

THE WORLD TODAY

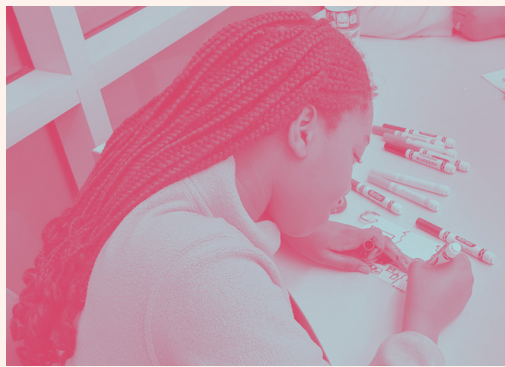
FALL ZINE 2023 • YOUTH AGES 14-19

FALL ZINE 2023

Youth expressing themselves
Creativity and freedom
Developing professional skills
Empowerment and success

YOUTH AGES 14-19

Supporting youth to dream
Bestowing communication skills
Creating community leaders



Fall 2023 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:

**Richmond High School for the Arts
Armstrong High School
Highland Springs High School
Varina High School
Huguenot High School
The Well**

Love & Loss

Youth explore what it means to love themselves and others while reflecting on the loss and heartbreak that sometimes comes along with it.

Heartbreak

Zofia M.

The Well

I have been heartbroken before.

The pain felt like my heart had been pulverized and taken out of my chest.

It felt like I didn't have a heart in the beginning.

I felt empty and tired.

He left me in the bathroom.

There, I could only cry and hold myself.

I was fiending for my friends to come and save me.

The emotions I suffered made me feel worthless.

I felt like nothing.

If he knew how I felt, then

Why betray me now instead of saying it from the start?

I learned my self-worth and that if you don't have the same feelings, don't lie to me because it hurts. I learned that my peace is more important than anyone else. I must put myself first because no one else is like me.

Loving Myself

Katwoine T.

The Well

I love myself today because I woke up.

I forgave myself today because I cheated in a relationship.

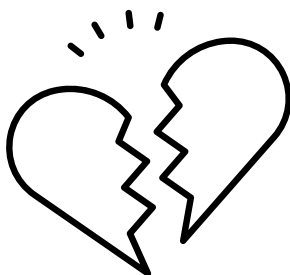
I am happy today because I got to sing for my grandma.

Something good I did for myself was cleaning my room.

Letter to My Ex
Darnesha S.
Armstrong HS

Ladies and gentlemen, today I have discovered that not only have I been betrayed but also, broken again. The boys of 2023 have made me realize that “S-I-N-G-L-E again,” won’t be bad after all. When you put your trust in a man, there are responsibilities that come with a man. From the cooking, the cleaning, the working, to being their moms due to them having momma-boy mentalities.

You can never give me the passcode to that phone, but you’re not hiding anything. Yeah, alright. I would go broke for you to make sure that you’re straight, but you got other girls on your phone. I guess you will never understand that. Five hundred sixty-eight dollars in cash and a three-year relationship. I put you first, so why can’t you do the same?



Heartbreak
Evalyze A.
The Well

I learned from my first heartbreak to love yourself before you try to love someone else. I feel like that’s important because if you don’t know how to love yourself, how are you going to love another person? I’ve learned self-worth and grew from it. At times, I used to cry, feel numb, and feel like I just wanted to disappear.

You were out living your best life. You didn’t care that you hurt me and left me feeling ugly. Even though you made me feel worthless, I still craved that attention from you. I shouldn’t have cried to my mom and friends about a person I “love.” I just loved the image of you that I created in my head, but it wasn’t really you. I learned more about myself and self-respect. I put up boundaries that you hated, but that’s okay because in the end, I was set free from your “love.”

Loving Myself
Keziah M.
The Well

I love myself today because I got ready for school.
Today, I forgive myself for not staying up in class.
Something good I did today was to make my friend happy.

To take care of my mind, I'll try to stay away from things that make me feel worse.

To take care of my body, I'll continue to clean myself, eat, and exercise more.

To take care of my heart, I will try to make myself happy.

