TRANSFORMING PAIN INTO POWER

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Do Now

- Write down the name of a very close loved one
- Write down your favorite activity
- Write down your favorite place to go
- Write down (or simply think about) a secret you have that is embarrassing to the point very few know about it. If you don’t want to write down the secret, use a symbol to represent it.
Founded by Detroit youth for Detroit Youth, Detroit Heals Detroit exists to foster healing justice for Detroit youth in which they are able to transform their pain into power. With a goal to combat trauma, we use healing centered engagement to share our greatest vulnerabilities with the rest of the world while simultaneously working to dismantle oppressive systems for marginalized Detroit youth.
Vision

Our organization was created for Detroit Youth who have been walking and developing in a world that has sought to silence their pain. We understand that our students face more challenges than any individual person can remedy so our goal is to have them help each other heal from their trauma together. They need a voice and access to share their greatest vulnerabilities with the rest of the world, giving their trauma a purpose. Exposure to trauma has a profound impact on cognitive development and academic outcomes and our specific students in Detroit seem to wake up to trauma like its breakfast. We believe that we need to look at children through the lens of "What happened to that child?" versus, "What's wrong with that child?"
Healing Justice?

“Healing justice identifies how we can holistically respond to and intervene on current and generational trauma and violence, and to bring collective practices that can impact and transform the consequences of oppression on our bodies, hearts and minds.”

- Cara Page – Kindred Southern Healing Justice Collective
HEALING JUSTICE

- Shifting from trauma informed care to healing centered engagement
- Decolonization of youth mental health
- Youth centered and focused practices
- Listening
- Substantive engagement as an agent of change
Healing Justice: The healing justice framework lifts up resiliency and radical healing that centers the collective safety and emotional, physical, spiritual, environmental and mental wellbeing of Detroit Youth.

Consciousness: Building consciousness in our youth as well as in those who serve them. Incorporating intentional programming that is aligned with the Anti-Deficit Framework as a guiding model, we work to build consciousness that will lead to collective liberation and healing.

Literacy: Developing powerful readers and writers who use literacy to write for real reasons like to advocate for themselves and others, to deepen their own and others knowledge, & to illuminate the lives they live and the world they are a part of. It will be an opportunity for them to use their words to bring power to their realities.

Access: Our distinct goal is to build access for our peers: Access to healing, Access to literacy, Access to Liberation and Access to new possibilities.
THE WHY!

CHALLENGE

SOLUTION
WHAT IS TRAUMA?

- ONGOING/COMPLEX TRAUMA
- ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACES)
- TOXIC STRESS
- GENERATIONAL TRAUMA
EXPERIENCES OF TRAUMA CAN LEAD TO

- DISTRUST OF AUTHORITY/SYSTEMS
- DISENGAGEMENT FROM SCHOOL, FAMILY, PEERS, ETC
- IMPULSIVITY
- SUBSTANCE USE/ABUSE
- ACTING OUT BEHAVIORS/TRAUMA RE-ENACTMENT
- HEIGHTENED FIGHT/FLIGHT/FREEZE RESPONSES
WHAT TRAUMATIZED STUDENTS NEED

- TO BE HEARD
- AFFIRMATION
- SUPPORT NOT PUNISHMENT
- VALIDATION
- SAFER SPACES
- CONSISTENCY AND STRUCTURE
TURN & TALK

How might trauma push youth into the Juvenile Justice & Child Welfare Systems?

How might trauma keep youth in these systems?
PROJECTS

“THIS IS WHAT HEALING FROM TRAUMA FEELS LIKE: YOU ARE HOLDING A DAM TOGETHER WITH SUPERGLUE AND BEHIND IT IS A GIANT OCEAN OF PAIN AND ALL YOU HAVE IS THIS IS SUPERGLUE FOR THE CRACKS IN THE CEMENT. THE TRICKLES OF PAIN THROUGH THOSE CRACKS ARE ENOUGH TO TERRIFY YOU, BUT EVERYONE AROUND YOU SEEMS OBLIVIOUS, THINKING, WELL YOU LOOK LIKE YOU’RE HOLDING IT TOGETHER, YOU LOOK LIKE YOU’RE HEALING...SO YOU MUST BE FINE.”
HEALING CIRCLES

• OUR HEALING CIRCLES ARE DESIGNED FOR DETROIT YOUTH WHO HAVE BEEN WALKING AND DEVELOPING IN A WORLD THAT HAS SOUGHT TO SILENCE THEIR PAIN.

