



detroit writes detroit

created by Chen-Chen
Jiang & Sydney Tanner
designed by Sydney Tanner,
Kaleigh Robichaud,
& Nick Weiland

First Edition

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Annis Stubbs

Executive Director,
Teach For America -
Detroit

introduction

Detroit lives Detroit, Detroit sings Detroit, Detroit feels Detroit, **Detroit writes Detroit...** My grandparents moved to the city from the deep south in search of better life opportunities for themselves and their children. For them, this city of over two million people was a place of hope -- an escape from the oppression of the Jim Crow. Freedom reigned along the banks of the Detroit River.

My parents lived in a Detroit where auto industry employment thrust many families squarely into the middle class for the first time ever. Motown sounds permeated the airwaves. Metro Detroit was on the rise. People were achieving the American Dream.

I was born and raised during a time of metamorphosis. I grew up loving the Motor City. My peers and I lived in cohesive neighborhoods that were just beginning to show the wear and tear of population loss, poverty and other city challenges. I have always felt an immense amount of pride and have celebrated spending my childhood and adolescence here.

Nearly a third of Detroit's current approximately seven hundred thousand residents are school-aged. These young people are the future of the city. They will bring about the next renaissance in a city whose motto is, "We hope for better things. It will rise from the ashes". The students in this publication will bring about the rise. Action will be fueled by their innovations, critiques, thoughtfulness, insights, knowledge – and most importantly their love. The stories in this volume represent the collective voices of students across the city of Detroit. Six hundred compositions were submitted in response to the prompt "If I could do one thing for Detroit, I would...". What you have before you, in your hands – is devotion personified. Because, above all, in the face of seemingly insurmountable challenges and fierce unyielding hope – **Detroit loves Detroit.**

selection committee



Anne Brophy



Sameer Bhuchar



Mason Cook



Alex Flatley



Kaleigh Robichaud



Nick Weiland



Katherine
Wilcox

Detroit Writes Detroit would not have been possible without the diligent participation of the Selection Committee, who worked tirelessly to publicize the project, organize the submissions, select the published works, and design the book itself. All members worked on the project as a volunteer and had to balance this work alongside their regular full time occupations. Thank you for your contribution!

If you are interested in being a part of the Selection Committee for the 2013-2014 edition of *Detroit Writes Detroit*, please email Detroit.Writes.Detroit@gmail.com.

project



Chen-Chen
Jiang
Teach For America -
Detroit



Sydney
Tanner
Teach For America -
Detroit

In August of 2012, Sydney Tanner, a first year Detroit corps member, and I sat down to share our visions for the year. Through our conversation, we kept coming back to two things. First, we wanted more opportunities for students to showcase their amazing capabilities, especially in the field of writing. Second, we were frustrated by the consistent negative portrayal of Detroit. There are wonderful strengths in the city, but rarely do we see those highlighted.

We were ready for change, and *Detroit Writes Detroit* was born. We wanted to create a

publication project that features student voices across grades and schools, centered on a topic that they know the most about: their city. Through the words and illustrations of children, we hoped to rekindle an optimism surrounding the future of Detroit while simultaneously providing young authors a pathway to publication that had not existed previously.

The response was overwhelming. By the February deadline, we had received almost 600 student submissions from EAA, DPS, and charter schools across Detroit. Over 30 classrooms participated in the project. With the Selection Committee composed of TFA and non-TFA teachers, we whittled down to about 120 student submissions that will be published in the 52-page compilation, scheduled to be available online and in hard copy by the end of May. *Detroit Writes Detroit* will culminate in a publishing party to celebrate the talented voices of our students.

After seeing the positive reception of *Detroit Writes Detroit* our first year, Sydney and I are more convicted than ever to make this an annual publication that will continue to feature student voices. We hope that *Detroit Writes Detroit* unveils the side of the city that is often overlooked: passionate, joyful, and ready to rebuild Detroit.

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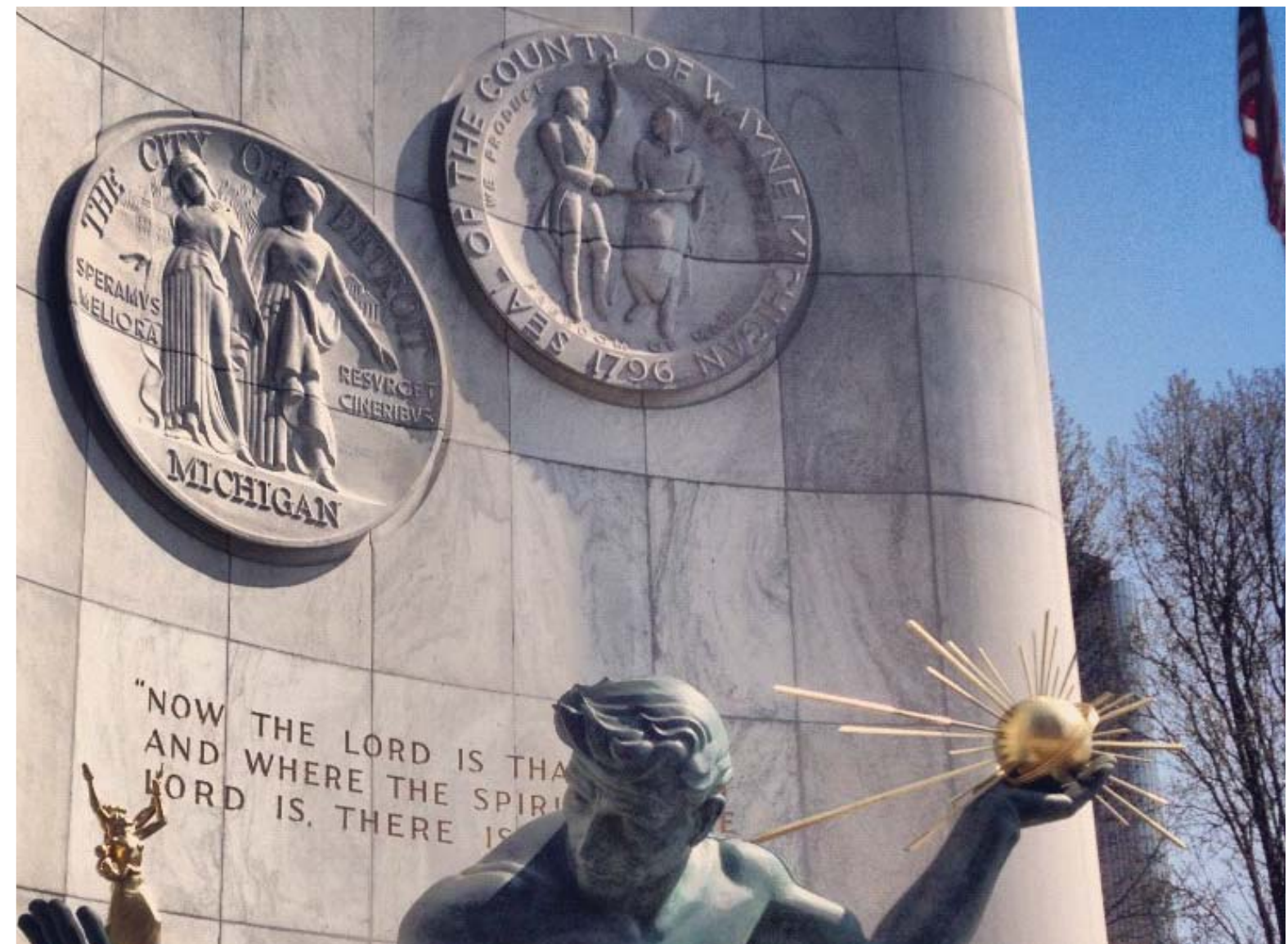