Loving Myself
Daniel J.
The Well

I love myself today because I finally did work.
Today I forgave myself for nothing.
I wrestle because it's my passion.
Something good that I did today was to go on a walk.



To care of my mind, I will read more books.

To take care of my body, I will work out.

To take care of my heart, I will stop getting it broken by the wrong people.

Heartbreak
Naomi L.
Armstrong HS

Not the literal sight of it breaking in two,
It was just the thought of losing you.
This isn't something I can just let be,
Erasing you from my memory.
Not physically, but mentally changing me.
Never speaking or seeing you again.
I hope that you will still be my friend.

Loving Myself

Jade D.

Varina HS

I love myself today because I tried.
Today, I forgive myself for being on my phone.
I am tired because I didn't get to sleep.
Something good I did for myself today was to eat.

To take care of my mind, I will think positively.
To take care of my body, I will do skincare.
To take care of my heart, I will listen to music.

Reasons Why I Love Myself

Deshaun K.

Varina HS

I love myself because I trust myself.
I love myself because I'm positive.
I love myself because I'm caring.
I love myself because of my hair.
I love myself because of my body.
I love myself because of my girlfriend.
I love myself because of my height.
I love myself because of my friends.
I love myself because of my mom and God.
I love myself because I make funny jokes.
I love myself because I can play the tuba.
I love myself because I can box.
I love myself because I listen to music.

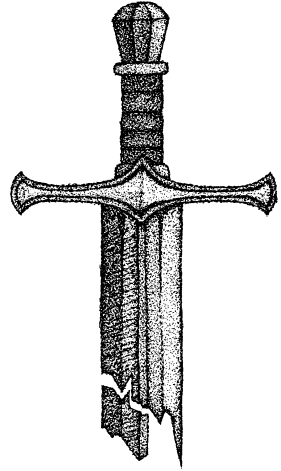


Ancient Betrayal

Jarmar R.

Armstrong HS

The love I had for you
Was like no other.
To me, you were my brother.
We went through wars and plundered many;
However, I did not see
What was awaiting me.
For some silly alliance that held greater power
You would sour the only one you had,
While I lay in spilled blood.
There was only one other thought I had:
You are still my brother.



Love

Jayla M.

Armstrong HS

My love for you is like no other.
Without you, my life contains no light.
You are the quiet night to my chaotic life.
With you, I feel alive.
If you were to die, I would search for you in the afterlife.
Every day I fantasize about my whole life with you.
I would sacrifice the rest of my life to join you.
Just to be with you again is all I want.

Poetry and Prose

Karl

Sierra M.

Highland Springs HS

In the mountains lived an orange fox named Karl. He went on an adventure to find some berries. One day, a coyote was making fun of the rabbits. "You guys are slow like my grandma," said the coyote. The rabbits all cried!

"Why did you say that?" said the younger rabbit.

"You're mean!" said the older rabbit.

Karl came and protected the rabbits, "You are a bully!" he announced angrily. "I will not be your friend anymore." The next day, a grove of bears tried to attack the coyote. Karl came, fought the bears, and grabbed the coyote.

"Thank you for saving me, Karl, and I'm very sorry for bullying the rabbits," said the coyote.

"It's okay, but why did you do that?" asked Karl.

"It's because my parents abuse me and call me bad names. Do you want to be friends?" asked the coyote.

"Yes!" And just like that, they became friends. When you have friends, you spread positivity into the world.

The Rabbit's Self-Esteem

Sierra M.

Highland Springs HS

There once was a rabbit with self-esteem issues. He thought that he couldn't make the jump to the log that all the other rabbits did. Then, a blue bird flew to the tree to talk to the rabbit. "What's wrong rabbit?" said the blue bird.

"I can't hop to the old log like the other rabbits because I'm different."

"Maybe you're having trouble because you are different." So, the bluebird showed the rabbit a different way for him to get over the log. He grabbed a rock for, so the rabbit could get to the other side. The rabbit was happy and thanked the bluebird for helping him.

Poetry: A Blackout poem
Evalyze A.
The Well

Poetry

In a pleasant
Breeze. The words
Were spoken by
God.
Discovering the man,
Motivations,
The legend.
Expert telling
Is biased.
Life as
Many of his
Colors.



