



# unmute

(the zine)

Louder together  
Louder than ever

2020/2021

VOLUME 1



## What is a **zine**?

Zines provide a safe, independent platform of expression for underrepresented and marginalized voices: Black, Indigenous & People of Color, young people, people with disabilities, the LGBTQ(+) community, persecuted religious groups, and people with limited economic resources. .

## What is **unmute** (the zine)?

unmute is a digital zine that showcases the artwork students created during their **Speak Up!** residencies with **Northlight Theatre** this year or through our Empower Hour workshop videos created for the Northlight's first Speak Up! Summit.

## What is **Speak up**?

Speak Up! is a performing arts residency that fosters social responsibility. Students will explore their identities, research events impacting their community, and collaborate on original works of art with their peers. By harnessing the power of performance, students will engage in dialogue about how to celebrate, promote, and maintain positive change in their community.





# STUDENT WORK

My name is Azariah  
Mostly everybody call me zie

AZARIAH

Growing up in Chicago is hard it's always killing everyday  
But we need to fix our black community  
Make it better for the kids that got to grow up in this  
environment  
Like let them go outside and play again

I'm from Chicago  
Where they call it Chiraq

I'm from Chicago  
Where King Von got everybody saying we not from 63rd

I'm from Chicago  
Where u mind your business and and still end up in drama

## CLIMATE CHANGE LILIANA

The weather is changing  
Becoming hotter and setting the woods on fire  
The ice is melting  
Animals have nowhere to go and we ain't helping  
Habitat loss, let's talk about that  
Oh wait, we don't  
We just have our arms crossed  
Animals are dying because of plastic  
We have to start a new tactic  
The time is ticking and soon we will have nowhere to go  
We have to start thinking

## BLM PARTY

TAYLOR

Where to start, the reason I chose this party is because of the history, loss, and pain this movement brings. But not just the suffering side the cheerful, uplifting, and amazing side of Black Lives Matter. Imagine thinking that a certain color of human beings was looked at as beasts, worthless, and products. These people who endured the worst were beaten, dehumanized, and chastised. Yet still rose to power, to fame, to worship, to higher standards. But still, people hate, still, people can't fathom a black person doing well. Now throughout the streets, you hear chanting, shouting, screaming, and preaching. As we are crying mourning and weeping. Because of the violence that just keeps beating and seething. They keep killing people, no it's black people, no it's black children, no it's black men, no it's black women. So we revolt and revolt and revolt. But change doesn't come, our voices aren't heard, and then we're back where we began.

STUDENT WORK

Some people's biggest fears are rats or clowns or even the dark

But mine's gettin' pulled over by the black and the blue

My momma once told me dat

"If you didn't do anything wrong then there's nothing to be scared of"

But that is not true when my skin color is already considered as a weapon

I remember the first time I got pulled over my heart skipped a beat and fell to my feet

My lungs became two newly weds holding each other in hands

Walking down the aisle

And all I could think of is "I'm gonna meet my maker today"

As the police approaches to my car

Drowning me in his lights

Like the red and blue lights beating through my windows wasn't good enough

He asked me for my license with his hand on his gun ready to take my life

Like I was holding a gun

DESTINY



# GRAFFITI IS ART



**WHERE?** AT THE ART MUSEUM

**PROBLEM?** THE ART MUSEUM WAS GRAFFITIED

**SOLUTION?** THEY TURN THE ART INTO AN EXHIBIT  
BECAUSE IT'S ART!

CHARACTERS:

FUTO - VILLAIN (THINKS GRAFFITI IS BAD)

KILUA - PEACEMAKER!

SAIKI - ARTIST (DOES THE GRAFFITI)



We're at the art museum. It's dark. Nighttime.

Saiki is painting graffiti on walls on the inside of the museum. Saiki steps back to look at his work so far...

Saiki: Suckerssssssss. My art is WAY COOLER than these paintings. I can't believe they didn't let me have an exhibit.

Futo: WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN HERE!!!! How did you get in??

Saiki: You really should close your windows at night...

Futo: AW man! If we only had a janitor the windows might be closed...

Saiki: Well it's too late now!

Futo: You've ruined all the art. GET OUT!!!

Saiki: You should've given me a chance!

Kilua: What's going on in here? What's all the yelling about?

Futo: He's ruined everything!

Saiki: My art made it better!

Kilua: Guys let's calm down and talk about this.

# STUDENT WORK

Futo: Well maybe it kinda looks good. What is that?

Saiki: ART!!!!!!

Kilua: What kind of art? What was your message?

Saiki: It's about my life.

Futo: How?

Saiki: Well after you kicked me out and didn't chose my art. I had to express myself in other ways.

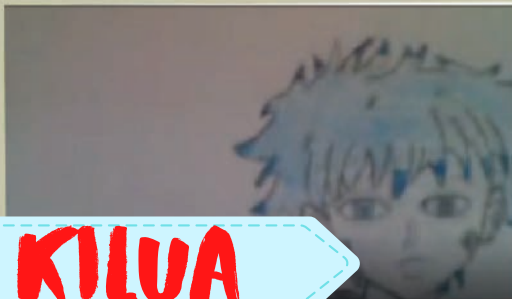
Kilua: I understand you. Once somebody didn't pick my art either, but we shouldn't paint over others art. You should paint your own stuff.

Futo: YA! Paint your own stuff.

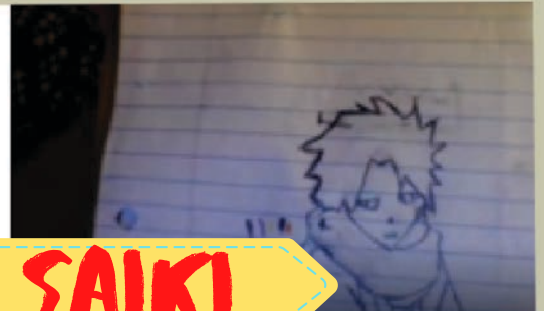
Kilua: Chill out Futo. His artwork is really beautiful and meaningful. It tells a story. Maybe we should let him have a spot in the exhibit.

Futo: I guess we can give him a chance.

Saiki: YESSSSSSSSSSS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



**KILUA**



**SAIKI**



**FUTO**



# STUDENT WORK

Where I'm from is Chicago, Illinois  
A place where I was raised there some 21 years  
I was raised in another family as well  
Another family to me is my mom and dad raised me and my three siblings  
When I was growing up as a child, I lived in the good town neighborhood  
When everything was perfect as well  
My object I like to do are arts and reading  
My favorite types of art is paint  
My favorite thing to read is about women in history  
Betty Smith is my favorite history fight  
She is my favorite because she sings the blues about her life struggle  
I wish I could be more like Betty Smith  
I also love learning and reading  
I like doing timetables  
I find mouths to be hard and easy at the same time.  
Clothes I like to wear like classic and new, famous style  
The end.

