

telling it



Arts-based interventions
for change

PARKRIDGE

Stories and Poems by the Youth of Telling It



SPRING 2017



WELCOME TO THE SPRING 2017 TELLING IT KIDS ANTHOLOGY! WE HAVE HAD A WONDERFUL YEAR WITH THE 7 TO 12 YEAR OLD CHILDREN THAT COME TO PARKRIDGE COMMUNITY CENTER EVERY MONDAY AFTERNOON TO PARTICIPATE IN TELLING IT.

The writing in this anthology reflects the program's sessions in which we vanquished the monster named Abiyoyo; created edible sculptures that represented how the children saw themselves as gardens, modes of transportation and houses; we used the theme of treasure chests to discover the hidden treasures in their lives; transformed weather into emotions; developed character stories from photographs and other prompts; and, processed the hurts in the children's lives through the medium of the arts.

Thank you to the inspiring guests that visited Telling It. These included the visual artist Valerie Mann who taught the children how to use a letterpress to print. Briaa Dupree and Lloyd Shelton, who are talented rappers, led the children in a workshop where they wrote and performed their original rap pieces.

The mission of Telling It is to support the healing and learning needs of school-age youth using best practices from social work and education filtered through the arts so they can lead safe, healthy and fulfilling lives. Over the course of this Telling It adventure, the children have learned to support each other, problem-solve and take responsibility. The Telling It team is very proud of what the children have created and written this year.

All of this is made possible with funding from the U-M Residential College, Washtenaw Co. Sheriff's Office, Ypsilanti Area Community Fund, and our on-going partnership with the Parkridge Community Center staff. As the New Parkridge development is completed, we will look forward to reuniting with the families returning to the neighborhood, to the Community Center and to Telling It.

I hope you enjoy this collection of the children's creativity in this anthology. Each page is a reflection of the children's imagination. It was truly a pleasure to get to know the children and to hear their stories.

With all good wishes,

Deb Gordon-Gurfinkel
Founding Director

AARON

TREASURE BOX - VOLCANO

Inspired by a treasure chest, treasure and a skull. Aaron had a coin as his treasure and the coin was in a volcano. His story is about how his treasure hunter died en route to the treasure.

I think this coin, this treasure came from underground in the biggest volcano. I think he died trying to get the treasure from the top of the volcano. He died because the lava shot up through him and he died with his mouth open and burning!

ST. NICK'S STORY

Continuing the treasure chest theme.

Once upon a time there was a pirate named St.Nick who tried to get the treasure at the top of the volcano, and he got halfway up the volcano and when he got halfway he fell asleep. The next morning a large eagle carried him to the top where the treasure was. He got the treasure and he fell and cracked his neck, he died his hand on his and his mouth wide open.

AHMED

I AM

A poem that inspired a candy sculpture.

I am a transformer.
I am awesome.
I can turn into anything that I want.

I am a garden.
I am big.
I can give good food.

I am a house.
I am big.

I can paint the walls and I dance.

THE CANDY HOUSE

I made a transformer that gives a lot of candy. Reese's, starbursts, kit kats and skittles. I gave it candy so it won't feel bored. It tastes good. Red, yellow and orange are the colors.

RED

Using the color red to inspire poetry.

A lot of jackets are red.
Sometimes apples are red.
Peppers, sometimes are red. The red is the hottest one ever!
Sometimes bricks are orange, but I see a lot of red ones.
Tomatoes are red, sometimes they are green.
Fruit punch is red.
Red makes me happy.
Cars are sometimes red, and so are bikes.

BAILEY

TREASURE CHEST MYSTERY

Inspired by a treasure chest, treasure and a skull.

There was a hopeful shy boy. He spent time reading a children's book. He read so long but he didn't understand it. He understood some parts but not all. The book was ripped and he tried to use lipstick to glue it together. He had an idea and said, "Terrific!" The boy said this time he was empathetic, this book was great and he felt guilty because his friend couldn't read it. He was shocked because he saw magnificent things in the book. After that he swept the dust off of the big children's book. He let his friend read it because it was fair minded.

I AM

A poem that inspired a candy sculpture.

I am a car that can drive.
I am pink and blue and I run off of water.
I can go up to 1,000 miles when it's traffic hour.
I am a garden.
I am flowers, pumpkins, candy.
I can keep on planting more seeds every day until the garden dies.
I am a house.
I am a mansion full of money and rooms.
I can feel safe.
I can transport into the house, to the garden, to the park.
And I invite a lot of people over.

