“When teens are given the opportunity to thrive, they SKYROCKET.”
— Suzie Staley
NZ Program Director
Dear Friends,

20 years ago, a group of community leaders dreamed up the Neutral Zone. Those visionaries looked into the future and imagined NZ’s tremendous impact on our community’s young people. I am deeply grateful to them for their vision, a feeling I know many of you share.

Our youth-driven approach encourages young people to reach their highest potential. We also have embraced restorative practice and mindfulness to let youth know they are safe, have critical skills and competencies, and can meaningfully impact our community.

Beyond our home community, our youth-driven approach blazes a trail for other centers to follow. We have coached 75 youth centers across SE Michigan, facilitated a regional youth-driven conference, and provided training in restorative practice to 400 educators.

Thanks to your unflagging support, the last two decades of Neutral Zone have demonstrated to young people that they matter, that they belong in our community and that we have their back.

Lori Roddy, NZ Executive Director

Roughly 500 teens regularly attend NZ. 60% from Ann Arbor, 30% from Ypsilanti, 10% from the broader Washtenaw County Area. Some highlights from their year:

**GATEWAY ARTS & COMMUNITY**

**LEADERSHIP**

125+ teens participated in our drop-in program, and 13 took weekly college readiness workshops. Teens also visited U of M, AADL, and took the StrengthsFinder workshop.

Teens produced 15+ shows for the community, 2000 visitors have enjoyed all-ages B-side shows.

Poetry Night in Ann Arbor 2018. 
"I name this body mine" event highlighted body acceptance, featuring 3 young artists and 25 teen participants performed for 500 attendees.

10 teens worked with musicians to hone their skills and perform at NZ in MIX, a new program created with partners Ann Arbor Music School and jazz musician Mike Brooks.

VAC hosted an art show in December highlighting student work and incorporating screen printing, 50+ students attended.

Big Reads project featured Citizen, by Claudia Rankine
- 15-20 educators & book club leaders presented Citizen
- 12 teens shared powerful conversations at NZ book club
- 221 students led book clubs at WCC, Bookbound and Nicola’s
- 250+ people attended the 4 public events

Riot Youth, NZ’s LGBTQIA program, hosted a county-wide GSA summit for 50+ students. Riot Youth also partnered with the U of M Spectrum Center to host a dinner for 50+ people for Transgender Day of Remembrance to share stories, support, and remember the lives of transgender and non-binary people.

6 teens led SARE, program for young women’s safety and advocacy, hosting events attending by 50+ teens including a writing workshop for survivors and a movie screening of The Feminist in Cell Block Y.

Teen Advisory Council’s annual gala raised over $20K from 250+ attendees.

Project GreeneZ started a monthly workshop with the Community Farm of AZ, and local chef Emich Boch. Over 20 teens attend each session to cook and learn about food security and food justice.

NZ, Ozone House and RYSE in Richmond, CA joined forces to found the Ypsi/Richmond Project. 11 Teens from Ypsilanti and 12 teens from Richmond are working virtually with Donte Clark, a Richmond por/phybidity, to explore racism, housing, and gentrification. Ypsi teens went to Richmond in May for a cultural and artistic exchange.
Neutral Zone programs share one goal: **to engage young people to reach their highest potential.** Here’s our model:

**S.C.O.R.E.**
- Drop-in, mentoring, college prep, technical training and workforce development
- **Juvenile Justice**
  - Supporting court-involved youth in intensive leadership training
- **Riot Youth**
  - LGBTQIA youth support & social activism

**IMPACT**
- Can identify one or more trusted adult in their life
- Increases feelings of safety and support
- Makes education & workforce goals
- Deepens sense of agency

**Arts & Community Programs**
- **Visual & Media Arts**
  - Video production, visual arts, and mobile app development & coding
- **Literary Arts**
  - Red Beard Press, Short Story and VOLUME poetry
- **Music & Technology**
  - Beat Making, Promotions, Audio Engineering, Record Label
- **Community Impact**
  - Diversity education, young women’s safety & empowerment, and environmental & food justice

