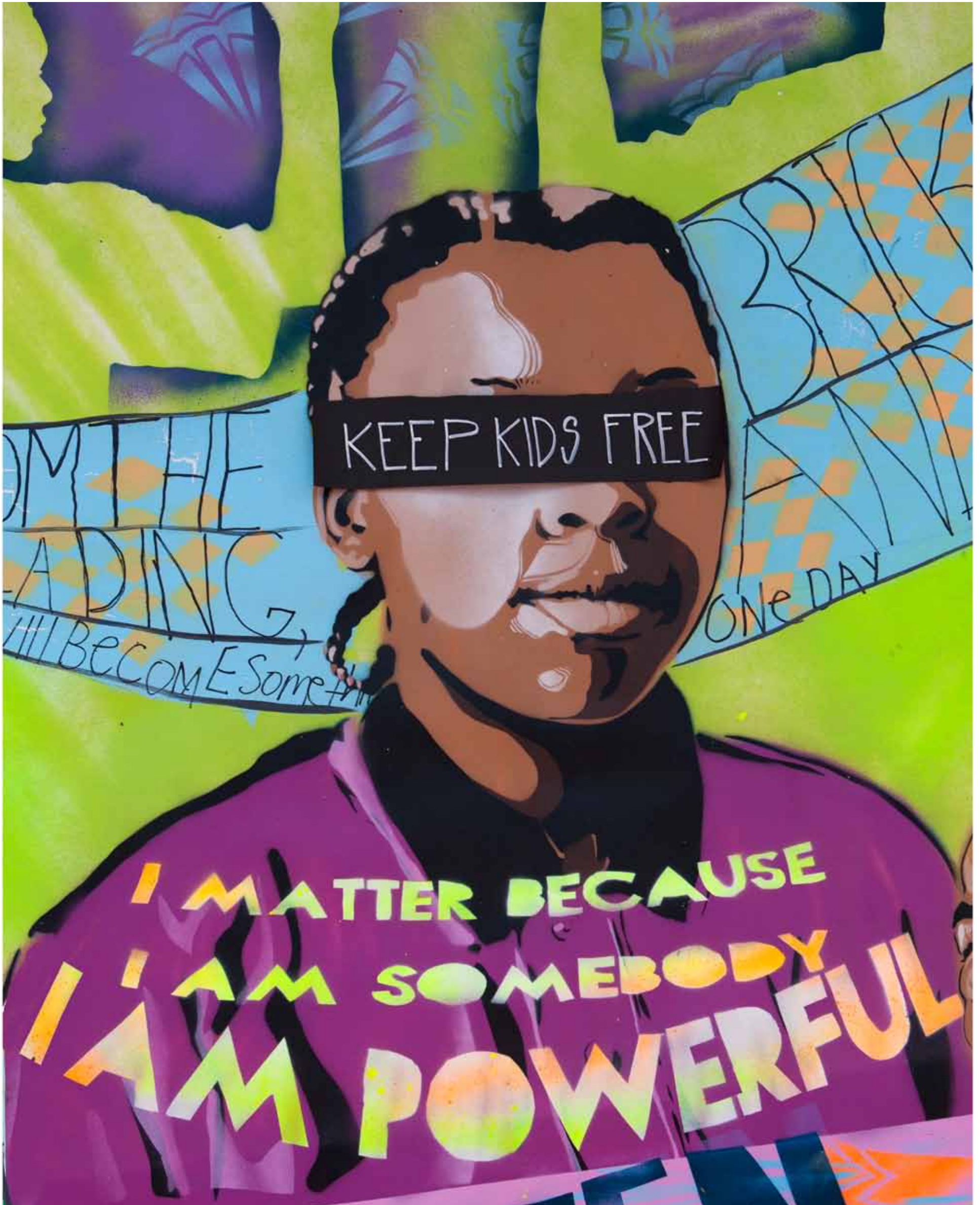




# Performing Statistics

Incarcerated youth, artists, and advocates working to transform the juvenile justice system

Issue no 2. Spring 2017



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# Performing Statistics

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## About Performing Statistics


Performing Statistics is a project of ART 180's new Youth Self-Advocacy Through Art program, the first program in Richmond to work with youth trapped in the school-to-prison pipeline to sharpen their advocacy and leadership skills, share their experiences through creative expression, and mobilize communities for change. The program brings incarcerated youth together with artists and advocates to produce media campaigns and mobile exhibitions designed to spark dialogue and inspire action on the causes, impacts, and alternatives to the school-to-prison pipeline. This program is in partnership with Legal Aid Justice Center and was inspired by the Performing Statistics project during the pilot phase in 2015.


The mobile exhibition will travel across the state (to schools, museums, public spaces, police departments, and many other spaces) to help dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline. We want to work directly with local organizers and those most affected by this issue to target decision-makers and create change. The mobile gallery exists to inspire CONVERSATION and ACTION on this important issue.

