

# DETROIT WRITES DETROIT



**A COLLECTION OF WRITINGS  
ABOUT DETROIT, WRITTEN BY THE  
STUDENTS WHO LIVE HERE.**

**A 2016 TEACH FOR AMERICA—DETROIT  
PUBLICATION**

**TEACHFORAMERICA**



Dear Readers,

Welcome to the 4th edition of Detroit Writes Detroit. An opportunity for Detroit students to tell the story of their city. Not the simplified Detroit of the media headlines, but their Detroit –a city as complex and beautiful as the over 700,000 residents that populate it.

As a proud daughter of this city, my story is Detroit's story. My past: growing up on the east side of Detroit, attending Bates Academy and Cass Tech, and moving on to the University of Michigan. My present: working hand-in-hand with the community to train and develop leaders who will educate future generations of Detroiters for years to come. And my future: living out my purpose to serve my community on a path that is continuously evolving.

I am who I am because of Detroit.

More importantly, countless other sons and daughters of Detroit are who they are because of Detroit. Together, they are the future of our great city.

Through Detroit Writes Detroit we get to hear directly from our children. Raw, honest, and unfiltered, our authors write the Detroit that they live; the Detroit that is rarely talked about. Through their words, we find windows into the past, portraits of the present, and glimpses of the future. Our authors bring life to our city's biggest hopes, wildest dreams, and sobering fears.

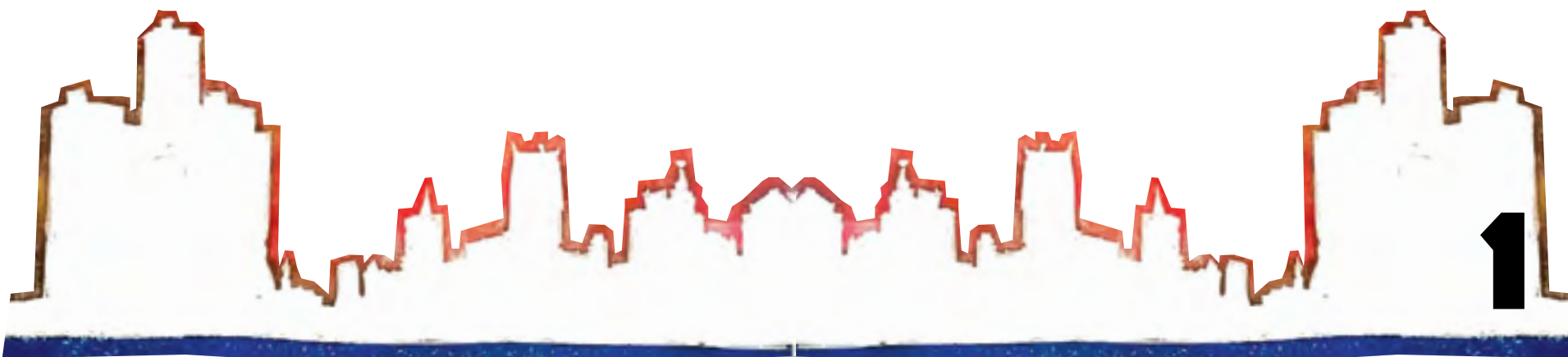
On these pages, our future speaks to us loudly and clearly.

It is my pleasure to invite you to sit back, turn the page, and listen.

For Detroit,

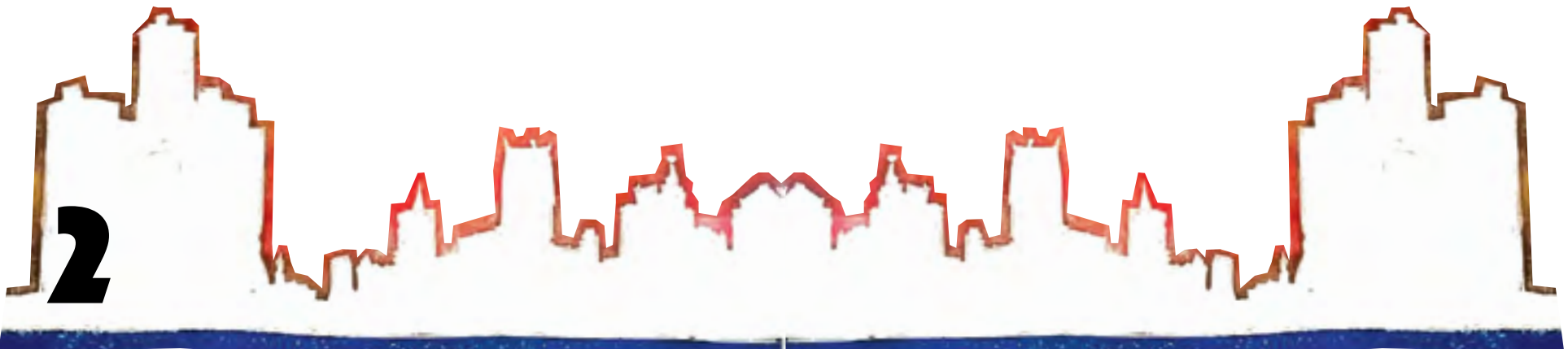


Tiffany C. Taylor  
Executive Director  
Teach For America - Detroit



# SCHOOLS REPRESENTED

*A. Philip Randolph Technical High School  
Benjamin Carson High School of Science and Medicine  
Cesar Chavez Academy Middle School  
Denby High School  
Henry Ford Academy: School for Creative Studies  
Mark Twain Elementary-Middle School  
Marion Law Academy  
Martin Luther King Jr. Senior High School  
Noble Elementary-Middle School  
Regent Park Scholars Charter Academy  
Trix Performance Academy  
Vista Meadows Academy  
Voyageur Academy  
Voyageur College Prep High School  
West Side Academy  
Woodward Academy*

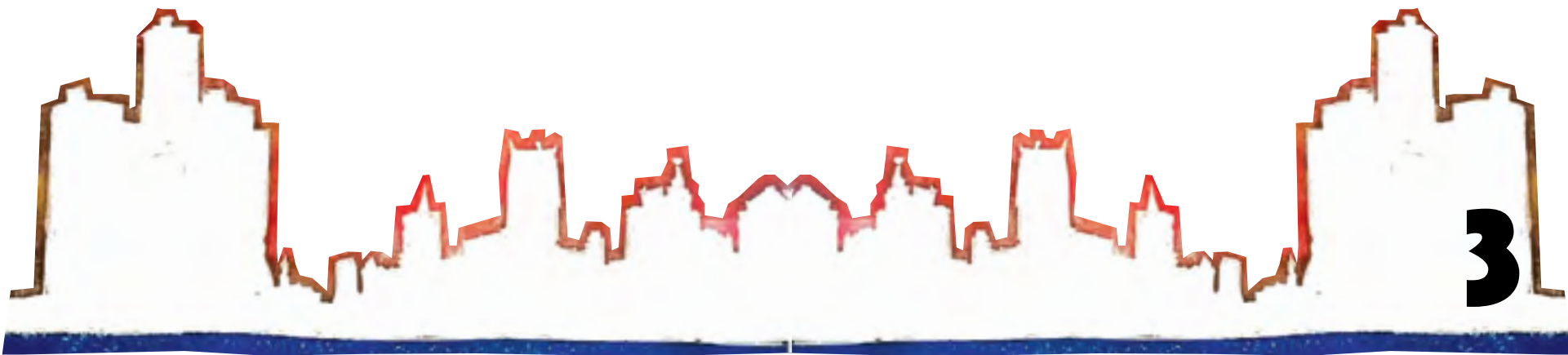


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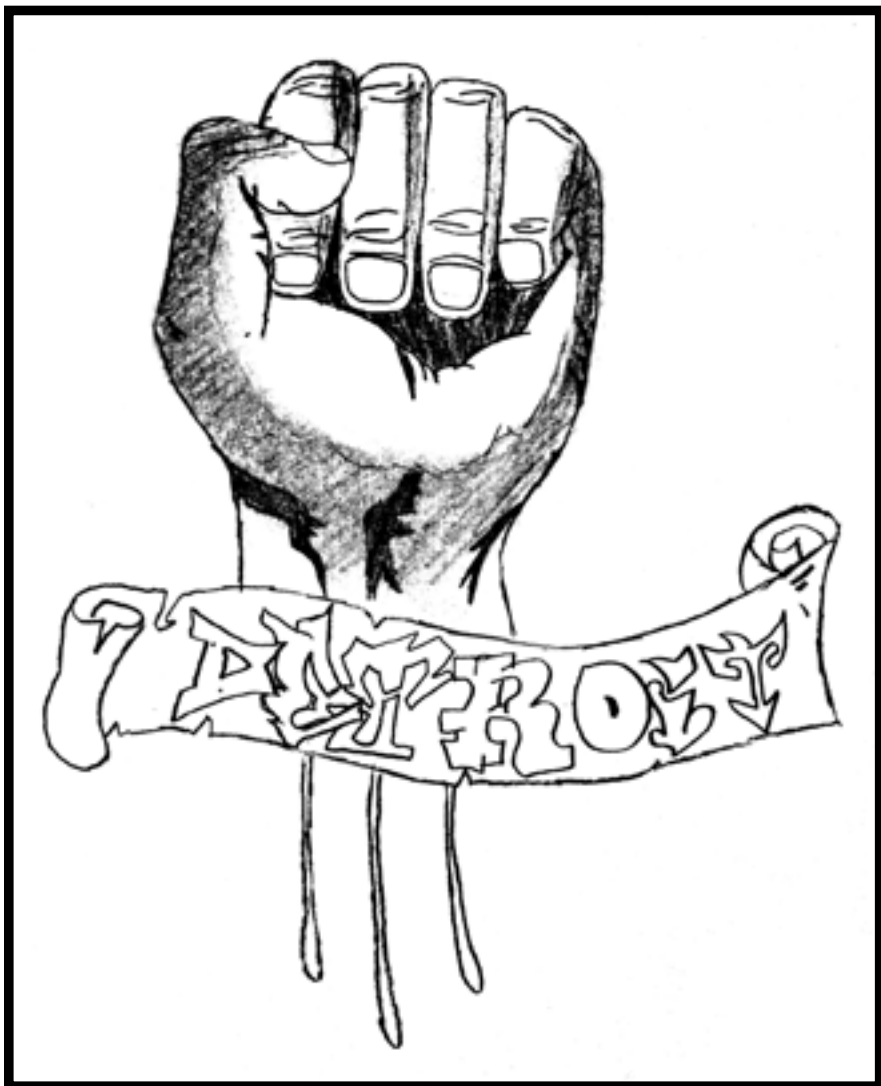
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# PAST



Hervin  
9th Grade

“What we have seen in Detroit is a city that once was great, but that fell off the national map due to a number of factors. Some of those factors were poor economic climates and poor city management. What we have NEVER seen in Detroit is the diminishing of spirit, even in the midst of decline. It is with good reason that Detroiters look back on the past with pride.”

Andrea F. Ayler  
Principal  
West Side Academy



Detroit is my city. You should know it is very historical here. Also it's beautiful down in Detroit, especially downtown. Detroit has a lot of roots and hidden gifts. It's also the birthplace of Motown, which is a great thing for Detroit. A lot of talent came from Detroit and it's only rising. You should also know Detroit is getting better. It's not bad here.

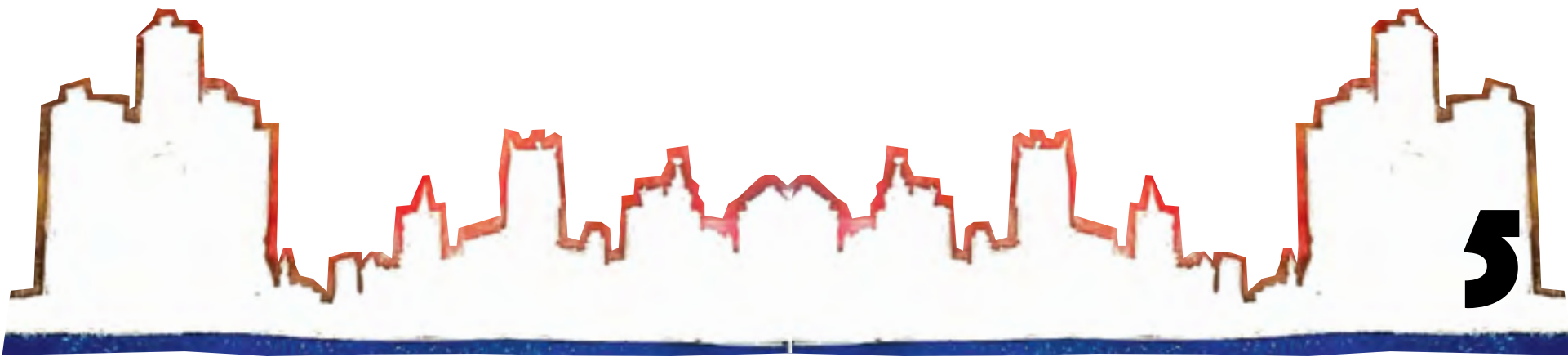
**Jalen**  
**12th Grade**

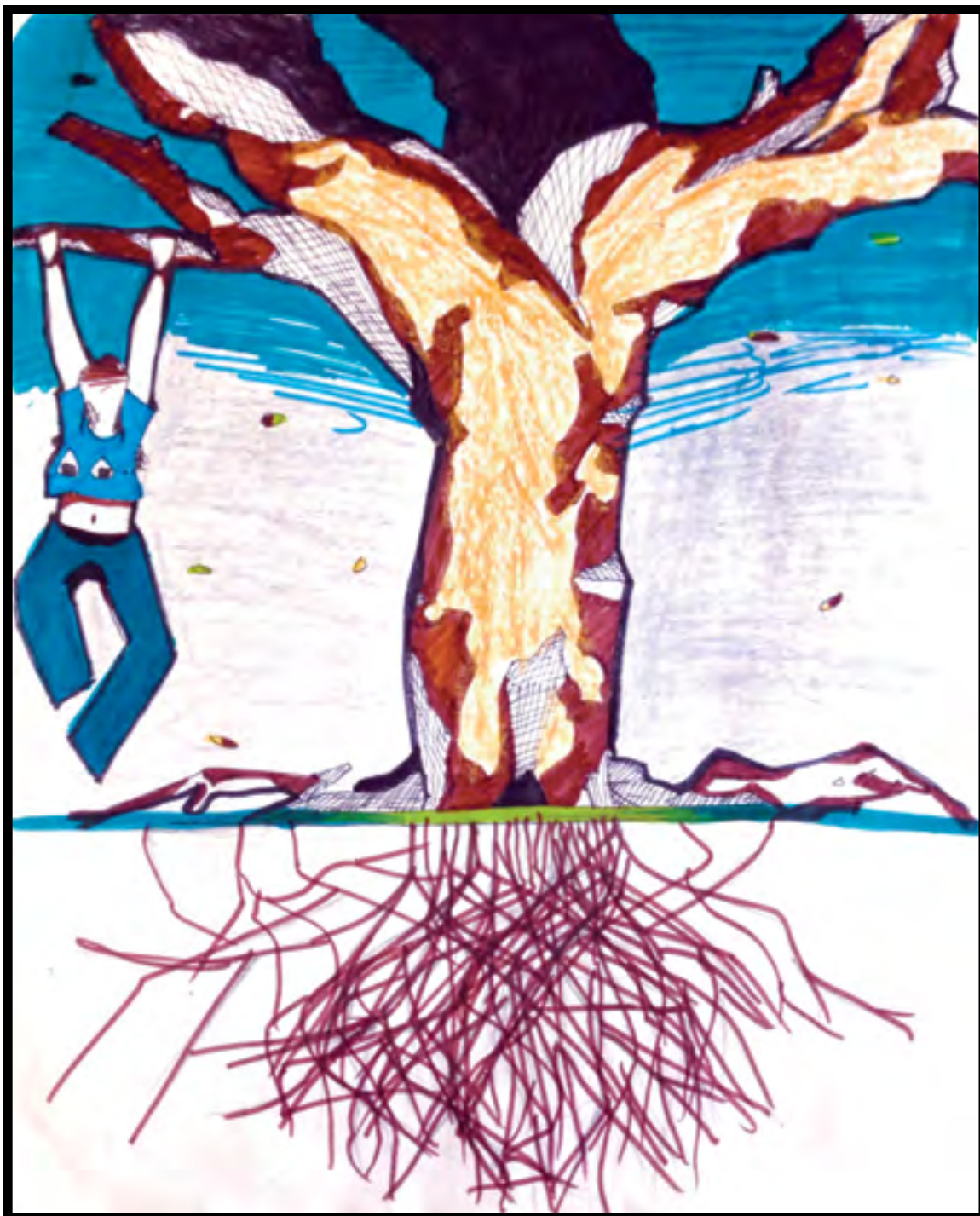
I believe in Detroit because there are a lot of successful people that are from Detroit, and if you're feeling like you can't do it because of where you're from just think of the people that did make it, the same people who were in your situation saying that they couldn't do it, and now look at them.