• WE UNDERSTAND THAT DETROIT STUDENTS FACE MORE CHALLENGES THAN ANY INDIVIDUAL PERSON CAN REMEDY SO OUR GOAL IS TO HELP EACH OTHER HEAL FROM OUR TRAUMA TOGETHER.

• WE NEED A VOICE AND ACCESS TO SHARE OUR GREATEST VULNERABILITIES WITH THE REST OF THE WORLD, TRULY GIVING OUR TRAUMA A PURPOSE.
HEALING CIRCLES

• OUR HEALING CIRCLES ARE VERY TRANSFORMATIVE. THEY ARE HOSTED IN VARIOUS LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT DETROIT. THESE SESSIONS ARE FACILITATED BY OUR TRAINED YOUTH ADVISORY.

• WE WILL START EVERY SESSION WITH A MEAL BECAUSE SHARING FOOD LEADS TO DIALOGUE AND DIALOGUE LEADS TO UNDERSTANDING, ACCEPTANCE AND PEACE. WE WILL THEN WALK OUR PEERS THROUGH A PROCESS OF TURNING THEIR TRAUMA INTO A WRITTEN NARRATIVE (STORY, POEMS, ESSAYS, ETC.)

• CIRCLES ARE ALSO SUPPORTED BY TRAINED THERAPISTS. WE INCORPORATE CRITICAL WRITING SKILLS ESSENTIAL TO THE BASIS OF LITERACY. EVERY HEALING CIRCLE ENDS WITH OUR HEALING MANTRA AND A POSITIVE RELEASING ACTIVITY LIKE YOGA, KARAOKE, DANCING, ETC.
CIRCLE NORMS

• Open minds exploring together ways of deepening capacity to heal, alleviating suffering, & finding meaning in both challenge and joy.

• Treat each other with kindness and respect.

• Listen with compassion and curiosity.

• Honor each other's unique ways to healing and don't presume to advise or fix or try to save each other.

• Listen with attention.

• Speak with intention.

• Every member of the circle has an equal voice & is responsible for the leadership of their own healing.
Forbidden Tears Publication Series

Forbidden Tears was written with a goal to combat student trauma in Detroit. Students from the heart of Detroit have contributed their once silenced voices to this project in hopes of turning their pain into power. Unedited and raw, students share their compelling stories of trauma in the form of essays, poems and written narratives. This book serves as the gift in the wound as a lot of tears were shed in the production of this publication but it will sure be impactful to anyone who opens the cover. Here is the inception of a movement of youth that will no longer suffer in silence.

THIS IS FORBIDDEN TEARS.

Forbidden Tears Can Now be Purchased on Barnes & Noble & Amazon
FORBIDDEN TEARS

STORIES, POEMS & ESSAYS OF TRAUMA FROM THE IMPRISONED VOICES OF UNAPOLOGETIC BLACK YOUTH
ARTIFACTS AND EVIDENCE

Youth of Detroit Collegiate High School

BOOK LAUNCH

TUESDAY, APRIL 24TH

Forbidden Tears

CHARLES H. WRIGHT MUSEUM
4PM-8PM

"If You Are Silent About Your Pain, They'll Kill You & Say You Enjoyed It"
DATA ANALYSIS

ALL 48 AUTHORS SAID THEY WOULD DO IT AGAIN

78% OF STUDENTS SAID THEY GAINED A NEW ENJOYMENT FOR WRITING

ATTENDANCE REMAINED ABOVE AN 87% ALL YEAR

BEHAVIOR VARIED, HOWEVER THE BOOK HELPED STUDENTS DEVELOP EMPATHY SO INCIDENTS OF BULLYING DECREASED SIGNIFICANTLY

ONLY 1 GRADE OF FAILURE WAS MARKED FOR MS. DARBY’S CLASS IN THE FIRST 2 QUARTERS DEVELOPING THE BOOK
Healing Justice Gala

- The gala is a fundraising event for the organization that showcases the monumental greatness of Detroit youth with performances including spoken word, dance ensembles, monologues and choral performances.
- Additionally, two scholarships are given out as well as awards to youth trailblazers making a difference in the Greater Detroit Community.
- The gala is an opportunity to exchange dialogue about trauma in our communities, led by the voices of our young people.
Healing Justice Gala

• "Trauma is personal. It does not disappear if it is not validated. When it is ignored or invalidated the silent screams continue internally heard only by the one held captive. When someone enters the pain and hears the screams healing can begin."