"People think automatically that if you are from Detroit, you are ghetto, loud, and will be unsuccessful. Well, let me just say that I will be the living example to anyone that Detroiters can be successful."
-Deborah, 10th Grade

"Our generation as of now needs to get out of the streets and put their head into some books for once. We need more leaders in this day than followers." -Deja, 10th Grade

"I am proud of Detroit for not giving me everything. For if it had, I would have no appreciation. For the outcome is greater. I have vision." -Nasura, 10th Grade

**"Motown tune harboring,
Automobile industrial-based vicarious drive.
Downtown city lighting,
Lifegiver of struggling spirit.
Red-winged angel, singing city...
I call home..."
-Terrell, 12th Grade**



spirit of detroit

If I could do one thing for Detroit it would be me becoming successful so I could come back and give to my community. I would build schools and hospitals and parks. I would give money to the poor and money to people who just need help because I want someone to come help me.
-Shayla, 10th Grade

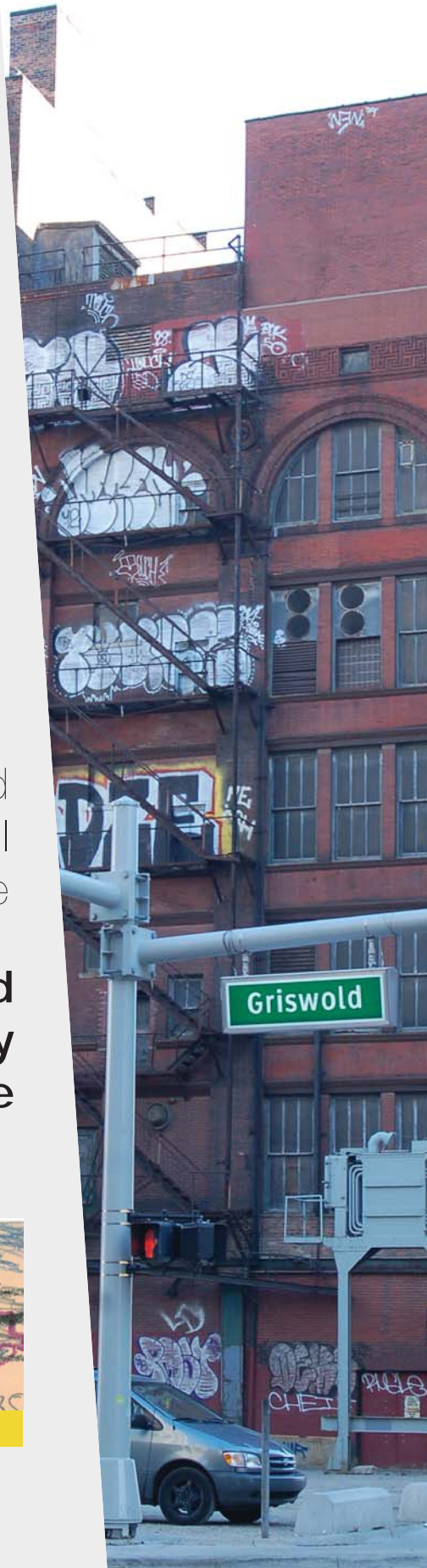
"Detroit needs our help to make it what it used to be. We have to put in the effort, time and dedication it deserves to once again deserve the title of home."
-Brianna, 10th Grade

"I am proud of Detroit for trying to build itself back up. I think people around the world are starting to care." -Diamon, 6th Grade

"I want Detroit to be the best city in the world." -Jasmine, 1st Grade

"I wish that Detroit had more hamsters and Guinea pigs so the people would be happy. I love Detroit." -LaDaysha, 1st Grade

"I want Detroit to be happy and kind. I like people being happy and kind." -Jordan, 1st Grade



"If I could do one thing for Detroit, it would be to clean up the city. To be respectful to Detroit and be nice and I hope Detroit will be safe. I hope Detroit will try hard and Detroit will be responsible." -Leeah, 2nd Grade

