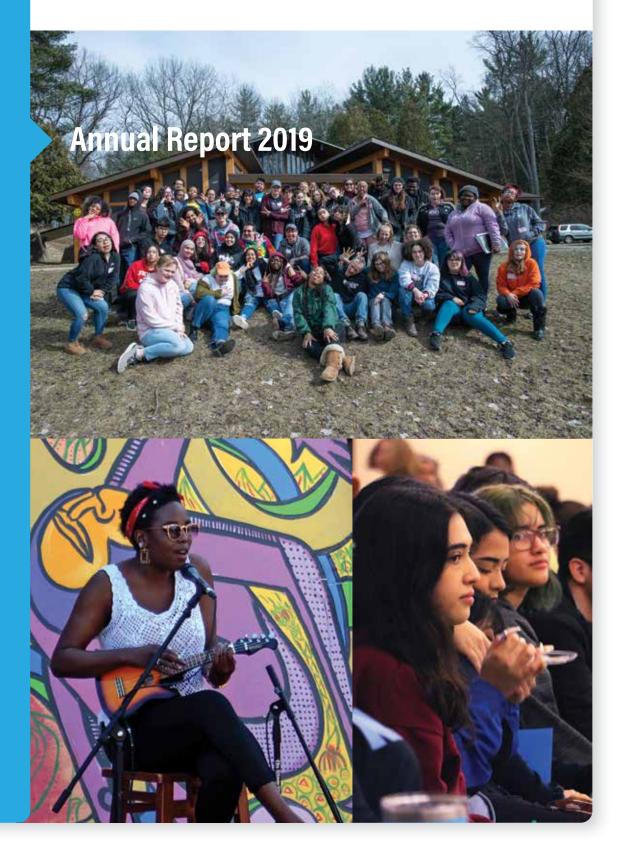
# The Neutral Zone Where teens lead, create and innovate



Dear Friends,

Without question, young people have faced many challenges this year, as have we all. But they have risen to meet those challenges with a poignancy and whole-heartedness that fills me with hope for the future.

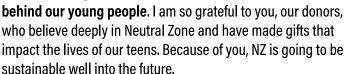
That's why I am so happy to share just a few of the stories from this year. You deserve to see what I get to see every day.

Teens from across our community have shown up at the Neutral Zone to share their ideas of belonging through poetry, to participate in government, and to take charge of their own futures through Neutral Zone's workforce development program. Being surrounded by so many empathic future leaders is truly inspiring.



It's not only the teens. It's you, the amazing adults in our community.

You have also answered the call to stand up for and stand



We have so much to celebrate — our teens, our partners, and you, our community. My colleagues and I are deeply grateful for the work that, thanks to you, we have accomplished this past year. I look forward to continuing to find ways to champion our youth together in the future.

With appreciation,

Xoii

Lori Roddy Neutral Zone Executive Director

# Neutral Zone Financial Health, 6/30/2019

#### Earned Revenue: \$97,253

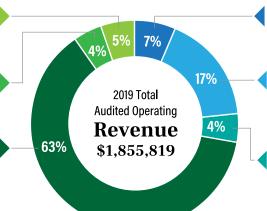
We earn revenue from several sources, including program fees, sales of merchandise produced through our programs, concert admissions and renting our space when we're not using it.

#### **Corporate Contributions: \$79,575**

Corporate citizens in our community have recognized the Neutral Zone as a valuable partner in creating the kind of world we all want to live in They honor us with their contributions.

#### Grants: \$1,162,719

Multi-year grants keep our cash flow consistent. Donors can be confident that the NZ deserves their resources, as we have already earned the support of professional funders.



#### Coaching & Consulting: \$120,148

Through Youth Driven Spaces, NZ shares information about our organizational successes with other youth-serving organizations who want to implement our model.

#### Individual Contributions: \$316,913

Few things signal the health of the Neutral Zone more clearly than individuals choosing us as one of their philanthropic beneficiaries. We ask you for money, tell you what it's for, and you respond with great generosity. Thank you.

# Fundraising Events: \$79,211

Neutral Zone puts on several events per year, each infused with teen spirit and talent. NZ events let us put teens front and center, and allow the larger community to appreciate them.

#### Programs: \$937,929

Our goal is simple: helping teens engage at their highest potential.

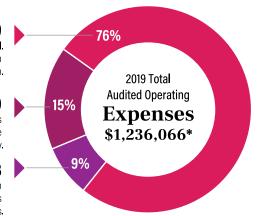
Program expenses range from hiring the right staff, to putting on
concerts and poetry slams, to keeping the lights on.

#### **Development: \$188,384.00**

Building and sustaining treasured relationships with supporters takes time, staff attention and money. Common expenses include mailings, gift acknowledgements, events and hospitality.

#### Administration/General: \$109,753

Someone's gotta run the place and make sure that we comply with the regulations that come with our non-profit status. These costs include audits and other outside professional services.



#### **Assets**

- Neutral Zone has \$3,876,762 in real assets
- We hold \$291,002 in our operating revenue fund and the value of our endowment is \$212,985
- The book value of our building and equipment is \$2,731,725
- \* Total expenses include \$98,558 of building depreciation, a non-cash expense.

