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The HerStory Project

The Gender-Based HERSTORY PROJECT takes place at the Genesee Valley Regional Center (GVRC), Genesee County Michigan’s juvenile detention facility. It addresses the unmet needs of the young female residents, by enabling them to find their own voices and become the tellers of their own stories through the mediums of Spoken Word Art, Theatre, and Dance. The Project empowers young women not only to tell their own unique histories but to also connect with the history of their communities and to take ownership of their futures.

During the Spoken Word Art and theatre workshops, the girls engage with history through creative works by and about women: notable women, many of them who have endured extreme hardship, such as incarceration or oppression or other circumstances. These works become the springboards from which the girls explore and give voice to their personal, family, and community histories. The workshops stimulate critical thinking around themes about community and personal struggles, acceptance, overcoming adversity, challenging expectations, difficult decision-making, and dealing with the past. The goal is to encourage the young women to reflect on their own identities, actions and choices by providing them a safe place to acknowledge and communicate their experiences.

A primary objective of the dance workshops is to decrease the girls’ sense of isolation while in detention and to address the sense of detachment from their physical selves many of them experience as a result of trauma and physical abuse. Issues such as negative body image, self-confidence, and physical awareness of self and others are explored through the styles of modern and other forms of classical and contemporary dance. The classes include warm-ups, introduction of a dancer and dance form, short choreographed dance steps, improvisation and discussion.

Each year the Buckham/GVRC Share Art Project publishes a collection of the girls’ written works that includes at least one piece by each participant. Copies of the book are distributed to each of the girls and are available to the public. This year an e-book is also available.
We begin this book with a short story by one of our GVRC workshop participants.

---

A lot of people at my school don't like me because I'm not popular, don't wear converse, don't have long hair, I hang out with "losers." But that is not true. Everyone has a best friend that fits with their personality. But it's not what they look like on the outside, it's how they look on the inside.

People at my school hate my hair so they judge me. It's not about what other people think. It's about how you feel. They don't feed you or give you a place to live. They are just people in your life. Don't let them bring you down! Be You!

---

What you will read in the following pages are from the GVRC participants in their authentic voice and writing style. Learn & Live Their Stories, if you will, as they have UNLOCKED themselves over a period of 9 months - from June 2016 to March 2017.

On some of the pages, following their stories, there are writing prompts for YOU, The Reader. These are some questions we asked the participants. Consider sharing your story, as well, with the young women in this book.

ENJOY!
Our Voices

I was young when I found my voice. I remember my grandparents always watching the news. I wanted to imitate what I saw news reporters doing when they told the news. So, I would stand on top of the fire place mantle and jabber on and on, as if I was reporting on Breaking News like the news reporters on TV. It was there I realized how I like to talk and speak to people.

Now, I have my own YouTube channel with over 700 subscribers. I also have a large social media following & presence! @JiasWorld

It felt empowering as I knew that “speech” could convey emotion & attention was placed on me when I talked. People listen to me and paid attention to what I had to say.

Using my voice does come with responsibility and accountability. I make sure I’m informed on what my voice is speaking on and about. I make sure I do not over step my boundaries, and I’m not taking up space from others whose voices should and need to be heard. @JiasWorld

~Jia Ireland, (GVRC Arts Intern)

I learn to find my talent when I was the age of 5 or 6 and from there on, that’s when I love to write about anything and everything.

I to r: Jia Ireland & Ella Thorp
The moment I found my Voice was when I was seven years old! I started singing Beyonce, as I would sing more I would get better at it every day. Till this day I still sing but not in front of people because I am scared to 😊😊.

For the past 6 + years, my voice has made people laugh, cry, think, yell, smile, it's told lies. It's explained, it's hid, it's raised, its rebelled, it's been my only support in my life. It's backed me up partnering with my mind, making phrases to make sense in other's heads, even making sense in mine. It's gotten me in to things & out of things. I Hate it, yet I love it, but I don't care I'm stuck with it.

Speak my thoughts Make people laugh Once, A girl was sad so I went over and talked with her and made her laugh. We became bestfriends. I had a friendly conversation with her. I was smiling and talking. And I was joking around.