**Leadership Programs**
- **Lead Team**
  - Program facilitation training
- **Teen Advisory Council**
  - Approve programs, fund grants & lead program evaluations
- **Board of Directors**
  - Youth/adult partnership to oversee NZ

**IMPACT**
- Builds 21st century skills: collaboration, communication, connection, critical thinking, creative innovation & confidence
- Increases social emotional learning skills: self-awareness, emotion management, empathy, initiative & responsibility

**Impact**
- Develop skills to facilitate dialogue
- Plan and lead community impact projects
- Plan and lead meetings
- Serve in high order organization capacities to advise and govern NZ
Adam & Jade, Leading the Board

Last year, a teen on the Board of Directors challenged Neutral Zone with a question: do youth have truly meaningful roles on the Board? While teen leadership on the Board has always been a priority at NZ, we knew we could do more. So the Board made a commitment to build an intentional co-leadership model to engage teens in every chair position.

This year, Adam Ruff and Jade Wang took the reins as the first teen co-president co-vice-president of the NZ Board of Directors, alongside president Lori Bennett and vice-president Chris White. The new leadership roles are part of NZ’s unending dedication to be as deeply youth-driven as possible.

Jade Wang, Skyline Senior

“At NZ, there is always this sense of community; I never felt like I was somewhere where I didn’t belong. There was always the feeling where I walked in and it was immediately comfortable - it was immediately a place I could call home.”

“To me, becoming the first co-vice-president is part of Neutral Zone’s constant work toward self-improvement. We’re taking our youth-driven practices a step further, saying, there is more that we can do; this is a higher position that teens can take on. That self-advocacy, that sense of being confident and having your ideas be even more listened to by adults and even more considered, is what I would consider the legacy of this new experiment

Poetry, Truth & Inspiration

“I don’t know what came into me. I was just like, I’m gonna do poetry night. And then I got onstage and thought, what am I doing?”

Ciatta Tucker describes herself as very introverted and shy, saying “I didn’t really talk to people. "Before Neutral Zone, I didn’t really have a solid idea of what I wanted to do. I didn’t really have a community to, like, push me on forward.”

Today, Ciatta is involved in just about everything Neutral Zone has to offer. She has helped run the B-Side concert venue, been involved in our diversity and women’s leadership programs, and has become deeply engaged in the VOLUME poetry project. Ciatta also helps lead the Weshenaw Youth Initiative on gun violence.

“I say I’m introverted and close myself off to people, but then when I get on the stage, sometimes I get butterflies and I get jittery — but then I start saying my poem and speaking my truth, and it just goes away.

A lot of my poems allude to my family, because my parents are immigrants, my brothers are immigrants — the majority of the first-generation people in my family consist of me and my little cousins who are younger and were born here in America. I allude to how I grew up and how I reclaim myself being a black woman.

After one performance, a group of girls from another team came up to me and said “We loved your poem so much, keep writing, you encourage us so much, we can’t wait for more” and that was just like an inspiration. I didn’t know I could inspire people so much.”

Speaking Up, Standing Tall

Samiksha Sneha followed her older sister, Shiksha, to the Neutral Zone. Reflecting on that time, Samiksha said, “I came to NZ the second semester of freshman year, and I was like, super shy and I would stick with my sister all the time. Like, I would not leave her alone. Then I came to NZ more and staff would help me be not as shy, they kind of taught me how to speak up more.”

Samiksha became deeply involved in managing NZ’s B-Side concert venue and helping to plan our annual Live on Washington festival. Recently, she was also elected to serve as the co-president of the Board of Directors for next year.

“I approach things differently now. I know how to speak up more. When I first came here, I was really shy. I would not talk, ever. Unless you talked to me and I had to respond, I would not say anything. But now I will, like, not shut up.

