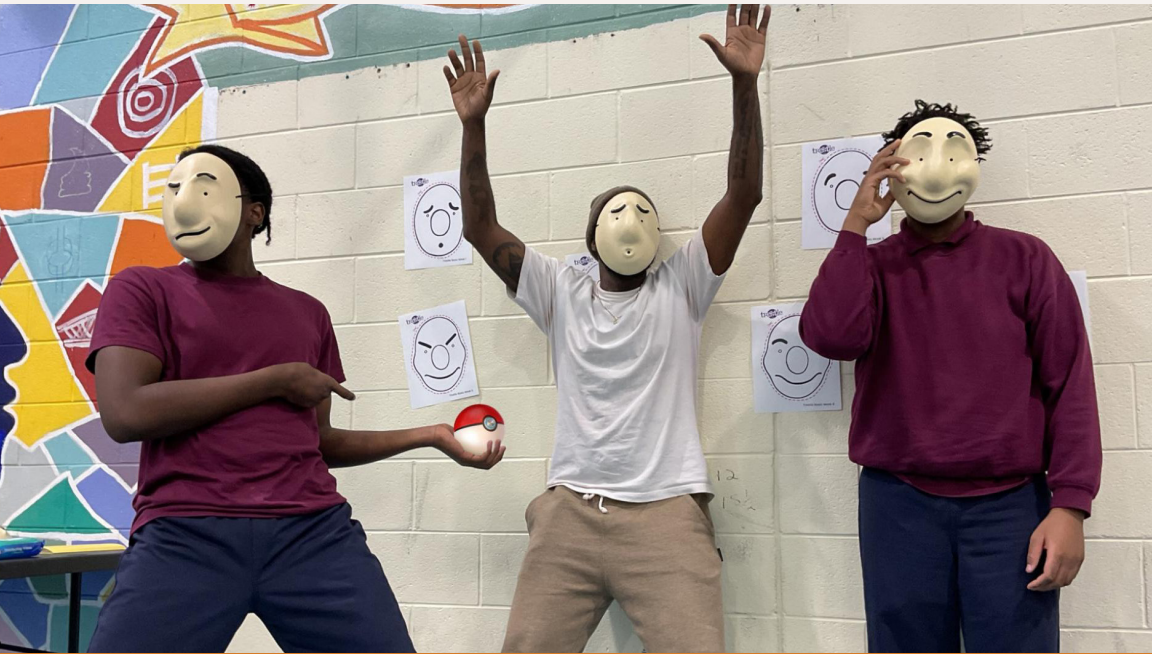


telling it



Telling It 2025-2026

Telling It Team

2025-26 Roster



**Deborah
Gordon-Gurfinkel**
Lecturer II, Telling It
Founding Director



Kelly Kundrat
LMSW, Associate
Director & Lead
Social Worker



McCrea Deezer
Principal Artist



Bryce the Third
Resident Artist



Domonique Weston
Team Leader



Andrew Morton
Lead Facilitator



Anna Harrell
LLMSW, MSW Intern

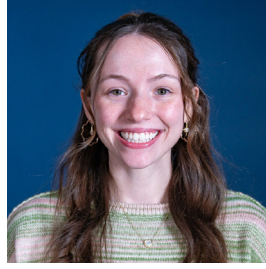


Brianna Evans
LLMSW, MSW Intern





Brodee Jason
MSW Intern



Allison Supanich-Goldner
MSW Intern

Guest Artists



Asia Dobbins



Alex Collier



Demetric Walls

Tiada

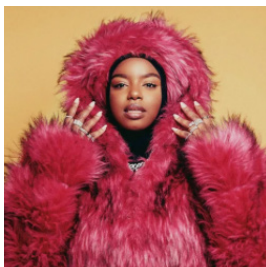


Ova Saopeng

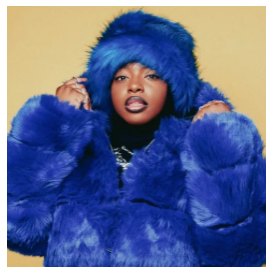


Stephanie "Soultree" Camba

Ain't Afraid



Inah



Yahzi

Community Partners



Juvenile Detention Center



Family Empowerment Program
(Eastern Michigan University)



Parkridge Community Center
(Washtenaw Community College)



Washtenaw Youth Career
Academy



Juvenile Division of
the Washtenaw County
Trial Court



Ypsi Housing Commission

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all of our funders and supporters. This work could not happen without you.