Da'Marcus

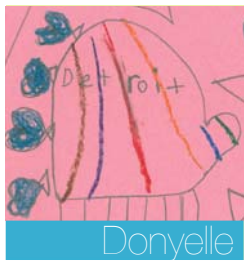


"I am proud of Detroit for making me who I am. I was raised in Detroit and I love my city. I am proud that Detroit is famous for being the Motor City. Detroit is a home to many people; the city is like a parent—showing love while being tough! I'm proud of Detroit for its layered appearance. Many people assume Detroit is a rough and dangerous city, but that is an outsider's opinion. I'm proud that it has its own brand of street smarts. It's something you learn without being taught. I'm proud of Detroit for being the greatest world teacher. I've learned everything I know from Detroit." -Gabrielle

"A city that degrades with every insult, to the point where the reputation is tainted. Why do we slander a city with so much potential?" -Nayeem, 10th Grade



LaDaysha



Donyelle



Elana

"I believe every person deserves a place to call home. A place of solitude and comfort, where everyone knows everyone. That's what I want Detroit to be.

I want Detroit to have more respect for itself. I want Detroit to produce doctors and entrepreneurs instead of killers and thugs. A place that gets recognized for its achievements and not its struggles. That's what I want Detroit to be. I want Detroit to fight for and protect each other, instead of against each other. I want Detroit to be the city that changes everyone's mind. The city that comes back from its harsh times. I want

"I want Detroit to be the city everyone thinks it can't be."

Detroit to be the city that steers our next generation to greatness, instead of settling for "okay." I want Detroit to stop settling for "okay," and improve for the future. I want Detroit to be the city it once was and more. The city that gave so many individuals hope and offered something to the world. I want Detroit to be known for its kindness, its stability, and the opportunities it gives their citizens; not for all the violence and hate it's been built on. I want Detroit to be the city everyone thinks it can't be."

-Starr, 10th Grade

"I want the city of Detroit to be different. I want it to be something more than just the Motor City. Detroit should be a city that people from all over

the world admire. I want Detroit to be the place where legends are made and Presidents are raised. Detroit should be a place where innovators are born and Nobel Peace Prize recipients reside. Everyone should have a desire to live in Detroit. Detroit should not be known as the most dangerous city in the world with the highest crime rates. It should be known for innovation and greatness. There are many people who came and put Detroit on a higher platform. Sports legends such as Dennis Rodman and Joe Louis are from Detroit. The greatest rapper of all time, Eminem, is from Detroit. The 38th President of the United States is from Detroit. One of the greatest innovators of all time, Henry Ford, is from Detroit.

All of these people achieved greatness, but one thing that all of these people have in common is that they already did their job. They already made Detroit look like a place where superstars are born. Now it is up to the new generation to give Detroit a platform where it can stand tall and proud amongst other places on Earth. It is up to the new generation to give Detroit a new title— innovative rather than dangerous, inspiring rather than wasteland. It is up to the new generation to bring Detroit back to what it used to be."

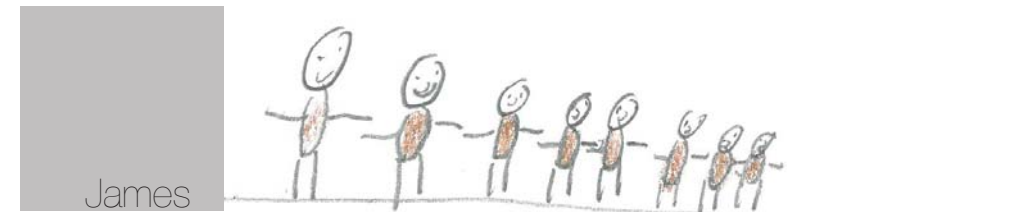
- Mohammed, 10th Grade



Morgan



Jordan



James

Reputations: Dirty and Dangerous Ricardo, 10th Grade

"Bad Reputations aren't gracious. Changing is harder than staying the same. Why should good people be slandered? Why can't they recognize all the good that comes from here? Learn. Learn to learn to change. Earn a good reputation. Change."

"If I could do one thing for Detroit, I would put it in space because I want to be a scientist." -Michaela, Kindergarten

"I want Detroit to be somewhere my sister can get an education."
-Dontrel, 1st Grade

"I'm proud of Detroit for what it gave me: a school to learn in. It gave me a store to get candy out of. It gave me a house to live in. It is my favorite city. It gave me a friend."
-Demia, 2nd grade



education

I believe it's not too late for another chance. It would help students find a job as well as help them decide what it is they want to do in life. I would give teenagers an opportunity to work one-on-one with someone to help them. Most teens just need for someone to be there. Instead of talking at them, they need someone to talk with them. Every teen deserves a second chance. I don't like what certain teens do, but they should be able to get help. -Shayonte, 10th Grade

**"We need money
for new text books,
projectors, and more
school supplies."
-Trachon, 6th grade**

"I wish that Detroit had a Dora the Explorer
so that she can save the kids so they
can go to school." -Jessica,
1st Grade

**"I would change it to a classroom
so when I turn 7 I can be a
teacher." -Jaila, Kindergarten**

"I would help people learn so they can learn
just like me! That way they won't do bad
things." -Kenya, 1st Grade



Jessica



**"If I could do one thing for Detroit
I would grow up and become an
author by drawing and writing words
for children that don't know words."
-Jayshawn, 2nd grade**



Jaylen

"If I could do one thing for Detroit it would be to
open a center for teenagers to come and get all
types of help. My goal will be to change someone's
life. Whether it's dealing with home, school, or they
just need someone to give them guidance. It will be a
second chance program but different. I would have it
where if you are having any problems you can come
there and get help or talk.