**Soria**  
**8th Grade**

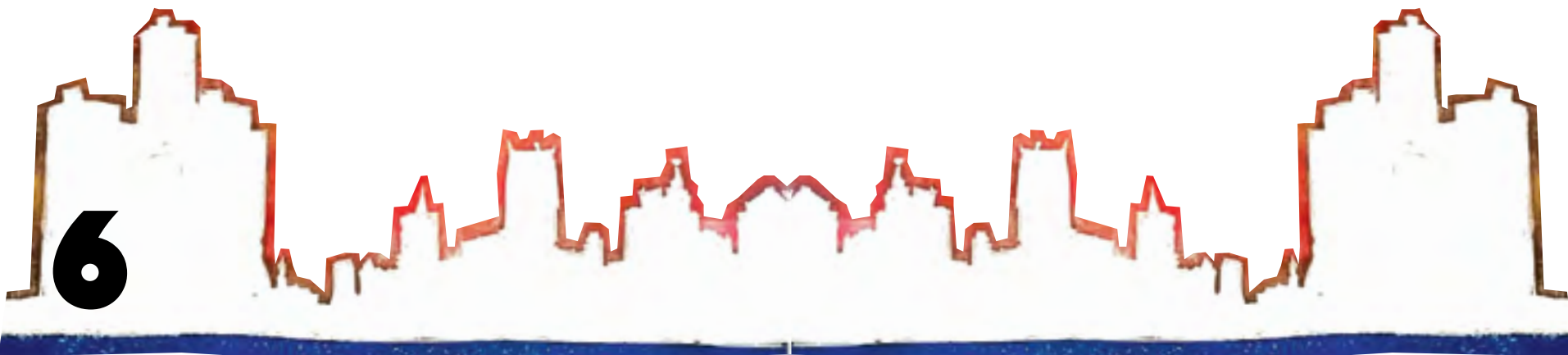


McNichols, near Livernois— Steven Josephson





Dolcia  
7th Grade



## “#LOGLIVEDETROITIERS”

Lartishia  
8th Grade

I believe in Detroit, because this is not only my city, it's everyone's. Detroit is where my mother grew up on 7 Mile with her brothers and cousins. She walked these streets and became something in life, even though the odds were against her.

Most people here were born here, or grew up here. I wasn't born here. I just recently moved three years ago. Since moving here I have learned that Detroit people are strong-willed and humble. Even though I wasn't born here I believe I am from Detroit, because of the history my mother left here, which makes me a part of Detroit and it will forever be a part of me. I am Detroit.

Sydney  
9th Grade



Fox Theatre—Peter Grace



I'm from the city they call "The D."  
Where the skies are grey  
but the grass stays green.

I'm from the city where they steal and kill  
Instead of building up,  
Where young girls are snatched up  
And no one stands up.

I'm from the city where we have more funerals than birthdays,  
People wanna turn up instead of getting jobs these days.

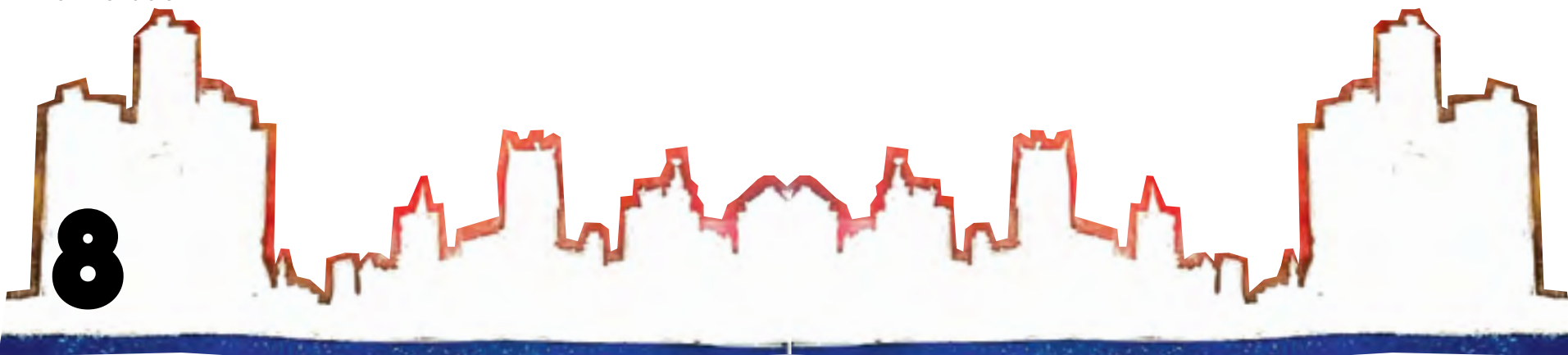
Don't get me wrong or get frightened,  
Our hearts are like the sun,  
Always brightened.

This isn't what it had to be,  
Just a few footsteps from tragedy.  
Just think about the barbeques and the beaches,  
Hearing families laugh instead of boring speeches.

Love and caring,  
Having joy and sharing.  
I believe in Detroit.

**Chynna**  
**10th Grade**

**8**



My Detroit is my home.  
A place like no other.

My Detroit is a place true dreams are made.  
Dreams that could maybe change the world.

My Detroit is a place holder of one big  
family. Holding families for people without.

My Detroit is a place of triumph. Overcoming  
things people never thought we could.

My Detroit is a place of curiosity. People  
here are always trying to find out new things.

My Detroit is a place of inspiration. Always  
inspiring people to go above and beyond.

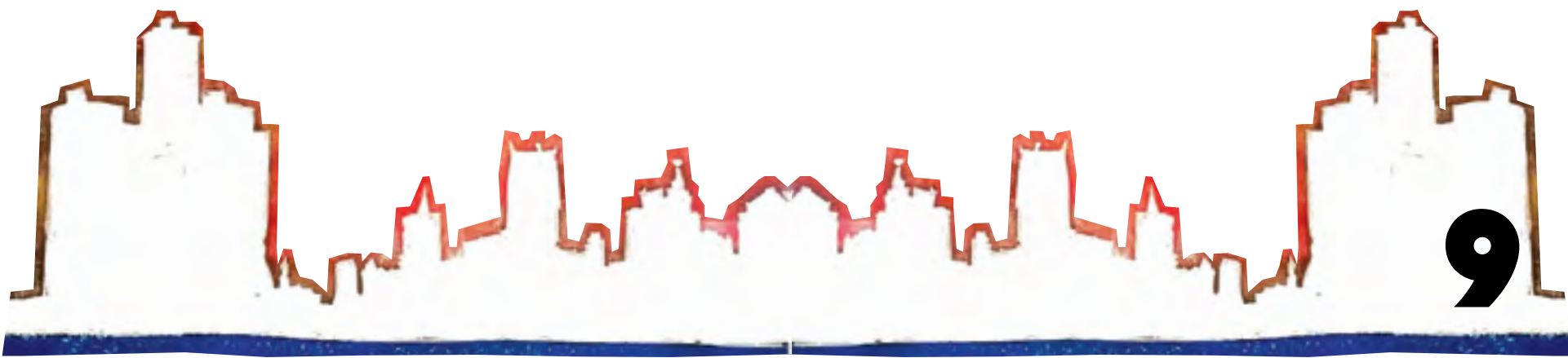
Overall, my Detroit is  
A place of pure hope.

**Barrott**  
**10th Grade**

Detroit is my city. You should know that I  
grew up in Detroit and my favorite place in  
Detroit is my church. My church, Love Day,  
is located on Polk Street. My Detroit may be  
in pain and have grey areas but through it  
all Detroit stays strong. I believe in Detroit  
because it's been standing its ground since  
day one. The people that live in Detroit have  
their differences, some of them destroy it,  
but some of them fight to keep it alive.

I love my Detroit, it's full of history, full of  
wisdom, and full of outstanding people who  
would do anything in their power to keep  
it safe from the people who are trying to  
destroy it. Detroit may have its times where  
it may break down, and people know it's full  
of poverty but deep down the Detroit society  
is one thing that keeps me going through  
life. I know it's my home, I know it's my  
job to keep it safe, so that's what I'm going  
to do, keep it safe, because Detroit is my  
home.

**Latoya**  
**9th Grade**



I am from the Motor City State,  
From graffiti on trains and buildings.

I'm from Clark and Patton Park,  
From seeing crime on the news,  
I am from watching another country just by going downtown.

I'm from bicycle mornings with a popsicle.  
From jammed freeways when everyone got out of work or school,  
I am from public schools here to private schools out of here.

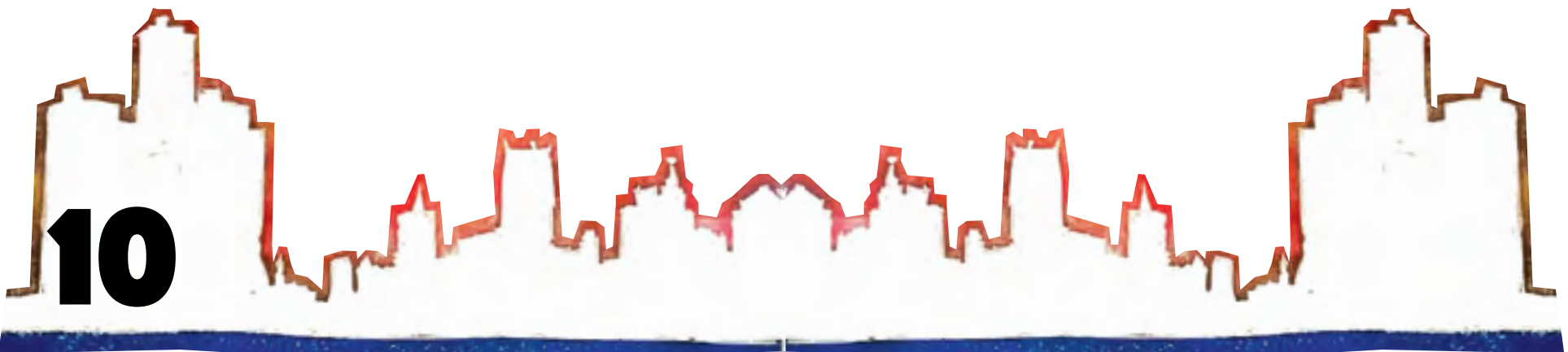
I'm from waking up at midnight hearing shots,  
From walking everywhere during daylight but not moonlight.

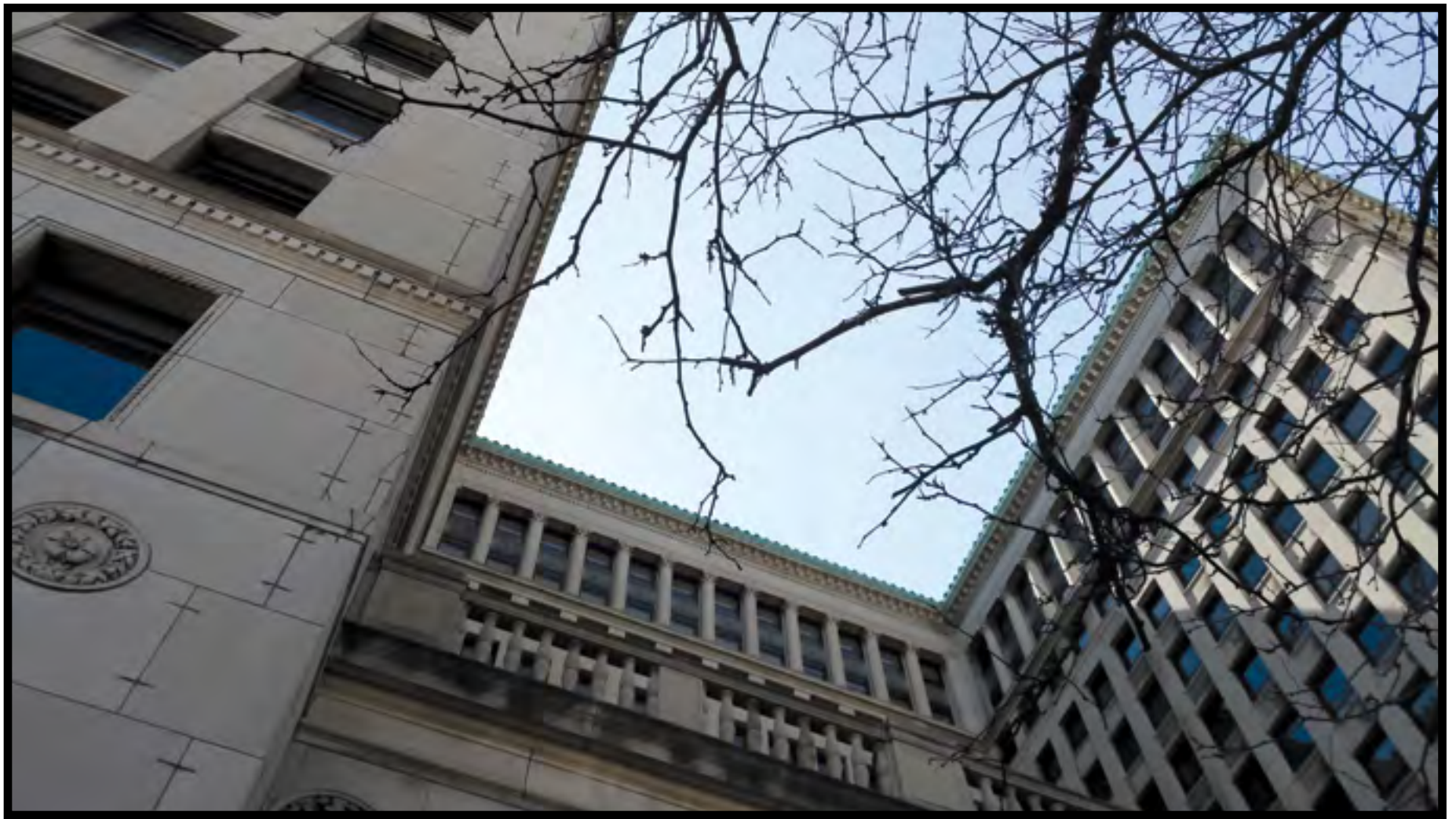
I'm from cold winters and hot summers,  
From two things connecting us,  
The Detroit River and the Ambassador Bridge.