University of Michigan

University of Michigan Residential College

University of Michigan Undergraduate Interns of
the Community Empowerments of the Arts

Donors

Julie Konigsberg

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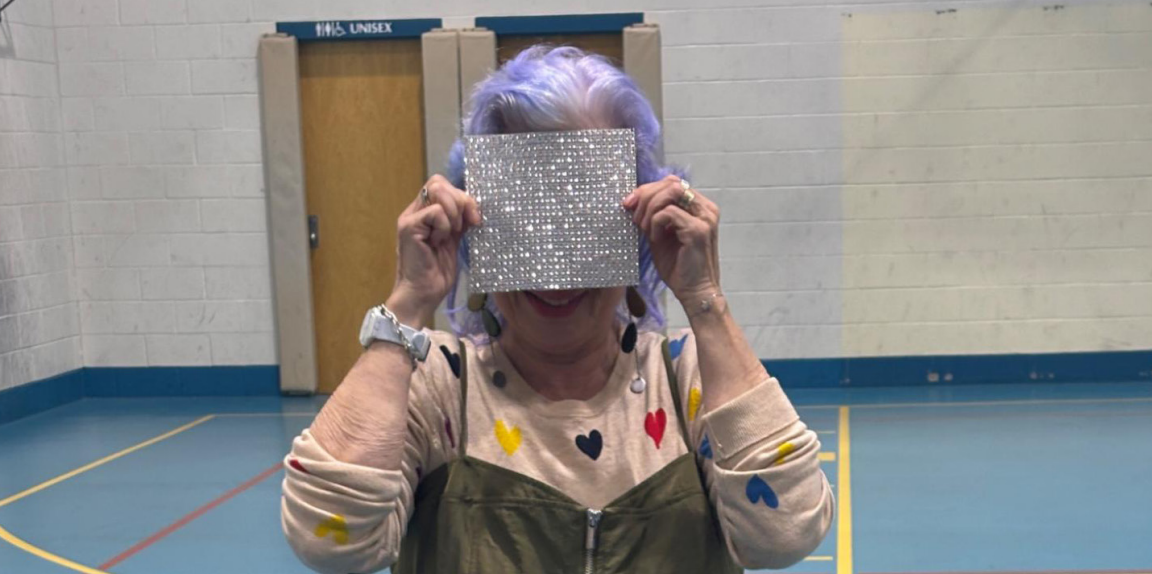
Ann Brennan

Cathy and Brandon Black

Dr. Ann R. Alvarez and Dr. M. Antonio G. Alvarez

Christiana M. Allen

Parth Borker



Director's Letter

WELCOME to the 2026 Anthology celebrating the incredible creativity of the youth of Telling It!

As Telling It approaches our 25th year of service to the community, we are honored to share this anthology of youth artwork and writing. Telling It is a community-based expressive arts program that prioritizes the mental health needs of young people by offering safe, uncensored, and judgment-free spaces. Through the arts, we strive to cultivate resilience, empower personal strengths, and provide meaningful outlets for processing emotional struggles.

The artwork and writing showcased here were created by youth during weekly Telling It sessions. These pieces represent the young people we engaged with at the Washtenaw County Children's Services Detention Center, two community-based diversion programs (The Academy and the Trial Court Juvenile Division), and the Family Empowerment Program in Ypsilanti.

What inspires all of us at Telling It is the resilience and brilliance of the youth. They have a profoundly creative capacity to process their feelings and experiences through expressive art forms, including visual arts, music, drama/theatre, creative writing, movement, and play. These youth may be navigating difficult and uncertain situations, while their laughter, tears, honesty, and willingness to share their stories is inspirational.

Our work would not be possible without the extraordinarily gifted and talented people who make up the Telling It team. We have an incredible array of folks from a variety of artistic disciplines, backgrounds, and life experiences who make up our staff, University of Michigan interns, and volunteers. Along with them, we have had internationally recognized guest artists visit our sites to inspire and engage the youth in sessions rooted in their expert disciplines. Everyone provides the critically important Telling It support network. According to the Supervisor at the Juvenile Detention Center, "the relationships built between the Telling It team and youth are one of the best things Telling It provides," and the youth in the detention center refer to them as their family.

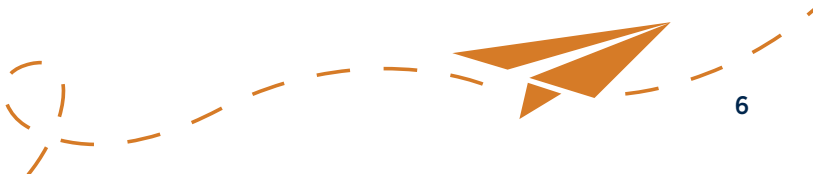
We have exciting plans for the coming year, including program expansion into the Wayne County Juvenile Facility and at least one additional community group to provide continuity of care for youth impacted by the juvenile legal system. Our goal is to maintain the long-standing integrity of our mission.

