

# GRAND HAVEN AREA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL  
2018-2019  
CREATIVE WRITING





THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION'S YAC IS MADE UP OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS FROM ALL AROUND THE AREA. YAC MEMBERS MEET THROUGHOUT THE YEAR TO DISCUSS AND ASSESS YOUTH ISSUES PREVALENT IN THE COMMUNITY, REVIEW GRANT PROPOSALS THAT BENEFIT YOUTH IN THE COMMUNITY, AND LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE AND EMPOWER YOUTH IN NORTHWEST OTTAWA COUNTY.

# Who We are & What We Stand For



## YAC's Mission:

We aim to set an example for future generations by giving of time, talent, and treasure to actively impact the lives of youth in Northwest Ottawa County.

## YAC's Vision:

A community where all youth have the resources and opportunities available, allowing them to be successful.

## YAC's Values:

Empathy – to understand the needs of the youth in our community  
Integrity – in making equitable decisions for the youth of our community  
Collaboration – through innovation and teamwork  
Open-mindedness – through a passionate and diverse group of youth representation

WE ARE A GROUP OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS THAT ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT LEARNING ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY AND INVESTING IN PROGRAMS THAT WILL IMPACT AND IMPROVE THE LIVES OF YOUTH.

# Youth Are Creative

OUR WORDS ON YOUTH, COMMUNITY, ENGAGEMENT & GIVING  
BACK.

## Where We're From

I'm from the generation of blindness  
So caught up in ourselves.  
Our lives  
Our problems  
Our success

The world's most important letter  
Is between h and j

Two eyes focused on the small circles of their own being.

I'm from the generation of possibilities  
So perfectly thought out in precision  
But never taken into action.  
Too afraid of loss  
Too afraid of risk  
Too afraid of failure  
Too afraid to struggle

To the point where our potential is whispered away  
And we will never know  
what it could have become.

I'm from the generation of comparison  
Success is measured meticulously on things that mean nothing.  
Money is more of an opportunity than friendship  
Power is more appealing than family  
Fame is more important than being yourself

And we end up driving down a highway of doubt  
Crashing into each other along the way

I'm from the generation whose problems are like all others  
It's not just us.  
There's also those who came before  
And those who came before them  
Fingers can't be pointed at just one

But hands can come together  
To protect the future that could be different.

- Maddy Streng





The lake stretches endless beyond vision.  
The sun shines on mostly clear waters.  
But the farther you go,  
The bottom becomes less visible.  
Perhaps it holds great secrets.  
Ships lost to time,  
Monsters and horrors incomprehensible,  
Beauty beyond all understanding.  
Perhaps it holds those things.  
But we do know it holds something else.  
Something we put there.  
Our garbage.  
Our waste.  
Most of it from the past two generations.  
The life once thrived in the lake must now be burdened by the unwelcome guest.  
Our waste.  
At its bottom, we desire to take its treasure.  
The essence of beasts lost to time.  
We mustn't give into the temptation.  
Protect the lakes.

- Coltrane Bodby-Mast

Tall  
A huddle  
clumped together with  
High hopes.

Eyes fall to the grass  
Slick from the morning dew  
and shivers  
fill the extra space.

The jarring wind  
whipping hair,  
stinging faces.

Nothing but each other for support

but,  
here we are,  
hear us now,

- Olivia Perrier



YOUTH  
ARE

# Involved



Life on the court

The court is coarse and the day is hot  
The sun shines down piercing into my eyes,  
Each point lasts and eternity but seems to fly by  
Serve and serve and serve  
Point, game, set, match  
Back and forth I run  
The court is my life,  
it is my home

- Ian Rant



YOUTH  
ARE

# Leaders

Leading  
Strong listener  
Learning working educating  
Success failure progress pride  
Searching building changing  
Accountable compassionate  
Leading



- Ellen Stolarski



YOUTH

ARE

*Passionate*



Don't Wait.

Youth is defined as the span between childhood and adulthood. The negative connotations associated with the time period is synonymous with "naive," "ignorant" and "inexperienced." Today's youth are pushed aside, told to stay out of "adult" conversations. They are made to sit at the kid's table, isolated from conversations that matter. Youth are hushed, told to wait until they're older.

There is a pattern among youth. In our minds, our opinions hold no value until we're older. Our actions must wait until we're older. Change cannot happen until we're older. Every dream and hope will only come true when we're older. The minds of today's youth are plagued with this false perspective. Our youth is seen as a transitional stage from child to adult, from bystander to active participant, but where the time in between is simply for waiting. Waiting for adulthood.