I am from burgers to tortas,  
I am from tamales and birria or posole on any holiday or party.  
I am from traffic lights and sounds as late as four a.m.,  
I am from a beautiful heart of memories I will keep forever.

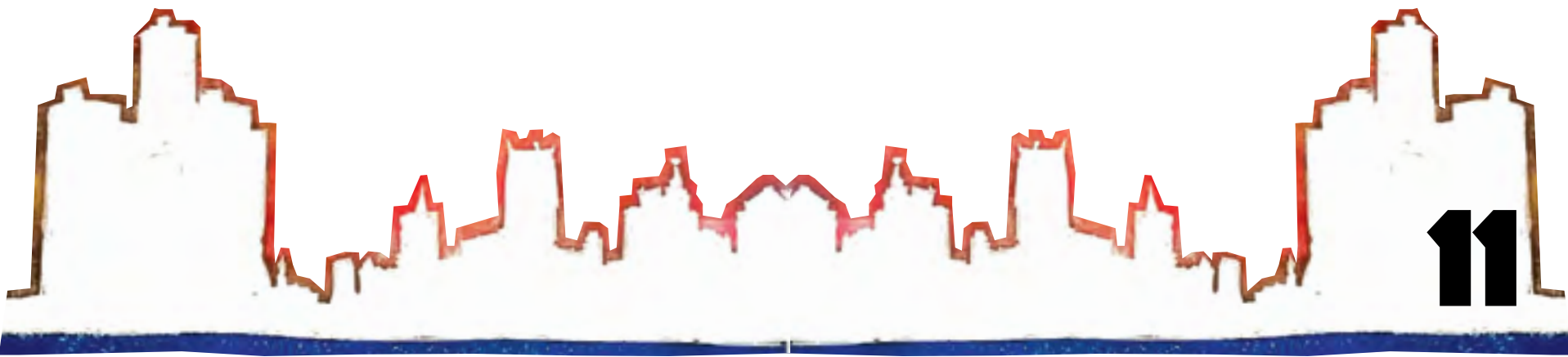
**Daisy**  
**7th Grade**

**10**





Cadillac Place  
JayShawn, 8th Grade





The Fisher Building  
Sandresse, 8th Grade

I am proud of Detroit for many reasons, but my biggest one is downtown Detroit. One thing that I love about downtown Detroit is the memories I have there. The clearest one I have is about three years ago. My family and I went to see the fireworks downtown.

Another thing I'm proud of is the art and graffiti we have. Even though I know graffiti is not encouraged it's still fun to look at and (if you can) read. The names are clever, and the colors and styles are very unique and interesting. It's one of the reasons I paint and I would not feel at home without seeing some graffiti.

I'm proud of Detroit because of its art and downtown.

**Daria**  
**6th Grade**

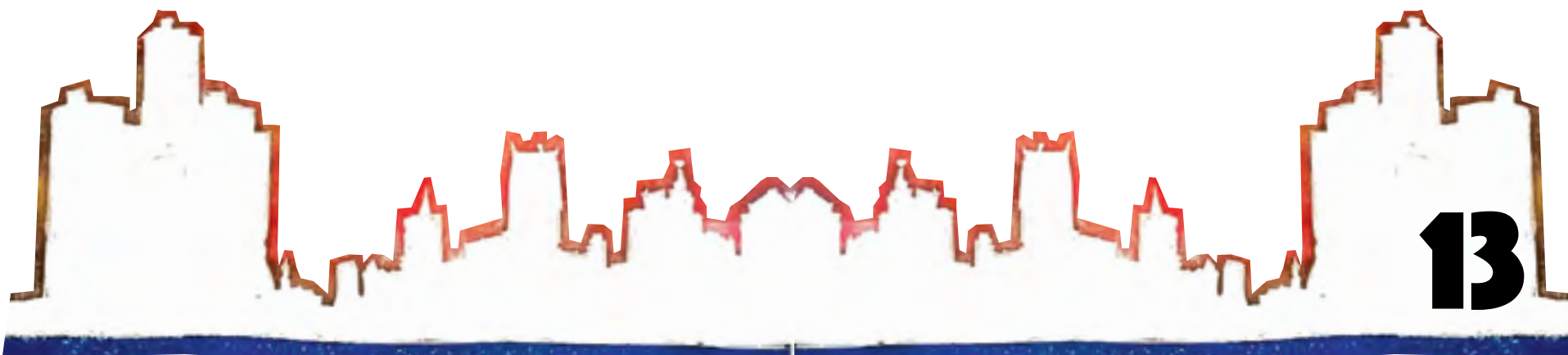
Detroit is my city. You should know all the good things about my city. Detroit was known for its plants and automobiles. People from every state and country wanted a whiff of all the good money.

We started expanding, and then came Motown. So not only did we have the nice cars and jobs that were available, we also had amazing music that to this day is still getting played everywhere.

Detroit made a way for us so we could look up to people. You should know we are a family and we support one another. Today artists look up to the people that sang in Detroit.

That's why Detroit is my city. You should know that it is a hard working city and people from all over come to see about it.

**Tamia**  
**12th Grade**



## Mama Detroit

I remember her. Right after a delivery from Hutzel Hospital, I grew and learned on her very streets. The smell of River Rouge no longer fazes me as I catch the Schaefer back to 8 Mile. Home. The most treasured sense she gave me.

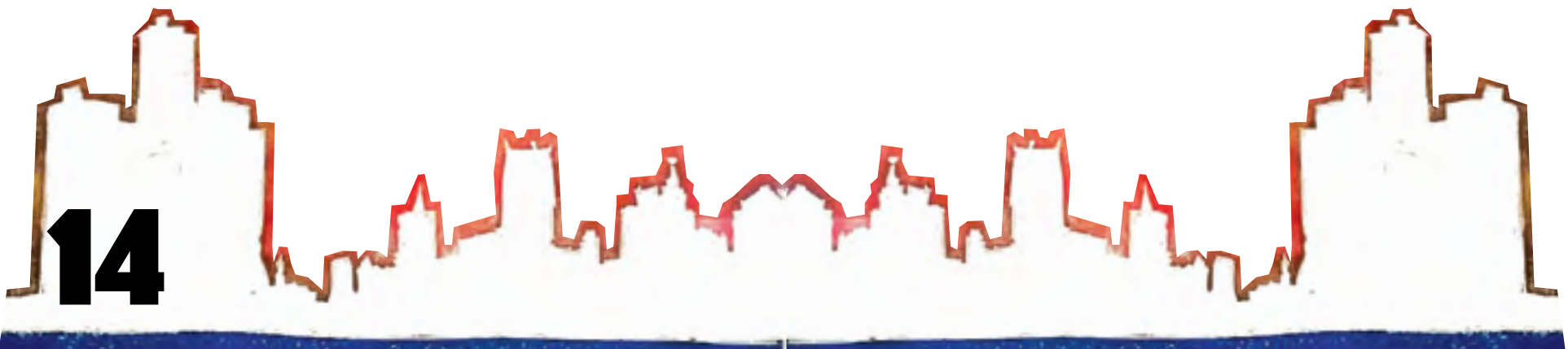
I decide to go and revisit the neighborhood in which she raised me. I walk past Butzel Elementary (now Marcus Garvey Academy) and remember the walks down Mack Avenue to Cadillac Boulevard. The flirts and hollers from the passenger side of tan Impalas angered me and my sisters. We were one of five houses on our block.

Detroit constantly showed me her worst but without reason. Homes were in the poorest condition with blight at every corner. In the summers I stayed home alone because no one my age lived there. When she noticed my sadness she sent men to come and throw flaming cocktails through the windows and destroy what I cherished, only to force me to go where she thought would be better.

I literally moved three blocks off of her so she could keep an eye on me in the small town of River Rouge. She watched as I turned my face up at the foul smell of dawn and dusk.

The smell of feces could stay in the air for hours on hot summer days. The train's horns and whistles acted as an alarm for the whole town since very few slept through them. I had to admit to her that it was a neat little town where all the human and community services rested in the middle of it, right next to city hall.

But Detroit didn't know that I picked up a lot from her. Every home with blight, the men in those cars, the middle school bullies, and the lonely blocks were embedded in my skin and showed in my actions. So I let River Rouge's diversity bathe me with a new look at her. Gratitude and prosperity. But when she saw how soon I lost love for her she made me come back. The death of my mother was her opportunity and she took it.





**Brewster Wheeler Rec Center (Joe Louis' Gym)—Steven Josephson**

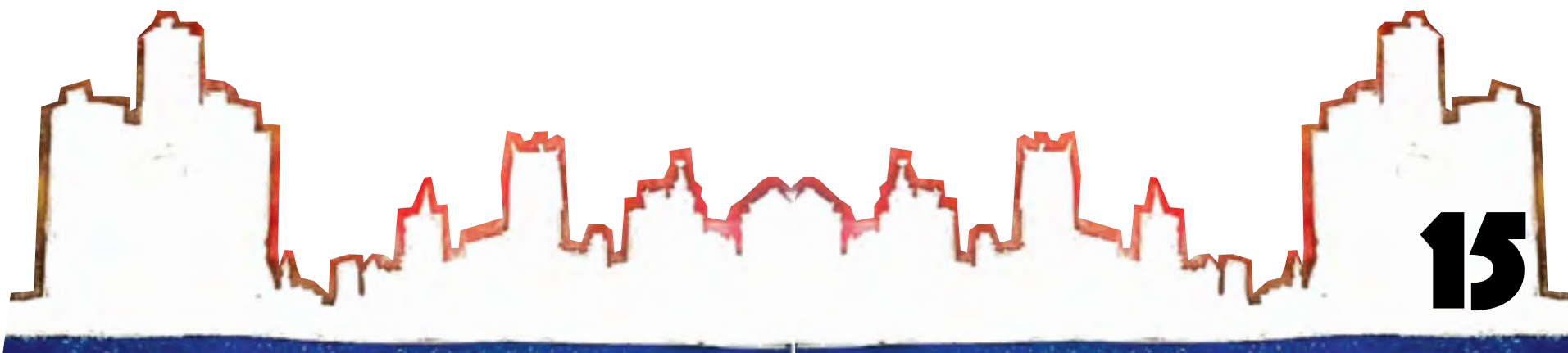
I slowly learned to love her again as I walked through Denby High School's doors.

Children aged 7-11 walked themselves, unfazed by blight, unfazed by broken bottles on cracked pavement that led into dark vegetated liquor store alleys. Only focused on fun and growing up. It was then when I learned to love her again. Her offspring usually left her and forgot about their mother. The one who nurtured. Taught and loved them.

She asked that I come back; She used every ounce of air in her lungs to shout my name so that it'd bounce off the GM Tower, to Cobo Hall, to River Rouge's Sewer Plant, just so I'd come back and help her.

I love her for calling me back.

**Alahzar  
10th Grade**



# PRESENT



Matthew  
7th Grade

**"At Voyageur Academy, our teachers work relentlessly to help every Scholar achieve and become aware of how they can play a role in ensuring our school, community and city are great places to teach, learn, and grow. Every day, I am blessed with the opportunity to make a positive impact on the city of Detroit. I help make our city great because I teach and I lead."**

**Aundrea Johnson  
Principal  
Voyageur Academy**

Detroit is my city.

You should know that like any other city  
Detroit has its deaths and its struggles. Yes  
there are some people who have to work  
harder than others.  
Yes there are some people who have to go  
a few days without a full meal.  
Yes there are even children who are putting  
themselves in bad situations.

But here in Detroit we never give up. We  
never have goals and abandon them. Here  
in Detroit we strive to succeed, to stand  
tall and show that we can achieve what  
everyone else can. We try our best and  
focus on what needs to be done to better  
ourselves.

What you hear about Detroit on the news is  
all the bad things never the good. What you  
read about Detroit is based on the opinion  
of someone who isn't from here, who wasn't  
born or raised here. By someone who hasn't  
even tried to see past all the damage done  
years ago.

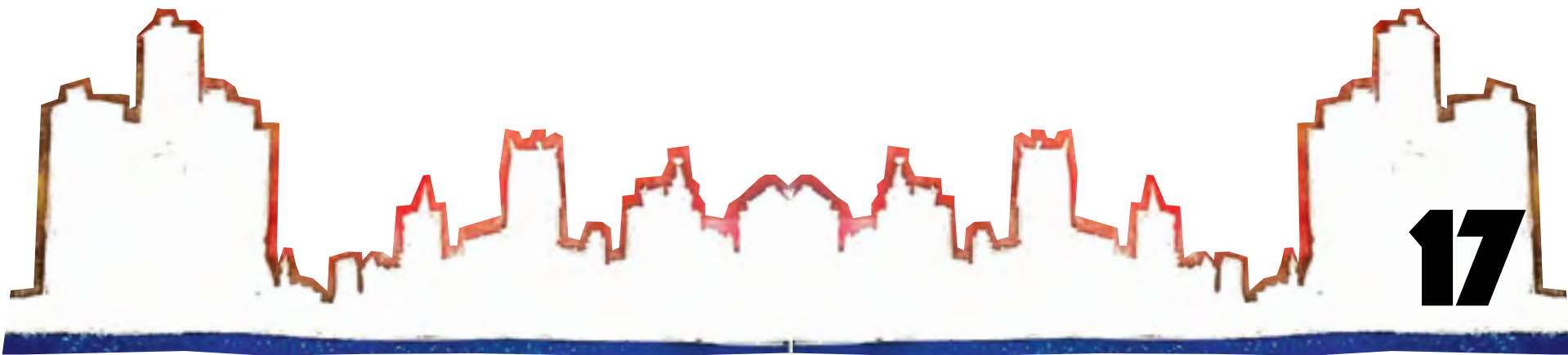
**“Detroit is a great place to meet a friend.  
They’ll be there for you until the end!”**

**Bresha  
6th Grade**

We try. We might not always succeed the  
first time but we keep trying. There are so  
many people who have succeeded and were  
born and raised here that are recognized  
Eminem, Diana Ross, Richard Kiel and even  
Elaine Stritch.