(Original by Susan Peterson, 2009)

A Halloween Adventure
Naomi L. & Jonathan R.
Armstrong HS

Margo and Margnet were twins who had just moved with their family all the way from Washington D.C. to Sleepy Hallow. As the girls' first day of school approached, they were brought to extreme fear. They started at a new school called Wiffard High School. As lunch followed, Margnet seemed to inherit the spotlight of popularity, and this upset Margo.

Margnet received an invitation to the biggest Hallo-scream party while Margo found herself without an invite. With her newfound jealousy, Margo warned her not to go to the party. She did not want Margnet to have fun without her, but Margnet insisted on going, so Margo hid her anger.

As Margnet set out for the party, Margo secretly followed behind her. Margnet soon arrived to find out that it was just a trap! She learned that it was simply a test from her sister, and she failed. The jealous twin quickly locked her in the house and set it on fire! Margnet was never heard from again, leaving Margo as the only child.

El Año 2002
Wilson C.
Huguenot HS

En el año 2002, un joven estaba en su edificio, y vio por la ventana. Vio que estaba repleto de zombies afuera, y lo peor es que se estaba terminando la comida de la refri y ahora tenía que salir de su departamento para conseguir comida. Se había agitado, y no tenía mas fuerza. Pensaba que era el unico sobreviviente en la tierra. Sacó un dron y trató de buscar ayuda, pero se quedó sin pila el dron. Vio a una chica al otro lado de la calle y le hizo señal para comida. La chica le mando recursos para sobrevivir, y ellos se juntaron para subir a los más alto del edificio. Lo conseguieron pero estaban rodeados de zombies. Luego llegó un helicóptero y los salvo.

The Year 2002

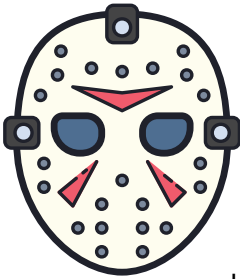
In the year 2002, a young man was in his office, and he looked out of his window. He saw that it was packed with zombies outside, and the worst part is that he had been finishing the food from the fridge and now had to leave the office to get food. He was agitated and didn't have a lot of strength left. He thought he was the last survivor in the world. He took out a drone and tried to find help, but the drone was out of battery. He saw a girl on the other side of the street and started to signal to her for food. The girl sent him resources to survive, and they started climbing to the highest point of the building together. They reached the top but were surrounded by zombies. Then a helicopter arrived and saved them.

Nature
Emmanuel S.
Richmond High School for the Arts

Nature can be very well balanced.
Natural disasters like thunderstorms, hurricanes,
Floods, and earthquakes.
But nature can also be beautiful.
Leaves change colors depending on the seasons,
And so does grass.
Leaves in the fall are orange in color.
In the winter, the leaves
Become a yellowish color, and
In the spring, there are a bunch of flowers.

School
Shyla S.
Richmond High School for the Arts

School is like a social box
where people contrastingly talk about the,
“What’s, who’s, where’s, and how’s,”
and you tend to hear pa-pow!
When kids fight on sight,
and you cannot sleep at night.
Homework yelling at you because
it’s waiting to be completed.
School is like a cage
making people engage in subjects
to see what we are good at
until we can finally pat ourselves
on the back.



Horror
Jonathan S.
Richmond High School for the Arts

He turned the key and opened the door.
To his horror, he saw a man as tall as Jason,
With claws like those of Freddy Krueger,
a disguise like Ghostface,
and a terrorizing laugh like that of Pennywise.

Church Betrayal
Tyleia C.
Armstrong HS

This is a story about how I got betrayed by the church choir. I was 10 years old in church, and the choir director promised me the lead for a song. I spent all day getting the song right, and I was so happy about singing it. But when it came to the day, she called a different name as the lead singer. I felt hurt and stupid.

Haunting Horrors
Anonymous
Armstrong HS

Two demons had a party where they invited a lot of people. After the party was over, they selected a few to stay over for a game of spin the bottle. When they spun the bottle, it landed on a couple. The demons dared them to go through a doorway. After going into the doorway, zombies ate them. The very next day, they were announced as missing. The police are still trying to figure out this murder mystery today.

