



FUTURE LIFE

**2023 SPRING ZINE
YOUTH AGES 10-19**

Spring 2023 Youth Ages 10 - 19 Zine

“Be yourself. Above all, let who you are, what you are, and what you believe shine through every sentence you write, every piece you finish.”

– John Jakes

You cannot be a writer unless you see yourself as one. Each program begins with an exploration of ourselves as writers, creators, and communicators. Some work is developed by the individual, and some work is a collaborative effort.

Enjoy youth pieces from Podium partners at:

***Armstrong High School
George Wythe High School
Huguenot High School
Highland Springs High School
L. Douglas Wilder Middle School***



Art is Life

Youth from L. Douglas Wilder Middle School reflect on why we make art and what art means to them.

Art
Shelby S.

We make art because it's fun.
We make art as a form of expression.
We make art to enjoy ourselves.
I think art is appropriate everywhere.
Art can be anything and everything,
and art can be used to convey a message.

Meanings of Art
Ayden P.

We make art to express our feelings. In some art pieces, there are no feelings at all, so some art has no meaning. I believe that art is appropriate in ads, museums, TV shows, churches, homes, schools, and malls.

Art
Arilon P.

We make art
because we want
different ways
to express ourselves.

Art in Life
Remas A.

We make art because drawing is necessary and is a part of identity in life. Drawing is used in homes, arts, and nature. If colors are not there, then life is boring.

Art Shows Emotions
Taylor G.

We make art because it lets people show their emotions, it relieves stress, and making art makes people happy. All types of art are allowed everywhere, like magazines, ads, visual, shows, etc., but everyone should be able to create art.



Digging Deep

Sharing what we love and know about ourselves isn't always easy!

Five Things

Carmen I.

Highland Springs HS

Two things I love about myself are my face and my eyebrows. Two things that I am insecure about are my smile and my gap. One thing that I wish people could know about me is that I'm not always mad when I have "a mad face;" that's just how I look, like, it's just my resting face.

Who Am I

Yefferson A.

Huguenot HS

I was studious, had fewer friends, and I didn't like to go out. Now, I study less and have more friends. I also work now. I want to be someone who can help my family, study, and be a member of the army.

Five Things About Me

Tyvaughn C.

Highland Springs HS

I love my face because I like taking pictures. I love my braces because I like to smile, and females think they're cute. I'm very insecure about my leg, and one thing I wish people could know about me is that I'm very outgoing and caring.

Past to Future

Richard J.

George Wythe HS

Who I Was: I went to school every day and got good grades. I would never miss a day of school. I loved going outside and would go outside every two to three days.

Who I Am: I still go outside, and I still go to school and get good grades.

Who I Will Be: My future self will go to college and get a master's degree. I would also like to drive a bus.



Who I Am and Who I Want to Be

Andrew M.

Huguenot HS

En el pasado, fui un perezoso. Ahora, soy una persona que sigue sus sueños, y quiero ser el tipo de persona que no depende de nadie y solo depender de mi mismo.

In the past, I was a lazy person. Now, I am a person who follows their dreams, and I want to be the type of person who does not depend on anyone and only depends on myself.

About Me

Xylah W.

Highland Springs HS

I really like my nose. I think it's because it's a nice shape and fits my face just right. I love my eyelashes because they are long, kind of pretty, and again, they go with my face. I'm a little insecure about my feet because I have my uncle's feet. I'm only a little insecure about my teeth because they are a little big, but at least they aren't crooked like they were before my braces. One thing I want other people to know is that I don't like talking to new people first because I can be shy.

About Me

Tae'Quawn M.

George Wythe HS

Who I Was: Back then, I was a really nice kid. I was creative, playful, and I didn't want to harm anybody. I had a good heart. I used to love creating things from TV shows, and I loved to dance.

Who I Am: Now, I am quiet and insecure. My mind is set, and my emotions have changed. I used to be nice, but now I'm mean. Over the years, I have learned to just not care. I get mad a lot, and I use music to calm down. I'm a little bit of a hothead.

Who I Want to Be: I don't know what I want to be. I do know that whatever it is, it's going to be something that makes me rich, so I can make sure my family is straight.

Mi Vida
Yostin C.
Huguenot HS

Mi nombre es Yostin, y naci en Junio 20 del 2008. Vivo con mi mama, mi hermano, y el novio de mi mama. Estudio en la Huguenot. No tengo ninguna carrera porque tengo 14 anos y estoy muy pequeno para una carrera. Los unicos logros de mi vida son que se un poquito de Ingles y pues estoy en los estados unidos.

My name is Yostin, and I was born on June 20, 2008. I live with my mom, my brother, and the boyfriend of my mom. I study at Huguenot. I don't have any career because I am 14 years old and am too young for a career. The achievements of my life so far are that I know a little English and that I am in the United States.