Detroit might not be high class, pretty, or  
even safe for everyone—but Detroit is where  
I stand and I’m proud to call it home.

**Raychel  
8th grade**

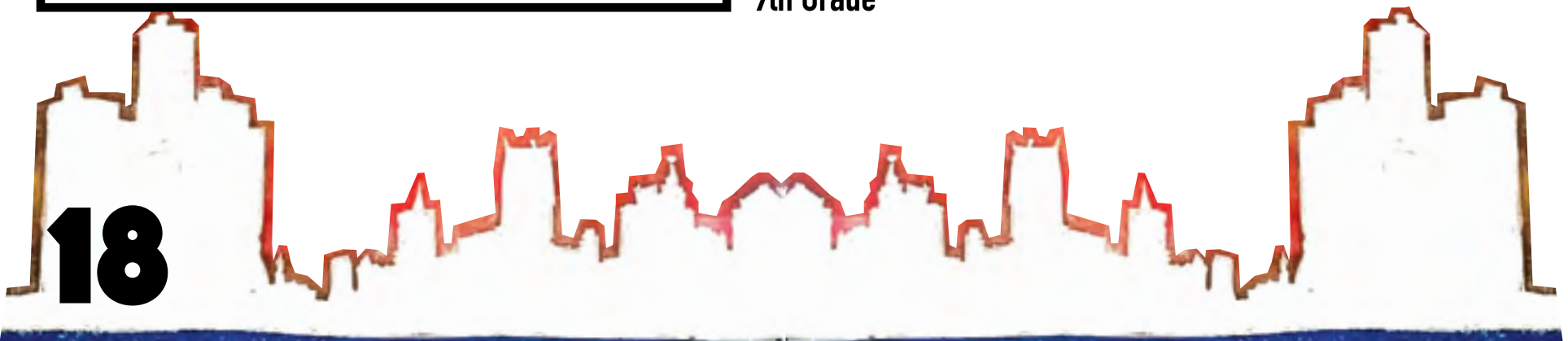




**“How I see Detroit is a place where people can start fresh or can start new. People judge my hometown because of its past. My Detroit may be crazy, but Detroit has many lessons ahead of it. This is how I see Detroit — it has many lessons to teach me.”**

**Yasmine  
8th grade**

**Jordan  
9th Grade**



**"I believe in Detroit because it is my soul and heart. If I lose that I will die.**

**I love Detroit like my family."**

**Raymond  
6th Grade**

Detroit is my city. You should know that Detroit is more than what the rumors are. Detroit is where music is more than beats, it is more lyrics. Detroit is beautiful in its own, unique way. You should know that we say "Detroit vs. Everybody", because people think they know the city, but they don't. You actually have to like the city to understand why we are the way we are. You should know that Detroiters work hard to keep their homes. We put extra work in even when it's not recognized. That's what makes us so hostile, but deep down we are individuals who are determined, motivated, and built with character. We are known for the techno music, General Motors, and the Motor City Casino, this shows that we do matter. We are everything you've heard and more!

My Detroit is strong through anything. My Detroit is full of outspoken people. My Detroit is filled with providers. My Detroit is special in its own way. You wouldn't understand unless you're from here. You would not think Detroit is made of anything if you looked from the outside, but my Detroit has potential to succeed again.

**Brandy  
12th grade**

**Shamira  
12th grade**

My Detroit is powerful, full of new and some used things. My Detroit is a beat-boxing, Harlem-shaking, freedom of growth city. From the mothers over hot stoves, to kids breaking water hydrants, Detroit is full of colors and new designs, made of passion and desire. Detroit isn't just manmade; it is all of the new growth of the country itself. We aren't just hood rat kids or disgraces to the world, but us Detroiters are a new generation, and have a new goal for the future. Yes, we rap, sing, argue, but sooner or later Detroit will become one of the greatest to visit. We are only getting better.

**Melissa**

**11th grade**

I am proud of Detroit because of the music. The jazz, soul, pop, and R&B. Music brings people together. We all love the sweet sound of music. I hear music in the car when I go home. Music is important because it calms us down. It makes us happy when we're sad. We love music!

**Alexus**

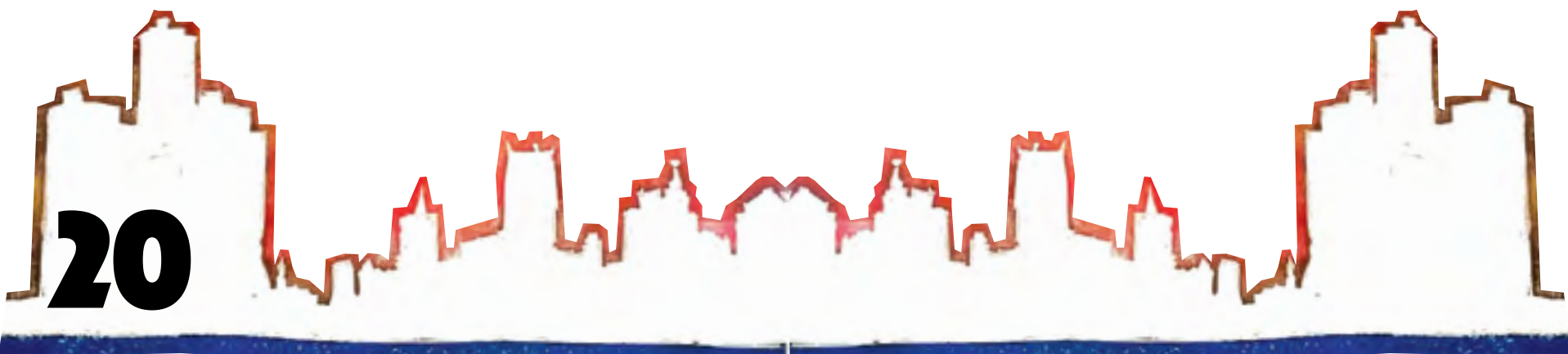
**4th grade**

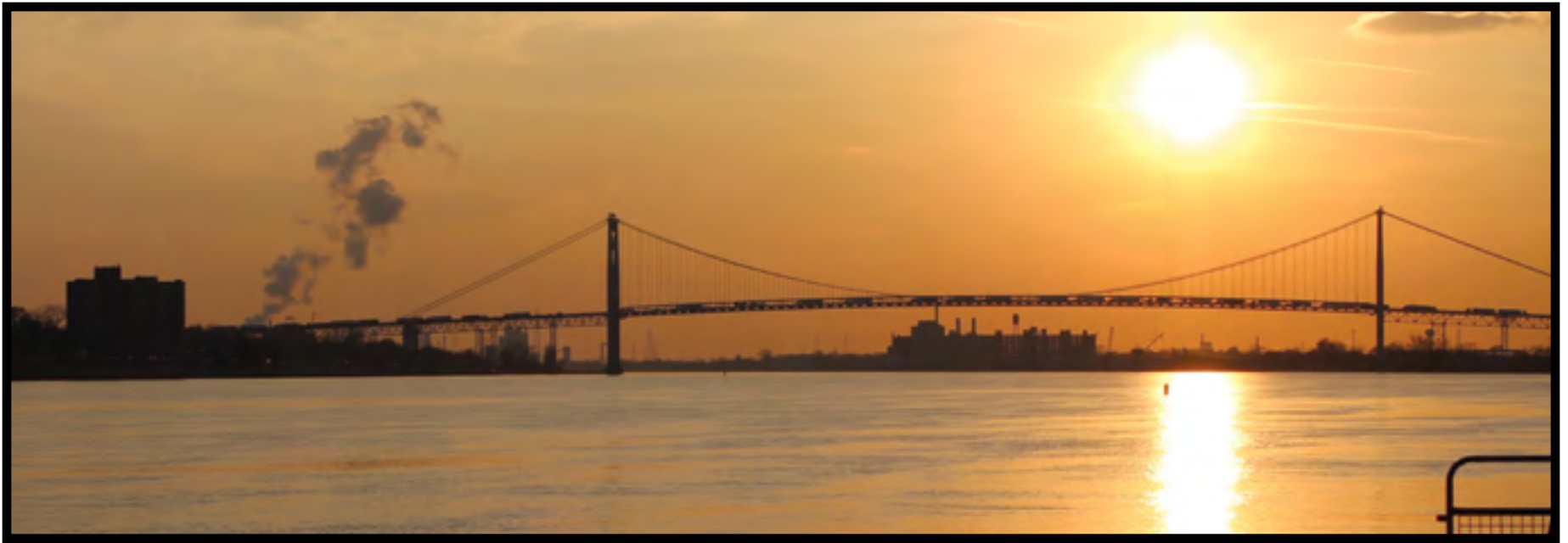
All of the children of Detroit  
should be proud  
With all the knowledge and pride  
brought around  
We the people go our separate ways  
Then come back to engage with happiness

**Mesha**

**6th grade**

**20**



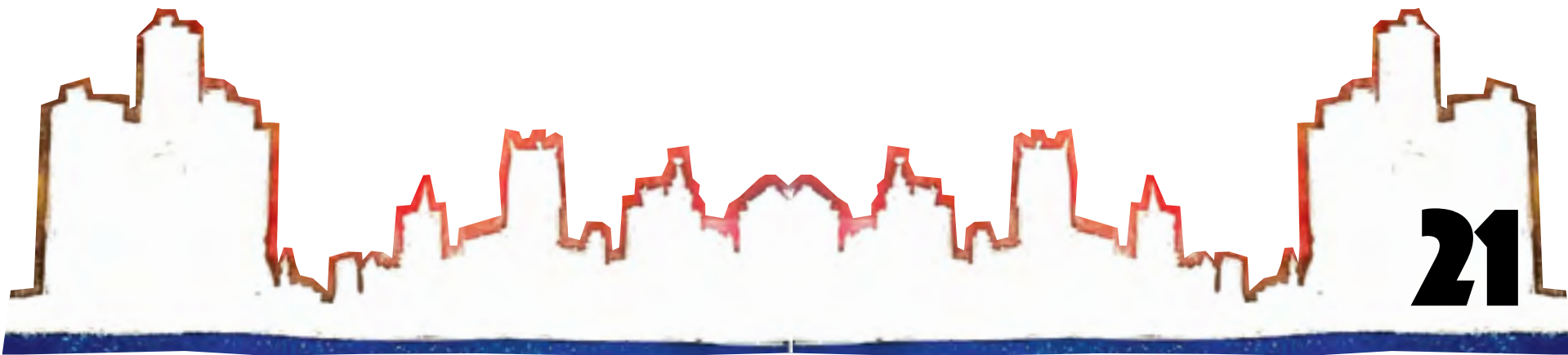


**Ambassador Bridge—Peter Grace**

I believe in Detroit because...

D stands for dynamic because that's what we're about  
E stands for everyday hard workers because we never pout  
T stands for try hard because we never give up  
R stands for rights because we always stand up  
O stands for outstanding because we show it every day  
I stands for intelligence because we show it every which way  
T stands for trustworthy because we really are

**Julian**  
**6th grade**



### **Detroit Soldiers**

I am proud of Detroit because people from other cities say we are like wild animals. We prove we are not wild animals because wild animals don't have good schools like Detroit does. Wild animals are not as smart as Detroit children. Wild animals are not as courageous as we are. We try our best, so we can get to college and get a good job when we grow up. At the end of the day, we are Detroit soldiers.

**Sheiany**

**4th grade**

I am proud of Detroit because people are talented and hardworking, and we never give up. Some of us are great athletes. We are beautiful! We don't put people down, we are happy for them. Detroit is a special community!

**Kenzel**

**2nd grade**

There is a beauty within Detroit that only most residents see, whether they grew up in Detroit or are just immigrants who moved to Detroit, they see beauty and culture in Detroit.

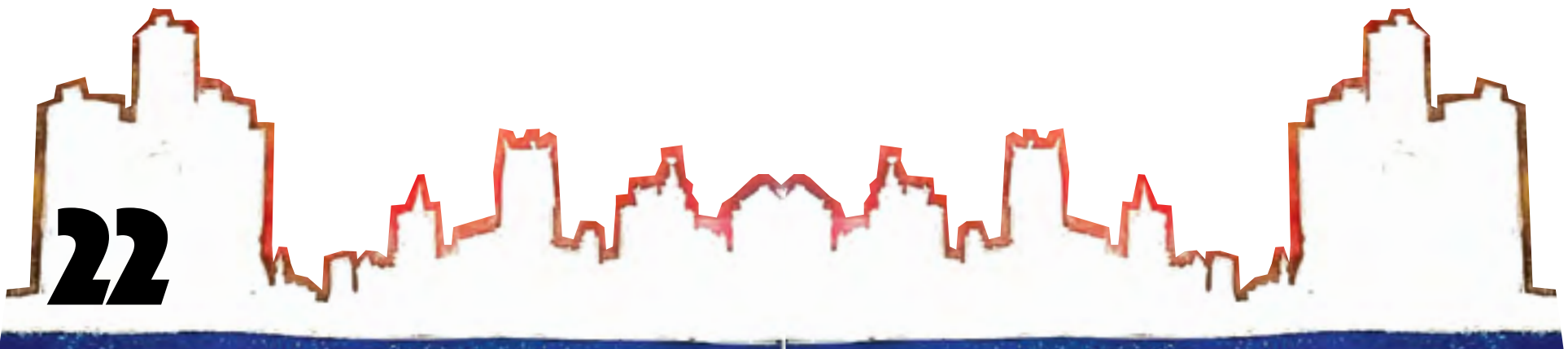
**Talayna**

**6th Grade**

Detroiters will always rise to any occasion when it comes to supporting their home teams. Sports help bring people together. When our home team plays, we all unite in cheering them on to victory. Sometimes when a city is in trouble, due to hard times and a bad economy, our sports teams help us stand together and forget about our problems, if even for a little while.