**DORIANN**

## WHERE I'M FROM **FERNANDO**

Where I'm from my brother goes to school to join into the army  
Where I'm from my mother is proud of my brother  
Where I'm from my family help our people out  
Where I'm from my family help my cousin and my uncle out  
Where I'm from people help other people out  
Where I'm from people help the planet  
Where I'm from I am thankful to my school  
Where I'm from I am thankful to my teacher and my class  
Where I'm from I am thankful to my pets and my family and  
my friends and my teacher.

# PAY GAP



(A group of friends playing basketball in gym class at school. Conversation starts while the game is being played. Dribbling, passing the ball to each other, and shooting baskets during dialogue)

Female Student 1 or FS1

Female Student 2 or FS2

Male Student 1 or MS1

Male Student 2 or MS2

Male Student 3 or MS3

FS1: First one to three wins!

(FS1 scores a three pointer)

FS1: See, girls can do it too!

MS1: That's just luck.

MS2: She did a good job!

MS1: I bet you can't do it again.

FS1: I'm a starting point guard so I definitely can do it again.

(FS1 scores another 3 pointer)

MS1: Alright, alright, you got skill. You still need to work on your jump shot. Plus, you girls don't play as aggressively as guys. Until you can do that, you're not gonna get paid more.

FS1: What do you mean by that?

MS1: Men in basketball get more injuries, they're more aggressive, they play for longer periods of time. Men are better.

FS2: That ain't always true Thorner. If a woman makes it to the WNBA she's obviously good at basketball and has worked really hard to get there.

MS1: Okay, but the fans also help pay. When they come to games and pay attention they are paying these players. Men's basketball gets much more attention and attendance than women's basketball. So it makes sense they get paid more.

FS1: Women in the WNBA do the same job that takes the same skills and the same commitment. So they should get paid just as much.

MS2: It's true men's basketball gets more attention, I mean, look at the arena sizes. They are set up to hold more people than for women.



MS1: Well yeah but that doesn't mean anything because even if they had the same sized arena, women still couldn't get people in the stands.

MS2: I disagree. But even if it was true, that doesn't matter because there's still a lot of fans at home watching on t.v.. Women basketball players work just as hard as men do, for the same season as men do. There's no reason they don't deserve to get paid the same.

FS1: People don't watch women play because they expect to see aggressiveness in sports and don't think that women can deliver that. I'm here saying they do play aggressively and to say they don't is an assumption.

FS2: What you are saying, is women don't make physical contact in sports?

MS1: Not as much as men!

MS3: They do though.

FS2: Thank you.

MS2: Exactly. They have something to prove so they step it up. I will say though that men's basketball is more entertaining because there's so many star players. Besides Candice Parker, I don't know anybody in the WNBA.

MS3: I know other players in the WNBA! I like basketball as a sport so I'm not going to discriminate who I watch playing it.

MS2: For them to get paid as much money as men in the NBA, they gotta get more attention, more endorsements, more sponsorships, and more popular players.

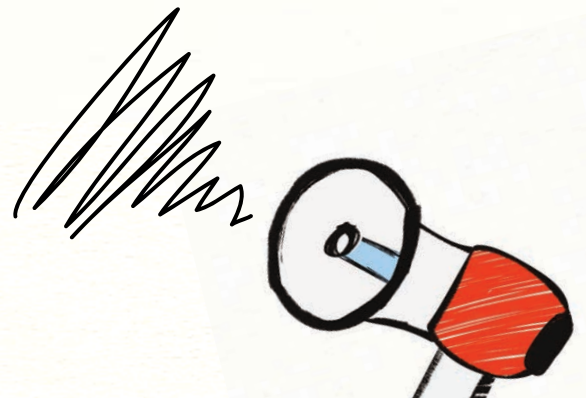
FS1: Since ya'll have these assumptions about how women play basketball how about you come watch me play. I just scored on you guys back to back.

MS1: Okay, I'm still not convinced women play as aggressive as men do, but maybe if WNBA players work on getting their names out there on social media and everything they can get more attention and more sponsorships.

FS2: The NBA has been around way longer than the WNBA. Because the WNBA hasn't been around as long they haven't had as much time to develop a fan base.

FS1: Yeah and we don't have as much information about the league in general. It's only been around since 1999 or something so I believe as time goes on and we get more exposure to the WNBA the players will get bigger and make more money.

MS1: Alright, I hear you, it could happen. Time will tell.



# A POEM AGAINST GANG VIOLENCE

ETYRA

I wrote a poem against gang violence  
because people in my community should not  
have go places arching in fear of not making it  
home alive

I wrote a poem against gang violence because  
I'm a sister to three siblings

I wrote a poem against gang violence because  
anything that is related to violence I believe  
that people are going to make it

I wrote a poem against gang violence because violence is not going to solve  
anything

I wrote a poem against gang violence because I'm a daughter, granddaughter,  
niece, and a stylist

I wrote a poem against gang violence because some people take their own life  
just because of violence

I wrote a poem against gang violence because I just personally think like what's  
the point of violence and i think that it's not going to get you nowhere

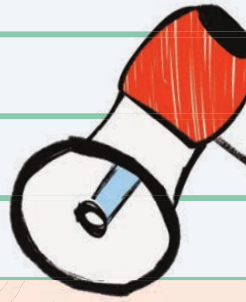
I wrote a poem against gang violence because it's not always the key

I wrote a poem against gang violence because some people always say,  
"This was the only choice." But there's always another way.

I wrote a poem against gang violence because I love my family



# THE LOVE LEAGUE OF VILLAIN FIGHTERS



## THE CHARACTERS

Kaiden aka StrongVIBES (speed and strength)

Jamie aka Speedy (super speed and invisibility)

Alex aka Frostbite (turns things to ice)

Shadow aka Moonlight Fox (any super power as long as she uses it for good)

Devon aka Black Devourer (super speed & teleport)

Jordan Kent aka Superboy (laser eyes, speed, fly, strength)

Kaden aka Thundergod (thunder/storms)

Ena aka Cloudy (telekinesis)

Kia aka Black Magic (use black magic/bad magic)

Mr. Kay, a teacher.

## SCENE 1

JAMIE & JORDAN KENT are sitting in Ms. Guidry's class.

JAMIE - Jordan, you won't believe what happened in the bathroom. It's disgusting! It's so disgusting. You should go see it for yourself. I wonder who did that.

JORDAN KENT - How nasty is it? Is it like toilet paper everywhere? Or is it...something else everywhere.

JAMIE - Trust and believe me, it's disgusting.

JORDAN KENT - But, I have to go...I guess I'll see how bad it is.

JORDAN leaves. ALEX and SHADOW walk in, chatting.

ALEX - So you know the pizza party that happened yesterday?

SHADOW - Yeah it was so fun, right?

ALEX - Yeah, I hope we have one next Friday. But the movie wasn't even that good. I'm not gonna lie.

MS. GUIDRY - Kaiden?

KAIDEN & KADEN - Yes?