THE DEAD ONES!

Developing role-play scenes about a dramatic incident.

Once upon a time there was a girl and a boy. A year later it was the girl's birthday. She was celebrating turning 102. But she had a heart attack and died. Then there were two brothers. And one brother, she was his best sister ever. So he became angry and started killing people. But the other brother stayed happy because the sister and the brother were always being mean to him. But then the meaner brother wrote "Give Up" on the wall because his sister died and he wanted people to give up their lives. When they looked down on the floor there were rats crawling everywhere. There were boots from the sister from when she was alive that the brothers kept to remind them of their sister. The brothers are so sensitive that they don't clean their house. Even the nice brother is sad because she was his only sister and she took care of the other brother. She liked the nicer brother best. Their parents had died three years ago. The mom was really sick and died and their dad had an asthma attack but his inhaler was empty and he died. The meaner brother died because he's so worried and he's crying. The nicer brother comes up to give him a hug and he's holding a knife and stabs him on purpose in his chest. The mean brother is dead. The nice brother lives on his own in the

house with the rats and the boots and the scratches on the wall from the mean brother who was killed. He felt free and sometimes sad, sometimes angry and scared because he had killed and he's not that kind of person but it had to be done.
The End
(P.S. He was haunted for a week.)

BRIYANA a.k.a. BRIZZY

LOOKING THROUGH A WINDOW

Brizzy's response to the prompt, "What do you see when you look through a window?"

There's this pitch-black window, divided into four squares. If someone looks in the window you'll see ...

Three lime green witches with very pointy hats with a buckle around the rim, wearing blue violet cloaks! The witches had these high-pitched laughs whenever they stirred this green stew in a pitch-black cauldron. The stew's green color is the only thing that brightened the cauldron.

ABIYOYO

Developing the back story to the monster, Abiyoyo.

- Q. How did Abiyoyo find our village?
A. He teleported.
Q. What happened to Abiyoyo?
A. In his old life he was abandoned.
Q. Why did he eat children?
A. His mother used to tease him.

I AM

A poem that inspired a candy sculpture.

I am a bike.
I am blue and purple and white.
I can give you tv and pop.
I am a garden of bikes.
I am the leader of them all.

I can erase other bikes.
I am a house.
I am colorful.
I can make a spitting image of anybody
And, I can become a person.

ORANGE

Using the color orange to inspire poetry.

Eyan is wearing an orange shirt.
Deb is wearing an orange backpack.
They are walking to the orange truck and
Deb is eating a carrot.
The truck stops at the orange stoplight and
Then turns at the pole.
As they are sitting in the car
It is an orangey-warm day.
They are feeling like they are going to go shopping
Or something, and going to get an orange Telling It t-shirt.

WHAT HAPPENED?

Developing role-play scenes about a dramatic incident.

So some little boys were in a house and all of a sudden the house started smoking. They looked out the window and they saw firefighters getting other children out their houses. They all screamed "MOMA!!!" and then some firefighter busted open the window and then some other firefighters busted open the room door then they grabbed the boys but one passed out After a while ... what happened was that a tree had hit a power line and the power line had split and caught the tree on fire. The tree had hit a house so luckily the family got out but their house caught on fire and it carried on.

THE WOMAN

A character profile that was developed from a series of photos that represented safe/unsafe images.

The woman that stands up.
The woman that is hurt.
The woman who is pregnant and living off of dirt.
The woman that is mad but also glad.
The woman who cried every night to get where she stands.
The woman who didn't have her dad so went through a lot with a lot of men.
The woman who was born on the south side with nothing to eat.
Oh, Lord Jesus.
Amen.

DEAR DADDY

A rap written in honor of Brizzy's father. He was a rapper and died five years ago. Composed during a session led by rapper, Briaa Dupree.

Daddy I miss you.
Forget all those people who wanna dis you.
It hurts me deep inside,
I'm try'n to hold it in knowing I wanna cry.
When the sun shines, I'm looking up in the sky
And the heavens is a perfect place for you
Because your favorite color is
Blue.
I'm your chocolate baby.
When they look at me they look at you.
Yeah, you was locked up but those tattoos couldn't cover up your love.
I miss those warm hugs.
It set me free when I saw who you was.
I remember when we used to be funny just because.
Now if it was up to me
There is no other man like you
There could be.