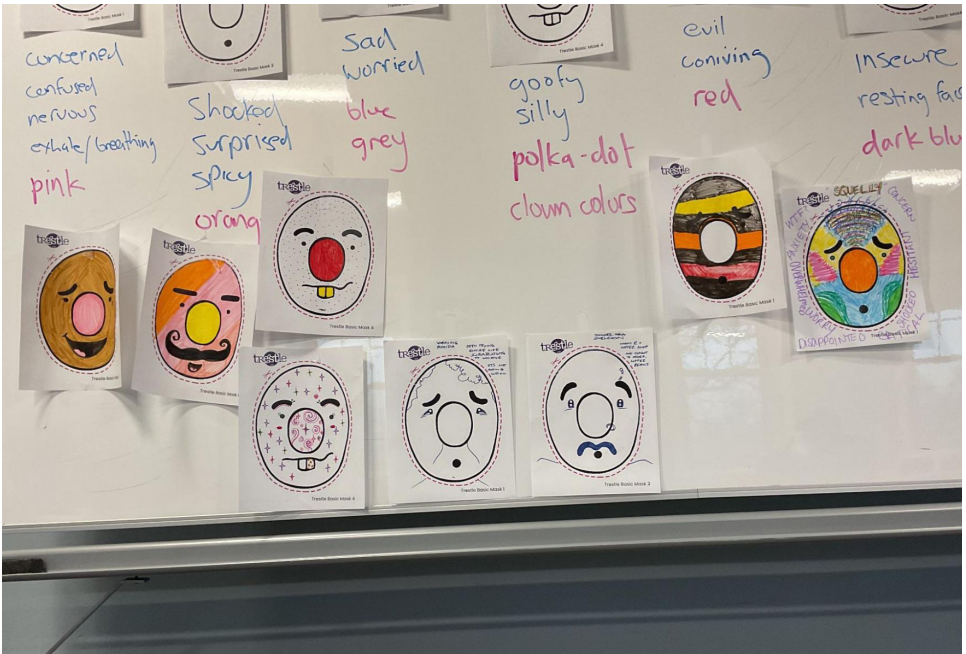
We are grateful to all of you who support us and who share in our commitment to care for our young people.

Enjoy this wonderful tribute to the youth of Telling It, to whom we dedicate this anthology.

Deb Gordon-Gurfinkel
Founding Director

Kelly Kundrat, LMSW
Associate Director/Lead Social Worker



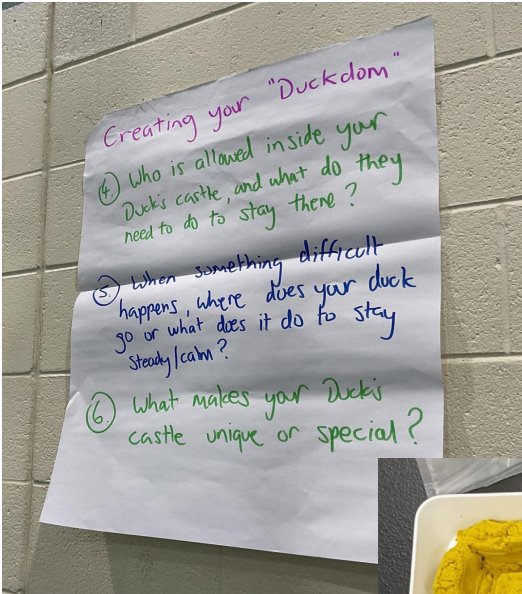


Mask activity at the Parkridge Community Center with the Trial Court Division. Youth created masks to express what emotions they were feeling, with many of them expressing a plethora of various emotions. Youth were able to create a character with the mask, stating their name, emotional state, and emotions that would be present.

Many youth expressed wanting to create goofy characters, and created characters with a wide range of emotions. Drama therapy and play acting characters allowed the youth participants to engage in situations they may have experienced, with the option of 'externalizing' their role in a situation, so any negative feelings associated can be separated from the participant.



Duckdom

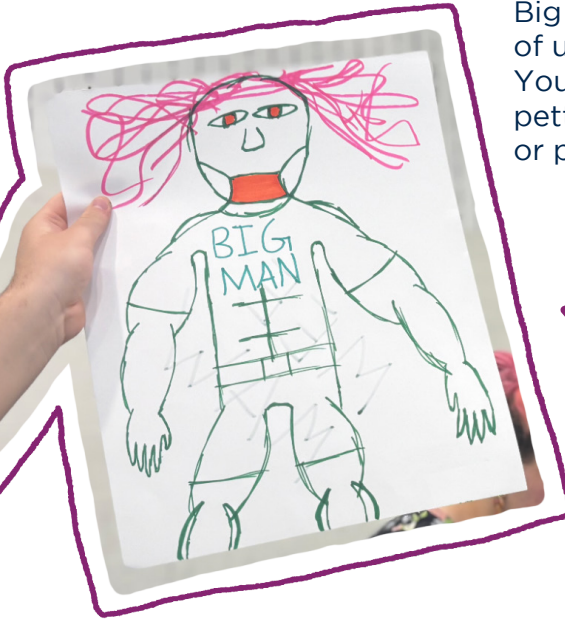


A youth created this duckdom and stated that he wanted his friends as ducks within this activity, and that he was "going into his garage to work on his bike." This youth enjoyed incorporating his own personal interests into the art activity, through direct self expression. This activity allowed for all youth to express themselves however they chose, with their autonomy at the forefront.



A youth created ducks in a pond for his Duckdom and reported feeling calm throughout the creation process.

