Nurture
Transform
Bloom

Art
Action
Garden
Hope

TEENS IN FULL BLOOM

Teens With a PURPOSE
GEICO

is a proud sponsor of Teens With a Purpose

Supporting organizations that benefit our communities is the one policy we’re most proud of.
Dear Gardeners:

Our work in ‘this’ garden is endless, sometimes tiring, but we love it. We keep our hands in the soil and we till, weed, water, harvest and at the seasons end, we are eager to plant a new garden and ensuring that it too will come to Full Bloom. On behalf of Teens With a Purpose and myself I would like you to know that we are honored to work in partnership with you, growing community and helping our young people blossom.

Until I was 14 years old, I lived in inner city Manhattan. Each day I would climb the stairs to the second floor, knock on the door of apartment #24, a two bedroom, one bath, and living room suite, full of enough love for each of my six siblings and me. It was a space and time where I was intimate with hunger daily but I would fill up on hope. I knew I was fortunate. My friends had far less. Some left Harlem for college, but many ended up in prison. I could see the grass that grew between the breaks in the pavement. My life in Harlem taught me that nothing grows, let alone our most precious fruit, our youth, without loving care and unceasing effort.

The Safe Creative Community Space that Teens With a Purpose and our many partners are developing, reminds me of home. It reminds me that with vision, hope and a lot of hard work we can transform what others see as emptiness into paradise!

So this year we celebrate the start of that garden. We celebrate the caring laborers, the youth, the partners, parents, community, the businesses, even the bystanders. We believe it is just a matter of time before more people will find the courage to believe in the garden. There is no doubt that violence and destruction live next door to peace and prosperity and without the gardener, known as community, this world would turn to weeds.

I am so glad you are here. Let’s enjoy the evening together. And when the night is over let us continue to make critical changes in our world and participate in the vision of Teens With a Purpose.

*Teens, creatively cultivating the next generation of leaders.*

In love, hope and Full Bloom!

Deirdre A. Love
Founder & Executive Director
CREATIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

TWP ( Teens With a Purpose) develops young leaders who positively impact their neighbors, classrooms, schools, governments, congregations and one another. TWP-The Youth Movement is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, creative youth development organization celebrating over 20 years of experience in providing peer leadership training. TWP has been recognized both regionally and nationally. Creatively cultivating the next generation of leaders is at the heart of our mission.

PROGRAMS & 2016 REACH

- Peer Education & Leadership: 6,724
- Arts Education as Enrichment: 13,998
- HealthE & Teen Camps: 3625
- Community Outreach & Engagement: 76,222

FREE & OPEN TO ALL HAMPTON ROADS YOUTH 12-18 YO, 18-24 MENTORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Teen Programs offered at the VCM Teen Center M-Th 5:30-7:30Pm | Homework Help M-Th 3-5pm | Hear This After School Clubs at Academy for Discovery at Lakewood, Bayside 6th Grade Annex, Huntington Middle School, I.C. Norcom High

VCM TEEN CENTER 700 E OLNEY RD NORFOLK, VA 23504 757-747-2679

ECOCONICALLY DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN IN VIRGINIA

1 IN 3 CHILDREN ARE ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Group</th>
<th>Number of Children</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic White</td>
<td>239,000</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>205,000</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>113,000</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td>43,000</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian and Pacific Islander</td>
<td>19,000</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A multi-pronged policy platform is needed to improve the economic opportunity of Virginia’s children.

Access to Affordable Healthcare  
High-Quality Early Learning Opportunities  
Two-Generation Supports  
Support in Schools  
Support For Children in Foster Care  
Continued Transformation of the Juvenile Justice System
Dear Friends,

I am pleased to extend my warmest greetings to all who are gathered for the 2017 Teens With a Purpose Gala and Move Maker Awards.

In celebrating youth in Hampton Roads who have overcome adversity to make a positive impact in their communities, we acknowledge the tremendous work of Teens With a Purpose. By empowering young people to use their voices, energy, and abilities, you are helping to create the next generation of leaders. I applaud all those who work with your organization to improve the lives of others. I also extend my appreciation to the young people who are dedicating their time and energy to furthering their development and strengthening their communities.

On this important occasion, I am very pleased to join with your families, friends, and community in wishing Teens With a Purpose the very best for a successful and fulfilling event.