KAIDEN - She called me, not you, Kaden.

KADEN - Um, she called me, Kaiden.

KAIDEN - I'm pretty sure she called ME.

ENA - Enough! Ms. Guidry, they're arguing about who you called.

DEVON comes running into the classroom.

DEVON. EVERYBODY RUN! THERE'S TOXIC WATER FLOODING THE HALLS! GET OUT OF THE SCHOOL!

Everyone runs out of the school except for 8 students.

STUDENTS (improvise). AH!!! No!!! Gross!!!

JAMIE. Follow me! I know a shortcut.

The 8 soon to be heroes run into a flood of toxic water and their lives are changed forever.  
Our heroes wake up on the floor of the 2nd floor hallway.

JAMIE. Oh my head hurts.

## SCENE 2

ALEX. What happened?

DEVON. I was using the bathroom and then there was toxic water flooding from the bathroom.

JORDAN KENT. Jamie! You lied! There was no other exit! Did you know there was toxic water this way?

JAMIE. No! That's why I went. And actually, there is another exit over here--

JAMIE turns invisible.

KAIDEN. Where did she go?!?

KADEN. Ummm...

JAMIE. I'm right here! Can't you see me! (she looks down ) Oh. My. Gosh. I. Have. Super. Powers.

JAMIE turns invisible. The students all look at each other and yell in panic.

KAIDEN runs towards a door to get away and rips the door off its hinges.

KAIDEN. I didn't see that coming.

ALEX backs up and slips into the water, turning it all to ice.

ALEX. What in the world just happened! (ALEX notices she has a cut leg). Ouch!

SHADOW. Is your leg okay?



SHADOW reaches down and her hand starts glowing green. As she touches ALEX's leg, it heals.

SHADOW. What. In. The. World.

DEVON. How do you all have super powers?! (starts running, tries to jump over a huge block of ice and instead teleports through it.) WHOA! I can teleport!!!

KADEN. This isn't fair! Why does everyone get powers except ME!!?! (starts to get upset and a storm starts to brew in the hallway. Everyone gets swept up in a mini tornado.)

STUDENTS (improvise). Kaden! Would you stop? I'm gonna throw up!

ENA. Kaden! What did you just do? (makes a gesture and suddenly using her telekinesis everything stops.)

JORDAN KENT. All this toxic water is making me need to throw up. (He's about to throw up, but instead shoots lasers out of his eyes through the wall.)

JORDAN KENT. Oops.

ALEX. Whoa. We really got a mess.

DEVON. We've got a bad problem on our hands.

SHADOW looks outside and sees the sun is rising.

SHADOW. The sun is rising. We've been here all night! The teachers are probably coming and we only have a few minutes to clean this up and hide.

ENA (looking out the window). I see a teacher coming! Everyone hide!

Everyone hides. MR. KAY comes in and sees the mess.

MR. KAY. Oh My God. What is going on here?!?

JAMIE panics and tries to run past MR. KAY, but knocks him over.

MR. KAY. Who was that?!? (peers down the hall and spots ALEX) Is that you, Alex?

ALEX REALLY panics and turns MR. KAY to ice.

ALEX. Whoops.

KADEN. Well now we have an even bigger problem!

SHADOW (looking out the window) Omigosh. My older sister is here.

ALL. Wait what?!?

SHADOW. I thought I told you guys about her. She's down bad. She used to be nice, but she's started hanging out with these older kids and got really mean.

KADEN. Then we gotta clean up before she gets powers too! (He uses his super strength to push all the ice together.)

SHADOW. I can make a big, heavy container to put all the ice, and broken things in.



JAMIE picks up the ice and cleans up all the ice in a second.

DEVON. I can get a new door. (He uses black magic to make the door appear out of nothing.)

ENA. Ooh it's covered in anime designs!

JORDAN KENT uses his laser eyes to melt the liquid in the container so it all fits. ENA uses her telekinesis to put the bricks in the wall. KADEN gathers all his impressive lightning power. We hear a huge BOOM. And then see KADEN just sweeping with a broom. KADEN picks up MR. KAY and JAMIE use her super speed to push the frozen teacher outside. ALEX slowly melts MR. KAY.

ALEX. Sorry sir. I hope this doesn't affect my grade.

MR. KAY. Wha-what happened? I don't remember how I got here.

ALEX. Well...see...so... there was a lot of stuff going and you ended up freezing.

MR. KAY. I think I need to take a sick day. (He leaves)

Back in the hallway, our heroes have cleaned up everything... but they don't notice that a small puddle of water remains on the floor.

ENA. We did a pretty great job cleaning up the school together.

JORDAN KENT. Yeah and I think we should keep this on the low key. If people find out, we'll be doomed.

SHADOW. Scientists might experiment on us.

KADEN. We can find villains who want to hurt our school secretly with our powers.

ALEX. If we're a league of villain fighters maybe we can call ourselves that.

KAIDEN. The League of Villain Fighters. The LOVE!

JAMIE. The sun is almost up and school's going to start. We need to go.

The heroes leave the hallway. We see a shadow at the end of the hall.

JAMIE. Who's that?

KIA. My name is Kia.

SHADOW. Kia! What are you doing here? I told you not to pick me up!

KIA. Shadow! You told me that you were going to come back at 12pm and you didn't!

KIA runs towards the group, slips on the toxic water.

KAIDEN. Uh. Oh.