Betrayed by Blood
Ta'miyah W.
Armstrong HS

Two twin aliens were getting married to the same man without knowing. One of them invited the other to their wedding. When the other twin arrived, she instantly realized it was her man! She ended up locking her twin in the dressing room.

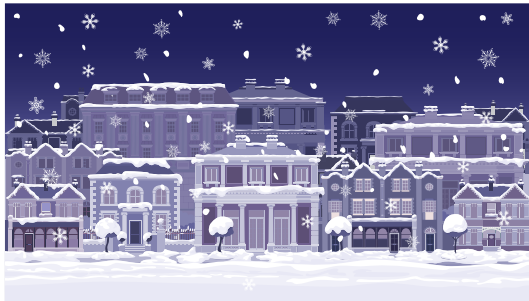
Imagine
Melvin L.
Richmond High School for the Arts

When I was little, like really little, there was this big tree.
Two trees at the same spot heading in different ways.
Now it's cut down, but
It was like a skyscraper to the eyes of a child with
So much space for kids to run around with friends.



Theatrics
Keemya W.
Richmond High School for the Arts

School is now a theater
with a full stage.
The actors all say their lines
like a moth attracted to light.



A Cold Winter
Lanasja M.
Richmond High School for the Arts

A town covered in snow. The snow was untouched except by the streetlights shining at night. In this moment, I experienced coldness. It was winter. I was a little girl, and I played in the snow until my hands were cold and numb. I had a snowball fight with my sister.

Similes and Metaphors
Lanasja M.
Richmond High School for the Arts

I got up, slow as a sloth.
I got ready as fast as a cheetah.
I feel as tired as a koala.
I talk more than a husky.

Similes and Metaphors

Dominique S.

Richmond High School for the Arts

School is like running, you keep going but you can't stop.

School is like grass, it's greener on the other side.

School is like hair; sometimes it breaks off, but it will grow back.

School is like air: you keep breathing it in.

Independence

Anonymous

The Well

When my dad cheated on my mom a couple of times, it made me realize that I never wanted to be like him. When my mom messed up, he took everything from her, and it made me never want to fully depend on a man. You should make something of your own, so that no one can take it.



Los años '80

Josue O.

Huguenot HS

Los años '80 fueron algunos de los más difíciles en historia porque para eso entonces, había un virus de zombies que se extendió en todo el mundo donde la gente se comía a uno a otros. Algunos científicos trataron de encontrar la cura pero no pudieron. La pandemia siguió aumentando más y más. Después de cinco años, la pandemia empezó a parar, pero poca gente se salvó.

The '80s

The '80s were some of the most difficult years in history because at that time, there was a zombie virus that spread all over the world where people were eating each other. Some scientists tried to find a cure but couldn't. The pandemic continued spreading more and more. After five years, the pandemic began to stop, but few people were spared.

Fading Beauty
Daziyah J.
Richmond High School for the Arts

When I was outside, I saw the sunset. The colors of the sky were orange, pink, and light purple. The worst color was blue, and it made me feel mad because I always take pictures of the sky when it's beautiful outside. Taking pictures is hard because the right moment goes away too fast.



Change – A Blackout poem
Dominan D.L.C.
The Well

We're committed
To be professionals
To help you,
Based on your life.

(Original by Wachovia Corp)

Hesitate – A Blackout Poem
Serena D.
The Well

Hesitate
To find
More attention.
Get Overwhelmed at
Everything.

(Original by Kim Vernan & Krithy Kalesti, 2007)

Surviving the Teenage Years

Youth use writing as a tool for healing as they process through tough emotions on the page.

Coping

Diamond J.

Highland Springs HS

My mother called me on the day of my homecoming and told me that my cousin had passed away. I was so hurt. I just cried, but my girlfriend was by my side holding me up the whole time, telling me that everything was going to be okay. I calmed down a little bit, and it was good for the night because she was with me the whole time.

