

YOUTH UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Youth Under Construction (YUC) is a newsletter for youth and by youth in the St. Paul community. The purpose of this newsletter is to share information, views, and ideas.

VOLUME 2

February is Black History month

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This poem touched a Youth LEAD participant and he wanted to pass it along:

By RuNett Nia Ebo

Why did you make me black Lord? Lord, why did you make me black?

Why did you make someone the world would holdback?

Black is the color of dirty clothes, of grimy hands and feet.

Black is the color of darkness, of tired beaten streets.

Why did you give me thick lips, a broad nose and kinky hair?

Why did you create someone who receives the hated stare?

Black is the color of a bruised eye when someone gets hurt.

Black is the color of darkness, black is the color of dirt.

Why is my bone structure so thick, my hips and cheeks so high?

Why are my eyes brown and not the color of the sky?

Why do people think I'm useless? How come I feel so used?

Why do people see my skin and think I should be abused?

Lord, I don't understand. What is it about my skin?

Why is it people want to hate me and not know the person within?
Black is what people are labeled when others want to keep them away.

*Why did I make you black?
I made you the color of coal from which beautiful diamonds are formed!*

I made you the color of oil, black gold, which keeps people warm!

Your color is the same as the soil which grows the food that you need!

Your color is the same as the stallion and the panther, beautiful indeed!

All colors of the rainbow can be found in every nation,

When these colors are blended, you become my greatest creation!!

Your hair is the texture of lamb's wool; such a beautiful creature is he.

I am the shepherd who watches them, I will always watch over thee!

You are the color of the midnight sky, I put star glitter in your eyes!

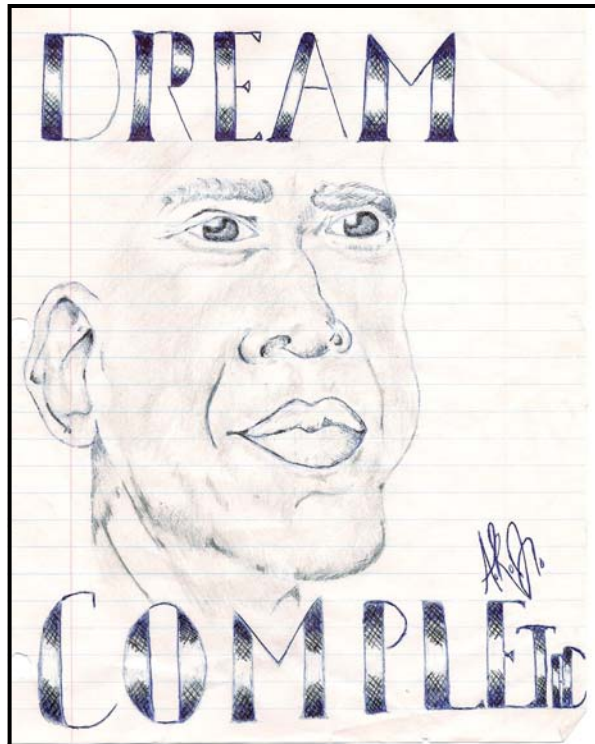
A beautiful smile behind your pain. That's why your cheeks are so high!

You are the color of dark clouds from hurricanes I create in September.

*I made your lips so full and thick so when you kiss * they'll remember!!*

Your stature is strong & bone structure thick to withstand burden of time.

The reflection you see in the mirror. That image that looks back, is mine!



Black is the color of shadows cast. Black is the end of the day.

Lord you know my own people mistreat me, you know this is not right.

They don't like my hair, don't like my skin. Saying I'm to dark or light.

Lord, don't you know its time to change?

Why don't you redo creation and make everyone the same?

Photo By: Adrian

LOVE

*When you think of me, I will think of you,
and how it will always be just us two.*

*You're the spool and I'm the string,
and I'm wrapped around you like wool on a sheep.
I want you to know that you mean everything to me
and that our love is never ending.*

You're the one that will make my world glow in rain or snow.

*Their loss is my gain and you can be the boss
and the keeper of my ring.*

If you were to set me free, I don't want anybody chasing after me.

You're the CD and I'm the case.