Another goal will be to get teenagers off the streets
and in school to better their life. I believe it's not too
late for another chance. It would help students find a
job as well as help them decide what it is they want
to do in life. I would give teenagers an opportunity to
work one-on-one with someone to help them. Most
teens just need for someone to be there. Instead
of talking at them, they need someone to talk with
them. Every teen deserves a second chance. I don't
like what certain teens do, but they should be able to
get help." -Shayonte, 10th grade

**"There is a lot of little kids learning how to be grown
before their time." -Betty, 10th Grade**



"I would like to teach my students to do art." -Phillip, 2nd grade

"I'd like to explore the world." -Dejha, 10th grade

"We need to go to college and graduate." -Diamond, 5th grade



Christian

"I f I could do one thing for Detroit it would be to help fix the DPS school system. Don't get me wrong, DPS has great intentions, and an abundance of opportunities. For instance, my school Benjamin Carson School of Science and Medicine: it helps students pursue a career in the Arts, and the Vocational Center, which gives students the skills they need to succeed in a professional job right after high school.



Kenya

With Detroit having these great intentions, it still remains unfinished.

"Start spending money on things that put money back in."

DPS is constantly in debt, because they spend the little money we have on million dollar schools. In my opinion I feel if they start spending money on things that put money back in, we would be in less debt. For instance: starting sport organizations, holding tutorial services, fund raisers, and community meetings. Things like this would take little money



Phillip

out, but put in twice as much. The money we make should be used on the students. It's time to start helping the kids of Detroit get off of the streets and help us do something productive with our lives and others."

-Asiah, 10th grade

"I f I could do one thing for Detroit I would grow up and become a teacher. As a teacher, I could serve my community by helping the children to learn. I would like to teach writing, social studies, and art. I will teach them how to read a book and go to the library. I think teachers are important in Detroit."

-Yasmin, 2nd grade

"A s a teacher, I could serve my community by helping the children to learn. I would give them ideas. I would teach them math, reading, and writing. This is what I would do to serve my community."

-Donrico, 2nd grade

"If I could do one thing for Detroit, it would be getting people to places fast! I want them to be on time. It's important to be on time because you don't want to miss part of the learning."

-Christian, 1st Grade

"When my mom drives her car, I see people doing art by the street and it looks beautiful." -Amia

"I wish there was cute houses, cute sand, and cute trees because there is nothing there."
-Gian Carlos, 1st Grade

"I can go door to door and get people to sign an agreement that says that if you sign your name you have to agree to clean at least three yards or three buildings." -Darrick

"I want Detroit to be pretty."
-Skylar, 1st Grade



beauty

When you think about the city of Detroit, what are the first thoughts that pop into your mind? Poverty? Violence? Dangerous? Ghetto? I can assure you every state and city has its flaws, but if you are a true Detroiter, you would know what the beauty is in ugly.

If you see the beauty in it, you won't think it is ugly after all. What I want to do for Detroit is influence others with my positive opinion about Detroit. Hopefully, minds will be altered and we can go back to being that great city: Detroit. -Sakina, 10th grade

"If I could do one thing for Detroit it would be to make the sun shine on."
-Sema-Jay, 1st grade

"If I could do one thing for Detroit, it would be to help throw garbage away."
-Jaylen, 1st grade

"I would grow some flowers."
-Sidney, Kindergarten

"I would make it beautiful. I will plant and be nice and not burn houses."
-Juliana, 1st grade

"I would change it to a beach."
-Mia, Kindergarten



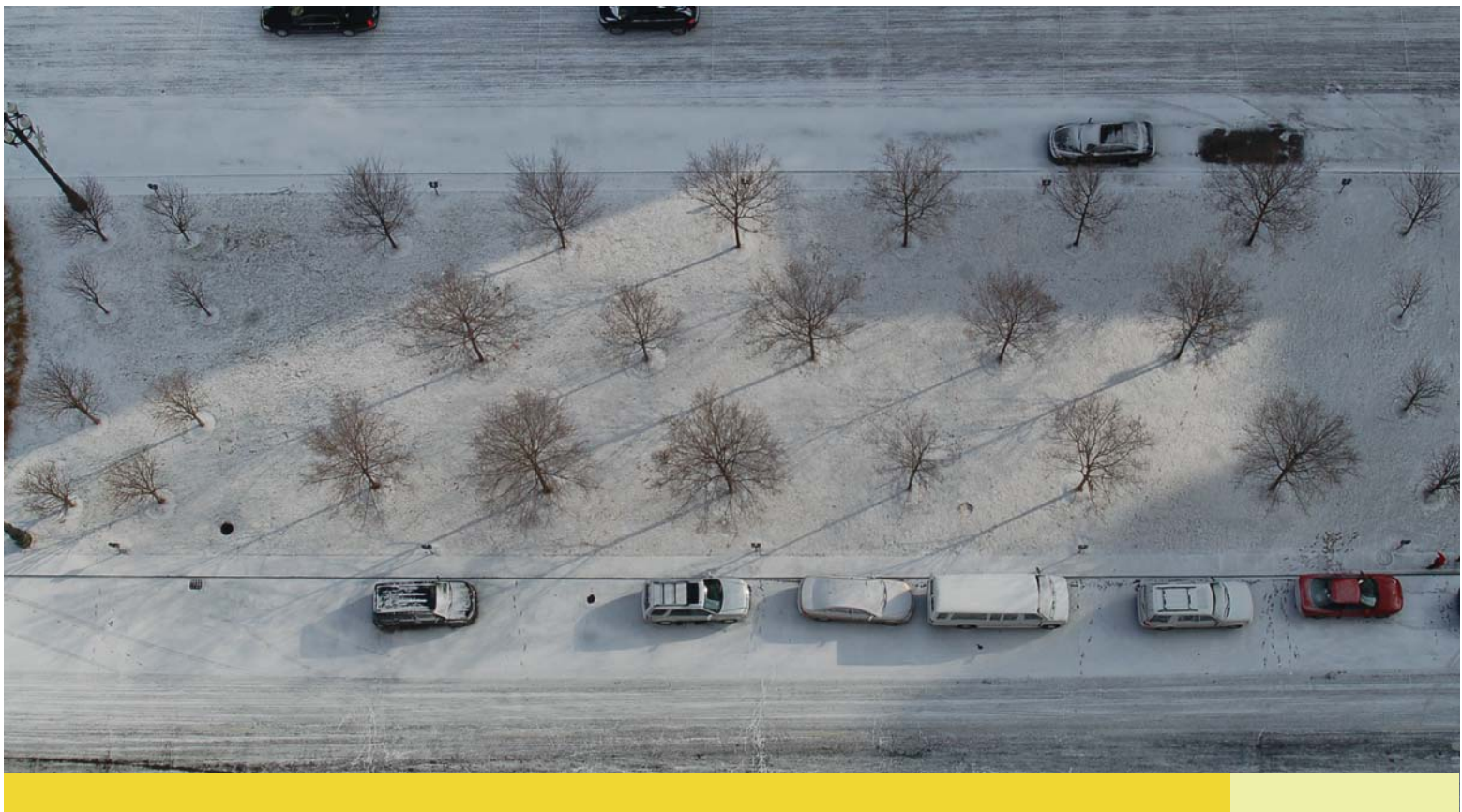
"I wish Detroit had more trees because they grow apples and then people could have food and boys and girls would get apples and not be hungry." -Valeria, 1st grade