## THIS IS AN INTERACTIVE MAGAZINE

Download Blippar from your app store to watch these pages come to life with interactive multimedia.

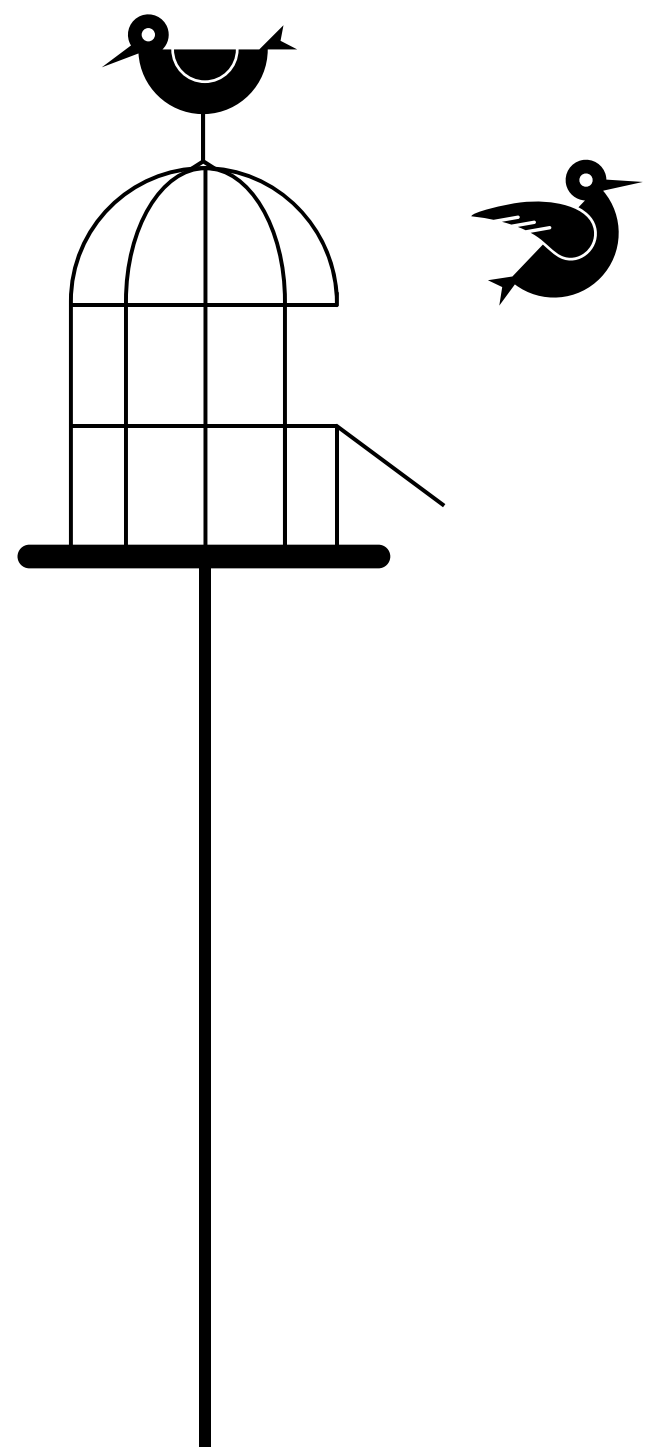
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Look for these icons to unlock additional content:





Give Us  
Opportunities



BEFORE YOU GIVE  
US A CELL



I AM

I live a lifestyle that nobody knows  
People shooting guns  
With the light from the sun  
Where I'm from we don't have a sky or  
Enough high school graduates  
I was surrounded by potheads  
But realized they were just kids like me

In and out of these brick walls  
But light is all I want to see  
Just because I'm from the bricks doesn't  
Mean I don't fit in college getting a degree  
I am smarter than you think

I am sixteen,  
Fifteen,  
Fourteen years old  
I am not a criminal  
I am not an animal  
I am powerful

POWER

When I was growing up, my neighborhood  
Sounded like police sirens  
Smelled like old piss and felt like a place  
With no hope

But it shouldn't be where you are from  
But where you want to be  
Give me freedom and I bet I'll succeed

If I had a superpower,  
It would be to save people from dying  
To take my mom's cancer away

If justice transformed, I would be doing  
Work instead of time.  
You'd hear me say  
We need freedom for unity  
You'd see what I did  
As an outlet instead of a crime  
Teach me math, science, reading,  
And language arts  
Believe that I am powerful  
And I will become something one day