Sincerely,

Mark R. Warner
MARK R. WARNER
United States Senator
2017 TWP GALA PARTICIPANTS

Barbara Hamm Lee is the Executive Producer and Host of Another View, a weekly call in talk show that “discusses today’s issues from an African American perspective” . She is also the owner/consultant for Sharing Info, LLC, a media/communications consulting company. She has held the position of Project Director for the National Federation of Community Broadcasters’ African American Public Radio Stations Initiative, consulting with 26 African American public radio stations on compliance, governance, development, programming and community engagement. She has served as Managing Director, SkillsOnline, Creative Services Officer, Chief Communications Officer, Chief Public Affairs Officer and Chief Community Engagement Officer, all with WHRO Public Media. Barbara is currently Chair of the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority Board of Commissioners; Chair, YWCA South Hampton Roads Board of Directors; Immediate Past Chair of the Norfolk Education Foundation Board of Directors; and board member of Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities (VCIC), Governor’s School for the Arts Foundation Board and Bennett College Alumnae Association. Barbara has been recognized for her work in the community, including being named by the YWCA-SHR as a 2010 Woman of Distinction; a Woman of Courage, Confidence and Character Award and a Famous Former Girl Scout Award, both from the Girl Scout Council of Colonial Coast; the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities Humanitarian Award; the Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Service Award and the Volunteer of the Year Award, both from the Urban League of Hampton Roads.

Symone Davis is a Multimedia Lifestyle Correspondent that will cover human interest, community and entertainment stories for the lifestyle site hrScene.com, powered by WAVY.com. She will be branded as our On The Scene reporter. Her unique multimedia position will provide engaging content on-air, online and across social media. Davis comes to Hampton Roads from Tallahassee, Florida where she served as a multimedia journalist for the CBS affiliate WCTV-TV. She is a graduate of the University of Central Florida where she earned her Bachelor’s Degree in Radio-Television with a specialty in Broadcast Journalism. While in Tallahassee, Davis covered a wide array of stories in North Florida and South Georgia. She was an integral part of team coverage when racial tensions sparked in Valdosta, GA. She also provided severe weather coverage when Hurricane Hermine swept through the Gulf of Mexico devastating several communities. Davis is a member of the National Association of Black Journalists, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., and Alpha Kappa Psi Business Fraternity. She participated in CBS News New York Summer Internship Program, and the Meredith-Cronkite Fellowship Program. Look for Davis’ On The Scene contributions on hrScene.com. Stay informed with her What's Happening in Hampton Roads segments Wednesdays at 11 a.m. on The Hampton Roads Show on WAVY-TV and Thursdays on WAVY News 10 at 10 on FOX43. Follow her on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

Full Bios available at: www.TWP-themovement.org/2017twpgalaparticipants

Chief Larry D. Boone
Norfolk Police Department

Michael P. Desplaines
CEO, Norfolk Botanical Gardens

Lisa Wigginton Doud
Executive Director
Business Consortium for Arts

Rodney Jordan
Chairman
Norfolk Public School Board

Shannon Kenderick
Owner & Founder
Kenderick Consulting Group

Andria P. McClellan
Councilwoman
City of Norfolk

John Pham
Vice President
GEICO

Dr. Andrea Warren
Executive Director
Governor’s School For the Arts
PLAY ME, I’M YOURS
ARTWORK BY BRITISH ARTIST LUKE JERRAM
PICTURED ABOVE VISITS TEEN CENTER

Touring internationally since 2008, Reaching over 10 million people worldwide, more than 1,700 street pianos have been installed in over 55 cities across the globe, from London to New York, bearing the simple instruction Play Me, I’m Yours. Virginia Arts Festival and Chrysler Museum of Art presented this exhibit in Norfolk, from May 23 to June 4 2017. TWP decorated their street piano with Artist Stefan Penn. 1 of 13 street pianos, TWP designated theirs in front of the VCM Teen Center available for everyone to play and enjoy. See photos online #streetpianosnorfolk.

HUMAN EXPERIENCE PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT

a riveting multi-media art exhibit made up of the audio, video and still photos collected from the community. Youth worked with photographer Robert Fields and Beth Austin in our summer camp programs to learn photography.