EUNICIA

ABIYOYO

Developing the back story to the monster, Abiyoyo.

1. Abiyoyo got here because he followed us for being too loud.
2. Abiyoyo's parents are Mother YoY o and Father YoY o.
3. Abiyoyo did not want ketchup because red was his favorite color.
4. Abiyoyo was born in New York when the dinosaur was born.

I AM

A poem that inspired a candy sculpture.

I am a train.
I am blue
I can go fast,

I am a garden
I am beautiful.
I can be beautiful
I will have flowers and fruits and apple trees.

I am a house
I am big
I can fly
And I can camouflage

SCARY CLOWNS

Developing role-play scenes about a dramatic incident.

There was a mansion in Ohio.
The mansion is a fun house.
It has a clown and spirits in it,
It is scary but you can still have fun.
The clowns pop out of the dark corners,
They remind me of my nana when she dyed her hair red!
She was nice but her hair was creepy.

I was only 5 and I didn't know who she was.
It never rained over the house.
And the sun never shined over the house.
It was foggy.

TREASURE

A story generated after a treasure hunt.

So I took this necklace and went to the Bahamas. When I got there, it was this boy all up in my face. So I sprayed him but he thanked me because he smelled better afterwards. He later married me and we went to the Bahamas for the honeymoon. He brought the spray this time. So just in case somebody messed up the food at the restaurant.

EYAN

WHITE

Using the color white to inspire a story.

Once there was a beautiful color, white. It was very awesome and made me happy. When I was on the bus I saw a face that was white. Then I went to my house. I had white shoes. I put on my white shoes, walked outside and there was snow coming from the clouds. I couldn't see myself because I was wearing all white clothes. So, I went in the house and drew a picture but then I forgot to close the door. Instead, I got on my computer and then I went on my back porch and then it was really cold. So I went back in the house to get a scarf and then I played on my phone.







KHALEIL

I AM

A poem that inspired a candy sculpture.

I am a plane
I am Fast
I can feel the fresh air hitting my bumper
I am a garden
I am beautiful
I can be picked up by my friend
I am a house
I am scary with vines growing up my windows
I can sit and be patient and I am Awesome.

YELLOW

Using the color yellow to inspire poetry.

In the night it was dark
But in the morning it was bright and light.
The flowers were growing.
Wind was blowing.
I went to school and the sun was out and
I got my yellow binder ready
And my yellow tape paper.
With my yellow paint and markers.
Then I went home.
School was fun and
I drank some lemonade out of my
Yellow cup.
I was feeling bright and happy.
Then I went to the store in the yellow taxi and on the taxi
I read the yellow words.

KHLOE

OUCH!

Developing role-play scenes about a dramatic incident.

As I was sitting inside the house, I went to the bathroom and looked out the window. I saw kids playing. There were about four or five kids outside playing in front of their mother's house. One of the children fell down and got hurt. The little girl broke her leg and jaw by falling onto the ground. All of the other children ran inside the house to tell their mother that their sister had gotten hurt. The children and the mother all got inside of an ambulance to go to the hospital. The hospital is fun because they give me popsicles and stickers.

TREASURE CHEST MYSTERY

Inspired by a treasure chest, treasure and a skull.

Hypothesis: Sam dropped this key when he died. Sam and his enemy saw the key at the same time. His enemy and his friends caught him and killed him. It was springtime, the sand is brown and there were pretty flowers on the trees. Sam was just a sad man looking for happiness. The End.

CUPCAKES

Developed using story mapping.

Khloe likes cupcakes with her dinner. Being bored makes Khloe nervous. Khloe is confident, that means happy. She is happy because she likes cupcakes. She is smiling. She likes smiling. When Khloe sees a cupcake she sees sprinkles in red, orange, yellow, green and blue. She likes that it has a candle on it. So she talked to her mom and asked if she could have it and her mom said sure. She ate the cupcake. It tasted like white frosting and she wanted more and then that's it. She felt about the cupcake that she got to ask her mom. And then she liked it and wanted to go to the grocery store to get more. And then she liked to give the cupcake to her mom. Then the mom said yes but she had a perfect thing. The End.

ALL ABOUT ME

A rap written when rapper, Briaa Dupree visited.