-
I don't like my voice sometimes because when I used to sing in front of my “Friend” she would say you stink, give up, your pitchy, etc. But with a lot of practice and self-esteem building I'm going to sing in my school's talent show. I going to sing: “Sailing”

I am sailing I am sailing
Home again cross the sea I sailing
Stormy water to be near you
to be free.

My voice doesn't really do much, but it's still mine.
It can be used to tell the truth, but also it is used to lie.
When I'm sad, or when I'm angry, my voice will stand to tell.
It can be used to insult you, or even to wish you well.
At the end of the day it isn't much, and it's relatively small, but it's still a part of me, and I'm a piece of it all.
What does your voice say
to **YOU** when you need it
to encourage **YOU**?
Our Bodies

Go look at yourself in the mirror. Don’t ask questions, just go do it. I’ll wait here...

Welcome back!

Now, what did you see? What did you think about when you looked in the mirror? If you are anything like me, you probably thought about everything that you think is wrong with the way you look. Perhaps there is a line or two etched on your face that you wish would disappear; a blemish that sticks out and drives you insane. Perhaps your face is a little rounder than what you care to see. Do you fear your stomach isn’t flat enough or your thighs are too big or too small?

Think about those imperfections we often cringe over when we look at ourselves. There are words we say in our head and aloud that are negative. There is so much criticism that we take in when we look at ourselves, often overlooking or forgetting how that can negatively impact our beings, let alone those around us.

If you ask me, and I am no stranger to being harsh on my own appearance, each thing I may not like about my physical self is a story. I have lines on my forehead - “laugh lines,” as I’ve been told to call them - that I have to remind myself are marks of years on stage using my entire being to express a character. These lines show every single joke I have ever told or heard. They represent the times I have looked wide-eyed onto a good or bad event in my life and the number of tears I have cried with my face scrunched up. My laugh lines tell a story, My Story.

I could talk about every other imperfection and “gross” thing about my appearance, but that would take about 720373561075 pages and no one has time for that. What each of us does have time for is to learn how to love ourselves enough to accept the story that has been written in our physical appearance and then take that acceptance and turn it into love. It is hard and painful, but when we learn to love ourselves, the rhetoric that is used changes and the people that we come into contact with start to see that too.

Each imperfection is ours to embrace, as hard as that can be. It is difficult to teach others self-love and acceptance of their body when we, as teachers, struggle to embrace our own. When we say negative things about ourselves, we are teaching our children that it is okay to say those things about themselves.

When my fellow teachers and I walk into our classroom, we acknowledge that there are negative things that we can say about our bodies. In fact, we even say them out loud, right to the girls without thinking twice, but we have made it one of our goals to turn those negative things we say into positive things; into our story of positive self-love and appreciation in hopes that they will turn those negative phrases and criticisms into positive things and learn to love themselves.

~Ella Thorp, (GVRC Arts Staff)
I feel like my body is decent. I'm not too skinny anymore but I'm also not too big. I mean I have a little gut but I also have a nice butt. I'm in love with my hair tho, that and my eyes are my favorite part of my body. I do feel like I'm about to gain a lot more weight soon. All in all I do like my body and I'm confident about my body now and my boyfriend helps me with that.

My body is my body! Every day someone would tell me that I'm too small or too skinny for my age. So what I did was started eating more junck food. Every morning I would get up and eat like four to five things of cerale, I when to the store, get every that was good to me and bye it then eat it. I started to eat more candy and some real food. Then when the junck food payed of I had gotten bigger and even better I got taller to so I was not as big. Then people told me that I was getting big I got happy. So then I started eating more every day. "Till this day I still eat."
I was told as a kid that I was too skinny, as I got older I was told I was told I was too fat. But my body is my body and I should be the judge of it! Who cares about what you think about my body? Worry about your own!

If you don’t like it somebody else will, but all I know is that I love it. My body speak loudly of what I know. And I know I’m beautiful!!!

I love my dark brown lusisious skin, my nicely sized hips, my slim stomach and under them my big butt. And to top it my beautiful face and smart brain.

Body image was never an issue, didn’t love my body, didn’t hate it. But when I started loving it is when someone else can’t stop admiring it. My boyfriend would tell me it’s not about being the hottest thing in the room, it’s about feeling that way. So confidence is key, no matter how you look or feel it’s your body and you need to be happy/content.
Get your shopping on at the mall max your credit card you don't have to choose by it all so they like you, do they like you. Get your sexy on don't be shy girl take it off this is what you want to belong so they like you, do they like you. You don't have to try so hard you don't have to give it all away. You just have to get up get up get up you don't have to change a single thing. You don't have try try try you don't have to try try try you don't have to tryyy.