F.U.S.E FEST CELEBRATES URBAN LIFE – BUILDS POSITIVE COMMUNITIES

A transformative experience that spans throughout the year, culminates annually with Teens With A Purpose’s 5th annual FUSE Fest (Focus on Unity, Spirit and Entertainment), a free celebration of Norfolk urban life through interactive art, music, games, food & more. This community-led, interactive festival, celebrates the heart of inner-city Norfolk in the downtown Church Street District at the historic Attucks Theatre. The vision – festival contributors commit to year-round programming that continues to inspire, inform, engage and celebrate Norfolk’s inner city dwellers helping a community transform itself. The festival was originally planned to be held at the newly developing Safe Creative Community Space (SCCS) but moved indoors due to the weather.

TWP and partner organizations FUSED to affirm the beauty of community. Rise for Youth hosted two powerful workshops that connected the community to local resources that’ll help strengthen our youth. Through stories of experiences and creative thinking, the workshops participants dialoged about alternatives to prison and ways to help knit a closer, safer community. F.U.S.E Fest offered food, haircuts, gardening, a concert, interactive art, and a riveting exhibit by Performing Statistics giving a voice to the incarcerated youth. Every guest received a calendar of ongoing empowering community events along with the promise of continued support. The SCCS space will become the anchor space for where this promise can be fulfilled. It is a developing outdoor environment for creation, application of the visual and performing arts and community gardening with activities that are educational, fun and artistic. Members of the community are encourage to get involved as contributors and participants.

DANOVAN POLLOCK
2017 Youth Poet Laureate

Donovan is Granby High School’s first Youth Poet Laureate, a current Tidewater Community College student and a dedicated member of Teens with a Purpose.

Don brings his personal experiences and his city, Norfolk, into the international poetic conversations generated between young poets from London to Los Angeles, Alaska to Trinidad, from Tennessee to New York. When he speaks, he owns responsibility for his every word because he speaks as the voice of young Hampton Roads.

@HamptonRoadsYouthPoetLaureate

HEAR THIS FESTIVAL LAUNCH

Youth and Adult Poets launch Hampton Roads gathered for performance and writing workshops at the Chrysler Museum for National Poetry Month.

VISUAL ARTS

Youth beautified their community with Visual Arts at the Safe Creative Community (SCCS) and created a Norfolk Public Art project with artists Stefan “Dat Artist” Pen and Karuum El that will be installed in the Young Terrace Community Center later this year.
Safe Creative Community Space Celebrates Urban Life

September 21st, 2017
NORFOLK

Hope, healthy and happiness is taking shape on Church Street in the form of, what’s called the Safe, Creative, Community Space (SCCS). It is located a block down from the historic Attucks Theatre. The site launched on September 9. (SCCS) is a designated safe, welcoming neighborhood space for art, entertainment and learning in a beautiful, bountiful garden.

The development is on a city-owned vacant lot that is adjacent to the Vivian C. Mason Teen Center for Arts and Technology Center, 700 E. Olney Road, the home of Teens with a Purpose (TWP) – The Youth Movement. Development of the site began in early summer of 2017.

The SCCS will continue to grow as an environment for creativity, the application of visual and performing arts and community gardening with activities that are educational, fun and artistically planned throughout the year.

City Councilwoman Andria McClellan and Wynter Benda, Chief Deputy City Manager of the City of Norfolk, alongside Teens With A Purpose, The Mission Continues, Norfolk Botanical Gardens, Virginia Co-operative Extension, Bill & Joanne Fowler, Margaret Hatcher and community members were on hand recently to usher in this new space made possible through the ongoing partnership between the city of Norfolk and TWP, and support of a number of individuals, groups and organizations.

Residence are encouraged to contribute to the garden, to gather and add their voice and ideas to important subjects like community and economic development and health initiatives. A Community Visioning Session was held at the SCCS and Teens With a Purpose Open House on Monday, September 18.

Safe Creative Community Space (SCCS) Partners

Article excerpts from Safe Creative Community Space Celebrates Urban Life Article, original article available at thenewjournalandguide.com
2017 COMMUNITY MOVE MAKERS

Taquan Butler

is a 17-year-old young man in 12th grade at Tallwood High School. In the past, he and his mother have been homeless due to financial stress for most of his 4 years in high school. He currently lives with a family friend due to his mother being incarcerated. Due to Taquan and his mother’s homelessness, he has taken a taxi cab to and from school everyday while he and his mom have lived in different hotels/motels and family friend’s homes across Virginia Beach, Chesapeake, and Norfolk. Taquan experienced a medical emergency on the football field a few weeks ago and he had to be transported by ambulance to the hospital. He was admitted, treated, and released at midnight and Taquan was at school the following morning on time at 7a.m. He is determined to stay on track with his studies no matter what curve ball is thrown his way.