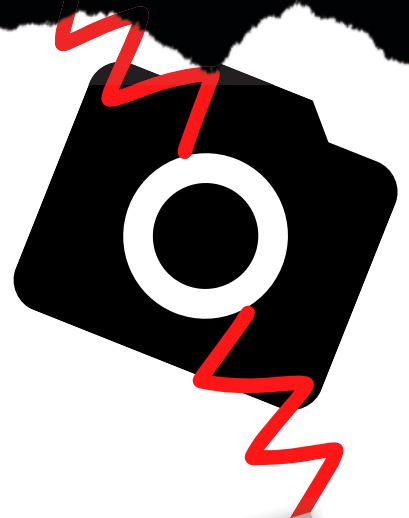
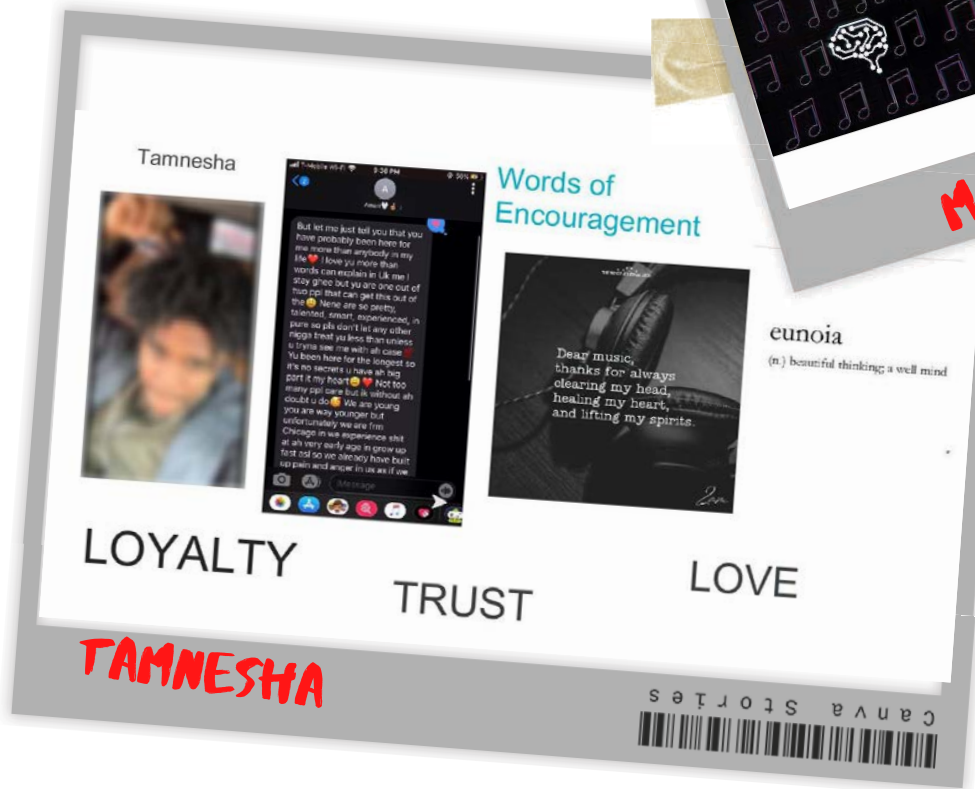
ALL. Looks like we missed a spot

THE END... OR IS IT?





# GRATITUDE COLLAGES





# I AM POEM

JALYN

STUDENT WORK

I am Jalyn and I like to live life to the fullest.

I wonder about a lot of things. I'm very intrigued by anything I come into contact with, especially people.

I want to learn how to control my emotions. I'm a very emotional person unfortunately.

I am Jalyn and I like to live life to the fullest.

I pretend to like working out although it's my worst nightmare.

I feel nothing about imaginary things because I don't like to make imaginary things.

I worry about failing in life because I push myself too hard sometimes..

I am Jalyn and I like to live life to the fullest.

I dream about my future a lot.

I try to make the best out of what I have.

I hope Covid-19 is over or at least better before may.

I am Jalyn and I like to live life to the fullest.

In my home, I am goofy and talkative.

In my school, I am quiet and focused.

In my family, I am loud and loving.

In my community, I am helping and family.

In the world, I am a stranger and I am going to make a difference soon.

My community is family, support, and neighbors.

For my community, I worry about the violence that gets nearer and nearer.

For my community, I wonder if we'll stay in contact.

For my community, I wish nothing but the best and safety because we live in a tough world.

For my community, I try to make a difference and bring the community more and more together.



# THIEF OF THE **SUN**

## AN ACCIDENTAL ALIEN ADVENTURE IN CHICAGO

### THE **CHARACTERS**

NA - an ordinary Chicago teen

J. - an ordinary Chicago teen

CHITO - an alien who can transform into whatever object she eats.

GRAVEE TRANE - Another alien who goes with the flow.

K. - a dog owner

POLICE OFFICER

NA and J. are walking in downtown Chicago by the Crown Fountain.

NA. What are these things doing?

J. Um, I don't know. They look kind of weird to me. I don't think they usually look like this.

NA. You think we could eat 'em?

J. I mean... if we try hard enough. (J. looks more carefully at the faces) Wait... is that my momma? I think that's my momma. What is my momma doing in these things?

NA. Omigod. Is she stuck in there?

J. Maybe we should check this out and see if anything's wrong.

NA goes up to the Faces Fountain and knocks.

NA. Hellooo? Is anybody home?

Just then a tiny, non-human voice pipes up.

CHITO (in a high pitched voice). What are you doing on my ship?!?

J. WHOA! That didn't sound like my momma.

NA. We should get outta here. This is too weird.

Suddenly the Faces Fountain shifts into a honeycomb spaceship.

NA. What are you?

CHITO. Great question! I am your epitome. I am the alien from outer space, Chito!

NA (in low voice to J.). Did she just say Cheeto?

J. (to CHITO). I'm Jewaun, this is Nasir. What are you doing on our planet, uh, Chito?

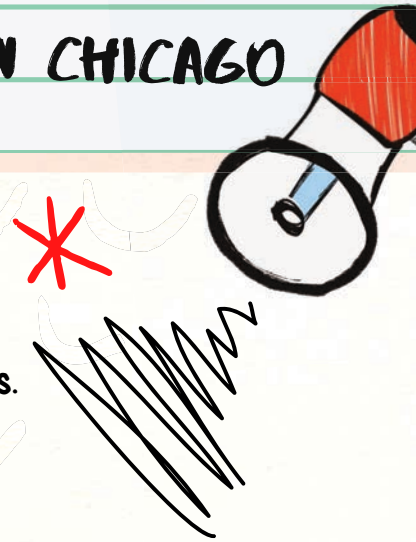
CHITO. Well, I actually crash landed, so I don't know. This is unfamiliar territory.

CHITO pulls out a device embedded in her arm.

CHITO. Hmm, my coordinates say I have landed on this planet called E-Arth (pronounced E-Earth).

J. Well, Chito, you might want to go back.

CHITO. Why?



Khalil enters, a kid walking his dog, KING.

K. King it's a nice day to walk to the park. Let's walk around.

CHITO. (says an alien greeting in her language)

K. AH GET AWAY FROM ME! IT'S AN ALIEN!

K. runs away.

J. Because something like that might happen.

CHITO. I can't go back. My ship is damaged.

J. Maybe we can help you. What do you need to fix your ship?

CHITO (in a threatening voice) Human blood.

J. & NA. Uhhhhh...

CHITO (laughing). I'm just playing. It's what you E-Earthlings call a joke. I actually need Real Fuel. From the garbage you dispose.

J. Oh, well there's definitely some garbage around here.

NA. But first, you're going to need this and this.

NA holds up hand sanitizer and a mask.

NA. It's hand sanitizer and a mask. We have a very deadly virus named COVID-19.

CHITO. COVID? That sounds like my grandma's name. What is this COVID? I don't understand.

Just then, three police cars go by.

CHITO. What are those metal things? Are they come for the party?

J. You should go.

CHITO. What?

J. If they find you, it's not going to be good.

CHITO. Luckily, I can shift my physical form into anything that I ingest.

CHITO grabs J.'s hair and eats it.

J. What was that for?

CHITO turns into a copy of J.

K. runs back on with a POLICE OFFICER.

K. Over there police!

POLICE OFFICER. Uh, we got a call about an extraterrestrial. Where is it?

CHITO as J. I'm just a normal human who looks just like that human.