“When you think about the city of Detroit, what are the first thoughts that pop into your mind? Poverty? Violence? Dangerous? Ghetto? I can assure you every state and city has its flaws, but if you are a true Detroiter, you would know what the beauty is in ugly.

Detroit is a unique city in every aspect. It is home to thousands of people with myriad of different backgrounds. It is a city making its come back from bankruptcy. The city is also trying to go back to the past when Detroit was a city many citizens loved and toured. There are large hospitals with great doctors of all sorts. Detroit has its fun by visiting the Detroit Zoo, a zoo filled with exotic creatures, and Belle Isle, a place where people can lay back and relax in the summer, and many more attractions.

Detroit is a special and wonderful city. There are many great things about it such as the history behind the city, tourist attractions, etc. It is a blooming city hand has several opportunities to offer. The city of Detroit is often misunderstood and judged by the opinion of others. If you see the beauty in it, you won't think it is ugly after all. What I want to do for Detroit is influence others with my positive opinion about Detroit. Hopefully, minds will be altered and we can go back to being that great city: Detroit.” -Sakina

"I would make it shiny and clean."
-Niya, 1st Grade



Unknown



Jaylen



Gian

"I want Detroit to be irenic, aesthetic and idolatrous. People would love to live in Detroit if they have these traits, I know I would. These traits will help us become a better community. I only picked these particular items because I believe Detroit is capable of being them.

I want Detroit to be irenic, which means peaceful. Our city is so violent for the wrong reasons. Adults and children shouldn't be afraid to walk somewhere freely without thinking their lives are in danger. Being irenic isn't hard. You have to be honest and care. Being peaceful can rub off and influence others.

I want Detroit to be an aesthetic city. Aesthetic means to be beautiful. By being aesthetic I mean clean. We need to

"We need to clean things up because we walk over trash."

clean up things because we walk over trash. If we clean it up, you will hear less about our city being dirty. We already have nice buildings and statues. All we need is for people to start caring and believing each other.

I want Detroit to be idolatrous, which means loving. Detroit should be idolatrous because if we don't love one another we can't be irenic because we don't care about one another. Being loving isn't hard either. All you have to be is respectful and caring. We have the power inside us to love; all we have to do is show it.

I want Detroit to be an irenic, aesthetic and idolatrous place. I believe we have the potential to be these things. Detroit isn't that bad of a city. People will talk down on us because they think we'll never reach these goals. If we work together we can achieve and become these awesome traits."

-Allisia, 10th grade



Skylar



Valeria



Lainyeh

"I would recycle glass bottles, plastic, bottles, and paper. Because the communities need supplies. Recycling is fun. I would help clean up the community. I would do it every day."

-Nakila, 5th Grade

"If I could do one thing for Detroit, it would be to love people."
-King, 1st grade

**"I love Detroit because its pretty and
all my friends are here. I love Detroit."**
-Sabina, 1st Grade

"If I could do one things for Detroit,
it would be to have a celebration."
-LeAntwone, 1st grade



relationships

The output may not always be a success, but it's the input that makes a difference. Detroit has been a place that I've called home for the past fifteen years. Our city has made decisions that I am not proud of, but the good seems to always outweigh the bad. I live in a small neighborhood and we do whatever it takes to protect our community. We formed a neighborhood watch, and thanks to Detroit police, supporters, and others it was a success. Whenever we have a block party or meeting, we know that we have the support of Detroit behind us. This is just one reason I am proud of Detroit. -Ya'matty, 10th grade

**"I'm proud of Detroit.
We've got Jesus in our
hearts."**

-Deshawn, 1st grade

"I'm proud of Detroit because
I get to live with my grandma!"

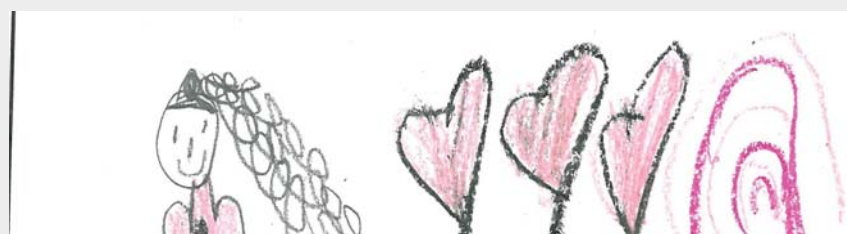
-Autumn, 1st Grade

**"If I could do one thing for Detroit,
I would give people phones to
call their cousins."**

-Zion, Kindergarten

"If I could do one things for Detroit
it would be loving people."