**Matthew**

**4th Grade**



Giamonni  
2nd Grade



**“If you really have a huge problem with Detroit, come do something great about it. That would be wonderful for the city.”**

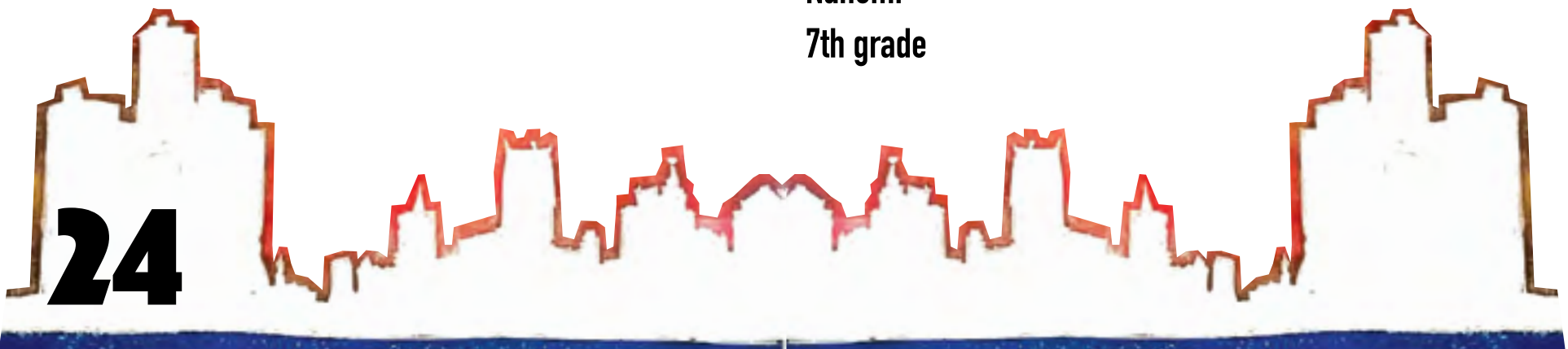
**Jackie**  
**8th Grade**

**“Where I’m From”**

I’m from music,  
playing through my headphones.  
From stacks of books,  
in my bedroom.  
I’m from the pink and yellow roses,  
planted in my front yard.  
From the old shed,  
my grandpa keeps his tools in.  
I’m from the colorful graffiti littering surfaces,  
nearly every place a person were to look.  
From the Little Cesar’s,  
down the street.  
I’m from making tamales,  
on Christmas.  
From eating carne apache,  
every birthday.

I’m from hearing abuelo and abuela say,  
“No dejes para mañana lo que puedes  
hacer hoy.”  
From hanging up posters,  
every time I get an AP magazine.  
I’m from walking to the corner,  
renting movies.  
I’m from having my cousins over,  
almost every Friday.  
From calling my aunt and uncle,  
once a week at night.  
I’m from the old photo albums,  
stacked at the back of my mother’s closet.  
From the baby clothes,  
kept in the basement.

**Nahomi**  
**7th grade**



My Detroit is real  
When I walk up the street  
People offer to help me  
That are different types of colors  
But still offer to help me  
We don't judge by the color of skin.

**Lakayla**  
**6th Grade**

My Detroit is real  
Other places look down on Detoit  
Because they don't know the real  
Truth about my city. They might  
Know the part truth, but they need  
To learn the full truth. Detroit isn't all  
Bad.

**Michael**  
**6th Grade**

My Detroit is cars and beautiful nights  
It isn't all violence with guns and fights  
Sometimes you gotta look at it in a  
different light

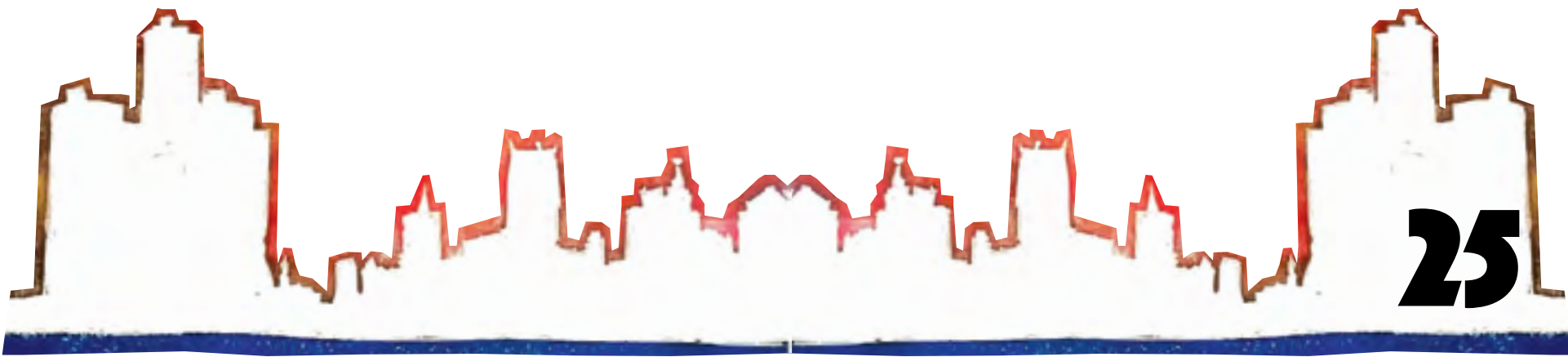
My Detroit raises naturally born innovators  
Some people need a motivator

My Detroit gives us the heart of a Lion  
Instincts and the work ethic of a Piston  
And Red Wings to soar over any competition  
My Detroit is known for greatness  
Fort Détroit risen out of wood and mud  
The Spirit of Detroit runs through our blood

My Detroit is my home  
My diamond in the rough  
Yeah, a lot of people here may be without a  
home alone on their own  
But, we get through it and that's what makes  
Detroiters tough

And that's My Detroit.

**Derand**  
**10th grade**





Eastern Market  
Kierra, 8th grade

Detroit is my city. You should know that not  
all of us here are who you think.

You should know that we have jobs and  
homes. You should know that we have  
wonderful families and exciting dreams. You  
should know that not all of us have a rough  
daily life involved with drugs and crime, but  
you should also know that some of us do.

Some of us do struggle economically and  
some of us do find ourselves in trouble at  
times, but we all strive for a change. That is  
how we all are connected.

You should know about the delicious Coney  
Islands scattered across Detroit. You should  
know about the delicious chili dogs or juicy  
hamburgers.

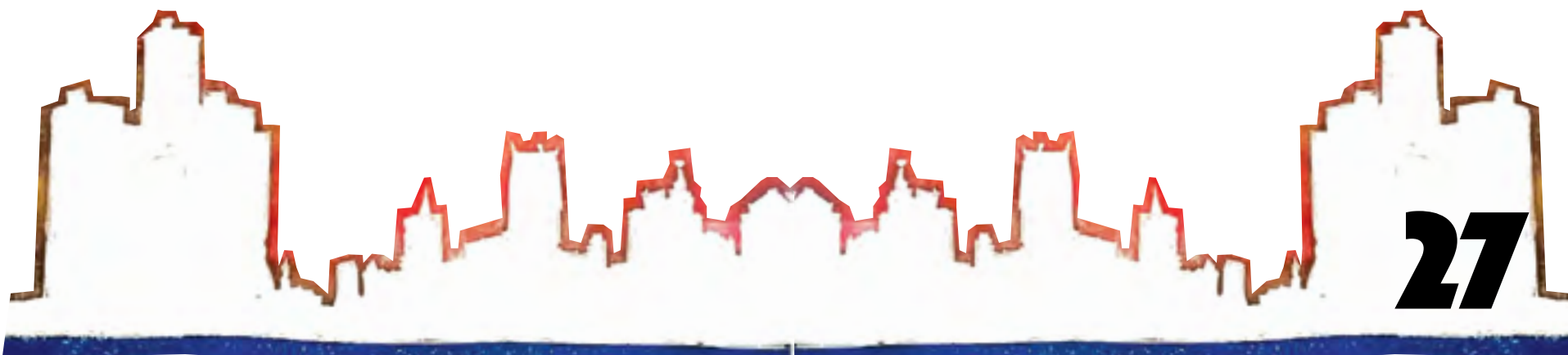
You should know about our beautiful  
cityscapes that light up the streets at night.  
You should know about the record- breaking  
Motown and the creative Detroit Institute of  
Arts.

You should know about the hard work and  
persistence that have been embedded into  
our neighborhoods because of our history.  
You should know about the community and  
our capabilities.

You should know about the proud residents  
who can do anything we put our minds to  
and our city can only fuel that. You should  
know about the uprising and the sweat that  
flows through our veins that pushes us to go  
each day.

You should know, you should see, you  
should experience, and you should feel the  
true Detroit awakening occurring everyday—  
accomplishing history all over again.

Deana  
12th grade



My Detroit is my priority, my blood, my sweat, and my sleepless nights. My Detroit is my savior because it gave me a place to stay before I was even born.

My Detroit reflects my flaws, my risks, my choices, and my capabilities. My Detroit includes diverse religions and ethnicities, community organizing and networking, professionalism and accountability, reputation and redemption, and nevertheless, bankruptcy and rebirth.

My Detroit includes my neighbors who are Romanians, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Africans, and so many more. My Detroit is represented by Cobo Hall, General Motors, the Michigan Bridge, the Detroit River Walk, the People Mover, Fox Theatre, Wayne State University, Mayor Mike Duggan, and an ongoing flow of organizations aimed at preserving the Detroit spirit by bringing Detroit ethnic neighborhoods together through service, activism, and leadership.

My Detroit represents me through its consistency at battling slurs, comments,

and misconceptions about its economy, neighborhoods, safety, representation, education, school-to-prison pipeline, and its culture.

My Detroit has endured so much betrayal and isolation from the rest of America, and the world, that it deserves nothing more than a chance to bring itself and its reputation back up from the ground. My Detroit is selfless, determined, reckless, focused, and fast-paced when it comes to replenishing the city and reviving the people, culture, and mainly, its social status.

My Detroit backs its diverse residents up whenever they are bombarded with discrimination and give them a place that they can depend upon. My Detroit is safe, publicly caring, respectful, and dependable. My Detroit had its issues of bankruptcy, disloyalty, and betrayal from those who did not believe in our capabilities. My Detroit describes me perfectly. My Detroit is my home. My Detroit is me!

**America**

**12th Grade**



We are very lucky because not a lot of places are like this. But if I could change one thing about Detroit it would be racism. I don't get why we get treated like this, over a really, really dumb thing such as color. Everywhere we go we get messed with, like the Trayvon Martin situation. We don't get a fair share.

**Makalynn**  
**6th Grade**

Detroit, Detroit, Detroit...all about Detroit.

Detroit is a place where families are struggling but we let our struggle show through our anger. Detroit is not a bad place to be. People are just lost. But it takes schools to teach our youth the right path to go so we can bring Detroit together in our future. Detroit schools need improvement and we are protesting to get our schools together. Detroit needs much work, but it takes Detroiters to improve the city.

**Henry**  
**10th Grade**

**"Detroit is my life, and I know no other life  
than this one."**

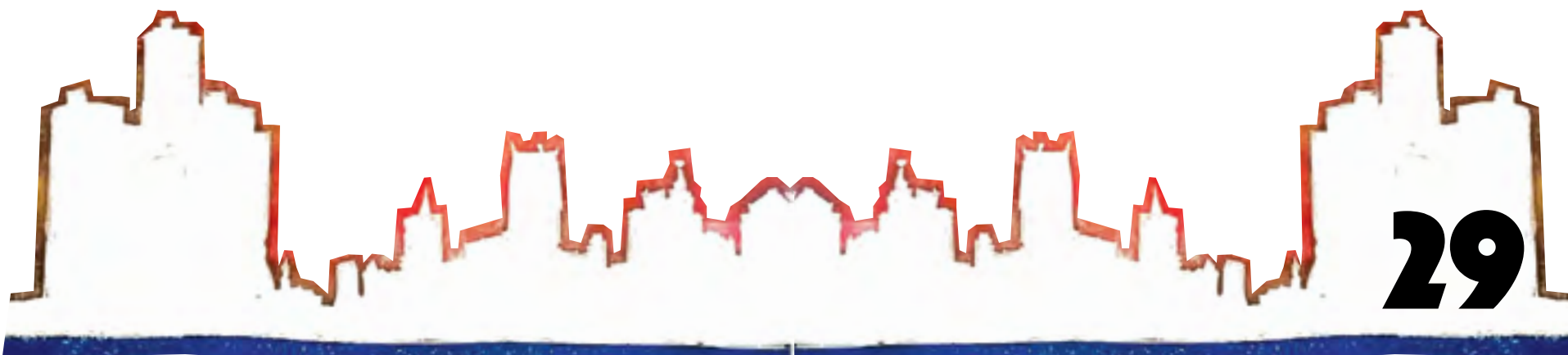
**Lachelle**  
**10th Grade**

Detroit is my city. You should know that everything isn't about violence and all bad things happening. I believe that if you stay out of the wrong crowd and hang around positive people. You should know that Detroit isn't what it seems.

**Brittiana**  
**12th Grade**

If I could change one thing about Detroit it would be to stop crime. Kids are getting sad because their parents are dying. This happened to my family. I try to take care of my little brother now.

**Giamonni**  
**2nd Grade**





**Downtown Detroit—Steven Josephson**

I wish all Detroit students will graduate from college. Only one out of every ten students of color from low-income communities will graduate from college, while eight out of ten of their wealthier counterparts will graduate. I want to change the super hard admission tests and stop letting in students with more money who may give less effort than students in Detroit.

One thing I want to change in Detroit is the super hard tests that we need to take to get into college. I think it's not fair for all students to take the same test. One reason I think it's not fair is because sometimes these tests have things you might not have learned before or that you might have forgotten. For example, I haven't learned a lot about science at school, but we are still tested on science. Also, sometimes these tests have things that I cannot relate to on them. We need to get rid of these tests!

**Alondra**  
**4th Grade**

**"I hear that the media says bad stuff about Detroit, but really you'll just have to see yourself because it takes strong women and men to be here. Detroit is not a bad city, we're just tougher people. At the end of the day this is my city and I'm staying for a ride."**

**Immanuel  
11th Grade**

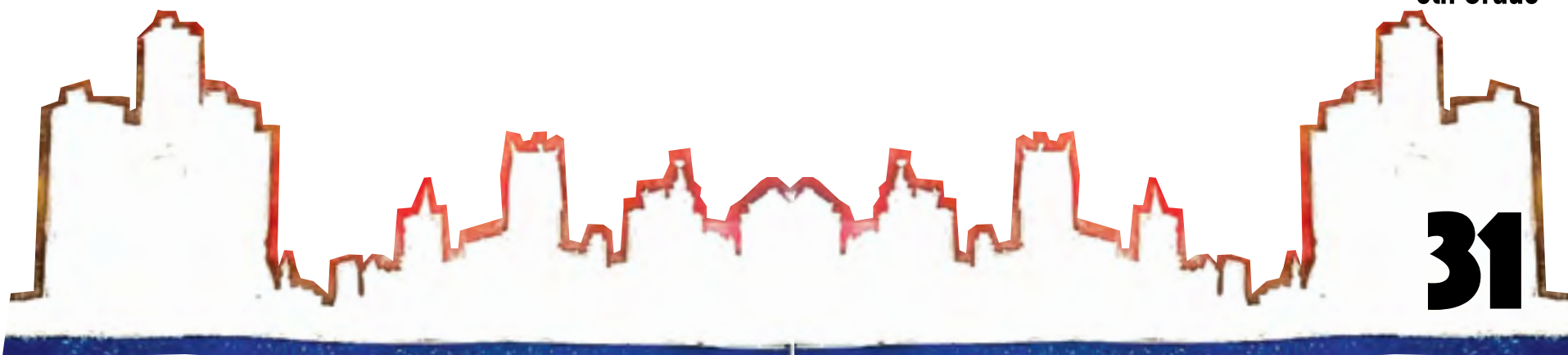
My Detroit is a place where obese people walk around and McDonalds rules the streets. It's a place with people of low IQs and kids dealing drugs. At least...that's the way we're seen. We're seen as people who have to walk around with guns to survive.