K. I promise there's an alien! Look, there's my dog passed out.

POLICE OFFICER. Sir, are you feeling all right?

K. No! I was just walking in the park and I saw an alien! She was right here!

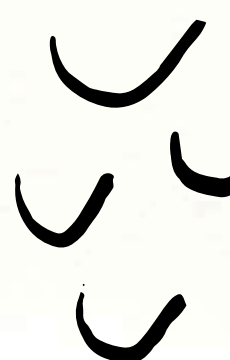
POLICE OFFICER. Uh huh, sure... Why don't we go for a walk and we can talk this out together.

K. I promise you, I'll show you the proof! I'LL SHOW YOU THE PROOF!!!

K. and the POLICE OFFICER exit.

J. You can't walk around like this. What if someone recognizes us? Here, eat this paper instead.

CHITO eats the piece of paper and we see on the Zoom screen a piece of paper with a smiley face.





J. Okay I'm going to fold you up and put you in my pocket.

CHITO as PAPER. Okay, but be careful with the folding. You'll hurt my back. (calling back to the ship).  
Gravee Trane!

We see another alien, GRAVEE TRANE, step off the ship.

CHITO. Can you please guard the ship while I go get fuel?

GRAVEE TRANE. That's fine. I'm not brown and saucy for no reason.

J. puts CHITO in his shirt pocket so she can still see the world.

Just then a garbage truck comes rumbling by.

CHITO as PAPER. Fuel! We need to get there guys, c'mon!

J., NA, and CHITO follow the garbage truck.

CHITO. I wish to learn more about your city. It's so big!

K. reenters.

K. Did you all see the alien too? Cause I promise you, I saw her.

J. Uh...What alien?

CHITO as PAPER. Excuse me, E-Earthling.

K. Who said that?

NA. Uh... me!

CHITO as PAPER. Tell me about this strange place.

K. Well, I don't want to brag but we've got the Bean. It's shiny and you can see your reflection. I can't really explain it. It's the Bean! I could say we have the best pizza. Sbarros' deep dish pizza is very cheesy, it's just the right amount of tomato sauce (actually it's kind of overboard on the tomato on the sauce) The cheese melts clean off the pizza.

CHITO as PAPER. I would sure love to lay my alien fingers on some cheesy pizza.

J. There are other amazing things too. The black community is amazing. The music, the people, the dances.

K. My neighborhood is creative. I like the park, the people, and helping out. But there's also violence and trash.

CHITO. Wow you all have a lot going on. But you guys are great e-earthlings.

They reach the garbage truck.

CHITO. Look! The garbage truck! Now we have enough fuel to get home.

Back at the ship, GRAVEE TRANE has some bad news.

GRAVEE TRANE. Guys, I have an issue. When I was inside the ship I was trying to fix it, you know. But then I looked in the sky and saw this huge orange ball. And then I thought, that looks like this Earth snack I just tried called a Cheeto. So I grabbed it and tried to eat it. It was wayyyy too hot, so I put it back. I don't want to be the thief of the sun. So... sorry, but I was not able to fix the ship with my own efforts.

CHITO as Paper. Oh dear. I guess I'm stuck here a little longer. And I'm sick of being a piece of paper.

J. Can't you just become invisible or something?

CHITO as Paper. Only if I eat something that is invisible.

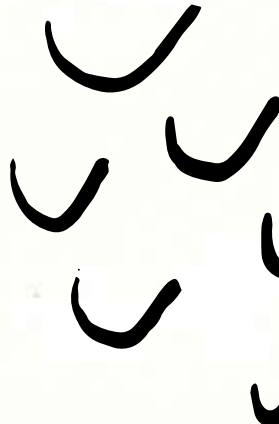
NA. What about the Bean?

CHITO eats the Bean and becomes invisible.

CHITO. Perfect! Now, I wish to see more of E-Earth. Where should I start?

NA. You know, Chito. I think you'd really like Area 51...

End of Movie.



# STUDENT WORK

My name is Anyiah Mcgrady

I am 15 years old

I was born and raised in Chicago, Illinois

I live in Chicago, Illinois with my family

I attended John Hay Academy

From kindergarten until graduation

Now I am a proud student at Al Raby High School

Doing my best to get a great education

And learn everything I need to learn to pass

And become a Junior in H.S. and in the world

And my teachers are helping me to do that

And I thank them

My neighborhood is very quiet sometimes

But very safe

My Uncle Quintin helps me a lot with everything

He teaches me positive things

And how to stay focused in life and school

He is a great uncle

And always makes sure I'm doing my best

In school and in life

My uncle sings and he is a minister

So I go to church a lot

And it's exciting

I'm from a family that goes to church all the time

And that believes in God

I would like to be a successful person when I get grown

And help my family and my community

And it will happen

I want to be a mortician

And make the people who die

look great

Even though they gone

I can do lots of things

And be lots of things

If I put my mind to it

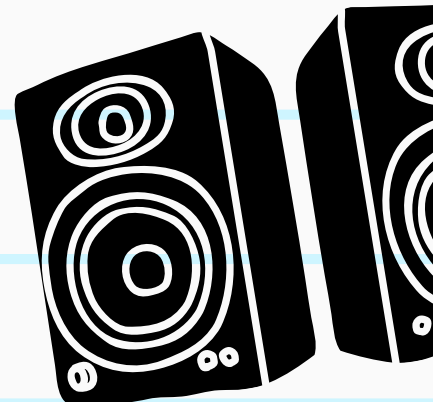
And listen and learn

And research my goals

And it can happen

With the help of God first

ANYIAH







Hi my name is Davon Ramey

Where I'm from is called Chicago, Illinois.

Where I'm from - the church has me and my family eating  
some food, drinking water, and pops

Where I'm from - six flags - when me and my family went to have  
some fun

Where I'm from the AMC theatre is where I go to watch movies

Where I'm from the Gamechuck - they have a lot of videos games  
inside

Where I'm from Walmart is the store to get what we need and want  
We get some water, pops, foods, and more

Where I'm from - my block - I see birds flying up in the sky

Where I'm from - my house - I live with my mom, sisters, and brother

Where I'm from - the neighborhood - I went swimming with my family  
and it is important that we stay together

Where I'm from - my grandma's house - to talking to her about  
a lot of good things

Where I'm from - my dad's house - I would talk to him about a  
lot of great things

I would like to celebrate my mom's birthday party because I  
could have some big strawberry cake

Also I would like to get some balloons too and I want to get  
some pops

Where I'm from - my apartment

**DAVON**





# SCHOOL UNIFORMS

## BEGIN SCENE

Student: We feel like we should not have to wear uniforms.

Principal: Why?

Student: Our uniforms are plain. I don't like any of these colors.

Principal: Why should I care if you don't like the colors?

Student: Students are the ones who have to wear them every day, so it's important that the students like them.

Principal: As the principal I'm concerned with how students perform in the classroom and on test scores. Why should I be concerned if they like what they are wearing? Uniforms are practical.