I Am Good at Everything
Qiana J.
Highland Springs HS

I love the fact that I am smart, and everything I do, I know I am good at it. I love that I am a caring person, and that I am very kind. The only thing I am a little self-conscious of is that I think I am really short. One thing I wish people knew about me is I am very good at solving problems and putting things together.

All Of Me
Laylianah M.
George Wythe HS

Who I Was: Negative. I was negative because I was in a broken household that caused my self-confidence to go down, and then depression arrived.

Who I am now: Confused. I am confused because I can be very nonchalant, but really, I care so much. I play basketball, and I love it. Life is good right now!

Who I will be: Settled. I want to play basketball for LSU. If I can't, I would like to be a psychologist, so I can help others. I also want to be settled and on track.



Mis Cifras
Kerem C.Q.
Huguenot HS

Mi nombre es Kerem Cantoral Quinonez, y mi familia es mi mama y mis hermanos. Mi educacion es high school, y mi carrera preferible es unirme al army. Mis logros son cuando me gradue de secundaria y que yo juego futbol. Un momento importante de mi vida fue cuando yo lleguo en otro pais.

My name is Kerem Cantoral Quinonez, and my family is my mom and my siblings. My education is high school, and my preferred career is to join the army. My achievements are when I graduated from secondary school and that I play soccer. An important moment of my life was when I arrived in another country.

5 Things
Jesse H.
Highland Springs HS

Two things I love about myself are that I love my eye color and personality. My eye color is so cute to me, and I love my personality; it is so funny.

Two things I love are my game and driving. I use game every day, and it is so fun. I also love driving. I always ask to drive somewhere.

One thing I want people to know is that I am really nice.

La Descubrio
Mario R.
Huguenot HS

Quien fui?: En el pasado, era un persona que vivia en el campo. Debida a eso me la pasaba ocupado, enojado, o deprimido.

Quien soy?: Ahora me evuelto alguien muy independiente y alguien que se preocupa por los demas y por su familia. Principalmente, estoy alguien feliz y con objetivos claros.

Que quiero ser?: Quiero ser el tipo de persona con mentalidad fuerte, el cual pone sus objetivos y familia antes que todo. Principalmente, alguien que no dependa de absolutamente de nadie.

Who was I?: In the past, I was a person who lived in the countryside. Owed to this, I spent my time worried, angry, or depressed.

Who am I?: Now I have become someone very independent and someone who is worried about others and their family. Principally, I am someone who is happy and who has clear objectives.

Who do I want to be?: I want to be the type of person with a strong mentality, the kind that places their objectives and family before everything else. Principally, someone who does not depend on absolutely anyone.



Struggles and Successes

Strength

Anonymous

George Wythe HS

My greatest achievement would be my grades and my schoolwork. I've been mostly a straight A and B student my whole school career. I have prided myself on it even though it really doesn't mean much. I'm just glad I have something that I can be proud of myself for.

My biggest struggle in life is my depression and my medical condition. When people find out I have a medical condition, they ask a lot of questions or think I might be lying. It's weird. I feel like they give me a lot of sympathy, but I don't like it. The sympathy also makes me feel weird. My depression just makes a lot of regular things feel harder than they should be and makes me feel really bad.

Greatest Accomplishment and Greatest Obstacle

Ce'von G.

Armstrong HS

I received \$120 in one day from my grandma, and therefore, that is my great accomplishment. My greatest obstacle was having hip surgery.

This is Me

Anonymous

George Wythe HS

My name is _____. I am in high school, and it sucks. My perspective of high school is that it is when you find out who your real friends are. I attend George Wythe High School. I am insecure about certain things, like my weight and what I look like. My life is messed up, as in my family and my so-called friends. I want to grow from these situations because I know that I can be better than this. I know I can get through this because I am a very strong person.

My father taught me to be strong no matter what I have to go through. He died a few years ago in 2016, and it broke my heart. I felt like no one understood how I felt or what I went through after he died and that no one understands me now. I am, and always will be, a daddy's girl.

I am also bisexual and am out to my close friends. I would never tell my family because they are very homophobic. If I were to tell them, they would be very mad.



My Accomplishments and Obstacles

Jamian Harper
Armstrong HS

My accomplishments include getting good grades, making friends, learning new BMX tricks, and winning basketball games. My biggest obstacle is learning how to drive a car.

How Life Is
Quinton B.
Armstrong HS

The greatest obstacle I have overcome in my life was making some great friends. My greatest accomplishment is that I haven't gotten into a fight so far this year.

Moving Forward
Laylianah M.
George Wythe HS

My greatest achievement was when I got through my depression without any help. Depression is a very challenging thing to get over on your own. My greatest challenge was overcoming my struggle with self-confidence. I can't seem to love myself the way I should, and self-confidence is something everyone should have. I'm slowly learning to love myself, but I just can't seem to do it yet.

This Is Me
Brianna N.
George Wythe HS

Who I Was: I wanted to be a veterinarian. I did not speak up for myself. I had no friends, was a quiet person, and hated learning.