*If you leave, my heart will have an empty space
and then I would never be able to look at your pretty face.*

My heart is still full and I will do what I'm told

*because I always know that you will keep me warm when it's cold
and that you will shelter me from the
rain and protect me from the pain
that might try to flourish inside of me.*

*You aren't like the others. We have brothers and we have mothers
but the most important thing is we have each other.*

*You are more than a dove. You are my angel from above.
We are in love and no one can shove me away from you
because when they do, the moment you start to miss me,
I will already be missing you.*

*That should prove that our love will always be true,
because of how much I love you.*

By Timothy

TayShawn

Sadness constantly interrupts my soul,
My heart cries out to you loudly,
Arms always aching to hold you,
So that I may comfort you soundly.
Where are you TayShawn my angel?
Did you go to heaven to fly?
Please tell me this isn't real,
Because I still can't say goodbye.
Everything reminds me you're not here,
That's when I begin to cry,
Grief has become my new enemy,
I wish it would leave and die.
My pain and tears are still here,
I guess they want to stay,
I'm not sure if mommy's strong enough,
To deal with this day after day.
I miss everything about you Tay,
Your smile, your laugh, your coos,
I wish I could just bring you back,
But that's a battle I have to lose.
I know God has a plan for me,
Sometimes I just can't see,
Good things God has blessed me with,
Are right in front of me.
I learned to be a better woman,
Wrapped up in your loving embrace,
God sent an angel so small and dear,
And sealed your love with a dove on your face.
I love you TayShawn

The Hand of Life

**Hand, hand, its been through a lot
Deaths, relationships, friends and many
More things you can think of
My life is headed in a better direction then it
was six months ago.
My hand shows that its been through so
much.
I'm finally happy with myself, things, and
people around me
Everyday I pray to God that he sends me and
angel
to keep me on the right track to go in life.
My hand has dreams of becoming a famous
actor some day,
Giving back to my community and helping
people in need.
But first I have to make sure that I am stable.
And I am. My hand has finally found happi-
ness, love, and peace in
its life.**



Those Candles!



When you're a young person, the day that everyone awaits is the day that they blow those eighteen candles out. Little does one realize, once that day arrives, life does truly change. Suddenly your

parents expect rent money or the

lack of your presence completely. Suddenly you're the one who is struggling to pay for those three hundred and thirty four extra cell phone minutes you accidentally talked your way through. Things that never once crossed your mind, like how you're going to pay for your thirteen loads of laundry, are racing through your mind as you slowly slide your undergarments from yesterday back up your legs.

*Young adults under the age of eighteen are in for a huge awakening if they are under the impression that just because they can hold a part-time job at McDonalds and support their own cigarette habit that they're completely one hundred percent independent. **WRONG.**

*Now, I don't know exactly who will be reading this article, but I can imagine that you or someone in your household is, or will be, affected by the current recession that Americans are currently experiencing. Because of this, parents of my generation will be feeling very differently than many other generations. We may not be able to experience

the whole *stay at home throughout college* thing that other generations may have taken advantage of.

*Please don't take my words of advice and view them as if they are from the perspective of someone who is bitter, but rather look at them as if they were from someone who is attempting to do things on their

own; someone who is struggling to do the basic things that define us as human beings. Take my words as advice that state no matter how grown-up you may feel or what responsibilities you may have, you are still someone's child. I cannot stress enough, that you please enjoy this privilege because it takes a very successful person to be an adult role-model today. Enjoy the fact that you do not have to pay bills of your own. Enjoy being young and free of adult responsibilities, because soon enough those previously listed, and

many more, will be yours as they are mine. Enjoy your youth as I wish I had enjoyed mine. Enjoy those candles because soon enough you'll be sitting at the table blowing away your childhood.

*Andre

they're

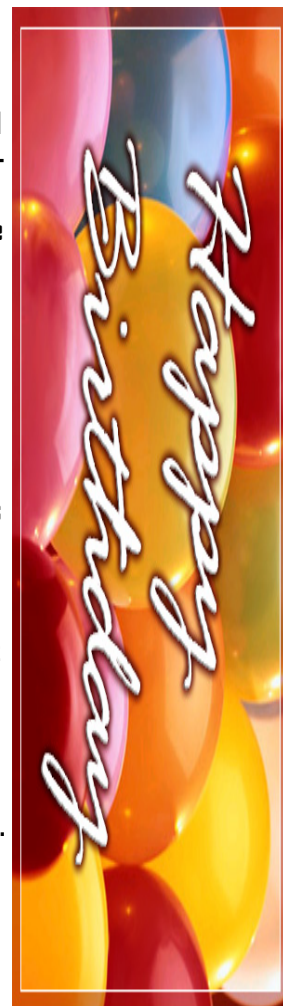
completely

one hundred

percent

independent.