Student: Uniforms are uncomfortable. If I'm uncomfortable in class I will not do well on my tests. The material is uncomfortable and I don't feel good in it.

Principal: I'm sorry you feel that way, but uniforms are the easiest way to keep a unified look at our school.

Student: Uniforms are a way of controlling students. If we can't wear what we want, we feel trapped and unhappy.

Principal: Kids look nice in uniforms. They represent our school in a positive way. If we allow the students to wear whatever they want then they may come to school dressed inappropriately, and that would be a big problem. How could you make sure every student wears appropriate clothing without uniforms?

Student: Well, teachers could make sure students are following a dress code by checking what they wear everyday.

Principal: How will they know what to look for?

Student: You can make the rules of what is and isn't okay to wear to school. To make sure everyone knows what the rules are about what you can and can't wear, the school can send a flyer out to the parents and teachers with the rules.

Principal: What do we do if students come dressed inappropriately to school anyway, even if they know that it's against the rules?

Student: You could send the student to the office and give them a warning, also call their parents. They get two warnings, and after that, they will have to put on a uniform anytime they break the rules.

Principal: Your parents spent all this money on uniforms and you're saying you don't even want to use them?

Student: We have to pay for these uniforms and that's spending money on clothes that we don't even like. Sure, we had to spend money on these ones, but I never want to have to spend money on them again.

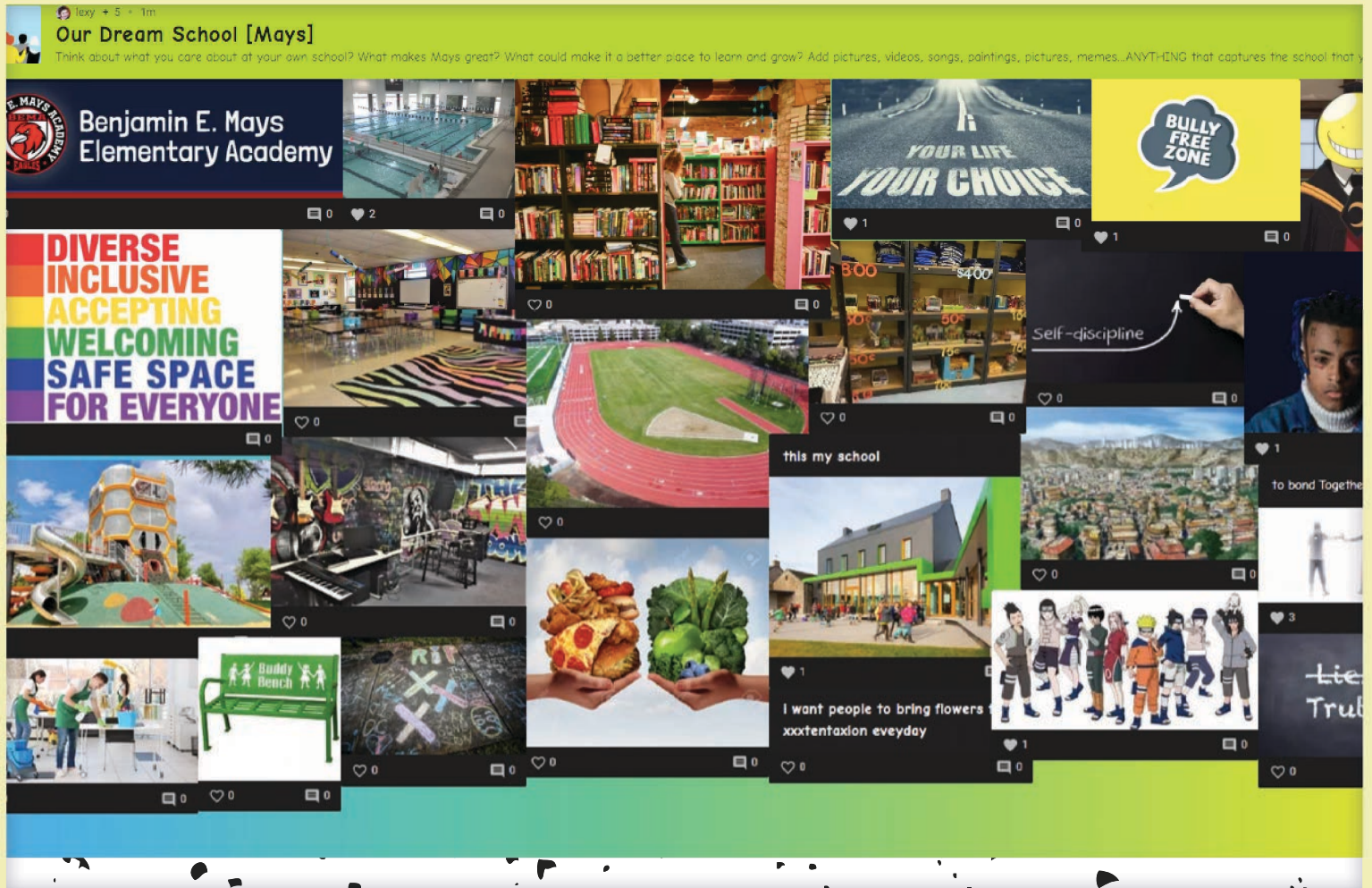
Principal: Well you know, if you don't have uniforms, your family will just have to spend more money on other clothes. Uniforms actually keep costs down.

Student: Maybe, but I already have clothes for outside of school so I can just wear those and then that's less money if we don't also have to get uniforms. Money can't buy happiness, and wearing regular clothes to school makes me happy.

Principal: Fine, you can wear your clothes every day. Just stop bugging me.



# OUR DREAM SCHOOL



Canva Stories

## MY IDENTITY, MY COMMUNITY

This is my favorite cousin Mirabel. She's like my best friend/ The picture was taken almost two years ago during summer when she was staying over at my house and we decided to sneak out to 7-11 to get snacks. Then we came back home and climbed up on the roof and we would talk about a lot of things. . I think we did this every night for a week. This is one of my favorite memories of her because sadly I only get to see her like three times a year.



VANIA

Canva Stories

# MY IDENTITY

BRIANNA



I learned to be myself 'cause no one can love me more than I do, accepting myself was the best thing I did.

I am from finding my inner power 'cause my voice holds weight and shines bright through every room.

People broke me down in the inside while being alone, and when I finally had the chance to get up again and put every brick up of myself back together.

I learned being myself because everyone had their own categories but I chose to be different because that's who I am.

I kept my head held high, not because I'm boujee but because my power gives everyone the crazy eyes because you would never expect it from me.

# I AM POEM

JATARAH

I am Artistic and Strong.

I wonder about everything.

I want my kids to be happy.

I am Artistic and Strong.

I pretend to be confident.

I feel anxious.

I worry about the world we live in..

I am Artistic and Strong.

I dream of being on stage again.

I try to put others first.