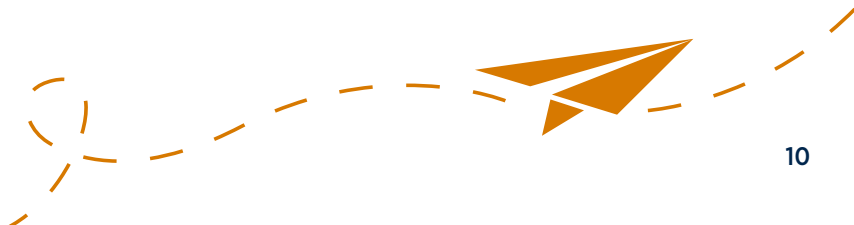
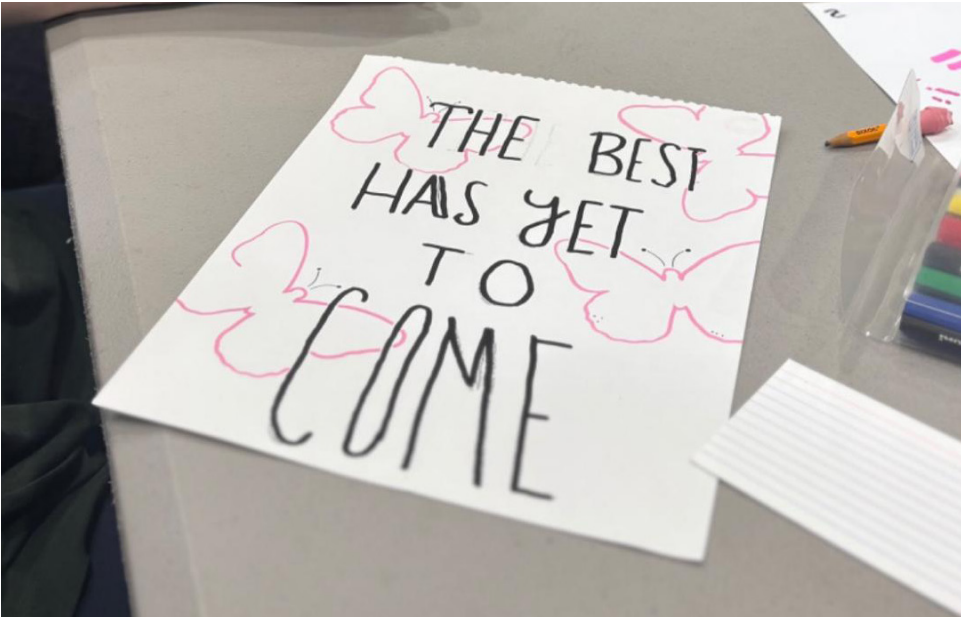
Our youth created “artifacts” to show what they gained from participating in Telling It, and what our program taught them:



Big man is “what is in all of us, if we can let it out. You can be bigger than petty little instincts or people.”



This youth went through a “big growth emotionally,” because of Telling It. He learned to share things from this time within Telling It, and it helped him “open up and grow.”



2-27-26

Everyday, I wake up in a new world.
A new world that I find bored.
What I find bored is the same things I see everyday.
The same sky, the same ground, the same air I breathe.
I'm truly getting bored.
bored of a story with no moral.
no moral with no honesty.
no honesty without prodigy that contains nothing more than a lie.
A lie for? To die for? But why though?
A lie? For why? For what? But what?
A lie? A lie that is so true, that the sky stops being blue.
Everyday, I wake up in a new world.
The same world I will always make me bored.

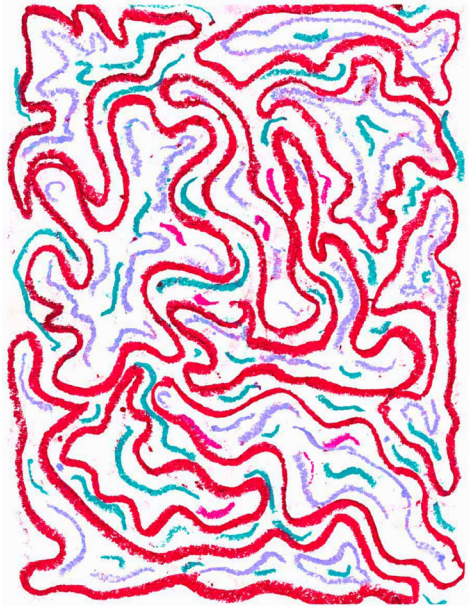
- C. Taco

Poem from a youth at the Washtenaw County Juvenile Detention Center (JDC), when Telling It guest artists Ain't Afraid were present during the session. Expressive arts can impact youth voice, in which a few youth who are quieter within the group shared poems, raps, and songs. Youth were encouraged to perform in expressive ways that were okay for them, such as performing with a group or writing a poem. This youth created the poem away from the larger group, and wanted it to be read by a staff member for the whole group.