Taniesha Crudup

is a 17-year-old young lady in the 12th grade at I.C. Norcom High School, about to go off to college. She admits that she had never joined a collective group before the "Hear This!" poetry club that started up a couple weeks ago. Taniesha always felt that she was too shy or too different to do these kinds of things. One reason which contributes to this is the fact that she was born with a cerebral palsy which makes her knees bent. Her restricted ability to walk quickly and for long distance has taken a toll on her self image, but has admitted that the poetry club has helped her to feel empowered. At these poetry meetings, she is not scared to share what is on her heart and mind. Everything about this young lady is true, honest, and optimistic.

Trinity Allen

is a 4-year-old, 9 grader at I.C. Norcom High School. She amazed every one around her with her strong academic record and character. She holds an A-B average, meaning she is on the honor roll! That being said, ALL of her teachers brag about her good nature, strong work ethic, willingness to help students who many struggle, and over all bright future. Trinity has a gigantic, humble heart which influences all who surround her. She is very self-aware and does not judge a single soul until she has gotten to know them first. She has over come obstacles, mainly bullying, which has helped to shape her into the person she is today.

Michael Giles

is a hard-working, enthusiastic and dedicated young man in the 10th grade at Oscar Smith High School. He and his family relocated from Atsugi, Japan back to the area in late 2014. Two months later, his mother was diagnosed with breast cancer and this devastated the family in many ways. Michael's parents separated, causing additional stress on the family emotionally and financially. Even though he was only twelve years old at the time, he along with his older brother became their mother's sole caregiver. In 2015, Michael begun brainstorming on ways to help other kids like him and created "Kid’s FUN Day" for all children affected by cancer. In 2016, he created the Strong Willed Survivor Award, honoring and recognizing children in the Hampton Roads area affected by cancer for their strength and courage. In addition to his personal success as a leader amongst his peers, a scholar athlete, volunteers to feed the homeless and Youth Coordinator for Strong Willed Survivor, an organization he co-founded with his mother to uplift and encourage all through times of adversity.

Deja King

is a 16 year old 11th grader at I.C. Norcom High School. She is by far the most outgoing and passionate new member of the I.C. Norcom “Hear This!” poetry club. Her poems are uplifting to all females but mostly speak on African American woman issues. She talks about and chronicles her move to Virginia from New Orleans after hurricane Katrina at the age of 4 and her battle with anger issues. In the group meetings, she is encouraging of others and always wants to hear their trials and tribulations as much as she wants to share hers. Even on the bad days, she manages to smile, contribute, and of course be there for her fellow peers.

Lamontae Davis,

also known as Tae, is a 17-year-old young man who earned his GED from Virginia Beach Juvenile Detention Center in January 2017. He has over come many over whelming barriers which would normally deter other people from the ultimate path of success. Tae has a full-time job, which is helping him to achieve his current goal of getting a car. Another goal of his consists of joining the military and attending college to study criminal justice. Understandably, Tae has a burning desire to help the future generations who will experience similar situations that he experienced within the legal system. His determination is honestly incredible.
2017 TWP MOVE MAKERS

Nylah Kelly is a 17-year-old 12th grader at Churchland High School. She is kind, honest, thoughtful, and hardworking. Having faced difficulty early on in her school years, Nylah has matured to be a voice for the underdog, a scholar, volunteer and a community activist. During her elementary years, she struggled to fit in, she was plagued by insecurity and subjected to bullying by her peers. It was a very chaotic time in her life, several school days were spent in conflict resolution with the guidance counselor. Nylah never allows herself or any of her peers to be bullied. She learned to be more comfortable in her skin and to be herself. Nylah resolved to speak out and speak often and learned that she had a voice and when she couldn’t adequately give sound to those thoughts and feelings, she always had the power of the pen.