Who I Am: I am more confident and have friends now. I found love, felt heartache, and I started to find my love for reading. I still have my insecurities, and I still need to work on my communication. I listen to more music now too.

Who I Want to Be: I want to be a scientist, a millionaire, and I want to be married. I also want to lose weight, and I want a dog!



I Believe in Myself

Jaliyah D.

George Wythe HS

My greatest accomplishment was when I learned to paint realism. My greatest obstacle was not believing in myself at first, but I ended up doing really good. I just had to face what others thought about my artwork and my style.

My Timeline

Christopher S.

George Wythe HS

Born: I was born on 6/11/08.

The Time I Grew Up: I was bullied for the first time. That caused me to be depressed, and I found myself at a very low point.

Finding Myself: Not too long ago, I found myself for the first time. I like guys and am a very good friend.

College: College is when I'm going to have the most work and the most stress. I'll also have to grow up and leave some of my friends.

My Dream: My dream job is to become a teacher. I love helping and teaching.

Achievements and Obstacles

Shyla S.

George Wythe HS

What is my greatest achievement, and what is my greatest obstacle? My greatest achievement is moving on from the past. This year, I have been stressing so much that I almost lost myself again. My greatest obstacle is finding self-love. I was so insecure about my flaws that I hid them for years, but I'm getting over this little by little.



Digging Deep

Youth from L. Douglas Wilder Middle School write about their future selves and the future of their world through the lens of self-advocacy.

Letter to Myself

Paris D.

Dear self,

Right now, I am mad because I personally like writing, but then I remember there's still the world to deal with. When I have a bad day at school, I just go to dance practice, and it calms me down. Listening to music calms me down too. Having to wash my hair sometimes makes me mad, but when it's done, I am always happy again.

Love,

Me

Helping People

William O.

I can help people survive, so that they feel safe. People should have access to health care. I will protest the legislature to build more in Chesterfield.

What I Would Do

Jacob W.

I would start a march against school shootings. "STOP THE SHOOT OR GET THE BOOT." I would also lead a protest for trans and human rights, and I would get people on my side through social media and public gatherings.

In The News

Arilon P.

I would give homeless families shelter, food, and make sure they have free health care. I would also protest to protect trans kids and to get rid of guns!



Letter to My Future Self

Zyperah S.

Dear me,

Do you live in your dream house yet? Is your mental health better? There are so many things I can ask you. Do you still live in VA, or did you move to the city like you always wanted to? Last question: Do you love music still? I know you have always loved music. Okay, I have to go for now. Bye.

Love,

Zy

Two Important Issues

Ayden P.

Ukraine: You can help refugees from Ukraine by giving them a proper place to live and food to eat.

Drag/Trans Bills: The Republicans are more worried about drag queens and trans kids than they are worried about people who are shooting up schools. They say they are trying to “protect our kids,” but instead, they are passing laws that could allow people to look at kids' private parts to see if they're trans or not. They then wonder why suicide rates are higher. It's because they are not protecting the kids. They are killing them.

In the Future

Arilon P.

In 10 years, I'll be in college.

In 50 years, I'll be an actor.

In 100 years, I'll be gone, but I'll have a legacy!

In 1,000 years, robots will take over.

Letter to My Future Self
Jacob W.

Dear future JR,

Is technology better in the future? I hope life is going better and that you and Zyferah stayed together and are strong. How are our siblings doing? Did you take Izzy and Zyan for that car ride yet? How big are Juju and Ivy? That's all for now.

Sincerely,

Jacob W. Jr.

Letter to My Future Self
Shelby S.

Dear future Shelby,

Hey! What's the future like? Do you still know your friends from middle school? If so, where are they now? What is Syd doing right now? Did you ever do that one redraw you said you were going to do ever since, like, 2021? I doubt it, haha!

Anyways, I hope you're doing well and that you have a good whatever year you read this in.

Love,

Shelby from 2023

Letter to My Future Self
Ayden P.

Dear Ayden,

Please tell me you're still alive and that you got accepted into Varina. If you're not friends with Vivian, Zero, Emma, and Joy in the future, I'm going to choke you! If things don't get better, I swear I'm going to scream, and if you haven't figured yourself out by now, we're going to fight. I wish you the best of luck for your future, and I miss you dearly.

Sincerely,

Ayden from 2023

P.S. If you forget French, I'm fighting you.



Letter to My Future Self

Arilon P.

Dear future me,

Are you an actor or in college now? Are you still friends with Vivian, Zero, Emma, and Joy? Did you ever get better? Is Nanna still around or Papa? Did we get the house with Keila like we always planned?

Sincerely,

13-year-old Arilon

In the Future

Jacob W.

In 10 years, I'll be in college.

In 50 years, there will be better technology.

In 100 years, there will be super humans.

In 1,000 years, there will be zombie mutations.

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