The Walking Dead basically. Everyone is a mindless zombie and are only out for themselves...but think about it. I see our education in Detroit as a zombie system. So let's look at the bright side. Yes, zombies are out for themselves, but what are they really out for?

Brains. Lots and lots of them. Everyone wants brains. Not to eat, but to devour knowledge. The teachers are seen as people who don't give a crap and only want a paycheck.

But you wanna know what I see? I see the teachers are, in a way, zombies too. How? They turn other people into brain wanting zombies. My teachers are the reason I'm here in 8th grade. Education is important in my Detroit. If you don't think so, then just think of it like a zombie movie. Except without the blood, gore, bones, chainsaw, etc.

**Salvador  
8th Grade**





Street art near Midtown

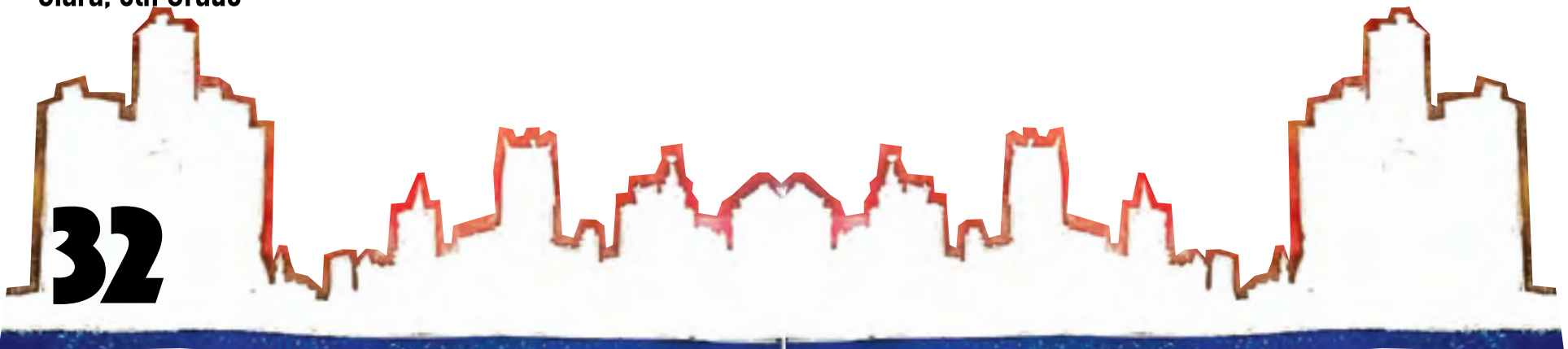
Ciara, 8th Grade

Detroit is my city and I'm grateful to be a part of it. I love this city a lot. I could never ask to be from somewhere different. In this city, most of the people think about the bad and not the good. Even though we have one of the highest murder rates in the country, this city is a beautiful place to be.

I am proud of my city because this is where I learned the most about life and the real world. Detroit has taught me to be strong and to never let someone or something hold you back from succeeding. Also, it has taught me to be humble because you can be good one day and be down the next. This is why I love this city and why this will always be a part of me.

**Kyle**

**12th Grade**



# **“Without Detroit, my soul would not be as strong.”**

**Brenda**  
**12th Grade**

My Detroit is beauty.  
From murals to modern art.  
My Detroit is strength.  
From Joe Louis to Thomas Hearn.  
My Detroit is culture!  
From Hispanic to Muslim.  
My Detroit is food.  
From El Rancho to Mi Pueblo.  
My Detroit is fun and games!  
From the warm summer bike rides.  
To cold winter snowball fights.  
My Detroit is home.  
From Vernor all the way to Whittaker.  
And we may seem cold  
And rugged and old.  
But when push comes to shove, I know  
Detroit has my back.  
Because my Detroit is family.

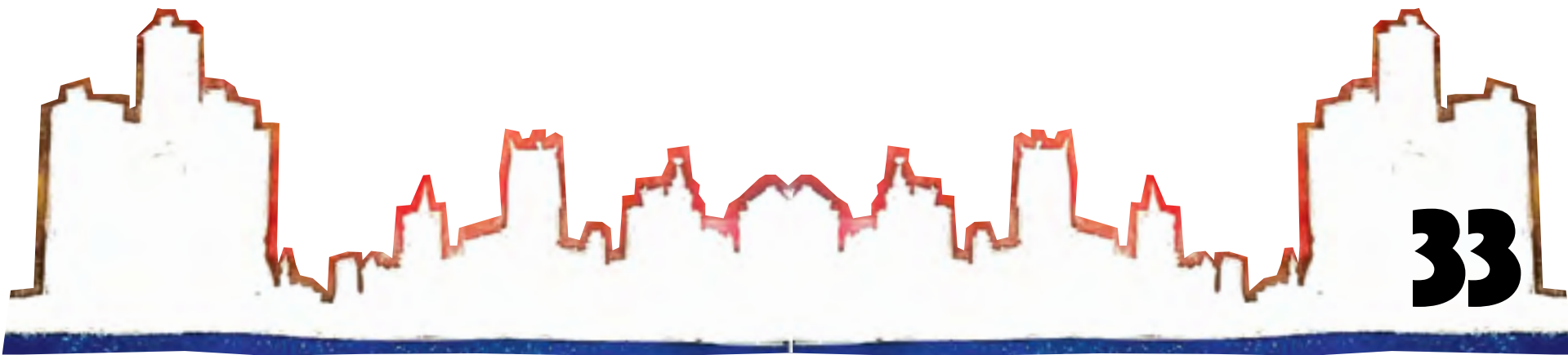
**Veronica**  
**8th Grade**

If I could change one thing about Detroit, I  
would make the Lions a better team. Also,  
I would fix up the streets and roads. I am  
proud of Detroit for the people giving clean  
or good water bottles to the other people  
who need it most.

I'm also proud of the Lions for not giving up  
and keep on playing. And I'm also proud of  
Detroit for trying to clean up the city and  
recycle, most of all the plastic bottles, paper  
wrappers and throwing away trash the right  
way.

Detroit is my city because we never give up.  
And Detroit is the best city I think there is.

**Jasiah**  
**6th Grade**



**"I am from the city, that everybody looks past. From walking on the riverfront, to cruising in Corktown. To going down to the Dream Cruise, to seeing those engines roar. From seeing all the beautiful artists, displaying their colorful artwork. Being known as the Motor City."**

**Mariana**

**7th Grade**

I believe in Detroit because it is where I was born and raised. I would like to prove that young black kids can succeed in life and have full education with a diploma and a degree. I want to prove that not every African American sells drugs and smokes and drinks alcohol. I'm glad I'm not one of the kids that got shot or a kid beat to death for being black. I'm glad I don't get pulled over for being black. I'm glad I don't get arrested on sight because the police underestimates black people and think we're stealing, doing drugs or some type of violence.

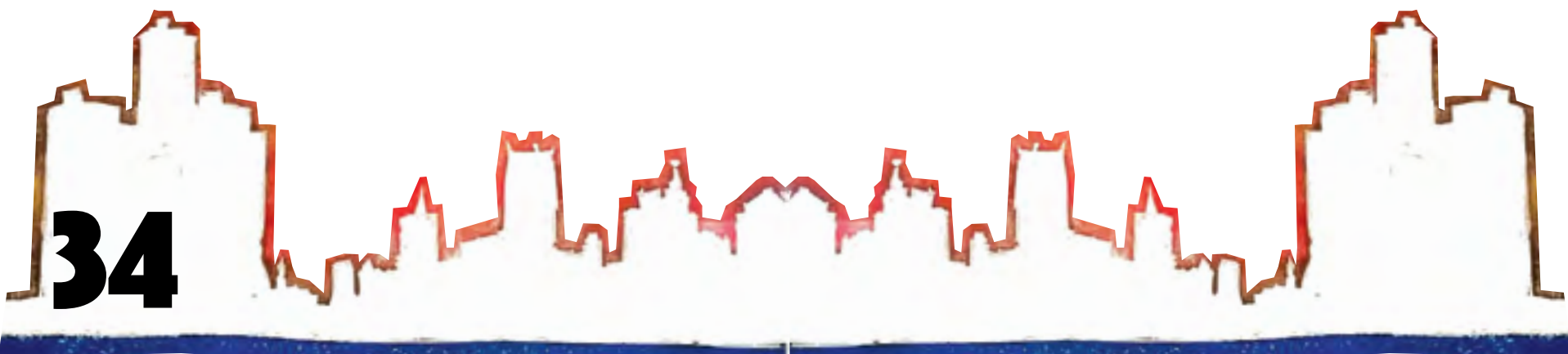
If I could change one thing about Detroit, it would be to stop the crime. People rob, and people sell drugs. People get shot and people die. If I saw a crime I would call the police. Then the police will take the person to jail. If there was no crime, then there would just be love. Detroit would be a happier place.

**Don'ta**

**2nd Grade**

**Darrell**

**7th Grade**

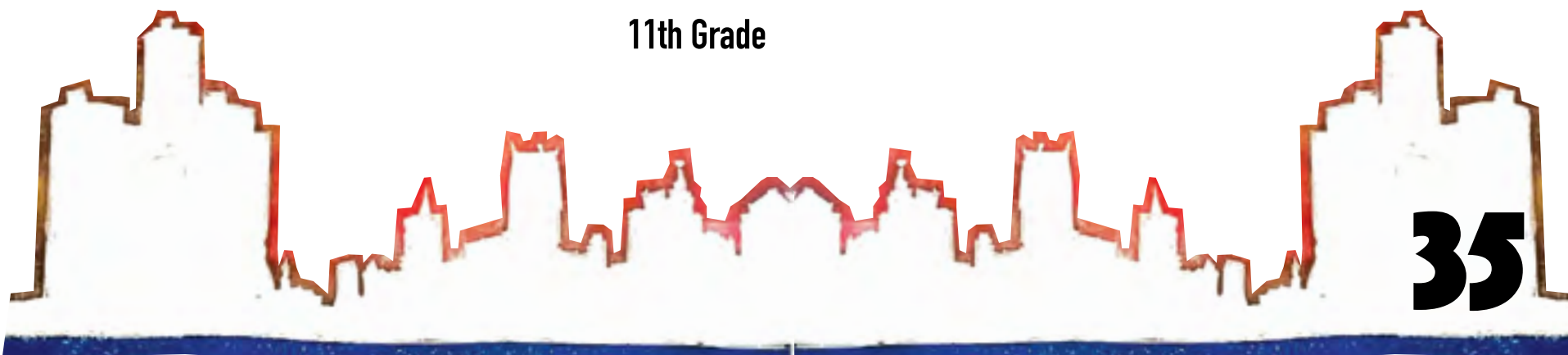


\*Gasp\* "You live in Detroit?!"  
"I'm scared to be in Detroit. My car might  
get stolen."  
"How do you survive in Detroit? There's so  
much crime."  
Whoever people think of Detroit they think of  
the fight.  
They never consider the things we're doing  
right.  
We've got Eminem and Big Sean but that's  
not even the highlight.  
Look at the skyline what a beautiful sight.  
Ice skating, auto show, and the Riverwalk,  
Everyone wants to be here  
Now you said you wanted to go to some  
suburb out where?  
We give you space to create  
This is a place that's never out of date  
When will people realize we're the best? I  
can't wait.  
It's a resurgence—Detroit's coming back.  
We need some work but don't worry bout  
that.  
What matters is Detroit is the place to be.  
Detroit forever... I'll never leave!

**Christian**  
**11th Grade**

Detroit is my city  
It's powerful  
And blessed  
Me and my people  
Will no longer take this  
Stress  
In debt or not  
We are still fighting  
For our success  
While many others are  
In the process  
Of becoming  
The  
Best

**Heaven**  
**8th Grade**



## Culture of My Detroit

My Detroit is the home of Motor City

My Detroit has the best and beautiful cars  
My Detroit has pretty murals all over Eastern  
Market  
My Detroit has color and brightness all over  
My Detroit has gorgeous blue water and  
sand in Belle Isle

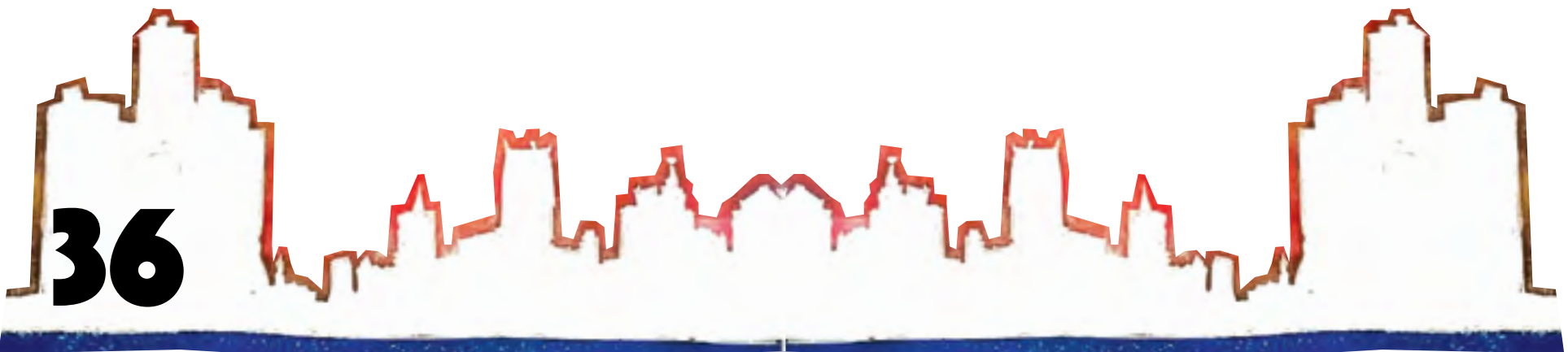
My Detroit has wonderful activities and  
Christmas in town  
My Detroit has a lot of places and  
restaurants you can go with your family in  
downtown  
My Detroit has a famous singer that is from  
Detroit—his name is Big Sean