I have learned so much at the Neutral Zone. I know how to have professional conversations, how to talk to someone and present myself appropriately. I don’t know how to write legal contracts myself, but I definitely have a better idea than I used to. In the Live on Washington program, we review the contracts before sending them out to the headliners. The details have to be really set in stone.

I feel like there’s something for everyone here. Everyone can feel like they belong in at least one aspect of Neutral Zone. NZ is so much bigger than anything individual, like all of us as a team are so much bigger and do so much for the community as a whole. I hate when people just call it just an ‘after school program.’ I’m like, no, we’re bigger than that.”
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.

Because of 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!

Organizational Donors

$100,000+
- Song Charitable Fund
- Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation

$50,000-$99,999
- Bill & Molly Dobson Fund of the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation
- RNR Foundation

$20,000-$49,999
- The Anderson Family Fund of Fidelity Charitable Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan
- J. Ferrantino Charitable Foundation
- James A. & Faith Knight Foundation
- Masco Corporation
- Towsley Foundation

Coaching & Consulting: $74,961
Through Youth Driven Spaces, NZ shares information about our organizational successes with other youth-serving organizations who want to implement our model.

Individual Contributions: $217,578
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: $85,146
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.

Assets
- Neutral Zone has $3,270,836 in real assets
- We hold $153,492 in our operating revenue fund and the value of our endowment is $32,491
- The book value of our building and equipment is $2,811,372

$10,000-$19,999
- Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation
- Netscout
- AT&T
- The Austin Memorial Foundation
- Buhr Foundation
- Martin Family Foundation
- McKinley
- Toyota Research & Design
- Toyota Motor North America, INC

Grants: $450,015
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.

Corporate Contributions: $86,458
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.

Programs: $842,295
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.

Administration/General: $88,206
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.

Development: $177,070
Building and sustaining treasured relationships with supporters takes time, staff attention and money. Common expenses include mailings, gift acknowledgements, events and hospitality.

2018 Total Audited Operating Revenue $1,012,966
- 10% Earned Revenue: $98,808
- 22% Corporate Contributions: $86,458
- 44% Grants: $450,015
- 8% Coaching & Consulting: $74,961
- 9% Individual Contributions: $217,578
- 8% Fundraising Events: $85,146

2018 Total Audited Operating Expenses $1,107,571*
- 76% Programs: $842,295
- 8% Administration/General: $88,206
- 16% Development: $177,070

* Total expenses include $98,570 of building depreciation, a non-cash expense.
| $5,000-$9,999 |
The J.F. Ervin Foundation  
The Gardner-Pokempner Charitable Fund  
Hook  
IECA Foundation  
Janeth Fund of the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation  
Jenkins Foundation  
Julius & Eleanor Kass Family Foundation  
Bernard Lewis Fund of the Jewish Community Foundation  
William J. Nicholson Foundation  
Washtenaw County The Wireless Zone Foundation for Giving  

| $2500-$4999 |
Comcast  
Facebook  
Kilwanis Club of Ann Arbor Foundation, Inc  
The Loveluck Veeser Family Fund  
Edward F. Redies Foundation  
United Way of Washtenaw County  

| $1,000-$2,499 |
Ann Arbor State Bank  
Arbor Trust Wealth Advisors  
Bank of Ann Arbor  
Columbia Threadneedle Investments  
Comerica Bank  
Cranmer Communication, Inc  
Cunningham Vision Center  
The Hylant Group  
La Chance Management Co  
LaVision  
McGregor Fund  
Meadowlark Design+Build  
Michigan Tax & Business Services Inc  
Millers Lawn & Landscaping  
Carl & Irene R Morath Foundation, Inc.  
The Moscow Philanthropic Fund of the United Jewish Foundation of Metropolitan Detroit  
PayPal Giving Fund  
Red Rock BBQ  
Richner & Richner  
S.I. Company, LLC  
Jack & Ginny Sinn Family Fund of the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation  
Strecher-Rosenberg Family Fund  
Whole Foods Market  