Alexander Dixon is a 13-year-old young man in the 7th grade at Ruffner Academy. Alex is one of the strongest people I have ever encountered. After his dad left his mom, they were left to take care of their selves, more like fend for their selves. They became homeless and bounced from place to place. Not only was there that, but they were also separated from my mother for a year. Despite being homeless, Alex has made the best of his situation by putting all his time and effort into his school work. He lives for his good grades. Last year, in sixth grade, he maintained the B honor roll. Alex even wrote his own school play for Black History Month. His teachers saw his radiating potential and recommended him to enroll in honors the following year. Now in seventh grade, he is actively taking all honors classes. Though it was hard and still is, he doesn’t have any desire to give up or ‘take a break’.

Devon Carter is a typical teenager. He has to be reminded to do his chores, clean his room, and pick up his dirty clothes. He loves to play video games! But Devon, also known as Imagine, is also an extraordinary young man. He loves to write poetry and he is very good at it. He uses this poetry as a means to express himself and “Tell his Truth”. He was a member of the HRYP Team for the second year in a row and participated in the world’s largest youth poetry event. Dev worked as a Junior Counselor in the Summer Camp at TWP this summer, added his poetry to “RethinkHighSchool” Poetic Town Hall, several poetry slams, World AIDS Day, and FUSE FEST, just to name a few! Devon has had a few challenges in his short life. Devon is not afraid to stand up for what he believes in. He is bi-racial and bi-sexual, in today’s society both are huge obstacles. But Dev just seems to go with the flow. During the PRIDE week kick-off and “Queeriosity T.R.U. Teens with a Purpose Open House Extravaganza” Devon was the main character in a play that he wrote and directed. Devon enjoys doing things for his community alongside his TWP family.

NDali Brume is a 16-year-old young lady in the 11th grade at Oscar Smith High School. She is self-motivated, creative and ingenious. NDali works hard to achieve her goals and sets very high expectations for herself.

Her humble, genuine spirit is matched by a strong leadership quality and steadfast determination. She is quite talkative and opinionated with a playful and kindhearted side. After losing her father at a very young age, NDali has persevered through years of travel and relocations, coming out consistently on top academically. She went through a particularly difficult period this last year in losing her maternal grandmother as well being separated from her paternal family who lives abroad in Nigeria and England. Through it all she managed to secure a GCSE certificate with very high scores and be admitted into Oscar Smith High School’s highly competitive International Baccalaureate Program.

Alisha Burke is a 15-year-old young lady in the 10th grade at Maury High School. She is a dedicated young lady who has overcome obstacles such as bullying, homelessness, and intense family turmoil. Alisha has blossomed into a beautiful young lady who used fighting as her every solution to someone who actively mentors other teens who have been through similar situations and help to cope effectively. As a sophomore at Maury High School, Alisha maintains an A average, is involved in the Navy JROTC program and plays viola in the school’s concert orchestra. During the summer of 2017 Alisha worked two jobs to help her mother support her and her two younger brothers after the boys’ father passed away unexpectedly. In the last year alone Alisha became involved with Teens With a Purpose and has spent over 2,000 hours volunteering for community and leadership events.
Asia Buie 22y.o, U.S. Army & Small Arms & Artillery Repair, currently stationed at Fort Carson - Fort hood TX. Asia was a member of Teens With a Purpose for over three years, she was a Peer Leader and Poet. One of her major achievements during the years of her membership were planning and hosting a Homeless Teen Lock-in. She is also a 2012 Move Maker Finalist. “TWP was the start of me being exposed to DIVERSITY (Personalities, life issues, opportunities, and places/settings). TWP is the reason I became a little less shy and became a little more vocal about the things I wanted and needed to achieve. TWP was the closest thing to a support system for a while. Love the organization and am more than appreciative of the people making it happen for the youth! I Highkey miss the days where I was able to be active with Teens With a Purpose. Although I had to step out and start "adulting" the opportunities granted, the lessons learned, and the fun I experienced is inexhaustibly missed and appreciated.”
HELPING TEENS THRIVE
By Leia Safshekan   AUG 2017

PLATFORM - The festivities are about to begin at Teens With a Purpose’s annual Slam Fest. Bob Marley’s reggae beat energizes the crowd as they find their seats in Chrysler Museum’s Kaufman Theatre. A boy dances in the atrium, moving fluidly with the rhythm. Event organizers conduct mic checks as competitors arrive, chatting like veterans of the stage. This diverse group of local students has been preparing for today’s Hear This competition for months. The excitement is contagious.