My Detroit also is very full of crime  
My Detroit is full of people that rob  
My Detroit has littering all around  
My Detroit has burned houses all around  
My Detroit has homeless people in the  
streets

In my Detroit I would want to see no littering  
In my Detroit I would want to see no burned  
houses  
In my Detroit I would want to see no  
robbery  
In my Detroit I would want to see no  
homeless people in the streets

But overall I'm proud of my Detroit

**Perla**  
**8th Grade**





**Belle Isle—Steven Josephson**

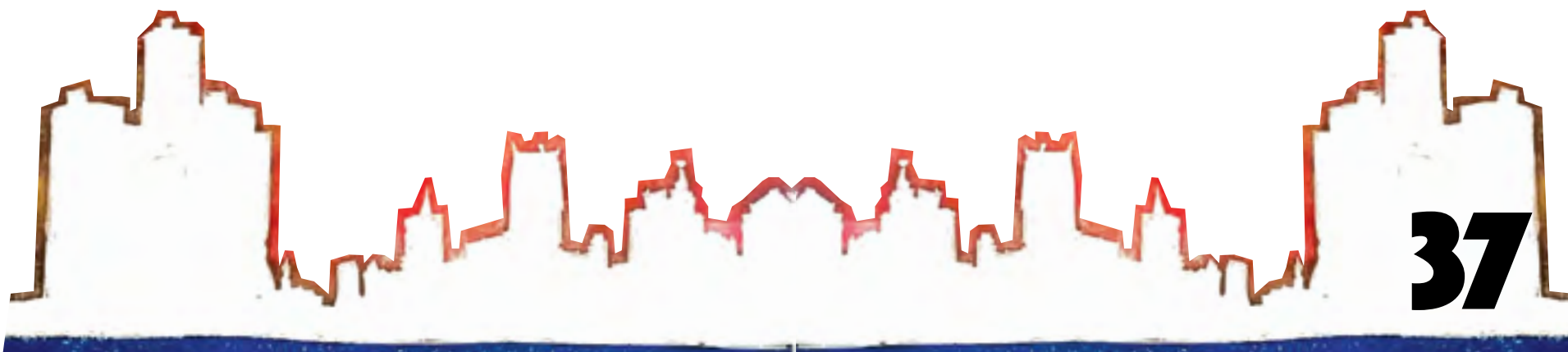
Detroit is my city. You should know we are strong, powerful and innovative. We aren't just our crime we are greater. Detroit is the Motor City. Detroit is not murder or robbery.

We are love and hate. In our city we design, create and achieve. The wrongs do not define us, instead our rights shine. We should not overlook the abandoned, be we should fix them.

We aren't just Downtown Detroit, there is the good, bad and the ugly. Enjoy Detroit, enjoy our theater, our parks, our riverwalk, GM building, Cadillac building, our new center and our art. But don't forget we can still make our forgotten surroundings great again.

This is my Detroit.

**Jazmin  
9th Grade**



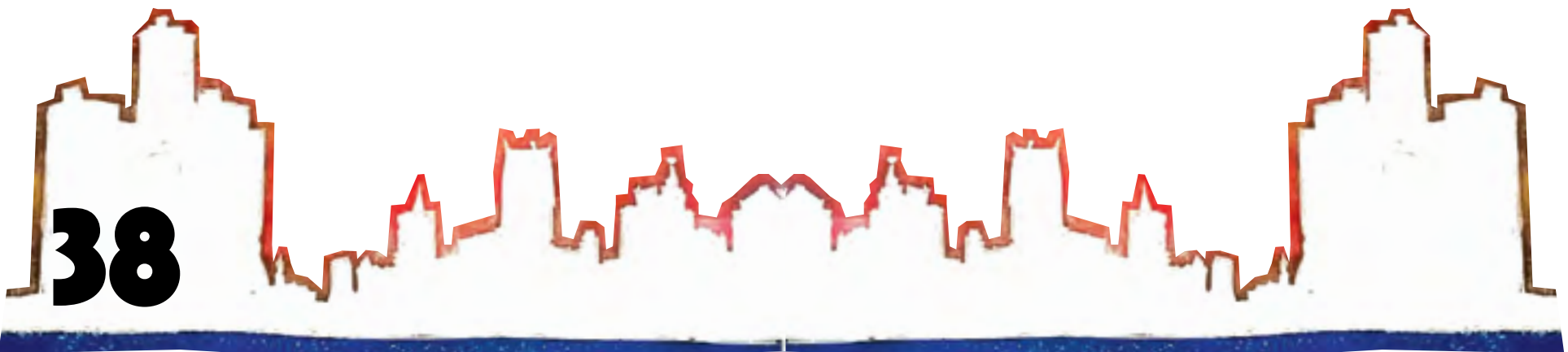
# FUTURE

**"Detroit, the city of my birth, is one of the great cities in the world. We have the architecture that rivals New York and Paris, the art of Diego Rivera and Mary Chase Stratton, the natural beauty of Belle Isle and the Riverwalk, and a history going back over 300 years that includes the Battle of Bloody Run and MLK's March down Woodward Avenue. Everyone that visits the city talks about how great, friendly and kind the people are in Detroit. Like a phoenix rising from the ashes, the city continually gets better and better."**

**Charles Todd**

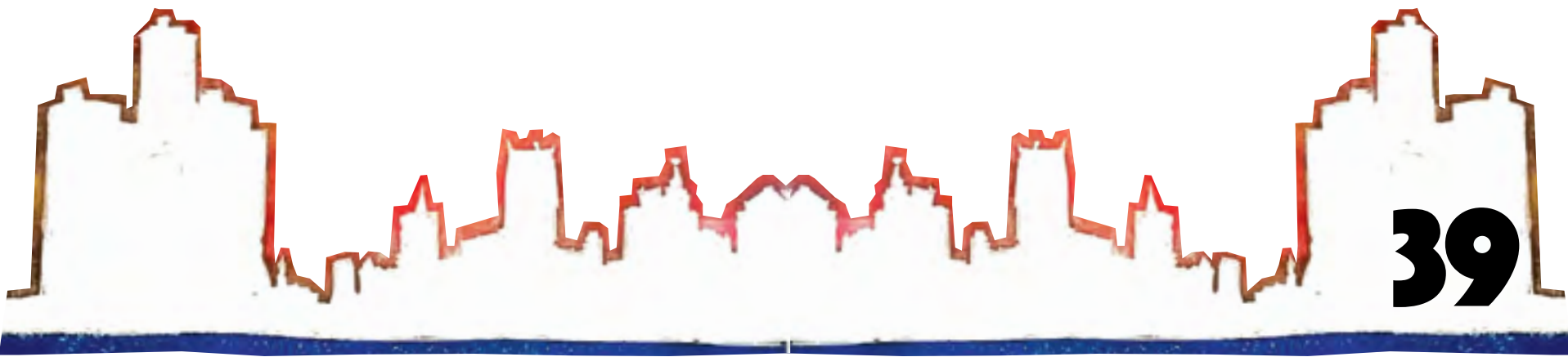
**Principal**

**Benjamin Carson High School of Science and Medicine**





Erica  
9th Grade

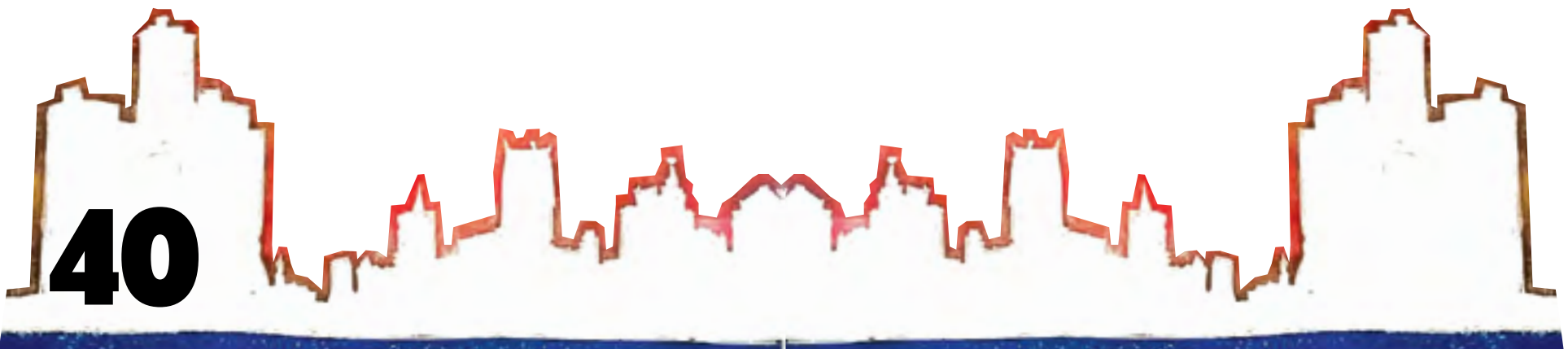




Delonté  
10th Grade

**"I believe in Detroit because Detroit will rise out of the hell of crisis and ascend into the heavens of greatness. My Detroit is as strong as a thousand waves of a thousand typhoons. We take care of each other when it comes to family. No matter what, we will stay strong."**

**Gregorio  
8th Grade**



**“This city has future doctors and lawyers, but yet we are not noticed. We need to be noticed.  
Instead of bringing us down, lift us up!”**

**Mya  
8th Grade**

My Detroit is strong, powerful, helpful and of  
course loving.

My Detroit is strong. The people are safe.  
They stick together to be strong. With love,  
they are strong as a brick wall. We also  
work together to be a strong community in  
unity.

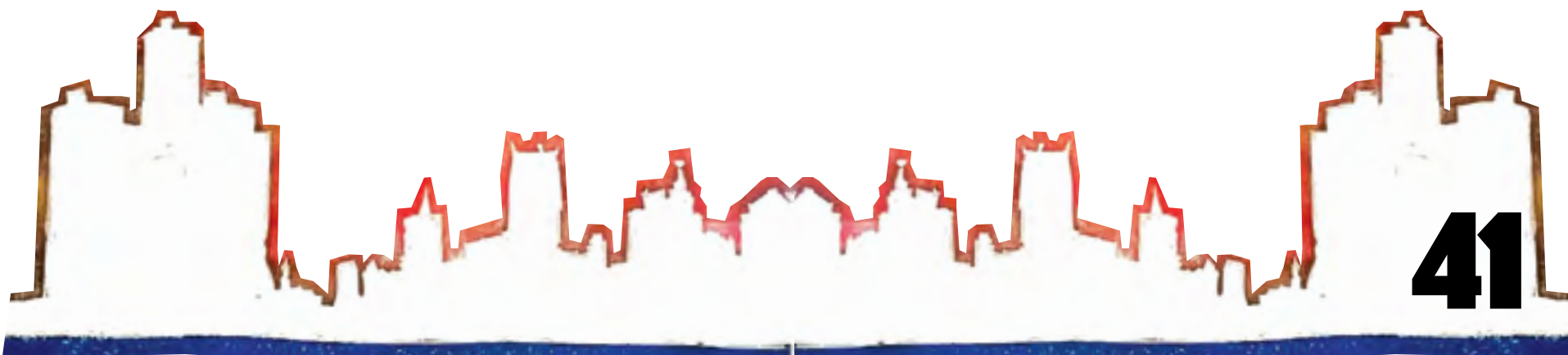
My Detroit is powerful. They work together  
to do, build or make stuff. Together we  
are one. And if we are one, we're powerful.  
And if we're powerful, we can do or achieve  
anything.

My Detroit is helpful. They give to people  
in need. When someone is in need of help,  
people sometimes help by calling 911. And  
it's called the 1st responders. That's how my  
Detroit is helpful.

Finally, my Detroit is loving. My Detroit is  
always loving. They're loving because they  
are helpful. By helping that means they love  
and care for us. They care for and love  
everyone that is in Detroit.

This is my Detroit.

**Isaiah  
6th Grade**



My Detroit is courageous and strong. Despite the tribulations our city and its citizens face, I'm still determined to see it make a full recovery. With unity, dedication, and hard work, there is absolutely nothing we can't accomplish.

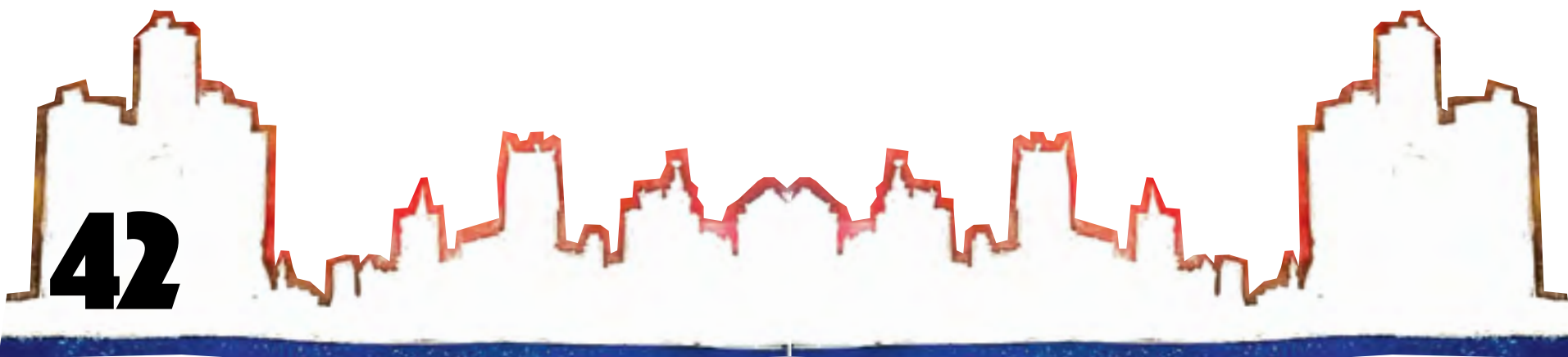
To begin, I'd like to kill off the overused clichés and opinions that individuals hold who do not reside in Detroit. Detroit isn't the stereotypical crime-filled, dilapidated, low-income city that everyone across the world is afraid of. When talking down upon the city, they should also understand that Detroit was once a fast-paced city that had an abundance of businesses coming in and being exported. My city will get back to that point as long as the community unites and the city officials work with the community.

While spectators continue to talk, Detroit continues to attempt to rebuild itself. Simultaneously, the neighborhood continues to become safer, crime is being eliminated, surrounding cities are coming together, and jobs are resurfacing. Though, on the world news, you won't see too many positive things

about Detroit. Due to the neglect the city faces, there aren't too many positive things to say when everything is happening at once. Sadly, good things don't make headlines nor do they attract an audience. When people are talking and nothing is being spread that's encouraging or supportive, it tends to break us down and make others assume Detroit is a 'lost' city.

Nevertheless, I have hope for us. I'm not sure as to when our justice as a city will come, but someday it will. Until then, we can't give up on Detroit or ourselves. A lot of things aren't in our hands, but what we can control, we should try to take into our power. We have to make our own opportunities instead of asking for hand-outs. What other states don't seem to realize is that you can't judge a book by its cover. You can't speak on Detroit if you've never lived or been involved with us. Detroit is going to redeem itself, no matter what.