# **Program Highlights**



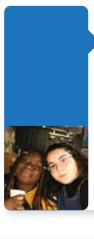
# **Literary Arts**

22 teen poets performed @ Poetry Night in Ann Arbor for 400+ people

8 teens performed @ Louder than a Bomb; 5 teens attended Young Chicago Authors "Write to the City" conference

250+ people participated in 5 public events for the NEA Big Reads Grant featuring Citizen by Claudia Rankine

15 Ypsi teen poets collaborated with Richmond, CA teens to talk about gentrification and housing justice



#### Leadership

Teen Advisory Council raised \$20K+ for youth-led projects at their Gala

SEED hosted dialogue workshops with the 20 schools in Washtenaw County, serving 400+ students

Project GreeNZ partnered with the Community Farm of Ann Arbor to raise awareness around food justice

RIOT Youth held teach-ins for community adults and created a curriculum for middle school teachers to support LGBTQ+ youth

SARE hosted Concentric, a day of consent culture activities for 50 teens



# **Music Technology**

182 teen participants in weeky programs

1,300+ people @ 14 youth-curated B-Side shows

3,500+ people @ Live on Washington, which showcased 120 youth musicians

3 new music programs started including EMCEE Workshop, Youth Owned Radio, and MIX (a collaboration with A2 Community Music School)



#### **Education**

SCORE teens used the Gallup Strengths Finder Tool with partners Torrent Consulting
SCORE teens hosted 3 NZ events: a Halloween Party, Holiday Party, and an Eid Celebration for
200+ people



#### **Visual and Media Arts**

89 students from 16 Washtenaw County Schools submitted 114 pieces to the Potential Art Show. Over 400 people came to the show

16 teens made films for the Teen 24 Hour Short Film Challenge

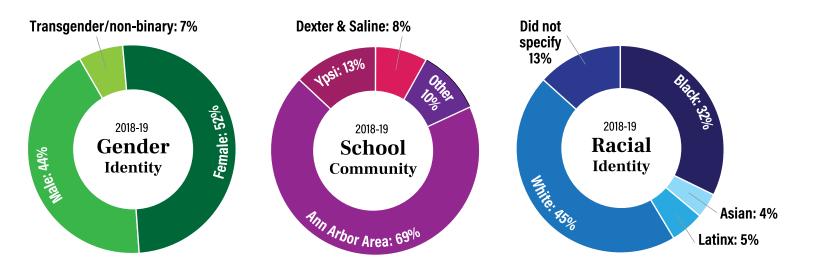
25 Zone Hack teens participated in the Tech Challenge sponsored by NetScout

# 97%: Highly Satisfied

Teens love the Neutral Zone. An astonishing 97% of them say they were highly satisfied with their experiences at the Zone.

Like many youth-serving organizations, we collect information from young people about the impact Neutral Zone has had on their lives. Are NZ teens' lives improving? Are we attracting and serving diverse communities? How do they compare to other teens in our area? For you supporters who are numbers people, this comparative data is a simple way to measure the impact your generosity is having on the lives of our community's young people. Thank you!

During the 2018-19 school year, the Neutral Zone hosted approximately 355 teens who participated regularly in our weekly programs. This figure represents the teens who came to the Neutral Zone weekly — and some every day — during the school year. We served an additional 150 youth through our summer programs and thousands more in our workshops, trainings, events and partnership programs. Visit neutral-zone.org to learn more.



# What our Teens are Good at (and Getting Better)

NZ surveyed our teens with Hello Insight, a nationally-recognized, norm-referenced tool. On the basis of 75 pre/post surveys, we found that 79% of these youth made gains in four or more of the six skills listed below. These are the skills that help teens thrive, such as fewer risk-taking behaviors, and better academics.

Hello Insight recognized NZ with a High Impact Award for being in the top 4% of youth programs nationwide in social emotional learning and positive youth development practices.

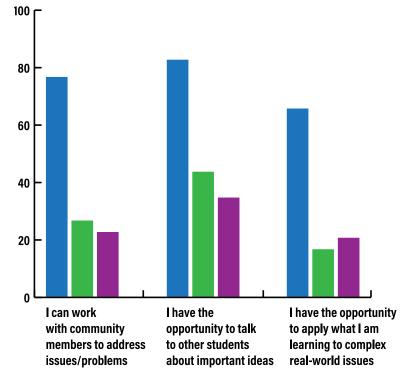
- 84% made gains in Social Skills
- 68% made gains in Academic Self Efficacy
- 74% made gains in Social Capital
- 66% made gains in Contribution
- 74% made gains in Positive Identity
- 76% made gains in Self Management

NZ seniors
experience
at Neutral Zone

NZ seniors
experience
at high school

County seniors
experience
at high school

We compared NZ's results to the Washtenaw County Intermediate School District Senior Exit Survey tool. This tool measures NZ seniors with graduating seniors across the county.





a neutral zone project: mentorship >> employment >> education >> coaching

After high school, what next? While some kids march directly to a traditional four-year college, what happens to the ones who don't? Many young people, especially from socio-economically challenged backgrounds struggle as they determine their steps beyond high school.