Run the extra mile keep it slim do they like you, wait a second why should you care what they think of you when your all alone by yourself don't you like you. Take your make up off let your hair down look into the mirror at yourself don't you like you cause I like you.

-
A long time ago, I hated my body. I felt too fat and unattractive. I took 6 kinds of diet pills 4 times a day, excersised like crazy, and even resorted to making myself throw up. One day, it hit me. Why am I doing this to myself? I layed there in a hospital bed, only 75 lbs. Doing what I was doing didn't feel good and I wasn't healthy at all. So I just decided, I don't wanna be this way. I started eating again and stopped taking all those pills. I felt so much better physically and mentally!

Now, I'm completely happy with my body. I love every single thing about it. I'm always posting full body pics on facebook knowing im gonna get only positive comments and tons of likes, as opposed to before when I was too scared to even post a normal selfie. Tbh, even if no one likes my pictures, I think they're bomb af and to me, that's all that matters.
When I was 5 this girl asked me
are you a slave on the bus. Well being black with white
Mom dad sister and brothers I was
confused so I ask this girl why would you
ask that. Her reply blew me outta water she said b/c your
black. Well I said NO but I really hurt
me. But I wanted to change her mind set so
I brought a book about black and whites, MLK
Jr. and Rosa Parks. This girl learned
from her older brother and she told
me she was sorry. To this day
we best friends and closer than close.

Love Yourself No Matter What

Maybe there's a lot of girls who feel like me
Feeling like loving yourself was self-centered,
because I was always told it was.
In the end everyone needs to realize that
people come and go. Change is the only constant.
You need to be there for yourself in the end,
because you're the only person that will be
there for 100% of your life. You are the only
one that will love you every second of your life.
That will only happen if you love yourself.
And don't let what people say let you down

I love myself because
- I'm beautiful
- I'm unique
- I'm myself
- No one else can take my place

-
From the time I was old enough to understand people would make fun of me + harass me to the point it was unbearable. From 5th grade until now its been going its just changed, the words, the insults, everything. It used to really bring me down. I stopped going to school + doing other things because I hated myself. But recently I've learned to love myself I dont need the boys + the drugs to feel love or to change how I feel. It took me a long time to relize this, I thought it was impossible for me to ever love myself. Honestly it takes a while some times but you just have to relize what they say doesnt matter, it shouldnt change how you feel you just gotta keep strong + do what you want screw what they think about you.

You have to love yourself because at the end of the day, nobody else will. Sure, you have friends and family, maybe even a boyfriend or girlfriend, but think about it. How many of them are really going to be there for you? You could be like me; I have tons of friends but none of them write me even though they know im in here. I have a boyfriend who I loved with all my heart, but yunno as soon as im locked up, he's got another girl. I have a mom but she would never take the time to visit me. I have no one left to love me, but you know what? Idc cause I love myself. Im gonna keep loving myself for my whole life so Ill never be alone, and Ill always have someone to love me.
I was 13, I weighed 184, I didn’t really think I was fat. Until my sister was a couple years older than me and I weighed more than her. It was kind of weird.

But I never really paid attention to my weight. Until I noticed I lost weight when I was 14. I weighed 162 I think. Now I weigh 145. I am happy with that. *But I need to gain a little more weight*.
How does your body make you feel? Are you tired and/or energized in your body? Do you feel like you can take on the world? Does your body say “Take Better Care of ME?!?!” What does your body say to YOU?
Decisions & Feelings

Missing Home
Missing those early birds chirp in the window
Missing my sister giggles fill my ears
Missing my dog's feet tap the wooden floor.
Missing my bed feel me at night
   Missing Home Oh I miss it
Missing the fan next my bed hit my face with tiny cold bits
Missing my mom yelling about the dishes.
Missing my brother's door slam at night
   Missing Home Oh I miss it
Missing the car drive out onto the street
Missing the wooden floor crack while I walk
Missing the sheets that give me warmth
Missing the friends I feel my laughter box
with missing oh I'm missing it.