WRONG.



Homeless and Cold by Derek

1:30 AM Jan 10th.

Tonight, my plans to stay with a friend in Maplewood fell through, so I decided to bike around for the night. Sounds harsh, right? You know, it's kind of amazing how even with the resources I had this year, that I'm still homeless. For the most part I've managed and I am still healthy and alive, which believe me, is a comforting thing. When people ask me how I can be homeless and still be so happy in life, I tell them that I love inside of me, and thank God for the good things in my life. Some of the friends I stay with tell me that one of the things they admire most about me, is that even when I have nowhere to go, I do not take it as a disadvantage, but a learning experience.

It is hard sometimes though. I know that people say that, and I also know that a lot of people in the world, and even right here in the cities, have it harder than I do. This helps me to understand and be compassionate for those who are worse off, but it also helps to brighten my standpoint on my situation.

Honestly, the hardest part is the nights that I have nowhere to sleep and I'm exhausted. 2:18 AM.

I'm trying really hard to stay awake right now. 2:54 AM.

I'm still cold.

Never thought I'd have a Ruptured Ovarian Cyst

For the most part I am a healthy person. Other than the childhood memories of falling off the bike and getting the common cold, life has been great for me. I find the health field very interesting and that's why I am a Medical Assistant. But nothing would prepare me for the day I felt extreme pain in my lower abdomen. That's the day I knew something was wrong, and thoughts ran through my mind of what it could be but I ignored the problem and insisted that I should just get some rest.

Luckily for me there weren't any complications to my condition. So I waited exactly two days and the pain presented itself again. I should know better because pain is the body way of telling you that something is wrong. I called the nurse careline & was told to get seen ASAP. I ended up going in to the ER the following day, waiting for two hours to get seen and then another five hours going through manual pelvic examinations, following an ultrasound, to get a diagnosis. I was told I had a *Ruptured Ovarian Cyst*.

Well what is an ovarian cyst?

I'd heard of it before but never understood how it happens exactly; hey you learn something new every day. It's obvious that the pain was from the cyst rupturing. But what is it? It is a cystic structure known as Follicle (in some instances continues to grow and become an ovarian cyst), which forms each month during a normal menstrual cycle. The Follicle secretes estrogen and progesterone to stimulate release of a mature egg from your ovary. The doctor explained that it doesn't pinpoint certain women; I am one of the few (though not uncommon) it happened to.

What can prevent it from happening?

The doctor told me that "you can't do anything to stop it, it just happens, Sheer bad luck", he said. Well thanks, I guess.

What type of cyst is it?

I know that cysts can be malignant or benign. Malignant means cancerous. Benign means not cancerous. Ovarian cysts are common in all women who continue to experience menstruation. Ovarian cysts may be simple or complex. A simple ovarian cyst contain only fluid, and a complex Ovarian Cyst contain fluid and solid

contents. Also a complex ovarian cyst has a greater potential to develop into a malignancy. I was told they have no reason to believe it to be cancerous.

What are other signs and symptoms of an Ovarian Cyst?

With my experience I have only had the unforgettable abdomen pain, but other signs can present themselves like: irregular painful periods, pain during sexual intercourse, when passing bowel movements, or pain in abdomen that may radiate to the thighs and buttocks. For the most part, you may not experience any pain, signs or symptoms to alert you of an ovarian cyst present. In some cases they may become large enough to twist fallopian tubes and cut off blood supply to ovary, which causes extreme discomfort. In return may cause you to lose an ovary.

What do I do about a ruptured Ovarian Cyst?

I truly wish looking back at the situation that I would have gone to the ER when it presented itself first hand. Ruptured ovarian cysts could have potentially life threatening complications, like internal bleeding and shock. In most cases of ovarian cysts rupture, whether there have been complications or not, you will be started on antibiotics.