-Da'Monique, 1st grade



Kamora



**"If I could do two things for Detroit it
would be to build more schools and
stop the fighting between colored
people and white people."**

-Alexes, 6th grade



"I want Detroit to be a nice place and a safe place. Detroit is not a safe place. Some people probably don't have an education. That is why they act like that and kill people. They need some help. No one wants people who are not good. God does not like ugly, mean people.

Many people just don't care. Their parents should care for them no matter what. They should care what their parents think. I wonder if they even care.

It's a hard thing to solve, but I want to help the city. Some ideas I have are to ask everybody to help me clean up the city, tell people not to litter, and take care of the city." - Maliycaha, 5th grade

**"I would be a good friend."
-Gregory, Kindergarten**



"I f I could do one thing for Detroit it would be to clean up the city and save the world. I would be respectful, responsible, and safe. I would keep my family safe and warm. I love them and they love me too. If I could save the world it will be for them because they deserve it." -Le'Airra, 2nd grade



"I will help all kids and make it [Detroit] a beautiful city. All the people who come to our city will come to live and our city will have good things and good places. I will always love our city. It doesn't matter if some call our city home. It is all our home.

"If I could save the world it will be for them because they deserve it."



Together everyone achieves more. It does not matter what city we live in. Everyone is welcome to come and help the

city reach its biggest goals its ever made. We are a team. Go to school and go to college so you can help our city."

-DarJhion, 5th grade

"I f everybody's dream came true, it would be to make a difference for our community. I promise you I believe. Do you? I am following my dream to help others together as a team. This is our community. We can do it; no more fighting and arguing. We've got to work as a team together. This is our life. Let's make it happen. We can build a peaceful world together. We need a better world for the kids and children. People are talking about everybody's color and if they're black or white. When people talk about that it makes me feel that the world is not peaceful. This is a fun, cool, peaceful world but we have to show respect, love, kindness and citizenship to others to make it a better place."

-Howard, 4th grade



"I want Detroit to be proud of their school and their families. Sometimes you will go on a trip to the zoo."
-Delano, 1st grade

"If I could do one thing for Detroit I would help the poor people because I like to help others that have nothing." -Kennedy, 1st Grade

"I would like to stop all of the bullying in Detroit because people are committing suicide. I don't want it to happen to me because it wouldn't be right to me. I want to keep everyone in school because I want to have a good education."
-TyJuane, 5th grade

"I'm proud of Detroit for at least almost bonding with people of different color or different cultures." -Summer, 6th Grade

"If there was one thing I can do for Detroit it would be to help all the homeless people. I would give them a home to live in. I would buy them food, clothes, and toys for the kids. I would give them money every two weeks. " -Kenneth, 6th grade

"I would give hungry people some chicken and apple pie."
-Michael, Kindergarten



inclusivity

If I could change one thing for Detroit it would be people understanding gay men more. The reason why I chose this is because I feel that the people of Detroit feel like being "gay" is an illness or gay men had to go through something tragic to end up gay. It wasn't a choice for me to be gay. I feel like I was born this way. -Ukhari, 10th grade

**"I'm proud of Detroit
for trying to get this
world together by
making it look nice."
-Alexus, 6th grade**

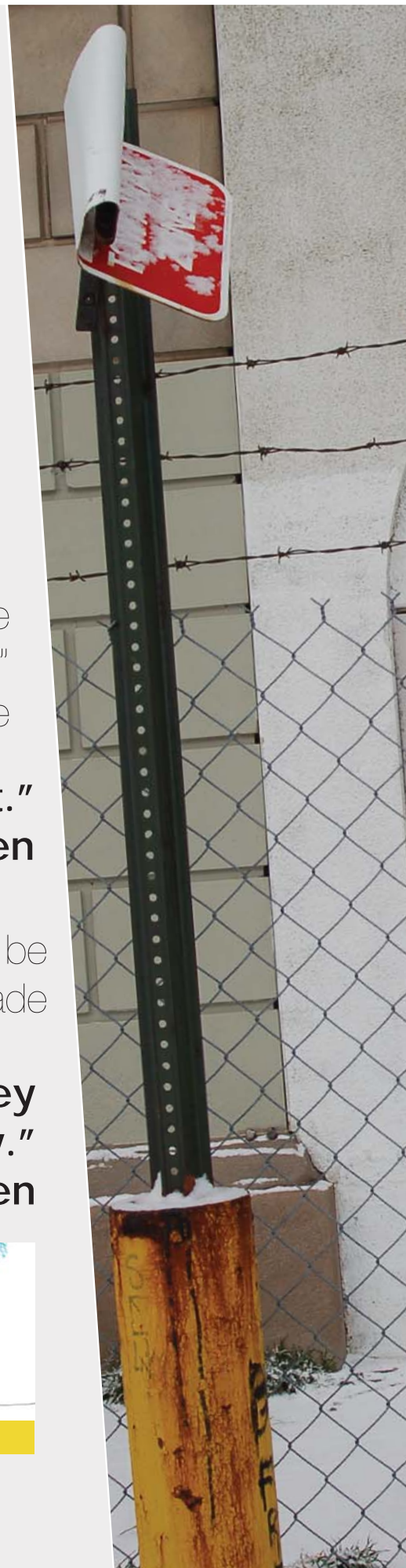
**"I would give people quilts to
keep them warm."
-Shannon, Kindergarten**

"If I could do one thing for Detroit, it would be
to have blacks and whites get along better."
-Damionna, 6th grade

**"I would give somebody a blanket."
-Ashanti, Kindergarten**

"If I could do one thing for Detroit it would be
helping homeless men." -Jaynelle, 1st grade

**"I would give people hugs if they
were lonely."
-Cameron, Kindergarten**



**"If I could do one thing for Detroit it would be to
build a community. I will get my family members to help
such as my uncle. We could even make food for the
homeless. My mom and grandmother are good cooks.
We can go by the freeway and give the homeless food.
I know to go to the freeway because I see them there all
the time." - Nahriyah**

**"If I could change one thing for Detroit it would be people understanding
gay men more. The reason why I chose this is because I feel that the
people of Detroit feel like being "gay" is an illness or gay men had to go
through something tragic to end up gay. It wasn't a choice for me to be
gay. I feel like I was born this way.**

I say this because from a young age I liked boys. I wouldn't choose this
lifestyle for anyone because being gay is very hard. It takes a real man to
put up with what I have to go through.