Bad Decision
The Time I made a bad decision
was Friday night I got heavily intoxicated
for the first time and got high
and I did something terrible
and I wounded up here. I learned
that being locked up isn't fun
this isn't the life style I
want to live one bad decision
can change our outlook on things
I also learned fitting in
isn't okay and everyday I'm
here I learn something new.
I know next time that drinking/smoking
isn't cool no matter what the
circumstance is oh and your
first time doing something can
be your last moment

Good Decision
Was turning down sex to
stay a virgin even tho
I like the guy still turn
it down now I can proudly
say I'm still a virgin
Being Raped By My Brother Best Friend

I was 6 and 11 and I was Raped By my Brother Bestfriend in my Room and it was hard to tell my Brothers and my Mother. But it did affected me Badly so I Reely couldn’t tell. But it finlley Hit me and I had tell somebody so I did. And it didn’t hurt as bad as I thought. But I mean it was hard trying not to tell. But after I told I felt good to get it of my chest. So it was good. But till this day I am doing Good with myself.

Past Doubts Led To Future Successes

I never learned until I learned from realized mistakes. It was like life wasn’t right as if it were a decorated cake. I couldn’t focus on doing right, because I was still getting into fights. Then one successful glorious moment in life, changed it all. It was like life was giving me a chance to survive the fall. I spoke to to Lord who was always ready to help. From then on out I don’t only pray for myself. I’ve learned to give to make me feel better. To not be selfish and to pray for others makes me feel as light as a feather. My faith gives me neverending hope in my journey. I try to live life freely without worry.
To Be YOU

If you don't know the nature of fear then you can never be fearless

I say this because some days I feel fearless. But sometimes I have so much fear of what my future will look like.

- 

HOW DOES FEAR CHANGE A PERSON?

Beautiful
and
Bright
The
REAL
YOU!

THE Star
Shine

You Are	INSPIRING
Warning
My collage is about success comes in big and small packages. Its worth it. The perserverance, determination, and your goals are worth it.

Live the best life because it is your only life. The life you have make it over the top and the best life you have ever thought anyone can have.

The flower shown is life. Why? Because you have to water yourself with goals to grow and spourt. You have to water yourself with determination so you can bloom.

Be A Leader
STAY Focus
You Can Do It
Sacrifice

Don't ever say you can't do it just put your mind to it.
I never think that i would be Here. I cried it out an pushed away my fears.
Being Hurt, Unloved, An Abanded
Wishing Y God put you threw it.
Trying to take your own life NOT thinking about how speacil you are!!

Being Bullied, Pushed around
Hearing the names you NOT BUT what they want
Telling you to kill yourself
You shouldn't Be Here Be Hated for you. Being yourself.
But you pray an wish everything will be ok. But you start making smarter Choices.
Brave an smart Being who you want an dont care what they say!!
Cause You R You ♥♥
Let go the past and see your future. Because the next day ain't promise.

We make mistakes it's how we bounce back that reflects who we are. No matter how bad we think we messed up... there is still a chance. listen to your heart! People will talk about you and Judge you... But their words don't matter! Those people don't know your story... they can't even begin to think of how strong you are. Believe in yourself... embrace your story...

I overdosed on L.S.D. and a lot of people talked about me. Judged me, talked about me... I lost almost all my friends...even my bf. ended up leaving me... I got kicked out of school... My parents lost all respect for me... I felt worthless. I cut myself... I found comfort in guys who I knew didn't love or care for me...

I Was Nothing... then I met my best friend ___♥ He helped me... He was my only true friend and he made me feel loved♥ He helped me stop cutting ♥ He helped me realize there is still a chance for me♥
Live life to the fullest
Don’t let people bring you down
Nobody’s Perfect

My parents always expected me to be Perfect in everything. They pushed me to be Perfect and if I failed or didn’t achieve their expectations they were disappointed. They never tried to hide it either. It really affected me for a long time, I always thought I was a disappointment & if I messed up I would be scared to go home in fear of being Punished. It took me awhile to realize that I will never be Perfect & failure is a part of life.
I was only 13 when I thought I was nothing. People bullied me because I cut my hair and that I was ugly. They called me names so every day I stared at myself in the mirror and called myself what they did. But after I tried to kill myself, I thought about it and became something strong so I threw up the pills.