A week later the middle school slam takes place at the Virginia Museum of Contemporary arts. Soon the theatre is full of friends, family, and supporters, and as the competition begins, the crowd grows silent. One girl is too shy to go on stage. A soft-spoken boy reads a poem about his family, and a girl spills a poem of pain and hope. A blind girl in a pretty dress is helped onstage by her school aide. She’s nervous, but she reads her poem using the braille notes in her hand. One by one the kids share their joys and their struggles, and the audience responds with enthusiastic applause. At the end of the competition, all the kids dance on stage, a wonderful mismatch of spastic flailing, giddy dance moves, and breakdancing. It’s impressive—and inspiring.

“I want all young people to feel valued. That’s from my heart,” Miss D said. “That’s why I do it.”

SPACE - Artwork adorns nearly every available surface on and around the Downtown Norfolk building that TWP calls home, including a hidden gem of a portrait near the garbage cans out back painted by one of the kids. Thanks to the generous support of City Government, local businesses and individuals, TWP stays open year-round and provides homework help, meals, mentorship, and workshops for area youth. The program seems to be working: 100 percent of the kids who are accepted into the program graduate high school, and many leave with awards, honors, accolades, and boosted self-esteem. But getting these kids to that milestone isn’t easy. Some of them face harsh realities at home.

“We circle up at the beginning of all our programs and we check in. People say, ‘Why is this so important?’ It’s because you can go home and there is nobody waiting for you—no one’s going to ask you, ‘How was your day?’ Miss D said. “Once when we were checking in a youth shared ‘My father shot.’ If we don’t take a minute to check in on young people’s lives, we miss out on what’s happening.”

Full article available at http://www.twp-themovement.org/helpingteensthrive/

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Lara Pham
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Bill & Joanna Fowler
The Lidman Family
The Y on Granby

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
Mykah Raphael (Designer of Commemorative Magazine Cover)
Minister KT Houston, Jr.
Governor’s School For Arts Dancers, Jazz Band and Collaboration
Virginia Beach City Public Schools
Darrel Crittendon, NRPOS
Nicole Bell, Elegant Affairs
Lara Pham
Michael Berlucchi
City of Norfolk
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TWP CONNECTS WITH THE WORLD

BRAVE NEW VOICES
University of San Francisco
(Don Pollock with Poetry Teams from LEEDS, England and Trinidad & Tobago)
International Youth Poetry Slam Festival convenes leading poets from around the world for workshops, slams, showcases, and civic participation.

ROOTS WEEK
Arden, NC
(Alisha Burke, TWP and Deirdre Love with Harold Stewart, Director of Theater Offensive, Boston and friends)
ROOTS Week Annual Meeting & Artists’ Retreat is a one-of-a-kind gathering. Six days of performances, art and organizing workshops, visual art exhibitions, late-night cabarets, and ROOTS’ annual business meeting, in a retreat-like setting in the mountains of North Carolina committed to building a just world through arts, community, and activism.

WRITE TO THE CITY
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
(Leila Hamilton from Hear This at ADL, Michelle Sims, Makhesazile McClain, Shana Smith w/ Chicago Educator and Student)
Over one hundred young writers from all corners of the Chicago and across the country come together for one week of nonstop art, developing a body of work through workshops led by world-class poets and artists.

LOUDER THAN THE BOMB NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM
Chicago, IL
National Symposium takes place during LTB Chicago, providing national partners with professional development workshops and a front-row view of one of the largest youth poetry festivals. The Symposium connects educators and organizers to educational practices based in the poetry of witness, hip-hop pedagogy, and cultural literacy.

ANDRIA MCCLELLAN
Superward 6 Councilwoman
City of Norfolk, City Council
(757) 373-5221
andria.mcclellan@norfolk.gov
City of Norfolk, 810 Union Street, Norfolk, VA, 23510, United States

YOUTH FIRST NATIONAL CONVENTION
Boston, MA
Youth received leadership training, learn from and build with youth leaders working in other states in Juvenile Justice Reform.
Marie Carter  6th & 7th Grade Math Teacher at Academy for Discovery at Lakewood.
"Words have so much power and it's very important that children learn that their voices are valid, important, and powerful. Teens With a Purpose gives youth the platform to explore their voices in a world where they are told that they are meant to be seen but not heard....and we should prepare to listen."

