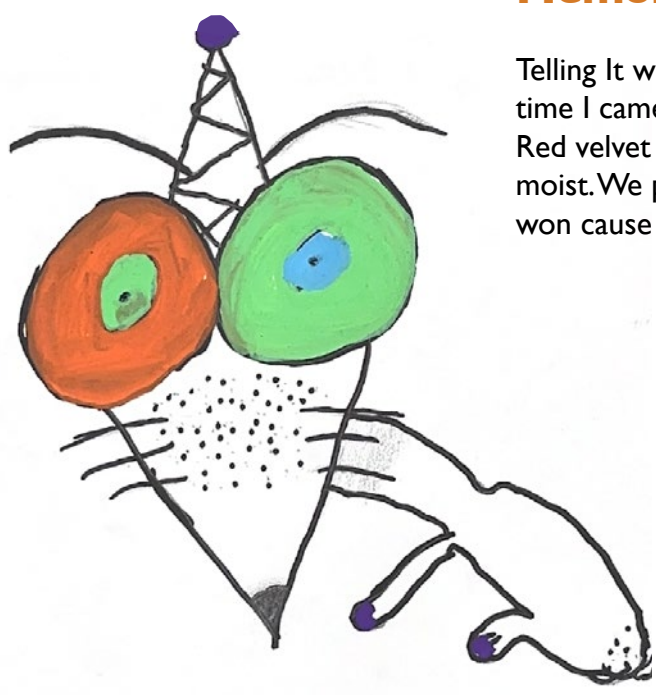




# Terrelus

## Favorite Telling It Memory

Telling It was fun. The very first time I came and we had cake. Red velvet cake. It's sweet & moist. We played uno. Jeremiah won cause he cheated.



# Zaire



## I Give, You Take

I give food, love, happiness,  
my best  
Nothing.

You take, food affection,  
everything my happiness,  
Everything.

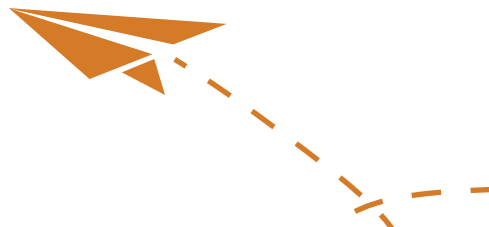
You give jokes, I take nothing.

## I Liive

I liive for food and games  
and Roblox.

## Favorite Telling It Memory

I like when we had the  
people from Brazil here. I like  
everything because it's so fun.



# Zero



## I Am

*Animal as metaphor*

I am a theropod from the  
dinosaur eras – maybe  
Cretaceous?

I am an animal that has lived  
longer than humans.

I am strong.

I am extinct.

I am in Jurassic Park.

## I Give, You Take

I give love – you take love.

You give attention, I take time.

You take my affection, you give  
thanks.

You give me a headache, you take  
my money.

You give me.

I give you a home, you take  
everything.

## I Liive

I liive for Telling It

I liive for Hadiza and I liive for  
A'riel.

I liive for my mom (she forces  
me).

I liive for Butters, Reese's, Sugar,  
Skittles, Sprinkles, Sundaes and  
Sorbet.

I liive for music and for family.

## I Am

*Animal as metaphor*

I am a horse.

I am a big black stallion

And I am an incredibly smart horse.

I'm going to find where you live.

I'm leaving behind no one because  
I am super loyal.

I'm getting there with the help of  
my herd,

Also known as my friend.

## **I Liive Rap**

*Angel, Jeremiah, and A'riel*

I be living for real.  
I like cars and cows and dogs.  
I be living for real.

I like music and art and theatre.  
I be living for real.

I like sleep and dreams.  
I be living for real.

I like helping my peeps.  
I be living for real.  
I'm living for love.  
My girlfriend is my dove.  
I be living for real.

**WE BE LIVING FOR REAL.**

## **I Liive Rap**

*Zero and Ja'Niah*

Brick, rinky dink house.  
I live with the monkeys  
and the gremlins.  
I sneak around like a  
mouse.

I live for my friends and  
my music.  
They help me so I don't  
lose it.

Butters, Reese's, Ace, Zeb,  
my days till I'm dead.





## **I Liive Rap** *Hadiza and Lune*

I live in Michigan.  
I liiive for my boyfriend.  
I live CJ.  
I live for Cookie... Cookie,  
Cookie, Cookie.  
I live my little cousin Sophina,  
I liiive Hadiza.  
I live in America.  
I liiive my cousin Thomas.  
I liiive for love.  
I liiive for bf and gf.  
I live for Harry Potter.





**Team Leader**

Deb Gordon-Gurfinkel

**Lead Social Worker**

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**Resident Artist**

McCrea Deezer

**U-M MSW Intern**

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Adam Baird

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United Way of Southeast Michigan  
Washtenaw County Sheriff's  
Office - *Jerry L. Clayton, Sheriff*  
Michigan Arts and Culture Council  
- *Telling It is supported in part by  
an award from MACC*

**Anthology Credits**

John Fornoff, *Graphic Design*  
Leisa Thompson, *Photography*

telling it



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