Ever since I was a little girl, I knew I was in the wrong body. It's not easy being transgender because you are bullied every day. You're hated because you're different from other people. It seems like people are always out to get you, but I will never change. But I would like to change the way other people think about transgender and my name is Shane.

My family judges me for things I have done and it makes me feel unloved a lot. “If you judge people, you have no time to love them.” -Mother Teresa-
I Can’t Hide It, It have to COME OUT It won’t change you but it can change your future. There long ways to come.

---

“Being UnWanted”
“Being Uncared”
“Being unloved”
“An Forgotten”

Being Forgotten, an left behind, is something that hurts. Being left to suffer Alone, Afraid, Hurt, Scared. But innocent. Being Uncared for, Lost an Replaced Judge by who you are an what you look like. living in the Shadows of Darkness AN Mislead.

I learned that I have to be a Leader than a follower because I have so many people younger than me looking up to me so I have to do what’s right.
What I have learned about myself

I’ve learned that I am beautiful
♥  I’ve learned that I can do anything I set my mind to.
♥  I’ve learned that I am a good person
♥  I’ve learned that I can do it.
♥  I’ve learned to never say I can’t

I learned that no matter what mistakes I make they don’t make me who I am today.

IN Gvrc I learned...

- To accept help
- Follow rules
- Be a leader
- Look at the positive
- Sacrifice
- Wake up early
- Stay positive ☀
I learned and Gvrc Never to Come Back!
- to accept help
- to give help when needed.

I…Can…Change

♥ I can change my attitude.
♥ I can change my Bad ways.
♥ I can change my life now.
♥ I can change my lifestyle.

I can change this by doing as Im told. Not getting upset for little stuff and making something of my life.
The decisions we make to be our truest selves. Who is your TRUEST self? What are you like when you are completely YOU wholeheartedly?
Mother Teresa Moment

“I want you to be concerned about your next door neighbor. Do you know your next door neighbor?”
-Mother Teresa

→ Help others beside yourself.
→ She saved lots of children. She went around helping kids.

To Me... This phrase means
Are you concerned about other people? Or are you just selfish?
Do you know who the people are that are starving, with no clothes or shelter. Don't be concerned on what you whant that you don't have.
Think... I have what I need does everybody have what they need.

---

Every time you smile at someone, it's an action of love, radiating friendship. Always be kind.  
-Mother Teresa

---

I'm always smiling even when I'm frown.
“Let us always meet each other with smile, for the smile is the beginning of love.”
-Mother Teresa

it mean’s to me that when you smile at me a feel loved I feel happy because some one Loves me and cares about me I feel this way when I’m with my grandma ___ and my other family members I Love Feeling Loved becous it makes my life way better Love Shane

Let's smile for the beginning of Love
Love rocks I♥Love helping people rules
Ya Boy!!!

“Every time you Smile at Someone, it’s an action of love, a gift to that Person, a beautiful thing.”
~ Mother teresa♥

I’m always smiling ♥
  No matter what... i try not to cry...
and when i do, i want someone to smile at me and tell me im okay♥♥♥

there is so much Pain and hurt i feel and i hate it that others feel it too... I feel if i show strength others will see and show strength too. i smile so that others know that you have a choice to be strong♥
my smile is a gift of strenght, a gift i hope people pass on♥ -
“Intense Love Does Not Measure. It Just Gives!!!!♥”

I picked this phrase because the intense love That I have for my mother and my family It’s not measure at all I just give it I don’t think about how much I don’t show how much Intense love I have for them especially for my dear Loving Mother...

“Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength lies....”

I chose this phrase because I feel like my Granny & Auntie wanted the Best for me before they left this earth and went with God So I chose this one because what ever happened with anything they always told me me to Be Strong..... Love yall

“Loneliness and the feeling of being unwanted is the most terrible poverty.”
-Mother Teresa

This phrase hit me deep because I spent most of my life feeling lonely, friendless and unwanted by everyone, including my family. Feeling that way is one of the worst feelings, it makes each day painful especially when you always sad, you feel like you have no one. I spent years feeling this way and it truly is the most. terrible. poverty. It robs you of your happiness, steals what matter the most.