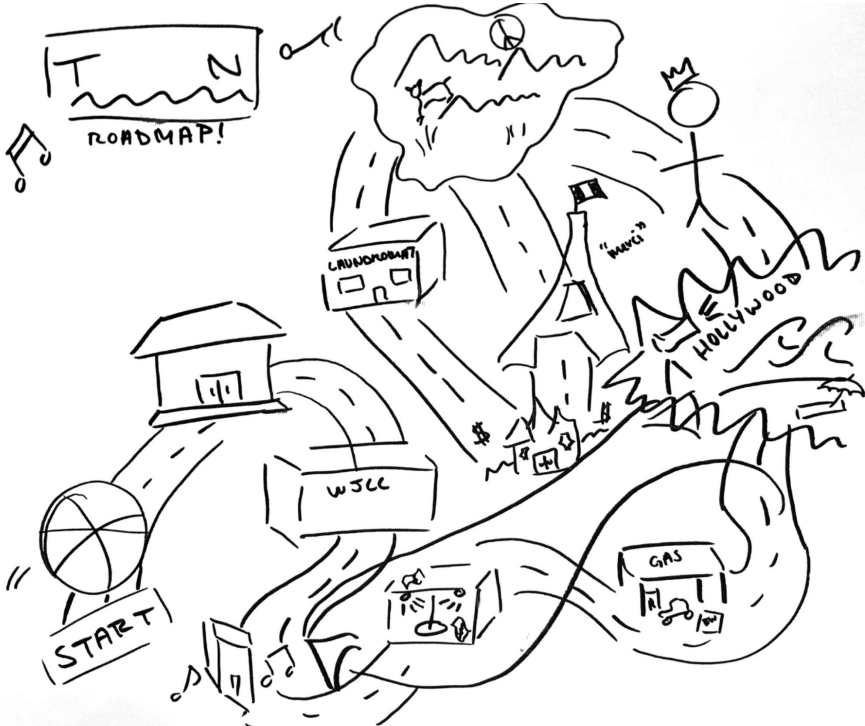


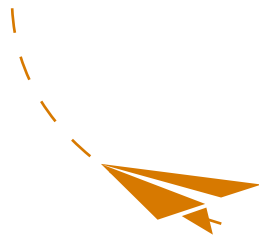


Build your ideal house or home.



Our young people created a roadmap of their goals, pinpointing what they believe they may need to add or subtract from the journey along the way.





A youth at the JDC has been consistently interested in math and science throughout his time with Telling It. This youth has been engaged with immersing himself in mathematics and sciences with various Telling It staff. By allowing full youth autonomy and interests present among sessions, this youth has found comfort in conversing with staff members and diving deeper into his mathematics and science interests.

$$f(x) = ax^2 + bx + c \quad f(x) = a\left(x^2 + \frac{bx}{a}\right) + c$$
$$f(x) = a\left(x^2 + \frac{bx}{a} + \left(\frac{b}{2a}\right)^2\right) + c - \left(\frac{b}{2}\right)^2$$

$$f(x) = a\left(x + \frac{b}{2}\right)^2 + \left(c - \left(\frac{b}{2}\right)^2\right)$$