Bill & Joanna Fowler  Retired Chemists

"Shortly after we arrived in Norfolk were walking to the Attucks Theater becoming depressed about the large amount of trash along the road side. Our spirits soared when we came upon a whimsically painted oil drum functioning as a trash barrel. This did not appear to be the product of City and we wondered where it came from? While at the Theater we learned that that a local organization, TWP, painted the barrel and was working to empower neighborhood youth to make the area more beautiful. We were immediately intrigued by this idea and wanted to become involved with this grass roots organization that is willing to do what needs to be done to improve the quality of life for the people of Norfolk. We have been very grateful that TWP has welcomed us into their community and allowed us to participate in their activities. We believe what TWP is doing is important, necessary and matters. This is making a difference."
Teenagers tell stories of overcoming hardship at poetry competition

William Williams tried to kill himself by the time he was 9.

Growing up, William said he could hear gunshots from his subsidized housing in Norfolk. When he went to school, other youngsters harassed him, saying he’d never amount to anything.

On Sunday night William shared his story as part of Slamfest, a poetry competition put on by Teens With a Purpose. That Norfolk-based organization aims to empower teenagers across Hampton Roads and highlight their strengths.

William was one of eight young people who shared stories of hardship at the Zeiders American Dream Theater. The top four finishers — William, Nia Naomi Johnson, Jeremiah Hagan and Devon Carter — earned the right to move on to an international event in July in San Francisco.

William took first place. His three poems talked about rising above the struggles life dealt him. “I’ve gone through a lot but I can’t let it impede on my progress,” William said.

Other competitors had similarly difficult stories. Khosi McClain, a freshman at Old Dominion University, said his parents died before he turned 5. Khosi said his poem talking about growing up without a mother and father took about a year to write. But it was helpful to him.

“I heal through my poetry,” he said.

While the event was a competition, it was also a celebration. Whenever a judge gave a score deemed too low, many in the crowd chanted, “Listen to the poem!” Breaks during the three-hour event gave the dozens in attendance time to congratulate each poet.

Leila Hamilton, a seventh-grader at the Academy for Discovery at Lakewood in Norfolk, said the supportive atmosphere was one of the things she liked about the competition. Her poems talked about the reasons people behave in certain ways.

“Get people to see why people are the way they are,” Leila said.

William was the final poet of the night. His piece talked about “hating the person in the mirror every single day” when he was young. His father wasn’t a part of his life, and other children teased him and told him he would never achieve anything, he said.

Now William is 16, he said, a sophomore at Granby High School. And he thanked those peers for making him stronger.

“Thank you for making me a man,” he said.
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The Move Maker Award honors Hampton Roads Youth (12-18 years old) who have made significant strides over the past year while overcoming insurmountable obstacles.

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Spencer Hall 2015
Donovan Pollock 2015
Stephanie Diego 2014
Malik Jordan 2014
Falon Presley 2013
James Yapnayon 2013
Khayla Walker 2012
Clara Huff 2012
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Yosef Woods
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Tallwood High School
Ruffner Academy
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Through the theme of creating a world without Prisons, organizations, artists and community take a close, critical look at the U.S. prison industrial complex – the largest system of incarceration in the world. ROOTS aims to lift up artist-activists use their arts to help them build a world where prisons are a thing of the past. Teens With a Purpose attended ROOTS Weekend in Richmond and ROOTS Week in Arden, North Carolina, a gathering of artists and cultural workers/supporters whose art is rooted in a community of place, tradition and spirit.

Teens With a Purpose members Alisha Burke, Dayana Lee and Donovan Pollock have been selected to join the Youth First Youth Leaders Network. Youth First Youth Leaders Network (YFYLN) is a group of youth who are interested in helping to lead campaigns to close youth prisons and invest in community alternatives in their states. Only six young people from Virginia have been selected to represent our state.

Over the next year, the network will bring together youth leaders from different states to work together to hone their leadership, advocacy skills and communion skills to help advance their state campaigns.

Alisha, Dayana and Don will receive leadership training and have the opportunity to learn from and build with youth leaders working in other states. On October 3rd – October 5th 2017, they attended the annual Youth First convening in Boston.