-
1. “If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.”
   -Mother Teresa

2. “Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless.”
   -Mother Teresa

1.) America and its people are so at war and we forgot we have each other we have people we can gain our peace with each other.

2.) Those words we speak are good and amazing but if we actually do it, it can have an impact on others and you can be and do what echoes on others life.
Who are the people in your life?

And how do they treat you?
People in Our Lives

My name is _______, I
am 13 years old and I
met my Dad when I was
nine. And on that day I
accomplish a goal that took
my mom and I 9 years.
Ever since then I have been
through good and bad stuff
that I'm grateful that have
happened because that's what
made me, me.

- 

Mama & Daddy
Daddy did the deal,
Mama did the drugs.
Life is a
Privilege
Death is a
Promise!

- 

I take Care of my
grandma because she
NEEDS me! Ever since
my dad passed away
nobody would check on
her...so I moved in ☺
I've helped her walk
around the house get in
the tub and sometimes
I help her cook♥

It makes me happy when
she smiles ☺ She always thanks
me for being there for her♥
Now that she's lose half
her memory nobody wants
to be around but I Love to
help her *
I even remind her to take
her meds!

-
pt1

Ten Toes Down
My Mama did It By Herself
Cause you was never around
Shoutout to my mama you
Know you Held it down, Thinkin
It was all my fault as I Look
around, waitin on the Bench
for you to Never even come
around Man I was Hurt and
Crying But I wasnt finna let
It get me down, Now Im Ten
Toes down Doing Better makin you
wish you was In my life Instead
of In the gutter couldnt come
out the Room cause I knew
Better got a daddy now and
He show me Better never walked
out & He treat me Better

pt2
Taught me life lessons now
I know Better, Ten Toes
Down But Im Back &
Im Better. ♥

- life is all fun in
games till someone get
hurt. It hurt to see them
hurt, and it also hurt to
see them gone. When they gone
its nothing we can do, but
set back in cry. People
see life as a joke, but
I see it as a game we
Play and win. You only get
one life so live it when
you can. People talk about
what the world or there
life could of been, not
know that it take the
real you to make your life
the better you. last but
not lease it take us
to make the world a better place.

-
First love ♥ (Daddy)

Yeah my first love was my Daddy he was very very sweet he changed his baby girls diapers and he keep his girls on fleek he make sure we look good and he keep us out the hood Keeping it classy we aint trashy and he make sure thats rule My Daddy is my Knight & Shining armor so dont try him If he catch me messing w/ these boys he gone fry My Daddy is the King & im the Princess so if he exicuting im not a witness lock em down tie em up You can do w.e. thats not gone change my love for my daddy thats forever
-

This conversations getting boring you think that you are right but theres two sides to every story theres a right and a wrong shoulda listened to my mom now im wrapped around your finger and im Chilling on your palm so ladies learn from my mistakes Just cause he buys you dinner doesnt mean he’s gonna stay Yeah I need a break from my phone cause every night on twitter all I see is relationships goals But no relationships perfect If you didnt have to fight for em would it be worth Just imagine if your sis was in my shoes you know you’d beat up the dude Cause all the things he put her through

So why do I stick around this long Sometimes I just dont know but you’ll Miss me when im gone Realize what you lost...im gone.
-

I don’t have or know anything or anyone who Impacted my life or I impacted they life because I’m a nobody 😓
-

37
My biggest Downfall was following followers Footsteps. As i was walking one summer I seen some kids bussing out window & smoking. I they were cool I just bussed a window & started talking to them & lying saying I smoked & I really didn’t. & I guess the more we hung out the badder I gotten & the stuff I thought I’ll will never do I did. & I got used to it an I started doing it more, seems like I got off focus & started being & doing bad things. School I started hating & started yelling & cussing out my teachers just to get kicked out to hang with friends. But yeah this is my Biggest impact on my life. & I just wanted to be cool & look how it effect my life !!

How I Impact Others...

♥ If you know me you know I talk about my Dad a lot, having a white Dad has been hard but I embrace it because im proud of it. People have called him names but I honestly don’t care because I love him and im gonna be his Daughter no matter what by being myself I encourage others to do the same I just want people in the world to find the good in people Because color is easy to spot, character is a little harder.