People are quick to judge or be up in arms when they see a gay male. I
feel like if you only walked a mile in a gay man's shoes you wouldn't feel
the way you do about gay men.

I want to encourage everyone to just let gay men live their lives. As long as
gay men don't hurt you or put you and your family in danger, then that's
good. Change your mind set for a week and see how much you respect
and feel for gay men. This is a taboo subject in the city of Detroit."
-Ukhari, 10th Grade

"I want Detroit to love." -Kamora, 1st Grade



African-American brothers and sisters will get their education and become the entrepreneurs, lawyers, and doctors; stop being ignorant and fill their brains with knowledge and convert their ignorance to intelligence.

One day prejudice will not exist and one will not judge another. I have a dream that the city of Detroit will be peaceful and not co-exist with murders, rapes, and burglary. Detroit will be a city of gracefulness and filled with love and not hate.

I have a dream that all the martyrs before our time fought and died for our rights and education for a reason and not just so our generation will stay in the streets.

My dream presents images of all African-Americans having an education. It shows me an image of Detroit being beautiful and not filled with empty houses and burned down buildings."

- De'Shawn, 9th grade



"If I could do one thing for Detroit, I would give people food if they are hungry." -Natasha, Kindergarten



Shannon



Cameron



Kanya

"If I could do one thing for Detroit, I would raise money for the city. I would create and hold different programs in different parts of the city. I would get children, teens, and young adults to get involved and help out. We would have engagements and performances. We'd have cookouts to sell snacks, meals, and drinks. The money we raise will go to charities and schools and hospitals. Money will also go to families who are living on the streets. Handing out flyers will get people citywide involved. Everyone in the city working together to raise money starts the rebuilding of Detroit."

-Alontae, 10th grade

"I would get children, teens, and young adults to get involved and help out."

"I have a dream that one day all races will get along. That one day we can say Martin Luther King's death was not in vain. My

"Honestly, Detroit is a huge mess right now. From gangs to homeless citizens; from murders to unnecessary violence in schools. What I want for Detroit is to be a successful, peaceful, out-of-debt society. In Detroit, our main problem is working together. If there has to be gangs, then there should only be one, and that's everybody in Detroit as one."

-Wendell, 10th Grade

"If I could do one thing for Detroit, I would build a house."
-Jamarion, Kindergarten

**"I want to try to get rich for Detroit. I want Detroit
to look like Hollywood."**
-Desmond, 6th grade

"I wish that Detroit had houses for the people
that do not have houses and also cars, food,
a job, money, shoes, and coats."
-Juliana, 1st Grade

"I'm proud of Detroit for making cars."
-Je'lyn, 1st Grade



infrastructure

If I could do one thing for Detroit it would be to make Detroit a better place. I would refurbish the whole city and add a wide variety of things people would love or like to do. I would buy vacant areas, tear down raggedy abandon houses, and build new ones in their place. I would bring more stuff to the city like recreation centers, water parks, bowling arenas, and things people could sightsee. Everything I would do for the city would make it so the city could generate money to maintain and upkeep possible improvements. I love Detroit. -Terry, 10th Grade

I will grow up to be an architect so that people can have homes to live in. I will make my dad a new house. I will make a school.
-Dontae, 2nd Grade

"If I could do one thing for Detroit, I would give the homeless a house so they could eat, drink, and sleep on beds."
-Brianna, 6th Grade

"I want Detroit to be nice with no abandoned houses."
-Jaelin, 1st Grade

"I would want all the street lights to work. I would want all the police officers and firefighters to have the things they need to do their jobs." -Martishe, 6th Grade

I wish that everyone in Detroit has a house so that everyone won't be cold. -Kenya, 1st Grade



Dontae



"I would increase the number of buses so that it would be easier for them to get to the different routes faster and make getting people to work, school, and other places faster and easier."
-Sydni, 9th Grade



"If I could do one thing for Detroit, it would be to make the Police Services much better and faster.

Every time my family calls the Police Station they come at least an hour later. Once, a woman came into my father's store, stole a bottle of perfume off the counter and ran. My father ran after her and reached her by the time she was close to the door. My father blocked the door and she took out a knife. While this was happening, my father's partner was calling the police. The police came an hour later; the woman was gone.

I think police should be on every corner, so when something happens they are there right away. They should be in both crowded and remote areas."

-Aysha, 10th Grade

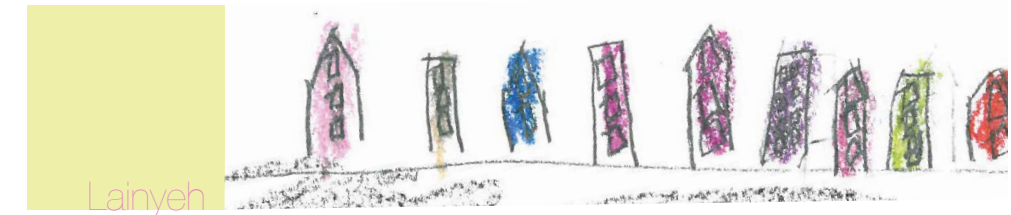
"If I could do one thing for Detroit it would be to tear down the empty houses and build playgrounds."
-Rayshawn, 1st Grade



recreational centers in the city of Detroit.