| $500-$999 |
Ann Arbor District Library  
Blue Cab Company  
CGC Water Treatment  
The City of Ann Arbor  
Howard J. Cooper Fund of the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation  
Fidelity Charitable  
Garris, Garris, Garris & Garris  
Heffelfinger Productions  
Krause Family Charitable Giving Fund of the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation  
Mainstreet Ventures  
O’Brien Development  
Physicians for Prevention of Gun Violence  
Spencer Foundation  
The Theater Offensive Inc  

| $250-$499 |
Gordon Group Insurance Agency  
Immigration Law PLLC  
Insurance One Agency  
The Little Seedling  
Main Street Homes, LLC  
William Molnar Roofing Co., Inc.  
Simons Foundation  
Spun  
The Jason Taylor Foundation  

| $100-$249 |
Amazon.com  
America Group  
Rizzolo Brown Studio, LLC  
Johnson & Johnson  
New Foundry  
ProQuest  
The Sterken Family Foundation  
Tree House Realty Group  

| $1-$99 |
Homes Brewery  
CommonAction Consulting  
Dog Time, LLC  
W.K. Kellogg Foundation  
Kroger Company Foundation, Michigan Market  
Michigan Aerospace Corp  
Progressive Insurance  

| In-Kind |
APG Studio  
Atomic Object  
Calty Design Research  
Corrigan Moving Systems  
Encore Recordings of Ann Arbor  
Zoller Incorporate
Individual Donors

$100,000+
- Linh & Dug Song

$50,000-$99,999
- Molly Dobson

$20,000-$49,999
- Lizann & Gerry Anderson

$10,000-$19,999
- Joan Binkow
- Janet Weiss & Donald Kinder
- Debbie & Michael Tirico

$5,000-$9,999
- Alice Byers
- Brian & Mary Campbell
- Laura & Brian Hayden
- Phil Jenkins
- Tim & Sally Petersen
- Ellie & Dennis Serras
- Peter & Sarah Tchoryk
- Elizabeth & Joseph Weiss

$2500-$4999
- David & Martha Bloom
- Philip Lineer
- Elaine Pomeranz & Joel Bregman
- Richard & Norma Sarns
- Tim Veeser & Jimena Loveluck

$1,000-$2499
- Beth & David Allen
- Jill & Rob Arcure
- Jim & Debbie Beuche
- Thomas Blessing & Susan Morrison
- Dr. David & Valerie Canter
- John Copley
- Christopher & Marie Cregar
- Anita Clos & Dennis Crowley
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- John & Gail Einhaus
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- James Goebel & Linda Irvin
- Ian Greenlee
- Michele Heisler & Jamie Tappenden
- Debbie & Norman Herbert
- Matthew Kern
- Bithika Kheterpal
- Lisa Krause
- Tara & Daniel Mahoney
- Ben & Betsy McCallister
- Mehul Mistry & Vashali Bhargava

Cedric & Moragan Richner
Barbera A Riemer
David Sarns & Agnes Moy-Sarns
Art & Mary Schuman
Richard & Carol Sheridan
William & Robbie Stapleton
Lori Bennett & Steven Stein
Vic Strecher & Jeri Rosenberg
Doug Strong & Peggy Cavanagh
Richard Tolman & Naomi Woloshin
David & Karen Ufer
Reed VanderSlik
Timothy & Laurie Wadhams
Charlie & Diane Waterhouse
Ronald Weiser & Eileen Lappin Weiser
John & Sarah Weiss

