



OUR VOICES

By teens, for teens

RESOURCES

**National Suicide
hotline:** 1-800-273-8255

Crisis Text Line: Text
"START" to 741-741

Crisis Care Center:
513-281-2273

**Psychiatric Intake
Response Center
(PIRC)**
513-636-4124

**Psychiatric Emergency
Services/Mobile Crisis
Line**
513-584-8577

Who we are: Our Voices is a multifaceted quarterly newsletter that is broadcasted to teens all over the city. With a culmination of student work such as art, poetry, photographs, and even individual interviews, we strive to provide a space for all teens to express themselves in any way they choose. Since our publication is "by teens, for teens," we hope to help raise mental health awareness in the teenage community, and take steps towards shattering the stigma.



INTERCHANGEABLE

Anonymous

it all seemed right in the moment
"you're my world"
but how was I any different than all the other worlds
you balanced so carefully
on the tips of your countless fingers?
a blur of "I love you's" that never meant anything
just a "you're irreplaceable" here and there
a blur of reckless behavior
forgotten just so easily
of course I wasn't your world
how could I be
when you love everyone in the universe the same?

This poem is about feeling insecure. Feeling as if you are insignificant in everyone's lives... as if you could be replaced in an instant. Even if they tell you how special you are or that they love you, somehow you never feel as if you mean anything to anyone.

PAINT ME PRETTY

Ria Parikh

Her face is a blank canvas in need of some pop and color
Her lips a dull shade of pink like a rose in the midst of the arctic
Her eyes a window into her self conscious soul
Her cheeks, pale and white and cold
Her nose, imperfect. Not 100% centered, straight or symmetric, therefore flawed
Her skin, torn and patchy because of ignorance of her washing it, but that's okay, the makeup will cover it
The brushes dab on a new layer, or better yet mask, onto her face
She glances in the mirror and smiles. There. All Better.
Her face is now full of life and personality
Her lips ready to stretch and smile
Her eyes shine again and she feels like she belongs
Her cheeks a touch rosy showing her delicate and ladylike self
Her nose, finally perfect and ready for the world to see.
Her skin, fair and even like a doll
She goes out and lives her life. Smiling at strangers, posing

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in pictures, and laughing with loved ones
After a long day, she comes home and sits at the sink
She scrubs the fake skin off of her face and her
personality goes down the drain
She peels off her fake eyelashes, taking her confidence
with them She rubs off her lipstick with a towel and her
smile fades
She finishes her routine and looks in the mirror.
She is disappointed in what she sees.
Earlier, she was so confident, bubbly, and energized,
ready to take on the world. Now her eyes are again dull,
her nose again flawed, and her face again ugly.
She sighs and gets up to turn off the light.
Oh well.
Tomorrow she can wake up early again and paint herself
pretty.

I created this work by noticing just how flawed society can make our ways of thinking. Teens are constantly pressured to look, act, and feel a certain way. My poem was written as a way to highlight how many people feel the need to almost make a mask for themselves. They are not comfortable with how they look and they think that society will judge them if they do not appeal to the standards. This topic is important to me because I feel strongly that nobody needs to change for other people. If everyone just stayed true to themselves, the world would be a more colorful and less harsh place. I hope that whoever reads my poem is able to get a view on how toxic societal standards can actually be, and how so many people are changing themselves without noticing. My goal would just be to inspire others to step outside the box and do what feels right to them, not to others:)



YOU ARE
BEAUTIFUL. YOU
ARE LOVED. YOU
ARE WORTH IT.

Lydia Masset

I took these photos at some of the most difficult times in my life. Everyday I struggled to find meaning in the world around me and in my own actions. Fortunately this was also the time I chose to pick up film photography. When you shoot film you have to wait a few days to get the pictures back and when I saw these shots for the first time it was truly a moment of healing. Putting my photos out into the world meant I no longer had to carry the weight of my depression or anxiety alone. Cheesy as it may sound, I hope when people see these photos they know they are not alone. I think sometimes we see Instagram feeds and



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movies and think everyone is happy all the time. I think as a teenage girl I felt especially pressured to put a smile on and "see the bright side." While I am an advocate of positive thinking, I also think it is important to normalize the fact that our emotions are not always pretty pictures and that's okay! My own mental health has always been difficult to talk about, so I am thankful that photography has been the vehicle for much reflection and conversation.

It is important to
normalize the fact that
our emotions are not
always
pretty pictures
and that's okay!