$$V = \left(-\frac{b}{2a}, \left(c - \left(\frac{b}{2}\right)^2\right)\right)$$

$$\frac{-30}{6} = -5 \quad V_1$$

$$75 - 15^2 = -150$$

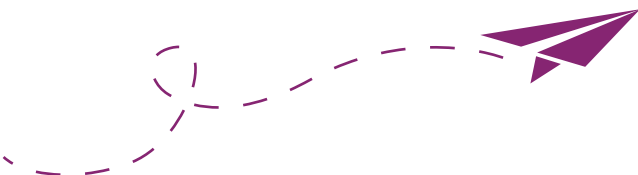
$$f(x) = 3x^2 + 30x + 75$$

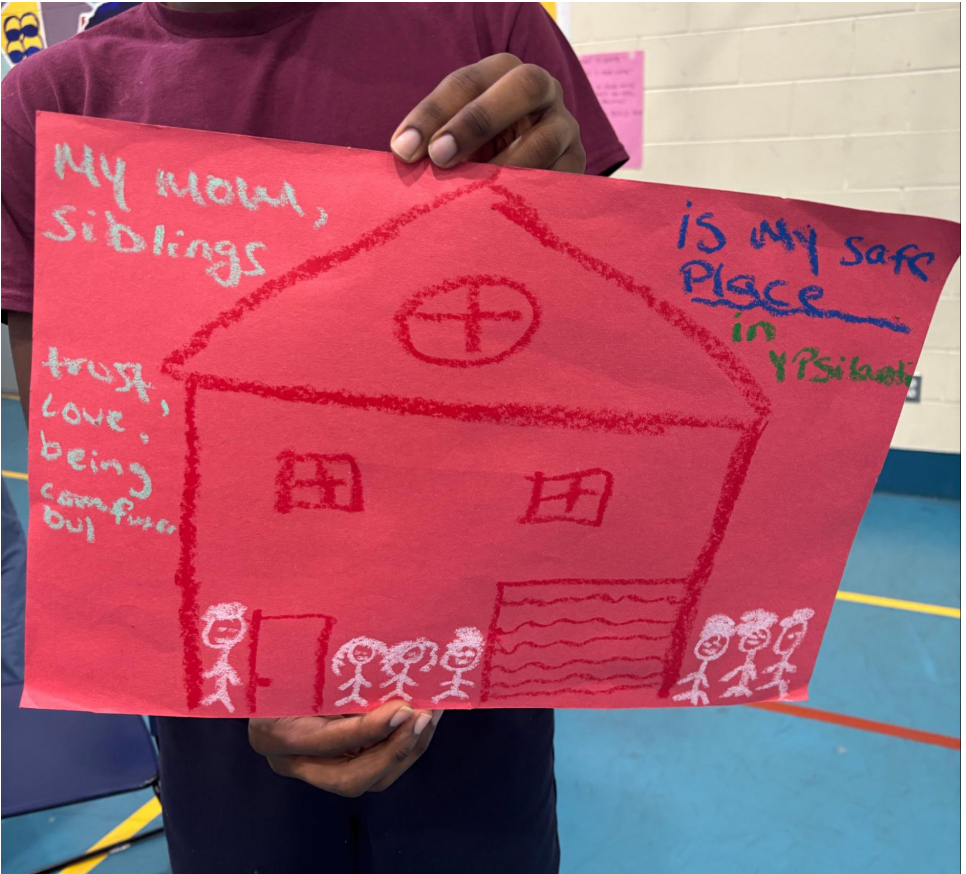
$$\frac{-30}{6} = -5 \quad V = (-5, 0)$$

$$3(-5)^2 + 30(-5) + 75$$
$$75 - 150 + 75 = 0$$



- C. Math





C y

Sunset in the infinite grass field.

Sipping yummy blue raspberry slushie
at Golden Corral.