“A father is someone you can Always look up to no matter How tall you get”
   -Unknown-

Because it gets worse before it gets better.
I impacted my mother when I did good in school. For a whole year at first I was kicked out every week. But I soon wanted to do good so I got back in school and did GOOD a whole year. She was so proud of me! ♥

My sis impacted me when she told me by dad passed away… But I soon thought about how much Pain he was in so I became happy cause he doesn't have to go through anymore pain!
What Do You See?

When you look at me, you see "drama" but I'm really an encouraging friend.

When you look at me, you see "spoiled brat" but I really work for what I want.

When you look at me, you see a "mean girl" but I have the biggest smile if you speak to me.

When you look at me, you see my smile, but you don't see the story behind it.

When you look at me, you see a girly girl. But I don't think a girlie girl would play on the boys football team.

When you look at me, you see that I have been to GVRC. But you don't know what happened to me to lead me to what I did.

You see someone.
What does community look like to you & who creates the community you live in and belong to?
Be you because Everyone else is taken ♥

Giving up is not  
The answer... its not  
A choice.

My life is a puzzle  
it won't make sense  
untell you put the  
pieces together.

Sadly i have drawn with Silver  
and it can out red... butttt  
I got away. Now I have good  
Friends and I'm Happy

We all act surprised  
Be we could'n see  
The hurt inside her  
Eyes...

I want to  
Be the reason  
You smile. ☺ -
When you look at me you see my smile.
But you don't see the story behind it.

When you look at me you see a girly girl.
But, I don't think a girly girl would play on the boys football team.

When you at me you that I have been to GVRC.
But you don't know what happened to me to lead me to what I did.

When you see me you see a popular girl.
But actually I'm just nice to everyone so I have a bunch of friends.

I have...
Pride* Spirit*
Respect <3
Joy<3
Peace of mind

I am...
Smart*
Loveable<3
Funny*
Amazing*
Positive<3
Ready!
Pretty*
Independent*
When you look at me you see
1. Trouble
2. A disrespectful person
3. Mean
4. Mugging all the time

But I am...
1. Nice
2. Quiet
3. Smart
4. Unpredictable!

- 

When you look
At me you see ☺
tan skin and assume
im Mexican. But I
am Honduran.

- 

When you look at me
you see "DRAMA"
But I'm really an
encouraging FRIEND.

When you look at me
You see a "SPOILED
BRAT" But I REALLY
WORK FOR WHAT I WANT.

When you look at me
You see a "MEAN GIRL"
But I HAVE THE BIGGEST
SMILE IF YOU SPEAK TO
ME.

-
Never stop trying.
Better Place

I feel like, when Flint come to my mind, I think of a better place. Flint could of been much more if people would have taking better care of are city. It also could of been more jobs if they would stop taring down old jobs & just reopen them to have more jobs here. Then just fix them old buildings up.

Then they could start fixing things when they see a problem finna come. They need to stop closing schools and fix them up and make them into something that that well stay open. They need to up the pay because people need to live in suport there familys & mine people can’t because of the little pay they get. And thats why most people struggle if they have more then one kid & only with one job.
A Better Place

When Flint come to mind I think of a better place. I feel like Flint could be a better if it was not so much killing & hate in -

Jia Ireland, (GVRC Arts Intern)

FLINT ♥ “Our City”

I want to change Flint for The Better. Why? Because I was raised here I have love for Flint and it Hurts seeing people give up on it, saying bad things. I get Flint is getting Bad But I feel we could change it piece by piece. Stop the crime rate. It hurts seeing Body’s droppin, hearing Guns Poppin, watching plays be made. People selling themselves on ever corner. I feel as if we all pitch in and Help we could change Flint not only Flint but its Reputation. Because Flint does have alot of good things you just have to clean the dirty window so we can see through it -
5 things about Flint

- Zeke Gundry
- Carman Ainsworth
- Military
- Home
- Claressa Shields

My brothers & sisters inspire me to help more.

My mom inspires me to do better.

Young m.a inspires me to be myself.

My Dad inspires me to help other people in need and do my part in Society. He shows me a positive way to live. But also how mistakes can and will be made.
Flint Lives Matter

Because many people are getting killed when it was never meant for them. The other half killing over drugs. Babies are never getting to live their lives. People are getting sexually abused, people are getting abused and neglected children. Flint Lives Matter.