**Destiny**  
**12th Grade**





**Street art neat Mount Elliot Street—Steven Josephson**

Detroit is my city. You should know that Detroit is the most caring city in the world.

My Detroit is special. Detroit fights for peoples' needs. I believe in Detroit because

Detroit cares about people. Detroit gives you something back. Detroit is what brings everyone together. Detroit stands up when people are falling back. Detroit is a place where everyone is equal.

**Shirell  
7th Grade**

“My Detroit is powerful and strong. When we are down, we get back up. We are brave and we have a lot of intelligence. We are a wonderful place. We can succeed when we work hard. Detroit is powerful and a strong place. I am proud to call it my home.”

**Jasmine  
7th Grade**



**“My dad always told me, ‘If you can make it here, you can make it anywhere.’”**

**Trinity**

**8th Grade**

Detroit was a powerful city  
That went bankrupt  
Now the people are working together  
To bring it back up  
Other cities are trying to knock us down  
But we are fighting to keep our ground  
Detroit is facing hardships  
Educated blacks are struggling  
For their rights  
While Detroit struggles  
Through blights  
But I believe Detroiters can make it  
We just have to keep working hard  
And dreaming  
But where do I start?  
Cause Detroit is my city  
And it has my heart

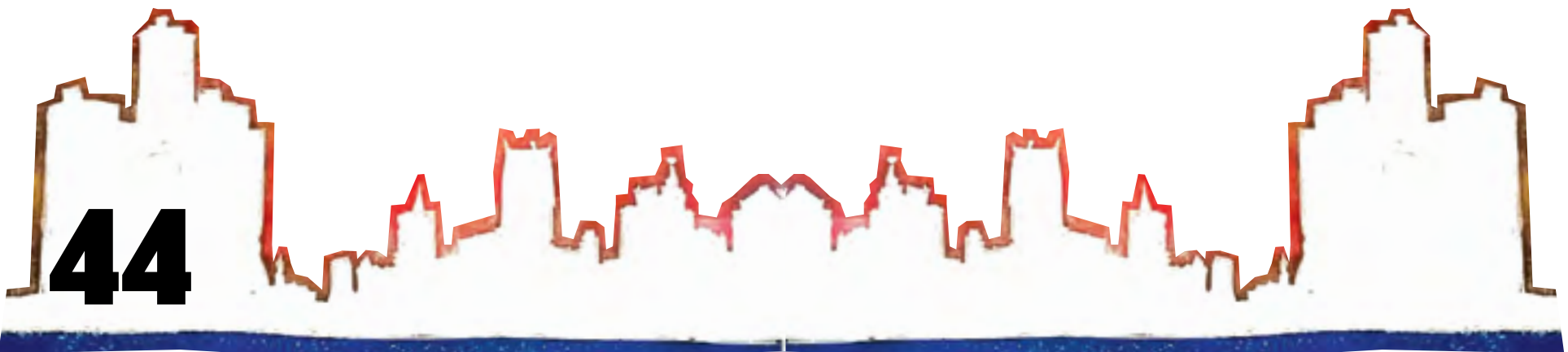
So much depends  
Upon  
Life and death  
In  
Detroit many people  
Stay  
And many people  
Go  
In Detroit I  
Wish  
All violence would  
Be stopped

**Sherod**

**4th Grade**

**TaRea**

**8th Grade**





Viaduct near Midtown

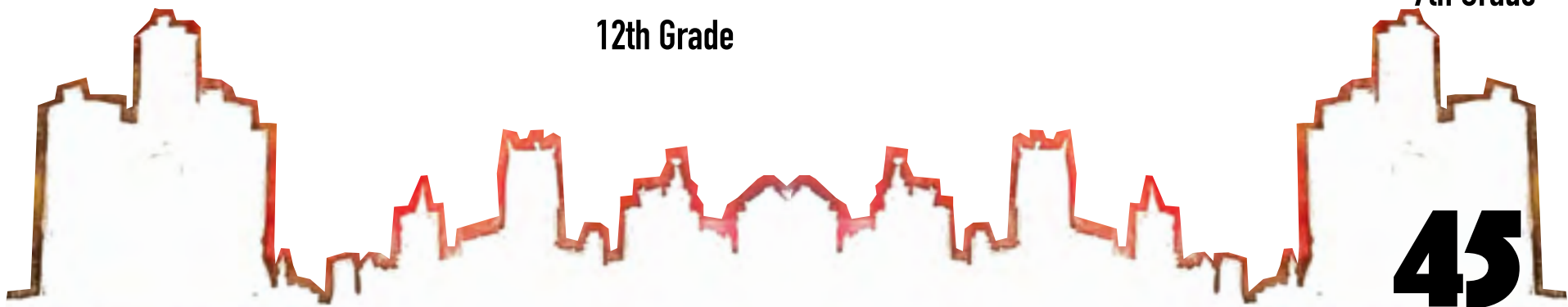
Alice, 8th Grade

“Detroit is a good place, and as we rebuild the city, great things are going to happen. As a citizen of Detroit, it feels good to see Detroit on its feet.”

“Everybody against Detroit, that’s what it seems. But not me, I would never leave Detroit’s team.”

Tommie  
12th Grade

Trashawn  
7th Grade





Hart Plaza—Steven Josephson

**“Detroit is my life and home. It’s such a beauty and looks like heaven itself. Detroit is full of happy smiles and faces made by our people. This is why our city is still standing. We may have our problems, but we will stand.**

**I believe in Detroit because our citizens are strong. We will rise, even through our tough and hard times. Detroit is the reason why I have so much hope. It is the reason why I have courage.”**

**Mar’Keiya  
8th Grade**

**"I believe in our city! My Detroit is amazing... Together I think you, me and the community can make a difference."**

**Fallon  
6th Grade**

If I could change one thing about Detroit, it would be to make more jobs so people can have somewhere to work. Also, so people could make money and so people could get clothes. Then people could have money for weddings. People feel good when they have a job.

**Arthur  
2nd Grade**

I am proud of Detroit because it is a fun place. I am happy to live here. I love to go to my school and learn because I have a big future. I am an activist because I stand up for what I believe in.

**Jayce  
2nd grade**

If I could change one thing about Detroit, it would be for people to make more money. Then people could buy food for their family. They will have somewhere to live if they are homeless. People can make more money, if Detroit makes more jobs. I can help by staying in school. I will go to college to become a nurse and I can help my family. People would have better jobs if they stay in school. I hope people in Detroit will get jobs.

**Jhaniya  
2nd Grade**

**"I am going to change the world with my bare hands or a pen."**

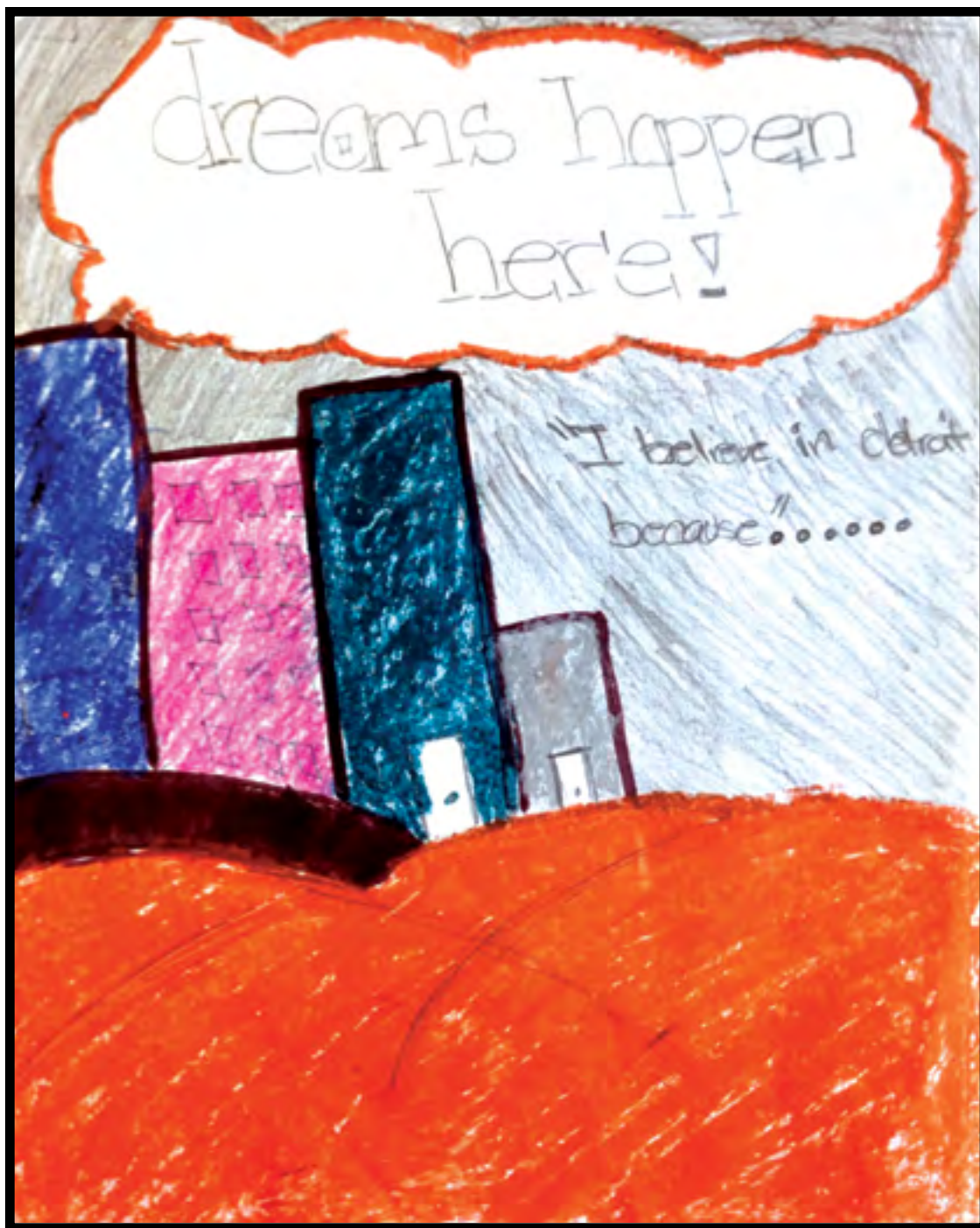
**Andre  
12th Grade**



Joe Louis' fist, Downtown—Peter Grace

"I believe that this city will get better. This city will probably be the one to change the world. This city is important to many people. There are people in Detroit trying to become better people. They want to get jobs, stop the crimes, clean the city, and keep kids out of trouble. They want this city to have a better reputation. This city will never give up for anything. This city will continue to get stronger. This city will get better and will prove the people who doubted it. I believe in Detroit because it's a very special city."

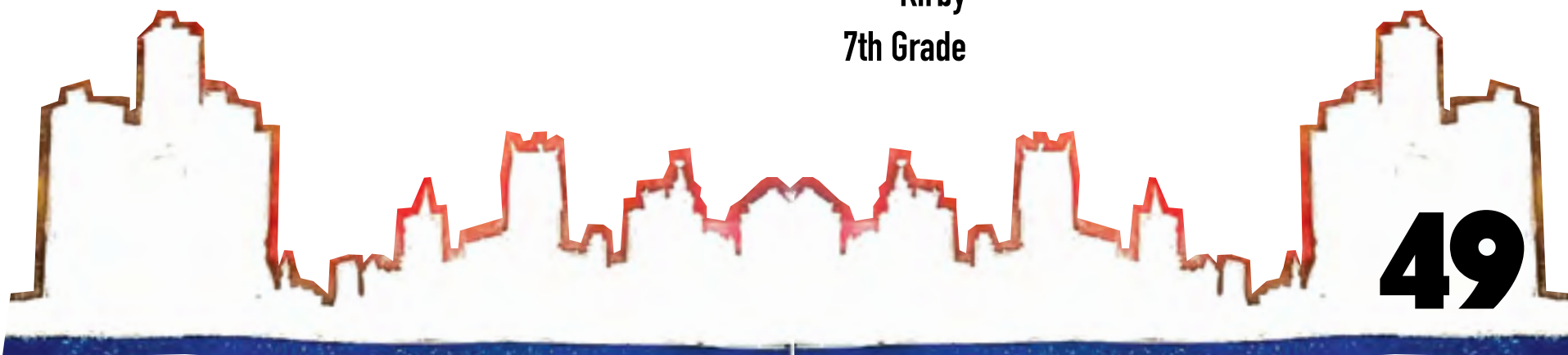
Deania  
7th Grade



Kirby  
7th Grade

**“We will expand and be more. We are more and if we build up a tall enough crew together we can take down anything in our path. We will succeed. We will be successful and no one can do this on their own. We are family. We can do this together and we will just wait for it.”**

**Eddie  
9th Grade**



# DWD TEAM



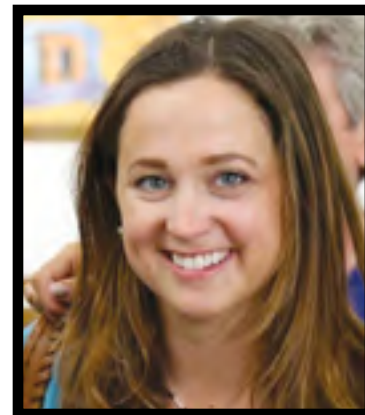
**Adam Schilt**  
2014 TFA Corps Member



**Ashley Gratz**  
2014 TFA Corps Member



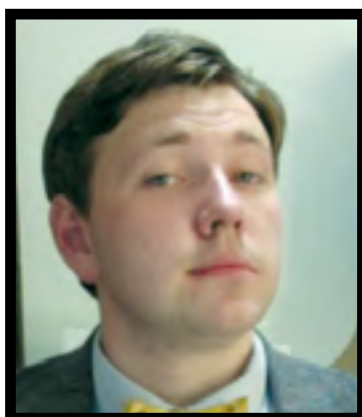
**Ashley Monteleone**  
2014 TFA Corps Member



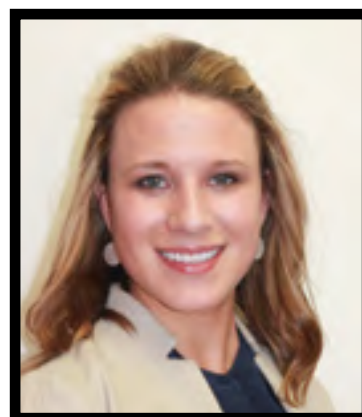
**Caroline Little**  
2014 TFA Corps Member



**Samantha Voss**  
2014 TFA Corps Member



**Steven Josephson**  
2014 TFA Corps Member



**Trisha Egan**  
TFA Staff  
2008 TFA Alum