What are my treatment options?

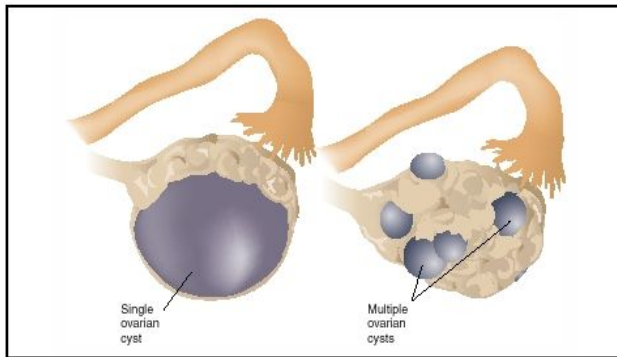
I was given Tylenol for my pain thankfully the worst part is over, though I still have some pain here and there, depending on how I move around doing my day to day activities. Since ruptured ovarian cysts are quite painful your doctor may want to help you manage your pain. In short term treatment to manage pain you will be on stronger antibiotics such as barbiturate like Vicodin. A lower dose codeine derivative such as Tylenol will be recommended for mild to moderate pain.

What is the treatment of my diagnosis?

Thankfully my diagnosis was simple and all I have to do is take some antibiotics to make sure I don't get an infection. Watch for abnormal bleeding, healing, having little to no pain in one to two weeks, and come back in three to four weeks to get another ultrasound to make sure that the cyst is gone. Usually cysts are discovered during a routine pelvic examination. The doctor will observe the cyst over a period of months through manual pelvic examinations and internal and external ultrasounds. Once your condition has been stabilized, your doctor may want to continue running tests to understand your condition more fully.

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Treatment Do I need surgery?

In three to four weeks when I return to see if the cyst has left I will find out if surgery is needed. Very unlikely, but possible I will need it. In certain circumstances your doctor may find the best option is for surgical removal of your ovarian cyst where three small incisions are made in your abdomen, and small surgical instruments are inserted through the incisions. Or they may perform the traditional surgery, with a large incision in abdomen, and it's typical to send any removed cystic tissue for biopsy. If your tissue is deemed malignant your doctor may wish to remove some of your reproductive organs, including your ovaries, fallopian tubes or uterus. Recovery from surgery is usually rapid and complete, however actual recovery times differ on type of surgery. If you didn't have your ovaries removed it is common for cysts to reoccur.

Be safe get checked! Unlike me there have been people who haven't been so lucky. At the onset of my pain I just ignored it but it very well could have been more severe. I am thankful that the worst is over and I'm not going to worry about future ovarian cysts being there. I

know things will be okay and if a problem presents its self I will just take it a day at a time. Please get seen if you have pain or are experiencing any of these symptoms get checked—don't wait. And remember pain is a sign underlying something's wrong. Get involved—be informed.

Words of Wisdom

Did you find a job?

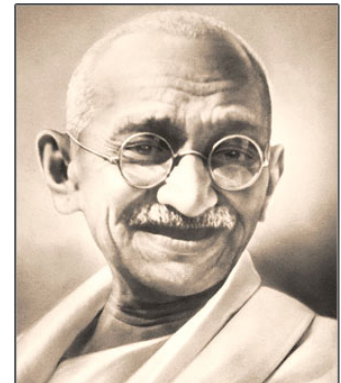
Do you enjoy it and hope to continue for a while?

Would you like to advance and obtain more responsibilities?

Advancing in the workplace is something everyone can do. Just follow these simple suggestions!

- 1. Seek additional responsibilities.**
- 2. Complete assignments immediately.**
- 3. Develop new skills through training.**
- 4. Seek assignments that offer exposure to managers.**
- 5. Show your enthusiasm for the organization.**
- 6. Work on your public speaking skills.**
- 7. Ask superiors for advice about your career.**
- 8. Get 10. Praise others for good work.**

help if an assignment is over your head.