I March
For Flint Life’s
Everyone
Life’s Matter

I march for Flint Life’s
Because I am sick of seeing people losing their lives and it’s not right for people to lose their lives for no reason.

Everyone
Have Freedom
March for Freedom
Stand up for your Freedom
Life’s matter and freedom matters and everyone should have freedom.

-
I March for
Health!

I march for my families health because my whole family has been in the hospital for something and everybody had to take time to get better. I want their health to be better and get better because a lot of my uncles have passed away from health problems.
Why are you Here?

So, who are you?
I'm 24 years old. I'm a Social Justice Activist. I'm currently pursuing my Master Degree in Women & Gender Studies. I'm a YouTuber and very outspoken. I'm a daughter, granddaughter, friend, mentor, and proud Fur Mother.

Why are you here?
I'm here to spread love, compassion and Social Justice. I'm here to give, to smile and be happy among other lively beings. I'm here to have fun and experience life through trial and error.

What did you have come here to do?
I came to spread LOVE, HAPPINESS, JOY, LAUGHTER, SOCIAL JUSTICE, and COMPASSION to all lively beings and the world.

How will you change history?
I will change history by simply being myself. I will lead by example. I will make my mistakes, but I will learn from my mistakes. My life's purpose will be to live, learn, love, and spread Social Justice.

@JiasWorld
~Jia Ireland, (GVRC Arts Intern)
Why are you here?

I don’t know for what I’m here exactly for but I know I will be and do something great...

I want to help people either by becoming a C.O., cosmetologist or an R.N. I want to help them because I received lots of help & I want to give back & do great things for them.

Who am I?

I’m a strong black woman!!

I’m here....?

To make the world a better place ♥

I came....?

To save a life, And Create a life!

That alone?

Will change history, one effect on the present...

Could Change The Whole World

I March for my Brother...

Survivor Survivor

Brother and Sister ♥

Forever And Always-
Who am I?
I am _____ a 15 year old girl that comes from a unique family in Color and Culture. I have a bright future that I plan to take advantage of.

Why im here!
I'm here because God knew I could do something great. He also knew I would take advantage of my opportunities.

What I Came to do.
I came to be a leader, in the military, at home and everywhere else.

I Will Change history by...
I'm not sure how I will change history but I want it to have to do with interacial marriages and equality. Instead of black lives matter I want human lives to matter.
I March Because....

Family is Family
Before I was born my bio Dad went to prison for murder! By the age of one my mom married my Dad (step) the only thing that made it any different was he white you wouldn’t think it would be a big deal but walking in stores we get lots of Dirty looks and comments. America fought so hard for racial equality and still this happens even more ironic is that majority of our Dirty looks and comments are from black people men and women. NOW I have 3 mixed brothers and 1 mixed sister that at times struggle with their identity. I feel that they should not want to be Just white or Just black because they are both! I want them to embrace both sides of their culture. I want not only my siblings to embrace where they come from but everyone. As for my real Dad I don’t talk or have any contact with him since I was one. He’s been my Dad regardless of his color and even though I’m not mixed I enjoy him telling and teaching me of his culture!!! Beliefs and lifestyle.

I March For

... health issues that don’t affect men, but women can’t get affordable treatment

...my nieces whose voices are not yet being heard, but whose lives are being impacted

...those who are still accused of “asking for it”

...to bring on awareness and force education on those who won’t acknowledge their privilege.

~Ella Thorp, (GVRC Arts Staff)
**Who am I?**

I am ________ and I am 14 years old. I am very observant and a good listener. I am very mature and I love helping people.

**Why am I here**

I am here
to make a change I don’t knowwhat exactly, but I just knowI am here to make a change.

**What did I come here to do?**

I came here to be someonewho works in the mental healthfield.

**What will I do to change history?**

I’ll probably do something to help people❤
How To Be Me ♥ Sunshine

Let go the negativity & be yourself♥

Live life and be successful♥

An be the Bigger person
cause it's people in this
world that think they not worth it♥

life is NOT perfect but
at least MAKE it worth it♥

Be your Best put it in your Heart♥
Love Yourself First!!
The photos that follow are from the Dance Workshops conducted by Emma Davis & Melanie Schott. *Photography by Zack Canepari
THANK YOU!

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~Shelley Spivack, Project Director
~C. L. Fields, Project Coordinator