Throwing snowballs at snowmen

Eating the breadsticks at Olive Garden

Learning about ionic compounds

D n

peace and loud on the dirtbike,

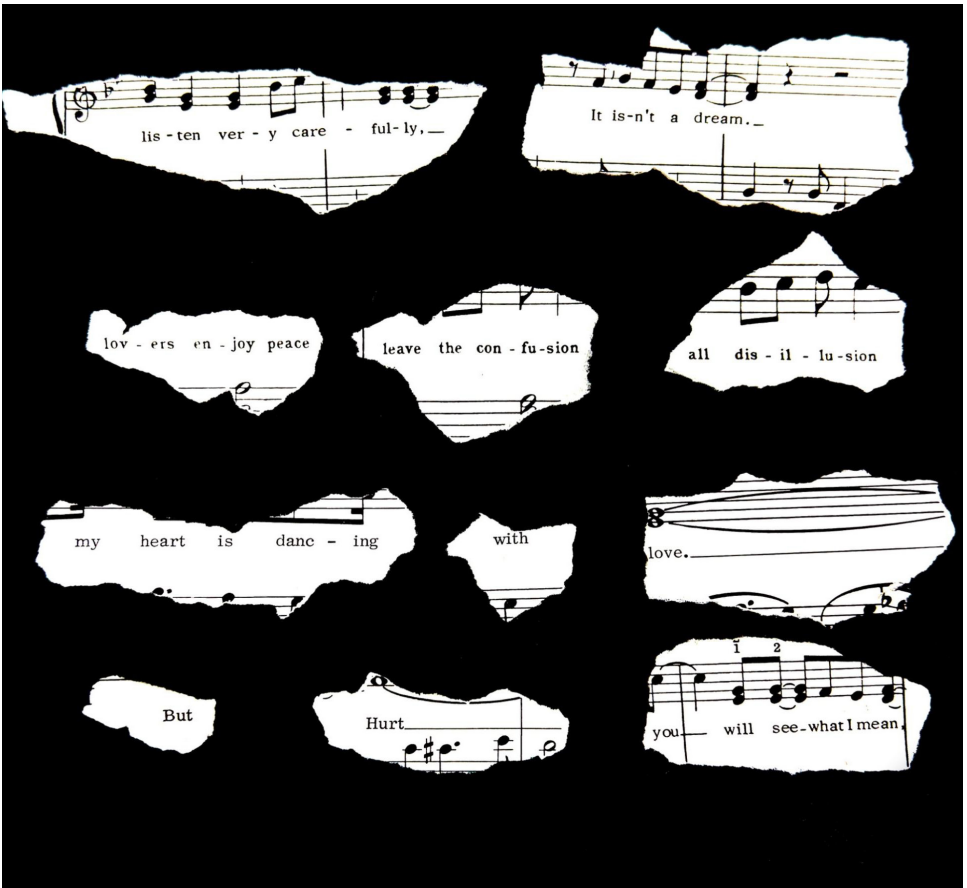
ice cold water in a big glass cup

I can do whatever I want to

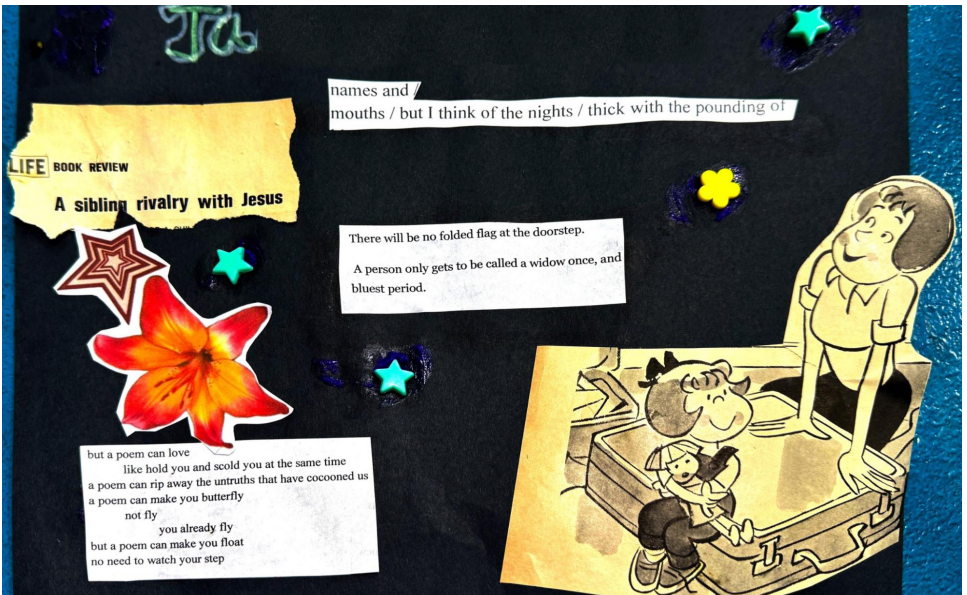
blend engine ~~of the dirtbike~~
drowns out the noise

freedom through the trees,
away from stress

Youth created a poem of their interest that described what a good day looks like to them. They then used this poem to perform their creation in front of the group either as a song, a rap, or acting it out creatively.



Found poetry and collage exercise





Aa



February 27, 2026 at 5:14 PM

Despair

In the ground, and in the air, everywhere I find despair.
the despair is in the air, where I won't see it, and I don't care.
Out the mouth, and into the world, spreads negativity, and soon becomes null.

With the Pen in my hand i can become the King
Of the Jungle

With the Pen in my hand i can erase the System

With the Pen in my hand i can get a Job

With the Pen in my hand i can write Checks

With the Pen in my hand i can change my future

With the Pen in my hand i can rewrite history

With the Pen in my hand i can make money

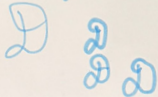
With the Pen in my hand i can change time

With the Pen in my hand i can make movies

With the Pen in my hand i can get a free vacation

With the Pen in my hand i can travel anywhere

With the Pen in my hand i can write books



With a Pen in my hand i can be him. I
will be him, i can be him, I will
ALWAYS, be him, I can achieve
my goals, i can get ~~to~~
where i need to go, i can
be the best i can be, and
The Pen i am Needed, ~~to~~, I will
get to the point i can be
role full in everything i do,
i can be the man i will become, i am
going to be, i will be a father my children
will look up to, i will give my life
to god. Because my god is my life, he's
the only reason i am alive, there is
nothing better than living for god.
I know im going to die someday, and
when that happens i will be forced for give it
in my future

With a pen in my hand
I can write myself a check.
I could buy my favorite car- Rolls Royce.
I would get rid of beefs,
I can go home

Q a di.

With a pen in my hand
I could glow some land ~~to~~ to
plant tiny words like seeds
and watch them ~~understand~~ understand, and ^{be set free}
When they sprout, you will see the
~~beauty~~ beauty of the cute ~~with~~ then
When winter passes over
I will be looking into the
Spring, waiting for you to truly see
I can do it, with this nice ink thing.

This exercise involved using creative writing, following the prompt "With a pen in my hand...", encouraging participants to use their imagination of them having a 'magic pen', using poetry to describe a world of their own creation, with ideal circumstances of their interest.

Design Team

Youth worked together in groups with different roles (designer, advertiser, engineer, etc) to build something that solves a problem, and then give a sales pitch to funders.



De
JN

NOVEL-TEES



3D
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OR
PLASTIC

+ free pack
of tees
+ free baseball
cap w/ logo



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for 8

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\$500k

NOVEL-TEES

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YOU GET... 33% of the company

2% ROYALTIES

COMPANY AMBASSADORS:

- * ~~Scotty~~ Scotty Scheffler
- * Rory ~~McIlroy~~ McIlroy
- * Tai Chang

GOLF,
YOUR WAY

YAMAHA



Be a kid again
 Escape bills

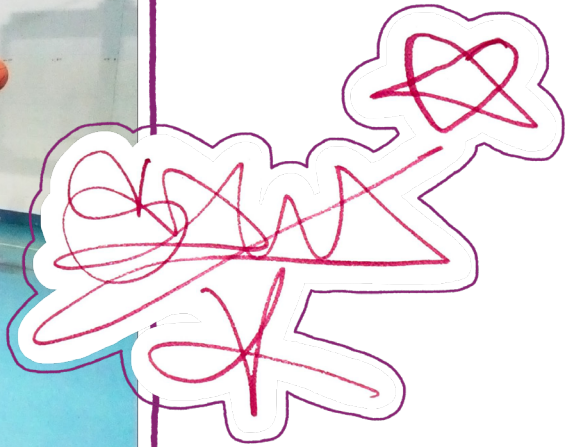
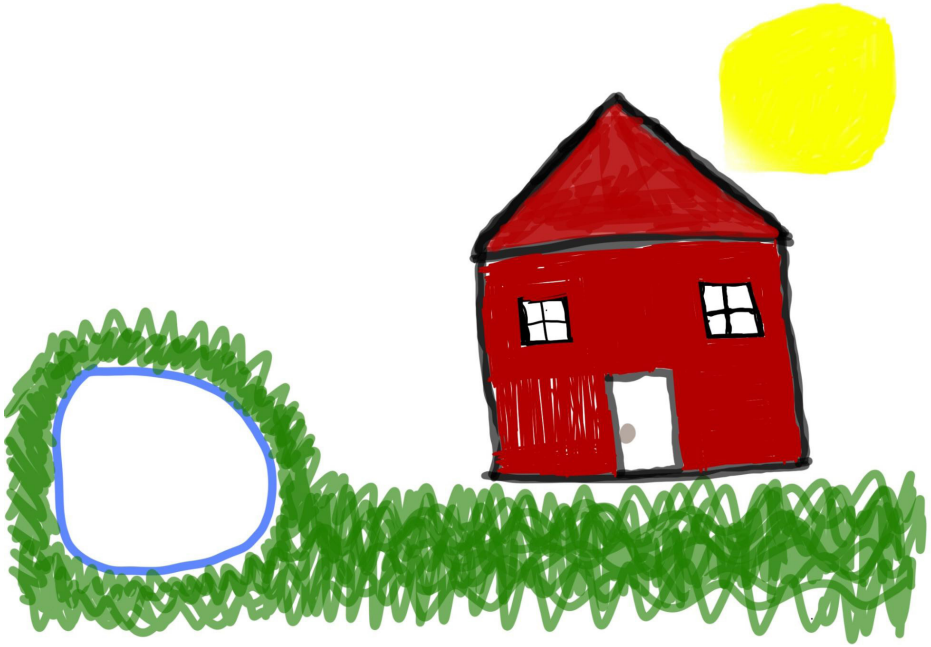
Asking 1mil
 \$5000/mon. subscription
 sign waiver to be on stream
 24 hrs & live streamed
 We will give you all revenue
 from the stream

ICE CREAM

ASK	
\$25k	WISH SET FOR 25% OF COMPANY
\$1M	ADULT 2M IN 1M FROM ASK LIVE STREAM AD REV 1 YR SUB → THEN ↑
\$350k	NOVEL-TEES 55% OF COMPANY \$50k IN ALREADY 2% ROYALTIES SPONSORS 350k YAMAHA







Once upon a time there was a son. His father is getting old. The father was the king of dragons. He passed from old age. The son and his brother had a sword fight over who would become the next king of dragons. During the sword fight, the son ~~Damary~~ placed his hand on the magic orb and he became the king of dragons. As king he could hypnotize and could control the element of darkness through his necklace. The king had a dragon servant with a magical plate that could summon anything and a servant with a magical car to summon ~~transform~~ whatever she needs. One day as king, Damary got into an epic fight for his kingdom during the fight ~~the~~ two beads on Damary's necklace of Darkness shattered, but he won.

My story for when I
get out...

I will be in barber school and I
will be supportive of my family and do
what I have to do to be successful.
and also I want a small business



Telling It Team



Special thanks to our volunteers:

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| Noora Aabed | Livvy Hayes |
| Adam Baird | Cydney Heed |
| Dalton Beber | Sanaya Hoskote |
| Taylor Bentley | Gabrielle Leiker |
| Parth Borker | Riley Morlock |
| Bebe Butters | Brittany Moseley |
| Ariel Chatman | Sydney Olthoff |
| Kaylin Eighmey | Ava Reed |
| Marissa Ewald | Madelaine Ringo |
| Olivia Glinski | Iris Ruffing |

Anthology Credits

Photography

McCrea Deezer

Andrew Morton

Bryce the Third

Creative + Production

Becca Morris, LSA UGED Design Services

McCrea Deezer, Data West Designs



DATA WEST DESIGNS

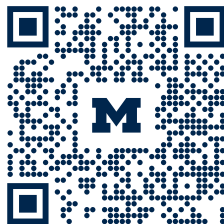
CREATIVE SERVICES

313.384.1447

@doanythingtomorrowafternoon



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Show your support!

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telling it



For More Information

Deb Gordon-Gurfinkel

Telling It Founding Director

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www.lsa.umich.edu/tellingit