• — Danielle Bernock
• DESTINATION: LIBERATION

• DETROIT HEALS DETROIT IS PARTNERING WITH WANDERLUST REVOLUTION ON AN INITIATIVE TO BRING RADICAL HEALING TO OUR MALE PEERS.

• WANDERLUST REVOLUTION, INC., IS A DETROIT-BASED NONPROFIT WITH A GOAL TO DECOLONIZE TRAVEL CULTURE AND UTILIZE TRAVEL AS A FORM OF RESISTANCE IN ORDER TO REACH LIBERATION.

• THIS INITIATIVE IS A TRAVEL IMMERSION INITIATIVE FOR FORMERLY INCARCERATED DETROIT MALE YOUTH. NO NATION HAS LOCKED UP MORE OF ITS OWN PEOPLE PER CAPITA THAN THE US.

• OUR GOAL IN THIS 8-WEEK PROGRAM IS TO GIVE THESE YOUNG MEN THEIR PURPOSE AND POWER BACK THAT SOCIETY OTHERWISE WOULD HAVE TRIED TO TAKE AWAY FROM THEM, INDEFINITELY. THIS WILL IMPACT AN ENTIRE SYSTEM THAT HELPED CONTRIBUTE TO THE TRAUMA IN THE FIRST PLACE, NOT LEAVING IT NEATLY INTACTED ENCOURAGING THE DEVELOPMENT OF FURTHER TRAUMA FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

• OUR GOAL: GIVE THESE YOUNG MEN THEIR PURPOSE AND POWER BACK THAT SOCIETY OTHERWISE WOULD HAVE TRIED TO TAKE AWAY FROM THEM, INDEFINITELY. GIVING THEM A PIECE OF THEIR POWER BACK THAT ESSENTIALLY UNDERCUTS THE LIKELIHOOD OF RECIDIVISM.
HEALING MANTRA
I SEE THE PROMISE AND POTENTIAL MY FUTURE HOLDS!
I ACCEPT MY SITUATION, I AM WHERE I AM AND I CAN BUILD ON THAT!
I HAVE A BRIGHT FUTURE!
I GIVE MY BODY LOVE AND SPACE TO HEAL!
I AM GRATEFUL TO MY BODY FOR EVERYTHING IT DOES TO SUPPORT ME!
I AM STILL STANDING!
I AM REASSURED! I AM SAFE!
I AM LOVED AND SUPPORTED!
FEAR CONTRACTS, LOVE EXPANDS.
I AM WORTHY!

MY SELF ESTEEM AND CONFIDENCE ARE GROWING!
I move forward and leave the past behind with confidence!
I can do this! I am peace!
I am love! All is well!
MEDIA


• MICHIGAN CHRONICLE: HTTPS://MICHIGANCHRONICLE.COM/2020/02/06/EMPOWERMENT-THE-MISSION-FOR-NONPROFIT-ORGANIZATION-DETROIT-HEALS-DETROIT/#/?PLAYLISTID=0&VIDEOID=0


• C&G NEWS: HTTPS://WWW.CANCGNEWS.COM/NEWS/DETROIT- STUDENTS-PUBLISH-BOOK-ON-CONFRONTING-TRAUMA-108054

• FOX NEWS: HTTPS://WWW.FOX47NEWS.COM/NEWS/EXCELLENCE-IN-EDUCATION/EXCELLENCE-IN-EDUCATION-52317-SIRRITA-DARBY
RESOURCES

WEBSITES:

- https://www.detroithealsdetroit.org/
- HTTP://TRAUMAAWARESCHOOLS.ORG/
- HTTP://DEVELOPINGCHILD.HARVARD.EDU/ RESOURCETAGEXECUTIVE-FUNCTION/
- HTTP://WWW.LIVESINTHEBALANCE.ORG/
- HTTP://CHILDTRAUMA.ORG/HTTP://TRAUMAINFORMEDOREGON.ORG/RESOURCES/ADVERSE-CHILDHOOD-EXPERIENCES-ACE-STUDY/

BOOKS/ARTICLES:

CHILD TRAUMA TOOLKIT

- HTTP://TSAFORSCHOOLS.ORG/_STATIC/TSA/UPLOADS/FILES//CHILD_TRAUMA_TOOLKIT_FINAL.PDF
- REACHING AND TEACHING CHILDREN WHO HURT: STRATEGIES FOR YOUR CLASSROOM
- FOSTERING RESILIENT LEARNERS: STRATEGIES FOR CREATING A TRAUMA-SENSITIVE CLASSROOM

FILM:

- PAPER TIGERS- HTTP://KPJRFILMS.CO/PAPER-TIGERS/