-LYDIA MASSETT

MASK

L.L. II

My face appearing happy
My demeanor always pleasant
However they may never see
the darkness which lies beneath it

Emotions running rampant
Anxiety trickling down
A body without a soul
A person who is not whole

Wasabi-like pain
Burning throughout my brain
Bound down by my chains
Struggling to live through the pain

I can't let them see
I can't let them know
I put on my mask
So my pain will never show

This poem reflects hiding your emotional, physical and mental pain from others. Despite sometimes struggling mentally I conceal my pain so I'm not a burden to others and so they can focus on their problems. I hope you understand that your friends want to help you and despite having trouble following my advice, I hope you recognize that you can share your problems with your friends. If you can't... Lose them. They're not for you. Surround yourself with people who you aspire to be so you can learn from and be better because of them. I thank all of my friends and family who help me better myself every day.

"Even if you cannot change all the people
around you, you can change

the people you choose to be around.

Life is too short to waste your time on
people who don't

*respect,
appreciate,
and value you.*

Spend your life with people who make you
smile, laugh, and feel loved."

-ROY T. BENNET

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HEAVEN ON EARTH

Grace Caldwell

Gentle footprints down an unfamiliar path, Cold stone, under thin shoes Pretty girl Tear stained face, Slow movements In the fast-lane life, Dancing with the wind Dress blowing in the breeze Of a morning not yet here, Hot day Cold hands Tracing outlines of days Lived in a previous life Forgetting the loveless parade, The quiet carnival A colourful world Seen only in black and white The princess and villain Of a modern day fairytale A tale of devotion and hopeless	pleas, Guilty pleasures Turn to deadly addictions a senseless act of love To end a degenerate generation A kiss of eternity But only for a night, White dress Stained black From darkness within, The bride hoping silently Coving stains with flowers Crushed candy on a child's tongue Turns more sinister with time, Pretty boy Wrong side of town Hiding in shadows You better run For you'll hear the screams	When his father comes home, A girl questioning faith In a cathedral pew Silent prayers For another one lost, What brings us together, Is was tears us apart, To emotion of billions We're all trying To outlive karma Cigarettes smoked in silence And kisses exchanged by the lonely The masquerade of humanity The show of a lifetime And, We all know That by looking for heaven on earth We can only ever find hell.
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This piece was inspired by a thought I had one night. I couldn't stop thinking about how everyone spends their life trying to find meaning. The poem has a few smaller stories in it about different people and how they all are struggling with something, while trying to find meaning in their life; and at the end of the day by trying to find heaven on earth, bad and dark things can occur. Some of these stories are related to my own mental struggles and others are inspired by things in the news or other people in my life.

WE
ARE
NOT
ALONE
-ALICIA LUO

NOISE

Alicia Luo

the dark is such a lonely place
but it is warm
and the voices sleep where it is warm, they scream
quieter with the sounds of dusk, they hide before the
yawning expanse of night
the light is bright, harsh, still empty
the voices yowl, like furious cats, and more join they
brawl, they thrash, pulse relentlessly
and, battery sapped, 100% to 0% in ten minutes there
lies just another abandoned marionette

There is so much noise in my head, white or otherwise, and it overwhelms me to the point where most days I am just a lethargic mess. Few people, at the subject of mental health, talk about how loud a head can be. And with the lack of sleep so prevalent in most teenagers, the voices aren't placated enough and they rage. It's loud, but they sap my energy, so I look dead while a monstrous symphony plays in my skull. So, I wrote this poem for anyone whose voice is drowned out by the noise in their head, who finds more peace with the dark than with the oh-so-virtuous light, who drags their way through most days because we are not alone.

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Dear readers,

Thank you so much for taking the time to read the very first issue of Our Voices. We could not have been more proud of our debut newsletter, and we are so grateful for your readership.

Though we have worked tirelessly to produce this edition, the real heroes of this publication were our contributors. Whether they decided to be anonymous or named, these artists and authors chose to put comfort aside and be vulnerable, exposing thoughts and feelings that are not discussed widely in the teenage community. With this action, they submitted to a cause larger than themselves, and we hope that their strong, powerful voices will lead to the echo of many more. We are committed to helping break the stigma, and these individuals give us hope that this endeavour is indeed possible. Thank you all for letting us hear your voice.

Sincerely,

The team at **Our Voices**

Want to win an awesome sweatshirt? Hop on over to our instagram page @ourvoices.1n5 to learn more about our giveaway! Follow the instructions on our most recent post to enter!



If you are interested in submitting your work, please contact:

ourvoices.1n5@gmail.com

If you are interested in learning more about *Our Voices*, please visit our website:

<https://1n5.org/our-voices-2>