Dear Grandma

Anonymous

Richmond High School for the Arts

Dear Grandmother,

We arrived in Washington D.C. yesterday for the tribal gathering and protest for our lands. We set up early in the morning, so I haven't gotten very much sleep. It's an honor wearing the tribal wear that you made for me and my daughter. My wife braided your special fur into our youngest child's hair. I wish you were here to see it. There's so much solidarity among the people of Turtle Island. We just hope that we won't be disbanded as the day goes on. Thank you for paving the way for this movement. We miss you and our elders today the most out of all days. We fight for you and our children.

With deep love,

X

Missing You
Amari R.
Varina HS

I miss you every day. I think about you every day. It hasn't been the same since you passed. I hope you are proud of me and what I do. I try to make you happy and proud of me. I cry every morning and look at photos of you, and my nana is not doing so well. She is still in pain. We think about you every day and night before I go to bed. I wish you were still here with us today to see what I'm doing and what I achieved. So, I hope you read this and be proud of me because I'm doing it to make you happy.

Dear Grandma
Jade D.
Varina HS

Hi Grandma,

I miss you. I wish you could be here and make your famous mac and cheese with those meatballs...mmmm. You were fun to be around as well as a good listener. I wish you were here to tell my dad, "Shut up Earl," to bring laughter to the party, and to hug me.

Thanksgiving VIP
Deshaun K.
Varina HS

I will miss my dad at Thanksgiving because he won't be there, and my cousins won't be there either. It's going to be different without them being there. I want my dad to be there because he makes everything funny, and he is fun to be with, so that is who I am going to miss the most this Thanksgiving.

Use Your Voice

Better Representation

Anijae S.

Highland Springs HS

I feel like certain people should not be political representatives because of how they let their opinions overpower their work. They should come to an agreement with people. They should not be able to tell women what they can or can't do with their own bodies. With abortion, a woman can have consensual sex and the pregnancy can affect their mental health. It can get so bad to the point where they're unstable and can hurt the child due to not being able to take care of it. They may not even have a job or anything.

Better Representation

Camryn C.

Highland Springs HS

my voice
matters

Outdated Representatives:

- Want to ban abortion and marijuana
- Support Trump
- Are against anti-bullying
- Are pro conversion therapy
- Do not believe in climate change
- Believe students should pray in school

Some representatives believe in many issues that do not benefit us as Americans. They think that abortion should be illegal and that women should have strict laws on what they should do with their bodies. They are activists about pro-conversion and believe that people should follow Christianity by praying in school. Why do they care so much about these issues? What do they have to do with female bodies, anti-bullying, and pro-conversion? They seem like they'd also promote stopping mental illness treatments the way they worry about other issues. For their own sakes, I suggest they continue praying and lead a quiet life: Don't be a part of Congress.

Who Am I?

Who Am I?
Germayle L.
The Well



I am me.
I have no special abilities.
I have no concerns.
My hobby is playing basketball.
I like my iPhone, my Xbox, shoes, clothes, and money.
My passions are playing basketball and my game.
I think I want to be a professional basketball player.
People who are important to me are my brother, my best friend, and my family.

Amanda's Bio
Antoine T.
Highland Springs HS

Hi, my name is Amanda. I love bad puns, and I'm great at video games and writing. I can be considerate and a good friend to all. I choose to go out of my way for others, like listening to them and driving people around. They also say I love to sleep, which is very true.

Sweet Me
Brianna N.
Richmond High School for the Arts

I'm sweet like a red fruit,
As delicate as ivory,
But as strong as fine timber.



GREGORY
Gregory M.
Varina HS

G-ood
R-ealistic
E-nergized
G-rowing
O-rdinary
R-oyal
Y-ou

Who Am I?
Keziah M.
The Well

I am an artist.
I like cats, sleeping, and art.
I dislike green beans, people who are upset, and crimes.
My hobbies are drawing and playing guitar.
My friends are important to me.
I plan on becoming an animator.

Who?

Life on Screen

Students reflect on what type of movies and TV shows relate to them and their life story.

The First 48
Dalmyr B.
Huguenot HS

The First 48 represents my life.
In the movie, there is a lot of killing.
I live in an area where there is a lot of killing.



Películas de Terror
Abraham E.
Huguenot HS

Me gustan las películas de terror porque son misteriosos porque no sabes quien es el asesino. En la película de Scream, el asesino se camufla entre los inocentes, confundiendo a las víctimas hasta que mueren. Todas las películas de Scream que he visto hasta ahora son buenísimas y entretenidas.