SHOUT OUT to:

- ☞ The January Customer Service Training students!
- ☞ St. Louis for obtaining his diploma and landing a job with the City of St. Paul
- ☞ Yamisha, Emerald, Stephanie, Andre, Maria, Angel for getting their nursing assistant certificates
- ☞ Josue for his job promotion
- ☞ Josue and Samariah on their recent marriage
- ☞ Geoffrey for an excellent job on his work experience position
- ☞ Jazzma for her exceptional internship with Johnson H.S. and GAP
- ☞ Calvin, Vanessa, Danny, Sonya, Brett, Cassie, Jerrell, Brittney for their successes in college
- ☞ Jason and Rashad for earning their forklift certificates
- ☞ Jason for completing his 10 hour OSHA training course

TayShawn's Story



A Story: TayShawn's Life

On the 17th of January, my son passed away. Although we won't know why his heart just stopped, it did. TayShawn Malik Galloway was a soldier. He fought harder than anyone I've ever known.

My son had Ohtahara Syndrome (O.S.), a rare form of epilepsy, found in .02% of the epilepsy population. It's very severe and progressive; usually appearing as seizures within the first 10 days.

Infants primarily have tonic seizures (violent muscle contractions involving the entire brain and body), partial seizures, and rarely myoclonic seizures (quick hard jerks of the body). My son had Myoclonic Tonic cluster seizures lasting from 20 to 90 minutes at a time. He had an average of 22 seizures within 8 hours, but with medication, we had finally got it down to 6-10 seizures a day. Diagnosed at 14 days of age, I was told his time was limited to under a year.

TayShawn is my inspiration to keep fighting everyday to get the word out about O.S. He never gave up, why should I? These babies need our help. Most of these infants don't even have a chance. Our society puts so much effort into stupid things (reality T.V. etc.), when we should be

paying attention to what's important; finding cures for diseases, time with family, and telling the important people in our life how much we love them. We should not take for granted the little things in life because they make life precious.

My goal is to create awareness O.S. I do not understand why I lost Tay so soon, but I do know that he would have wanted me to reach out and get involved.

I love you Tay.

You saved Mommy's life.

I am forever grateful for you.

- Felicia

TayShawn

Malik

Galloway was

a soldier

Thinking positive

Hello every to all those reading this article. I am a 21 year old young woman about to start college and taking a CNA class and doing my thing. Sounds perfect right? Well I had thought it was perfect. I started taking things for granted everything for granted life itself I was too busy being angry at everyone and everything that all changed on December 2nd, 2008 when I went in for a TB test I needed done in order to finish up and complete my CNA class.

The night before me and ex-boyfriend were drinking and talking about life and honestly our future*. When out of nowhere he feels like telling me something his exact words were *baby, I had something in June a girl told me I gave her.* I was shocked because he should have already told me this since we had unprotected sex a few times. I was so scared so I told him he was coming with me to the Dr. in the morning and that we are both going to get tested for everything. I refused to do anything with him that night.

The following morning came along and I was still upset and hurt he hadn't told me this. I was not ready for what came next! He follows me to the bathroom I yell at him saying I can shower myself I don't need his help. He then replies *baby, the girl said I gave her HIV*. I almost fainted. I mean I didn't know how to react. I wanted to kill him and cry all at the same time. He quickly replied to me screaming at him to get out the bathroom by repeating *baby she's lying I didn't give her anything she gave me something.* At that moment for a brief second I saw my life literally flash in front of me I was so scared. Then denial hit I kept telling myself I feel fine he looks fine, and this could never happen to me. The bus ride there was the longest trip I had ever taken - it felt like hours. I was so quiet and he kept asking "what's wrong wifey?" my reply was "What do you think is wrong". I arrive at the Dr. office at the Red Door clinic. I am patiently waiting for my name to be called finally I hear