$500-$999
- David & Kathy Falkner
- David & Janet Garabrant
- Martha & William Grimes
- Jennifer & Joseph Heckendorn
- Aleia MacDonald
- Marshall Johnson
- Denise & Perry Kantner
- David & Katherine Kerschbaum
- Mabelle & Jim Kirk
- Adam & Rebecca Lowenstein
- Ethan & Margo Lowenstein
- Joseph Malcoun & Caitlin Klein
- David Martel & Patrick Francis
- Angie Martell & Kelli Conlin
- Kyle Mazurek & Megan Crosbie-Mazurek
- Kelly Miles & Chris Hammond
- Jordan Miller
- Elise Nanos
- Mary & Tim Neff
- Laura Nisenson & Kelly Londry
- Sandro Cinti & Billie Ochberg
- Kenneth Raynor & Laura Pershin
- Raynor
- Mike & Janet Reid
- Laura Rice-Oeschger & Brent Oeschger
- Ben Rowe
- Carolyn Rudberg
- Tim Ruff & Andrea Smith-Ruff
- Don Rumelhart & Judy Dow Rumelhart
- Daniel Seely & Hannah Hotchkiss
- Joseph & Lisa Skaisgir
- Karen & Bruce Stancombe
- Michael & Amy Tschirhart
- Joe & Suzanne Upton
- Nick & Kathleen Wang
- Joel & Marcella Weiner
- Lynn Fiorentino & David Yates
- Yong Yon
Ray & Dawn Yerkes

$1-99
Lisa Alteri
Harvey & Mary Amoe
Ace Anbender
Kenneth & Andrea Anbender
Brian & Judy Ashin
Chris Atchison
Tedd Aurelius
Wenyu Bai & Qinghui Liu
Jennifer Balch Hale
Illyana Balde
Audra Baleisis
Lonna & Alan Baum
Mary Beauchamp Cohen
Jennifer Bednar
Tyler Bengel
Carol Bennett
Raymond Beveridge
Jeffrey Bieszki & Trudy Hughes
Jyotsna Bisaro
Judith Block
Amanda & Joshua Botisko-Wilson
Robert & Janet Bower
Rebecca Bowman
John & Kerry Bowman
Kathleen Brennan
Bjoern Brixius
Jodi Brown
Mary Browning
Linda Brylewski
Tom Buczak
Vinal Burbeck
Jennifer & Jeffrey Burks
Dan Burns
Ashley Burnside
Matthew Busdiecker
Hazel Byers
William B Calhoun
Carol Chan-Groening
Michael Cieslar
Sarah Cohen
Richard Colby
Heather Cooke
Kara & Scott Copeland
Sean Copeland
Renae Covington
Dianne Creighton
Geoff Crosbie
Nancy Crosbie
Suzan & Michael Curhan
Mike Daniel
Jaime Davidson
Dawn & Kevin Davis
Abbey Davis
Lisa & Alan Dengiz
Macdonald & Carolin Dick
Ralph & Marcia Dresch
Ross & Mitra Dunbar
Elliott Earle
Adam Eichner
Jonah Eichner
Elinor Epperson
Sheryl Fagin
Tom Fahlstrom
Samar Faraj
John & Sonya Faris
Mea Fiadhiglas
Heidi Fitzgerald
Chrissy Flaherty
Katherine Ford
Kim Freeman
Charles Jason Frenzel
William Frey
Francelle Fulton
Taryn Gal
Karrie Gardner
Jamila Gaskins
Patricia Gatto
Kiersten M Gawronski
Elizabeth Gerber
Julia Gilbert
Avery Gleason
Elizabeth Gonzalez
Deb Gordon
Leigh Greden
Linda & Richard Greene
Bjorn Gustafsson
Judith Halloran
Lavinia Hanachiuc
Jenni Hansen
Annika Hanson
Paul & Susan Harrison
Marlene Harten-Gillie
Harry & Jan Hawkins
Alice Held
Charlie Held
Cam Herringshaw
Rachel & Jake Heydlauff
John & Martha Hicks
Emilie Hill
Jonathan Hoard
Lillian Hoard
Daniel Hooper
Mark & Vicki Hopper
Anne Hotchkiss
Phillip & Kim Huhn
Marjorie & Bob Hyde
Ronald & Marita Inglehart
Milo Inglehart
Kenneth Irwin
Sharon & John Iverson
Deborah Jardins & Igor De Padova
Zilka Joseph
Tyler Kane
Deborah Kanter
Matthew Kay
Sarah Kerson
Lou Kincaid
Betty Jo Kolb
Gay & Kerry Konschuh
Greg Kostin
Kristin Kubacki
Mark Kubitskey
Jim Kuyawski
Holly LaBute
Paul Lalinsky
Jenni Lane
Shelley Larned
Jerold & Judith Lax
Lauren League
Mary LeDuc
Laura Lein & Benjamin Kuipers
Sandy Lemkin
Jennifer Leopold
Kristie Levandoski
Erika Light-Bright
Liisa Lusk
Sara Lyberg
Danielle Macfarlan
Leonid Makar-Limanov
Scott Mann & Lynn Sipher
Ryan Mark-Griffin
Diane Massell
Maria Maughan
Charlotte Maurer & Benjamin Harrington
Tatyana Maxey
Laura McDaniel
Chris McKenna
David & Kate McKinnon
Leon Wyszewianski & Catherine McLaughlin
Lise McNeil
Shane McParland
Jeremiah Messer
Kathryn Milne
Hannah Mitchell
Nancy Moceri
Jason Morgan & Michael Budros
Paige & Joe Morrison
Mary Motherwell
Maria Murphy & Don Packard
Orest Mykolenko & Nancy Niemela
Lizzie Nash
Barry Nelipowitz
Stephen Nose & Aura Glaser
Traci Novar
Chris Nowak & Amber Harrison
Clara Nunez-Regueiro
Kristen Nye & Justin Leahey
Linda Nyquist
Laurence & Mary Louise O’Connell
Adrian Ohmer & Darren DeWitt
Pamela Ortner
Paquetta Palmer
Leopoldo Pando-Zayas
Lynn Papalambros
Ramona Parker-Muhammad
Paul Parsell
Dan & Katrina Pasick
Dana Peterson
Sarah Plum
Dr. Steven Popper
Jinny & Jonathan Potter
David Pratt
Ali Ramlawi
Amanda Ransom-Heckenkamp
Meghna Rao
Kenneth & Angela Rasmussen