I am outspoken and I can not be broken  
I will not be ashamed of who I am

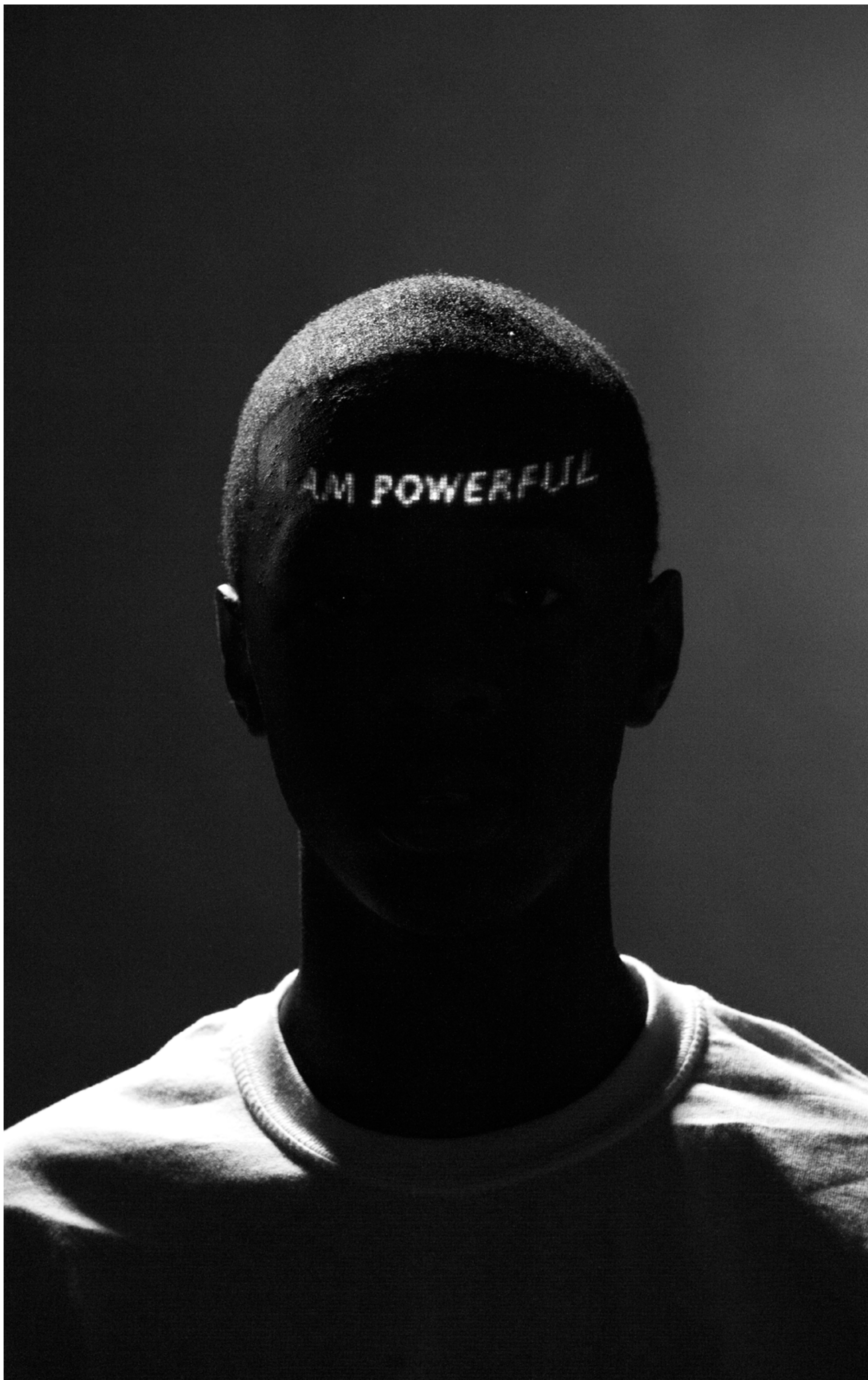
Believe me, I am powerful.

FULL



*Written by teens from the Richmond  
Juvenile Detention Center, Summer 2016*







Imagine you can feel  
The cold bricks that you consider your wall  
The hard mat on your skin, itchy wool covers  
Sad not being able to wake up and see your mom  
My pain

Imagine you can see bugs on the wall when you wake up

Imagine you can hear  
The same people tell you what to do every day  
People's stomachs going empty  
The person next to you piss  
Me cry out for help

Nothing

Imagine spending your day in only one room  
Closed in a closet, counting bricks and killing bugs  
Searching for freedom

Stop for a moment, and think about where you are  
Then Imagine your child in here  
Think about how your room looks at home  
Imagine you can't be in that world  
Think about what it feels to be recognized as a troubled child

# STEP INTO

Close your eyes and remember you're locked up and you can't go home

Imagine not being able to smell  
Fresh cut grass  
Your house  
Real food and fresh air