I hope I can make a difference.

I am Artistic and Strong.

In my home I am Loved and Valued.

In my school, I am Seen and Heard.

In my family, I am Different and Misunderstood.

In my community, I am Invisible and Quiet.

In the world, I am Respected and Self Conscious.

My community is Judgemental, Blind, and Hopeful.

For my community, I worry about the way we treat one another.

For my community, I wonder if we can all come together.

For my community, I wish we could all push one another to be better..

For my community, I try to bring joy.

STUDENT WORK

8



# THE ROBBERY SCENE

ALLAHSHAWN, BUKARI, JAMARIUS, SHAVEZ

It's a beautiful day in the Ktown neighborhood. Sunny flowers high. Grass high. Kids playing on the block. Barbeques are happening. Families are out. It's a beautiful time. Then all of a sudden - BOOM - it went from a beautiful day to a disaster.

Robber: GIMME YOUR MONEY before I blow your brains out in front of all these beautiful people tonight.

Person 1: Bro please, I don't have any money. All I have is this car. I'm trying to make it home so I can feed my kid. Here if you want the car so bad you can have it.

Person 2: Man it's going down on Pulaski, they out here poppin' people and everything. It's going down man. Shaking my head. I'm gonna get on up outta here, sumptin real bad.

Person 3: Bro it's not worth it bro.

Robber: Shut up! You don't understand.

Person 3: Bro he say he don't have nothin'. What are you still robbing him fo'? Imagine that the roles were reversed and he was robbing you for nothin'. You gonna steal a car from a man who doesn't have anything but the will to make it to his kids tonight?

Robber: This is your last chance, you don't talk to me, you don't understand.

Person 3: That's my whole point of talking and reasoning with you. I wanna understand. Like what do he have that you don't. Is the thought to keep making it in life, no matter the circumstances? Because he said he don't have nothing. Is it because he has a car, you don't?

Person 2: Bro shut up, you lame man.

Person 3: Bro put this gun down. Let me help you.

Robber: I surrender man.

Person 1: Thank you so much sir.

STUDENT WORK



# RACE

## VIVIANA

Race.

The concept of race should not exist

The word race in itself means any one of the groups that human beings can be divided into based on shared distinctive physical traits

I think this definition clearly states that we are all still human beings

We must understand people of color are synonyms for the word human

Yet we as a society can't understand that we are racist because

we continue to deny deny deny. Trick ourselves into thinking we aren't repeating history because there are laws that say we're equal. Although there are these laws people chose to treat each other unequally like we always have. We need to gut out the rotten stuff from the past so that we can salvage what's left of our world for the future.

Change starts with us

Change starts with mansueto

The concept of race should not exist

It is a word intended to separate us based on our physical differences and appearance

It is an illusion that makes us think that we're different

It is a word that creates a hierarchy between people of different color

It is a doorway that allowed racism into our world

We need to get off of our high horses, we need to snap back into reality

That we are all people born on the same earth

We can make the world a better place by learning to accept each other for our differences without having to label each other

Change starts with us

Change starts with mansueto

The concept of race should not exist

I get told at school what I am based on the color of my skin

I know who I am

I am latina

Yet at school I get told I am white

I get told I am not dark enough to be latina

Do they say these things out of ignorance or simply to put others down

This bullying affected me

Made me question who I am

It made me question if I was allowed to call myself latina

Or if I wasn't dark enough

Moral of the story is that we need to be kinder to each other

We need to do better together

We keep repeating history when we should be rewriting history

Change starts with us

Change starts with mansueto



BLUE DUDE fuels his truck up. He then walks into the store and greets COOL GUY.

COOL GUY  
What's up, bro?

BLUE DUDE  
Nothing much. Just grabbing some snacks.

COOL GUY  
Have a good day, man. I'll see you around!

Blue Dude walks to the counter with his snacks. RACIST BOSS is behind the counter.

RACIST BOSS  
Total will be 50 dollars.

BLUE DUDE  
WHAT!?!? THE TAG SAID TWO DOLLARS!

RACIST BOSS  
I can change the prices as I will.

BLUE DUDE  
That's not fair!!

RACIST BOSS  
Pay or leave.

Blue Dude pays.

RACIST BOSS  
Wait, what's in your pocket?

BLUE DUDE  
Nothing.

RACIST BOSS  
Your kind always tries to screw me over.

Cool Guy runs back in.

COOL GUY  
Your kind!?!?!?

Cool Guy punches Racist Boss and Racist Boss Pulls a gun on Cool Guy...

MARTAVIOUS

STUDENT WORK



# SAM'S STORY

SAM

STUDENT WORK

When I was in Elementary I did a basketball tournament at ETHS with 3 friends of mine (2 of my friends were black like me but with a darker complexion and 1 was white). The tournament was called The Justin Wynn 3v3 basketball tournament so 3 people on my team would be playing and we would have 1 sub. We played and were doing pretty good then we faced this 1 team with all white kids. We ended up winning and me and 1 of my friends ShaiShai went to get snacks. As we are walking down the stairway we saw one of the girls we played walking up with her mom holding her arm that had a small bruise on it. Then the mother looked at me and ShaiShai with a disgusted look and said something across the lines of "your kind is too rough". Me and ShaiShai were very young so we didn't know exactly what she meant but we could tell from all the context clues of the way she said it she was not giving us a compliment. We were very upset and scared because we didn't know we did anything wrong. We quickly ran back to our parents and told them what happened. At first I was scared because I thought I did something wrong. Once our parents found out, staff came over and talked to us. I guess the mother saw this and wanted to make sure she was heard loud and clear. She found her way to the complete other side of the bleachers and started yelling and waving her hands as well as swinging her water bottle at ShaiShai, Cece, their mom and I, pretty much everyone in our group that had a darker complexion. When she did that instead of calming her down or at least escorted her out they stepped in front of the 4 of us and started holding us back like we were gonna get violent when in actuality we were just standing there... [CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE]



# SAM'S STORY

SAM

STUDENT WORK

[CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE]

After we were brought to a meeting room, we sat at a big table while a group of 4 men came in and started asking questions like and it started to feel like an interrogation. The more questions they asked, the more I started to think, Am I violent? Why are they only asking us the questions while Amelia is sitting there quiet? After that was done we were told to replay the game, we ended up losing and being eliminated. We walked back to the cars separately and once I got in the car my mom explained to me the reason for all of this. It was because we were black and stereotyped. It was all older white men running the tournament and when the incident happened we immediately treat as if we were dangerous or "thugs". The car ride home was silent because I just sat there just thinking to myself WHY? Why do we have to be more mindful than white people in situations like these? Why will we automatically be blamed when we're involved in situations like this? All throughout the rest of the week I learned about tons and tons of innocent black people being accused, harmed, or ever killed for things they didn't do. This has always stayed with me in the back of my head..