I go to school and learn.
I go home and watch TV.
I go outside and play with my friends.
I swing on the swing.
Nails done hair done you know how I do
Keeping it real, rocking the blue
Even the pencil that I wrote my rhymes
Shows my style and lets me shine.
I love what I do because it's brand-new
It's all about me and none of you.
I love to rap but I really don't like
I rather sing and I can't even fight it.

AWARD SPEECH: BEST JUJU ON THAT BEAT

A speech written to accept an Award for Excellence.

I would like to thank my sisters Drenaya and Makaya for teaching me my amazing dance skills. I would also like to thank my friends Avery and Mylan for supporting my dance career and for the yard we practice in. Thank you to my teacher for her help, for the awesome costumes and for making my hair into a bun. Last but not least, thank you to my parents.

I am looking forward to helping with my new little brother or sister getting dressed and making them look cute. When the baby gets bigger they are going to irritate me when they are sleeping and when they are waking up. I'll love the new baby. Love Khloe.

NEWS AT 5

A news story based on three random objects.

Kiara loves the camera to take pictures of herself. She has a long blue hair. She was on the news for stealing someone's phone. She loves to make cake and cupcakes.

SAD MAN

A character profile from a series of photographs that represented safe/unsafe images.

A sad man with no mom is sad because he is looking down. He is all by himself in a dark place. He has a cup with ice but nothing to drink. This could be unsafe because someone might of passed away so he shouldn't be alone.

KYLE

NEWS AT 5

A news story based on three random objects.

His name is JJ and it was President's day and he had a flag that supported his native country. It was special so he buried it. The hole he buried it in made a mouth and it said, 'Keep the flag. Keep it or something very bad will happen.' He liked music and he wasn't that bad at it. He tripped and fell on his head when his trombone hit him. He cried and it was put on Facebook.

He got on the news because he was a total outcast. So he got a skateboard but kept falling. Two people helped him and once again it was put on Facebook. One day he was to be on Channel 5 news for a singing opportunity but on the way he accidentally fell down a huge hill while riding his skateboard then into a pond it was bloody and he died!

TREASURE CHEST MYSTERY

Inspired by a treasure chest, treasure and a skull.

It was a kid named Jason and he was digging. He found a mysterious bag and he saw a box inside. It has a very cool design on it. It had jewels and shells and gems. Then he buried it again. He showed his mom. She asked, "Why are you doing that?" And he said,, "Because it is a treasure game. I'm going to bury them and find them again." One day, Jason got older and somebody shot through his window with a gun and it killed him. He fell into an ocean and his

skull was there. And then the Native Americans got him and painted him beautiful. The Native Americans dug all over and found his treasure. And Jason was also a Native American.

WATERMELON

Using the color pink to inspire poetry.

Wateriffic

Action

Terrific

Everyday

Read

Melon

Excellent

Likeable

On task

Nothing else is better.

NIYAH

TREASURE CHEST MYSTERY

Inspired by a treasure chest, treasure and a skull.

Maybe he crashed in a car? He was on his way to his job. Johnny is his name and he works at the oreo store. The oreos are the treasure. There is a special oreo that is made out of gold. Bacchus, a new coworker doesn't know about the treasure. Bacchus and Johnny were in the car and they both crashed. After they crashed, another person, a mystery man, found them and shot them. Bacchus and Johnny stole the golden oreo and the mystery man killed them and stole the oreo. The mystery man kept the oreo for himself and was never seen again.

BOBBY

Developed using story mapping.

Bobby was a very handsome boy. Bobby was worried about being late for class. Bobby started to get very sad because he was thinking about all the spectacular things he was taught at school. During class Bobby was using a tablecloth to clean his desk and it tore. This made him very frustrated. Bobby's teacher said next month they'd be spending a generous amount of time talking about a waterfall. The End.

FIRE!

Developing role-play scenes about a dramatic incident.

So the house caught on fire, someone lit it on fire. The firefighter appears and puts out the fire. There was a boy and the boy was scared. The old man had surgery. Someone came into the garage and set it on fire and ran away. Mom made a call when she saw smoke. Everyone came (firefighters, cops and paramedics). The police asked what happened? The firefighter put out the fire. The firefighter and paramedics got us out. So the neighbor heard and let us stay in her house and the house still isn't fixed. Everyone is okay.

HAPPY

Connecting colors, weather and emotions.