Molly Raynor
Daniel Ream
Marnie Reid & Barney Klein
Hannah Reischl
Douglas Reith
Caroline Robb
William Roberts
Julie Roberts
Leah Roddy
Carol Roddy
Josephine Rood
Anna Rosenfeld
Margaret Rosequist
Stephanie Rowden & Andrew Kirshner
Allan & Lola Rubens
Rosemarie & John Russell
Stephen & Katherine Salant
Kirsten Schmitt
Robben Schulz
Isaac Scobey-Thal
Lucy Scott
Kimberly Sheldon
Belinda Short
Stacey Silverman
Sharonda Simmons
Joepeth Smith
Chiquita Smith
Hannah Smith
Rick & Linda Solomon
Jennifer Spector
Emily Springfield
Jim Staley
Suzie & Mandy Staley
Bennett Stein
Jonathan & Sue Stern
Ellen Stone & Roger Lauer
Cierra Strawder

Michael Sullivan
Alissa Talley-Pixley & Theodore Pixley
James A. & Teri S. Teeri
Claudia & Sheila Terrones
Kimberley Tibbert
Emma Tolman
Heidy Turner
Nancy Twiss
Linda Tynmcaz
Katie Vioet
Kent & Merrie Wattleworth
Kathy Weaver
Howard & Judy Weinblatt
Karen & Jerry Weiner
Stefan Welch
Laura Wernick & Lori Brooks
Ronald & Janice Weston
Kirk Westphal
Sara Wiener
Kasha & Angela Williams
Roger Williams
Kendra Wilson
Derek Woodrum
Elizabeth Wright
Yongyi Zhang
Anna Zinkel

In-kind
Iain Burrell
Kevin Dorn
Michael Gould
Robert Harrington
Aaron Klein
Kathleen Pepin
David & Janice Robb
Tim Streeter
The biggest thing I will take away from Neutral Zone, is to start talking for myself instead of letting people talk over me or talk for me.

Mission

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.