Now think about that one. According to the U.S. Census, Detroit has 706,585 people of which 26.7% are between the ages of 5 and 18. That's like 1500 kids per recreation center, not including adults who may want to utilize the centers. The main purpose of a recreation center is to give kids a safe and fun atmosphere. Let's keep kids off the streets. We all know that our city has an uphill battle against violence. Recreation centers are essential in urban areas. Recreation centers deter kids, like myself, from getting into activities that could lead kids to bad choices in life.

In conclusion, if I could do one thing for Detroit, it would be to increase the amount of recreational centers the city currently has." - Paige



"If I could do one thing for Detroit, it would be to pay all of the city's debts. I would do this because I want Detroit to go back to being independent and the nation's biggest car industry. Detroit almost lost its biggest income in the year 2012 and if President Obama did not help Detroit out then Detroit wouldn't have been able to pay back its debts. The State wants to own Belle Isle—if

I paid all of Detroit's debts they would be able to keep the island for families who use it every summer to bring families and friends closer. This is what I would do for Detroit, if I could do one thing."

-Janai, 10th Grade



"Let's keep kids off the streets. We all know our city has an uphill battle against violence."



"I am Paige, 13 years of age, and Detroit is my city. I love my city, but if I could do one thing for Detroit it would be to increase the amount of recreational centers the city currently has. There are 17

"If I could do one thing for Detroit I would feed the children who need food and put money in the pockets of mothers who need it most. I believe no one deserves to live in the cold and wonder where their next meal is going to come from."

-Ravon, 10th Grade

"I'm not only trying to win a contest, I'm trying to confront everybody about the changes we should make. I really hope my word gets across."

- Montania, 8th grade

"Sometimes I wonder or begin to vision bad things happening to me or to think, 'Am I the person who is going to get hurt by just walking home from school?'"
-Sharn'ai, 10th Grade

"Kids can't even play outside without their parents worrying about them being kidnapped. I want Detroit to be the famous city that I admired as a kid."

-Xandria, 10th grade



safety

I want Detroit to be the glorious city it used to be. It's not rare that while I'm in the car with my dad, I'll hear a story about the old Detroit. The Detroit my mom and dad grew up in. I want to see that for myself. I want Detroit to be a place where we can walk down the street and not worry about being robbed or raped. I want Detroit to be the land of opportunity that it once was. -Camera

"I would grow up and become a firefighter. As a firefighter, I could serve my community by putting out fires. I want people to be safe at good times."
-Caleb, 2nd grade

"I want police right next to me every few seconds and I want Detroit to be safe."
-Alve'Ana, 2nd Grade

"I want Detroit to be safe because I want the people to not get hurt."
-Dwayne, 1st Grade

"I wish Detroit had Spidergirl to help kids so they could be safe so my friends don't get killed." -Flor, 1st Grade

"I want Detroit to be safe for my family." -Mareya, 1st Grade



"If I could do one thing for Detroit I would grow up and become a security guard. I keep people safe. If someone is fighting, I would break it up and put things right."
-Devondre, 2nd grade

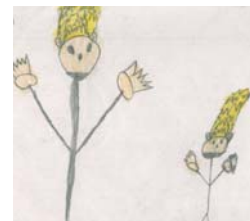
"I want Detroit to be the glorious city it used to be. It's not rare that while I'm in the car with my dad, I'll hear a story about the old Detroit. The Detroit my mom and dad grew up in. I want to see that for myself. I want Detroit to be a place where I can walk down the street and not worry about being robbed or raped. I want Detroit to be the land of opportunity that it once was.

I was born in 1996, and shortly after that, my family moved to Georgia. I was always told Detroit was too dangerous. Now that I've returned to Detroit, I get to see it coming back. My dad says I get to be a part of the rebuilding of a great city. Right now, my city is in the process of healing. I want Detroit to be a great city that I can tell my grandchildren about, and one they can see for themselves.

I want Detroit to be safer. Unfortunately, Detroit has one of the highest crime rates in the country. I want this to change. I want to see the people of my city work together to build and maintain its communities.

I want Detroit to be the way it was. I want to be able to visualize the great things my parents talk about. I'm not ashamed of my city, just what it's become. I want Detroit to be the city that rose from the ashes." -Camera

"I would start on the crimes."
-Angel, 6th Grade



Elijah

"The people in Detroit need to realize that killing people off will not solve any problems, won't get them anywhere if life, and most of all, it will just get them into more trouble than what they were already in; either they go to jail or someone tries to kill them for revenge. The only way Detroit will change is if the people who cause trouble change and help their community. **"** -Keyana, 10th Grade



Caleb

"I want Detroit to be a better community. But I don't

"Almost 300 people were killed in 2012. That's unbelievable."

think that will happen no time soon. Almost 300 people were killed in 2012. That is unbelievable. I barely like to go outside. Sometimes I think what if I never make it back inside? That really scares me. Why should I have to be scared in my own neighborhood? **"** -Micah, 10th grade



Dwayne

"Don't get me wrong, I love Detroit. It was the city I was born and raised here, but we may need a little work. We have a lot of problems here like crime, pollution, and waste. My main thing I have a problem with is crime. In my opinion, a way to help our city with crime is to provide every citizen with alarms so that every time the alarm goes off, that means someone is trying to break in. The police will get an alert that someone is being broken into. The police will immediately come. There's rumors going out saying that the president wants to make a rule saying no guns should be sold. I agree with it, also there shouldn't be any bullets sold either. **"**

-Montania, 8th Grade

"I would like people to stop killing other people. They can go to rehab to learn how to stop killing. They can get mental help/therapy. **"**

-Chauna, 5th grade

"I want Detroit to be safe for my kids when I am a dad." -Elijah, 1st grade

"I wish Detroit had the Ninja Turtles to save the children." -Adrian, 1st grade

"We all should keep small problems small." -Shamyia, 4th grade

"I would grow up and become a soldier. As a soldier I can help the community. I could protect the community. I could protect the city of Detroit. It can make my family proud of me and it's good for the community."
-Adrian, 2nd Grade

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