Horror Movies

I like horror movies because they are mysterious because you don't know who the killer is. In the movie Scream, the killer camouflages himself among the innocents, confusing the victims until they die. All the Scream movies that I have seen up to this point have been very fun and entertaining.

Películas de Fantasía y Romance

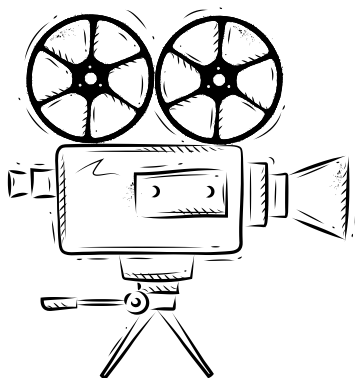
Mani G.

Huguenot HS

Me gustan las películas de fantasía porque tienen muchos colores, cosas mágicas y sorprendentes seres mitológicos. También me gustan las películas de romance porque es lindo ver a las personas quedarse mutuamente.

Fantasy and Romance Movies

I like fantasy movies because they have many colors, magical things, and surprising mythological beings. I also like romance movies because it is cute to see people fall in love with each other.



Genre Galore

Jefri J.

Huguenot HS

I like action movies because of the adrenaline. My favorite movies are about war or fighting. My favorite action movie is called Sin Novedad en el Frente. I also like romantic series. For example, Love is War is an anime about two students who love each other, but at the same time, they don't love each other because they view love as war. Whoever declares their love first loses the war, so it's full of romance and drama.

Genre Galore
Angel M.
Huguenot HS

I like romance because I watched one romantic anime and went, “Oou, I like this.” The anime I watched is called Tonikawa, and it’s one of the best anime shows because the story is so cute. In it, the protagonist was going to be run over and his future wife saved him. He ended up remembering a story about them.

I also like action anime. I watched Jujutsu Kaisen, where negative feelings of humans like regret and shame become curses that haunt them in their daily lives. Curses run rampant throughout the world and can cause people to suffer terrible misfortune. They can even lead to death, and what’s even worse is that only a new curse can break another curse.



Genre Galore
Ashley L.
Huguenot HS

I like horror movies because watching them is fun. You don’t know when the scary action will come. You get a lot of jump scares, and you maybe even scream it out. I also like K-dramas because they’re cute and romantic. They make me feel happy, although sometimes it’s weird because they can be too dramatic. In most K-dramas, they hide their feelings.

Películas y Libros de Acción

Kevin Q.

Huguenot HS

A mí me gusta las películas de acción porque son bien entretenidas y muy divertidos. Uno aprende unas cosas nuevas y se siente bien. No tengo un libro favorito, pero me gusta leer porque aprendo muchas cosas. Me gusta más leer misterios porque es bien entretenido y divertido también.

Action Movies and Books

I like action movies because they are very entertaining and very fun. One can learn a lot of new things and feel good. I don't have a favorite book, but I like to read because it lets me learn a lot. I like to read mysteries because they are also very entertaining and fun.



El Cine

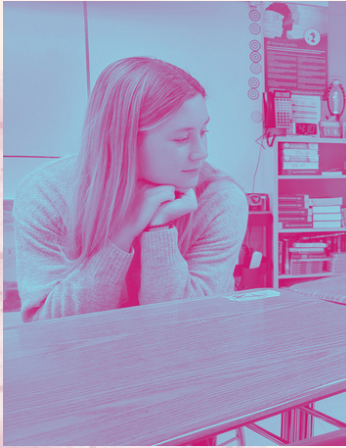
Fernando R.

Huguenot HS

Me gusta mucho la drama o películas. Me parece que es bonito, y me gusta la película de animación. Me gusta como la haces la producción y todo. También, me gusta las de pistola, las de miedo, y un poco de todo. Hay muchos actores que me gusta, y creo que el cine es bueno en general.

Cinema

I like drama, or movies, a lot. I think that it is beautiful, and I like animated movies. I like how the production is done and everything. Also, I like Western movies, scary movies, and a little of everything. There are many actors that I like, and I think that cinema is good overall.



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