**BECAUSE WE SPEND 12 TIMES MORE TO INCARCERATE ONE TEEN IN ONE YEAR THAN TO EDUCATE THEM**
COMMUNITY LOVE

QUEERIOSITY T.R.U. OPEN HOUSE EXTRAVAGANZA
Hampton Roads Pride Week Kick Off presented by Teens With a Purpose, sponsored by Hampton Roads Pride
LOVE= Listen, Openhearted, Value, Encourage

WORLD AIDS DAY CANDLELIGHT SERVICE
Teens With a Purpose began in 1996, as a HIV/AIDS ministry for teen, at the Basilica of St. Mary, coordinated by Deirdre Love. With hard work, prayers and time, we witnessed a decline in the number of young lives lost due to the AIDS pandemic. We marched into an era of hope still with no cure, but with increased knowledge and medical advancement we witnessed and participated in progress. TWP continues this work. This year TWP hosted the World AIDS Day sponsored by EVMS HIV/AIDS Resource & Consultation Center.

MY BLOCK IS BEAUTIFUL
Second Annual My Block is Beautiful Party united community with a clean-up, live DJ, community open mic, cook-out by Chef Tony, games and even a “dance off” with the community and Norfolk Police Department that went viral and captured national media attention. The event was held in front of the Young’s Terrace Community Center.
Young Poets Engage America to Rethink High School in Norfolk and Beyond

Too often the future is discussed, but too rarely is the future engaged in the conversation, but that was not the case on Saturday, March 25, 2017. XQ Institute, an organization dedicated to rethinking high school in America, and Youth Speaks, the convener of the Brave New Voices Network and the country’s leading youth spoken word and literary arts organization, sponsored #RethinkHighSchool 2017 in Norfolk VA, as part of a 20 Cities national effort. The young people from Teens With a Purpose developed and delivered a poetic town hall at Norfolk’s Booker T. Washington High School where young people shared their poems, stories and dreams to reimagine public high school.

The event gave youth the ability to envision high school in innovative ways specific to this community’s needs. Panelists comprised of both youth and adults were asked to respond to the poems with one question in mind – What are you going to do about it? Panelists included Delegate Daun Hester, Michael Berlucchi – Community Engagement, The Chrysler Museum & President, Pride, Dr. Ronald Holloman – Assistant Principal, Hampton City Schools, Tamele Hobson – Lawyer and students from Norfolk, Suffolk and Chesapeake.

Young people reimagined school, spoke out and were heard by other students, teachers, administrators, legislators, community leaders and youth in Norfolk and from all around the country! “In history, the architects of transformation have always been the young. #RETHINKHIGHSCHOOL is their united blueprint for change.” Deirdre Love, Founder & Executive Director of Teens With a Purpose.

Youth poet, Devon “Imagine” Carter of Maury High School, identified the suspensions rate and referrals to law enforcement agencies as one of the areas that need rectification. U.S. Department of Education data analyzed by the Center for Public Integrity show that Virginia schools in a single year referred students to law enforcement agencies at a rate nearly three times the national rate. Earlier in March, Teens With a Purpose, conducted writing workshops for Norfolk Juveniles from the Detention Center. Their voices and poems were produced and performed, so they too were a part of the conversation.

Some suggestions that were made include building community gardens on vacant city lots to improve the quality of the food provided to students, eliminating Study Packets, including more current events and history classes that reflect the student populations and providing more student feedback to the administration.

The 20-city tour that began in Washington, DC; Baltimore, MD; Philadelphia, PA and New York, NY continued this March through June 2017. Additional events were held around the country, opened to the public and press.

Dayana Lee, 2016 Hampton Roads Youth Poet Laureate won as a top ten contestant in the national Brave New Schools online competition. “We received hundreds of submissions for the Brave New Schools competition, all of which showcased immense creativity and eloquence while truly capturing the spirit of the competition,” said Youth Speaks Founder and Executive Director James Kass, “We launched this competition to push young people to rethink the traditional public high school and the 10 winners and 15 finalists took the challenge head on while producing truly incredible pieces of art.”
HAMPTON ROADS PRIDE

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TEENS WITH A PURPOSE
Hampton Road's own, Richard A. Love, is a living Testimony

In February, Richard - the artist known as Testimony - was chosen for national recognition along with 27 other young, gifted and Black millennials who are redefining what it means to be Black in America today through their work and accomplishments. For each of the 28 days of February, NBCBLK, the African-American vertical of NBCNews.com, showcased 28 game changers, all 28 years of age and under, who are leaders in a wide array of industries. Testimony was honored alongside Stephen Curry (Go Warrior!), Von Miller, Chance The Rapper, Simone Biles and other national unsung heroes.

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