Have we forgotten about the influence of youth? Have we forgotten that our youth is of paramount importance to the development of our future selves? It is a time to be heard, take action, and make change. We are told to wait. We are told that we do not understand. It is the individuals that do not listen that make history:

Mikaila Ulmer created a lemonade business to support bee advocate organizations at age 13. Salvador Gómez Colón, 15, started the Light and Hope for Puerto Rico campaign to raise money and awareness after the hurricanes. Krtin Nithiyandam, at age 17, is creating a more effective method for treating triple negative breast cancer.

When youth realize their potential, skill, and voice, that is the time for change. That is the time for youth. The time is now.

- Janna Ercole

Just a Globe

It stands on its  
own,  
bright and proud,  
to many  
just a globe.

But to me,  
so much more.  
It shows me world issues,  
and places that need help  
beyond belief.  
But to many, it is  
just a globe.

I look at the globe,  
and learn  
so much.  
I learn about myself,  
as well as all the places in the world that need help.  
Although, it is  
just a globe.

It cannot fix global problems,  
or change the world forever,  
because it is  
just a globe.

The globe, in fact,  
can make about as much change  
as a book.  
After all, the real change is made by  
you and I.

And what we choose to do with objects  
we are given.

-Chloe Weigel

When the wind whips by and the rivers run dry and you no longer  
know what it means to be alive

When the birds and the bees don't sing in the trees and the lies all  
around you bring you to your knees

When the best book and the best nook have been burned by Beatty  
and taken by crooks

When everything beneath you falls away and you can't seem to go  
another day

If in that time, you can stay alive. If you can live and love and strive  
and thrive. Then the world will be your oyster, and life will be  
sweeter than honey from a hive

-Ben Garretson

YOUTH  
ARE *Important*







YOUTH  
ARE *Aware*

American Teen

Sometimes, it's not a matter of if,  
But of when.

Nearly every teenager in the country,  
Has wondered,  
Will it be me next?

Will it be my school?  
My classroom?  
My closet?  
My life?

Will my life be taken,  
Because of a lack of policy?  
Or rather,  
A lack of empathy?

We all wonder,  
Do the people really care  
More about their guns,  
Than our lives?

Every time,  
Over, and over again,  
We have found,  
That they do.

So we scream,  
And cry  
And march

But sometimes,  
The cards are stacked against you,  
And we might just have to wait it out,  
Until we are old enough to make the change we want to see

Sadly,  
Some of us don't have time  
To just  
Wait it out

So this is my plea,  
To the nation  
To the people  
To the "United" States

Your children are terrified  
They are dying  
They are begging  
To just live another day

You have the power to make this change  
Or at least  
A change

So stop hiding behind  
Theoreticals  
And start making change

Because if you don't,  
I may not have the chance  
To finish this poem

- Jalen Greene



Tornado with bright eyes  
Tearing through the skies

Hurricane with a heart beat  
Sowing and reaping so sweet

Tsunami with still waters  
Filling your empty harbors

I am about to strike  
I am exploding  
Weather or not you like  
I am not imploding

- Emma Visker

I've scored goals that didn't make the difference.  
I've won the start but lost the race.  
I've written wonderful words for blind eyes.

What is the point?  
Why do we kill ourselves to fail?  
If a few successes come from one hundred attempts why  
bother?  
Like sharks, we have to move.

Successes are small:  
a good victory in a losing season,  
a great paper in a failing grade,  
a gorgeous start in a race I'll lose.

Never stop,  
Never give in,  
Because on the one hundred and first attempt,  
The world will become your oyster.

- Charlie Parker



YOUTH  
ARE *Resilient*





# OUR *yAC* Team

Class of 2019: Matt Bays, Habeeb El-amir, Matt Marcus, Ellen Stolarski, Chloe Weigel, Coltrane Bodbyl-Mast, Janna Ercole, and Charlie Parker

Class of 2020: Jalen Greene, Tess O'Leary, Olivia Perrier, Jackson Schulte, Maddy Streng, Liam Beck, Muskaan Multani, Ben Garretson, and Emma Visker

Class of 2021: Ian Rant, Madison Rogers, and Oliver Shampine

Advisor: Lauren Grevel

» Youth are  CREATIVE

[WWW.GHACF.ORG/YOUTH](http://WWW.GHACF.ORG/YOUTH)