FutureCorps, a new program at Neutral Zone, in partnership with the City of Ann Arbor, re-imagines the post-high school years, giving young people aged 18-24 years old a new workforce development program.

FutureCorps uses a four-step process of readiness training, mentorship, employment, and education to lay the foundation for young people to build their success upon.

When young people reach out, we want them to have a transformative experience that allows them to become successful adults. Our aim is to make sure that youth who have struggled the most know that as a community, we will work together to give them our best.



# **Staying Power**

Ypsilanti, MI and Richmond, CA: two historically Black, family-oriented communities challenged by white flight, redlining, segregation, poverty, and gun violence. Now, gentrification threatens their historical identities, But these two cities have an ace up their sleeves: a corps of young people committed to preserving and improving their homes.

These young leaders invoked the power of poetry to preserve culture and defend affordable housing. Staying

Power brought together youth from Richmond and Ypsilanti for a year-long cultural exchange project that explored their communities' challenges, and used poetry to advocate for change.

Two of the cities' former poet laureates, Ciera-Jevae Gordon and Donté Clark, launched Staying Power with a 4-day retreat in May 2019. The participants continued the exchange through weekly concurrent workshops in their respective cities and quarterly Skype dialogues.

"To me, Staying Power is more like a movement and community of like-minded youth who want to make a change in their neighborhoods," says Ciatta Tucker, one of the Ypsi teens in the cohort. "It's important to me because before, I felt like I didn't have a group of people to relate to when it comes to housing justice and other social justice topics."

# HOW IT WORKS

Mentorship Youth build a cohort of peers while learning critical workforce and life skills. When they're ready, a community of mentors will offer youth a circle of support and accountability at monthly dinners throughout the 1st year of the program. Youth will lean on their mentorship support circles to help them navigate their challenges and celebrate their successes.

#### **Employment**

Youth will follow a path toward engagement with the City of Ann Arbor, including a tour of all the city departments, a chance to meet with city leadership, a job shadowing experience, and a first time job experience.

#### Education

Youth will receive a full scholarship to attend Washtenaw Community College for a two-year associate or technical degree. Participants will have ongoing support through the GED process and a WCC coach to counsel and manage their experiences.

**Coaching** NZ staff will continue to coach youth for 2-4 years, during which the youth will continue to have access to a cell phone and paid data plan from Wireless Zone and a monthly unlimited bus pass from Ann Arbor Area Transit Authority. NZ will partner with Michigan Works! to ensure youth are jointly engaged in both programs to access resources and training.

# **Washtenaw County Youth** Commission

A group of young leaders from across the county are having the experience of a lifetime. They're the inaugural cohort of the Washtenaw County Youth Commission.

Last May, after nearly a year of preparation from youth working with Neutral Zone, Corner Health, the U-M School of Social Work and Commissioners Jason Morgan and Felicia Brabec, the full body of Washtenaw County Commissioners voted into existence our first ever youth commission.

Who better than our young leaders to address the needs of young people, while gaining experience in community and government affairs? The newly formed youth commission's first order of business: use surveys, focus groups, interviews and town hall meetings to learn how life is for our community's young people, and how to make it even better.



### Dear Donors,

Neutral Zone teens count on you and your support. Your generous donations help NZ run special programs, pay for new initiatives, and keep the lights and heat on in our building.

Thanks to you, NZ never has to turn a teen away because of financial issues. Your donations help build the kind of citizens you'll be proud of when they're running the world of the future. Thank you very much!

These lists represent donations made January 1-December 31, 2019. Did we make a mistake? Please email amy@neutral-zone.org

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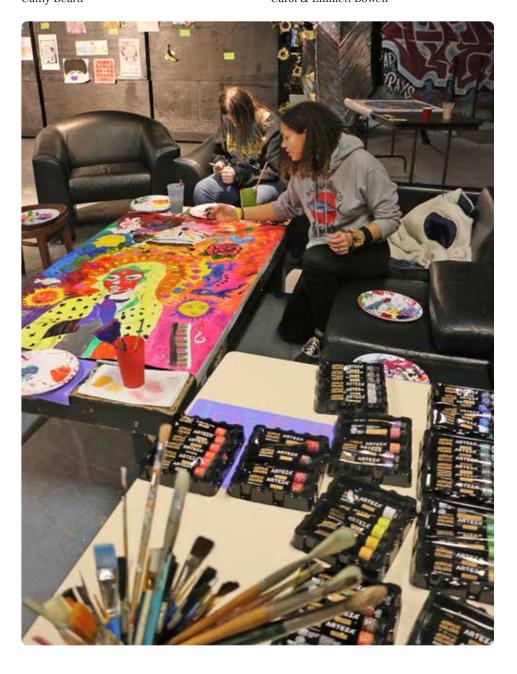
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# The Neutral Zone

Where teens lead, create and innovate

The Neutral Zone is a diverse, youth-driven teen center dedicated to promoting personal growth through artistic expression, community leadership and the exchange of ideas.

310 E. Washington Street Ann Arbor, MI 48104

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