I'm happy about rainbows
Forget all those lame-os
Blue and Purple are my fav colors.
They are better than all the others.
My family makes me happy.
They are everything but crappy.
If you got problems with them ,
Just come at me.
I got a lot of friends.
I can't keep track .
They are always here for me.
They always got my back.
They ask me what's for dinner?
I tell em mac and cheese.

That's how I want it.
I make it with ease.
At school, my favorite
Part is recess.
On the swing.
You know 'm the bestes.
My name is Niyah.
I'm 7 years old.
I can handle anything,
Even a heavy load.
Meisha always on our back.
The next song will be our dis track.

MATH AND PLAYING

A speech written to accept an Award for Excellence.

I'd like to thank my grandma's dog, Froti (Rest in Peace), Pepper we miss you and Khalina. You were my favorite dogs. I'd also like to thank Mcdonalds, Wendys, Taco Bell and Checkers for keeping me full. And Dave and Busters and the movie Boss Baby. I use number lines, fingers, my mom, my dad and Shakira. Also, my teacher for making me great at math. Rihanna, Nashell, Lakiya, Xavier and two guinea pigs Lulu and Lola for playing with me.

SHAKIRA

ABIYOYO

Developing the back story to the monster, Abiyoyo.

Who was Abiyoyo before he was a monster?
Abiyoyo was a 17 year old boy named Samuel Fowler. He was very bright and skipped 2 grades.
What kind of Monster was Abiyoyo?
Abiyoyo is an original monster. He is one of a kind and his bloodline is unknown.
Where did Abiyoyo come from?
Abiyoyo.
When exactly did Abiyoyo become a monster?

April 3, 1954: He was on a biking trip and fell into a deep dark whole-where a Witch was waiting.

TREASURE CHEST MYSTERY

Inspired by a treasure chest, treasure and a skull.

The last person that owned this ring was me. The old me or the future me (I don't know which one yet). I was able to move without being seen. I was respected, I was blunt, I was without a care in the world. I was a leader – a good one – I was a queen! But I bought this ring because it represented everything in me ... it represented the best in me – it brought out my Royalty. In hopes that I would find it one day and it would bring out the best in me – it represents power ... I have now found the ring ... The true me – will soon be brought out ...

I AM

A poem that inspired a candy sculpture.

I am a Mazda 2015.
I am made to sit four people.
I can allow you to answer, decline and talk through Bluetooth.

I am a garden.
I am filled with roses, dandelions, tulips and apple blossom trees.
I can change rearrange my flowers during the night.

I AM ME

I am happy. I am never sad. They cannot catch me, ginger bread man.
What they wanna' do is make me be the same.
Cuz sometimes I ain't happy.
Sometimes I am sad,
Sometimes I get slow and that is when they come.
Lock me in a dungeon and leave me alone.
I get drowned in my thoughts and drowned in my thoughts

and drowned in my past.
I just gotta remind me that the past ain't who I am .
Cuz I'm strong and I am proud. Sometimes it hurts when I
scream it out loud!
I take the pain with the pleasure.
The benefits with the doubts they don't understand me
and that is what I want so they could never categorize or
stereotype me.
They'll just take me for who I am, and that's how it'll be.
So when they ask for my description. I could never say. My
only advice for them is to learn along the way!
All I am is me. Which is all I can be.

IT CAN HAPPEN

Connecting colors, weather and emotions.

Intro: In the blink of an eye, with the twinkle of light anything
can happen for you.

Chorus: The sky can turn purple at the voices you make. Red
when you're mad and blue when you're sad, Anything can
happen- So sing if you can. I said anything can happen-
Sing if you can,

Verse: When you find your voice and know the things it can
do,

Sing with your voice, and that's what you do.

Through all the doubt, pain, sweat and tears.

If you believe in you, then your voice will be there.

You will turn the sky purple with your voice's command.

WHEN THEY SAY

Ask em who they ever beat.

I bet it ain't me.

When they say-go get em. I already got em.

60 feet below and I still ain't at the bottom.

60 feet tall and they still won't top me,

Say shine bright. I be like ain't that why you like me?

Cuz even if I was blind I could see my haters watching.

And if I was deaf, I could hear em talkin mess.

But my haters is my motivation.

I'm the sun, participatin.
Bout that action, never lackin.
So when they say- who is you?
Yes I am the queen.
Bad like MJ and you can't touch me.





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FUNDING & SUPPORT

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