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my name - "S.R.!" I tell them why I want all the tests and she ends up giving the the whole lil female check -up. She gives the quick test for HIV also which comes back in 15 min. I thought the bus ride was long but this was the longest 15 min of my life. The knock of death literally - she comes in and says well everything looks negative from your pap smear (for the fellas that is when they check the inside of our female parts) I lit up but that smile quickly changed when I heard the nurse say in slow motion *but your HIV test was positive!* At first I didn't believe it. I kept making her repeat herself like what she was saying to me was going to change. My next reaction was to go out to the lobby and kill my ex-boyfriend after all he was killing me slowly. They would not let me out that room. I was breaking down, my whole life just is flashing, my brothers, cousins, my mom, grandma, my goals and dreams everything changed just like that. I would never be the same. I didn't know what to do or who to call. I honestly was going to leave there and just jump off the nearest bridge. I felt like my life was over!! The nurse then informed me that she would take another quick test which I did and wellllllllll* that did not change anything since this one was also positive... but the nurse told me I have to come back in 2 wks to get my confirmatory test results which is the long 100 percent accurate HIV result. I asked what are the chances my 2 quick tests are wrong the nurse quickly replied less than 1 in a billion so that is when I really just gave up and wanted to just stay there. I did not want to go face the real world now. I called the only person I thought would not judge me and be there for me which is AJ, my workforce counselor for the YouthLEAD program I'm currently in. She didn't judge me. She told

that I can't give up and to continue my dreams. So I wiped my tears and put myself in denial mode so I could leave and meet with her. When I arrived there the place was closed but she let me in. I was really grateful for AJ and this program that night because I had nowhere else to go and no one else I could talk to. I knew I had to be strong though over the next few days while I was telling different family members which to my surprise everyone still wanted me around and still loved me.

I did finish my CNA training and continued on with my life trying to be strong. I just accepted my life as a HIV positive young woman so I thought. I did cry myself to sleep a couple of nights in a row but by the end of the second week I just knew I had to achieve my goals and live my life to the fullest because I never knew when I was going to get sick or be in the hospital or anything. Well, finally the 2 wks came they called my name again "Stephanie Ramirez". I was just repeating in my head I am already prepared for the worst I have already accepted the positive results. To my surprise -a beautiful surprise - they told me I was a miracle and my results were negative I DO NOT HAVE HIV!!!!!!!!!!!! I DO NOT HAVE ANY FORM OF ANY STD!!! I was so shocked and happy and thankful I feel it was a blessing from god to teach me a life lesson and to test my strength and he blessed me for not giving up on him and for staying hopeful.

I hope those reading this learn that it can happen to you and yea, I may not have it and the results were wrong but the point is it could have turned out differently so please be safe and strap up or go get tested.

Free/low cost confidential STD, pregnancy, HIV testing:

Face to Face
651-772-5555
1165 Arcade
St.Paul

Red Door
612-543-5555
525 Portland
MLPS

Safe Zone
651-224-9644



WHAT IS YOUR DREAM JOB?

-To become a marine. —Tim

-To help people and design home interiors. —Derek

-Architect —Andre

-Fashion Designer

-I want to work with friendly people and make lots of money.

-R.N (Registered Nurse)

-My dream job is to become a group home director. —Niya

-A multi-platinum solo artist (Singer). —Shetivia

-To be in the UFC one day.



My Opinion

I'm not quite sure what effect Barack Obama becoming president will have on the world. As far as political leaders go, many places on Earth are a few steps ahead of us. Numerous countries have had numerous women and men of many different racial and ethnic backgrounds



as their leaders. My only real hope is that our any nation, and particularly anyone of African descent, will see it for what Barack himself called it, "change". It only enforces what I already believe to be true, that anyone of nationality, race,

gender, sexual orientation, age or creed can do anything that they believe they can. Obama becoming the president of the U.S. doesn't "put power into the black man's hands", it puts power back into the hands of the gloriously common citizens of this glorious country we all know and love. -Andre

What's Your Advice for Younger Generations

- Don't take your youth for granted - Derek
- FOCUS - Andre
- What everyone else says, stay in school!
- Sometimes it's best to put up with your parents and not move out right away
- Live, learn, move on
- Follow your heart and dreams, not others
- Stay in school, practice safe sex, say no to drugs and have respect for everyone - Niya
- Stay in school and also shoot for the stars. Don't give up on your dreams. Shetivia
- Stay in school - Todd

Can You Contribute To The Next News Letter?

Do you have something to share with your peers? Is there something you'd like to write about? We welcome most any type of article.

Your experiences?

Your job	Educational information	Movie, book, restaurant,
cd, concert, and/or video game review	Poetry	Favorite recipe
What you did on vacation	Advice	Career information
Interviewing advice	Whatever you'd like to share	

Give your article to your YouthLEAD counselor or email your article to: annette.johnson@co.ramsey.mn.us