# WE NEED BETTER FOOD

[before today, the group of students have arranged to have a press conference directed towards Janice Jackson (CPS CEO) publicly about getting better food in CPS]

\*Students chant\* WE NEED BETTER FOOD

\*students step up to the microphones\*

S1: We are tired of horrible food. It's usually over or under cooked, which is unsafe and leads to students not eating at all. Some students can't afford to have full meals at home and they count on having good, healthy food at school. Often by the time we get through the line and sit down to eat, the food is already cold and that makes it taste bad. If every kitchen had better appliances, we could fix that problem and the food that students receive could be fresh.

S2: Students should have a vote on the fruits and vegetables that are offered. We're required to take one, but if it isn't something we like, it just gets thrown away, which is wasteful. Right now, our options are usually only apples, oranges, pears, bananas, and cucumbers. We deserve to be able to choose from freshly sliced fruit, strawberries, broccoli cooked well, and more.

S3: CPS should survey students in general to see what they want and make sure that they're getting food they'll actually eat - that way, everyone's happy.

S4: We could keep some things like salads, nachos, hot chicken, spicy chicken sandwich, tater tots, oranges - but it needs to be cooked well so students will actually eat it.

S5: CPS needs to spend money on this because our students deserve good food.

S6: It's their responsibility to make sure that we have what we need to focus better to get a good education.

# SAVE THE ANIMALS NOW

## Save the Animals NOW

Before it's too late

Zoos give the animals a place to live

Animals are safe in the zoo because there are no predators

Feed the animals daily

Cool place to come to with your family

Learn about animals!

FUNDRAISER HAPPENING TO SUPPORT THE ZOO!

You can ride the animals and play games!

We'll be selling lemonade and hats at Ahjanae's Gift Shop

Come by the Zoo at 4PM!

Zoo is safe for kids! You won't fall in the gorilla pit

See the animals whenever you want without putting yourself in danger





# STUDENT WORK

That's grocery shopping, cause I'm shopping for food  
Pizza! It's so delicious

Laundry, cause I need to wash my clothes  
My mom does cause you don't want dirty clothes  
You have to keep 'em clean

VROOM  
I wanna mow the grass, cause it's fun

That's a car getting washed  
Clean the inside of the cars  
Maybe you use a vacuum  
WHOO

That's like a sweep  
That's a guy sweeping up leaves

I clean the home  
Ya, everynight  
You sweep up the crumbs  
Like zwoot, zwoot, zwoot

Somebody throws something in the garbage can  
We don't need stuff  
Like plastic, banana peels, and all that stuff

That's somebody serving someone food

Playing video games  
Sonic and Mario

## SHAVAREN

## SHONTAVIA

Where I'm from death or jail is normal

Where I'm from wearing a certain type of clothing gets you called names

Where I'm from wearing your hat the wrong way can get you killed

Where I'm from the cemetery is more full of kids than adults

Where I'm from it's a blessing if you make it past 21

Where I'm from not many make it out

Where I'm from if you're wearing less clothing you're "asking for it"

Where I'm from women have to carry weapons everywhere they go because  
there are people that are sick and just looks at us as pieces of meat.

Where I'm from our young black men are not safe at any point

Where I'm from love can get you killed and loyalty gets you hurt

Where I'm from everywhere you're black you are a walking bait.

# OUR LEADERS

We believe that things would be better with the right person in office  
We believe that our leaders should make things  
different instead of following everyone else  
Our leaders should fight for everybody  
Regardless of race, sexual orientation, or background

We shouldn't have to say this, but...  
They should NEVER use racial slurs  
Our leaders should NOT be racist  
Our leaders should NOT be prejudiced  
Our leaders should NOT be homophobic  
Our leaders should NOT be childish  
They should NEVER speak against women's rights

Our leaders should fight for everybody regardless  
of race, sexual orientation, background  
Good leaders should be open to ideas from the community/state  
Good leaders should genuinely want to help people  
Good leaders should be fair  
Good leaders should want equality

Young people should be able to vote  
Kids opinions matter too  
It's only fair  
The voting age should be

17

16

17

16

Schools need to be active teaching kids about the world  
Things we need to learn for the real world.  
Everything from credit scores  
To hygiene.

To how to get a job

About debt and how to choose a career

About our rights within the law

Some people end up dropping out of school because they're just not prepared

I think we need to be the speakers to save the world

[CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE....]

STUDENT WORK



[CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE]

In our community, We want to see...

More small businesses owned by people who live there

Nice places where kids can play.

Safe places for kids to go after school and get  
counseling/talk about their problems/do activities

Places for people to learn job and professional skills

We believe that things would be better with the right person in office

We believe that our leaders should make

things different instead of following everyone else

Our leaders should fight for everybody

Regardless of race, sexual orientation, or background

We can't forget about women's rights

Women need equal pay

Equal rights

And should not be doubted because of their gender

And the leaders we have right now won't be here forever

So students need to step and start leading now because we are the leaders of the future

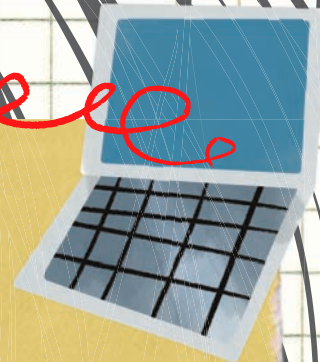
## THIS IS MY DREAM

This is my future i have prove of what's going  
on around the world iam make sure everybody is  
going to be okay we are fighting for our life  
and we are proud we are black we are help out  
our whole country why are slaves are going  
against blacks and whites we have friends that  
are going to have our black forever and we are  
working as a team and family no matter what's  
going on we still helping out our whole entire  
city stop the violence anti chiraq let us live  
stop killing us and black history is going to live  
on With us forever period.





# WATCH & LISTEN!



VISIT OUR **YOUTUBE CHANNEL** TO GET THE FULL  
EXPERIENCE OF OUR STUDENTS' WORK!



AND CHECK OUT OUR **"EMPOWER HOUR"** WORKSHOPS CREATED  
FOR THE SUMMIT TO INSPIRE WORK FEATURED IN THIS ZINE!

## ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE



1 - Least Agree   2   3   4   5 - Most Agree

## WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND



## WITH THESE HANDS





# THANK YOU!

THE ARTWORK IN THIS ZINE WAS PROVIDED BY ARTISTS AT THE FOLLOWING SCHOOLS:

AL RABY

EISENHOWER

EVANSTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

JOHNSON COLLEGE PREP

LEGACY CHARTER

MANSUETO HIGH SCHOOL

MARCUS GARVEY

MAYS ACADEMY

RAUNER COLLEGE PREP

NORTHLIGHT IS GRATEFUL TO THE RALLA KLEPAK FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATION IN THE PERFORMING ARTS FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT WHICH PROVIDES RESOURCES TO OUR COMMUNITY'S YOUTH TO ENGAGE WITH OUR THEATRE ARTS EDUCATION PROGRAMS.

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PERFORMING ARTS

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THEATRE