Imagine not being able to hear  
Buses  
Kids  
Your family's voices  
The songs you want to hear  
The real world

Imagine not being able to feel your son in your arms  
Your daughter's hand  
The comfort of the people you love  
A good bed to lay on  
Free

Before you leave, make sure you think about what you just read  
Remember me  
Never forget this feeling  
Never forget that being locked up is not a situation you want to be in

But that I can be successful

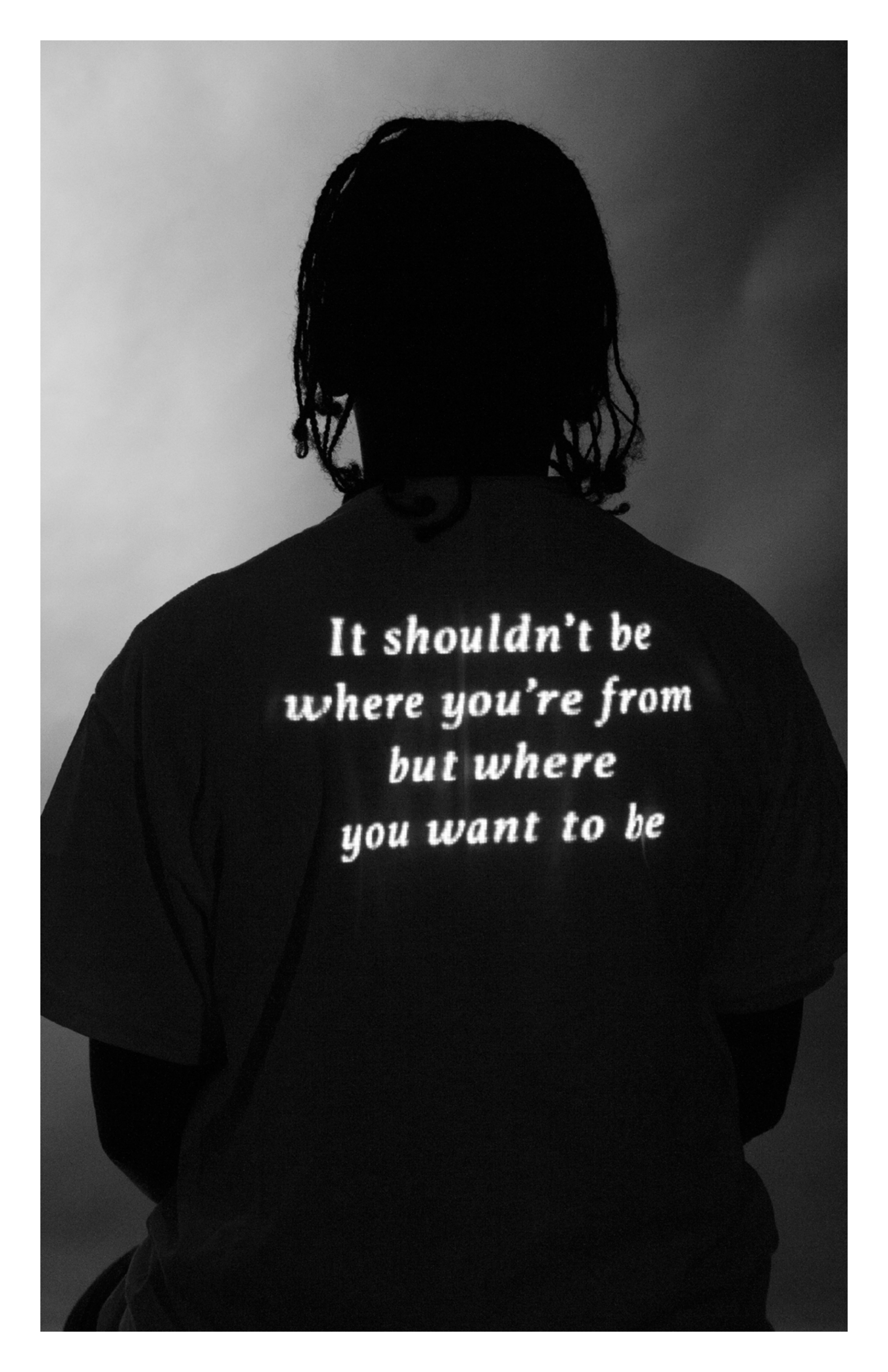
That I am human

# WHEN YOU STEP INTO MY CELL



*Written by teens from the Richmond  
Juvenile Detention Center, Summer 2016*



A black and white photograph of a person from behind. The person has long, dark hair styled in many thin braids. They are wearing a dark-colored t-shirt. The back of the t-shirt features a white, serif-style quote. The background is a soft, out-of-focus gradient of light and dark tones.

*It shouldn't be  
where you're from  
but where  
you want to be*



# WE

When I close my eyes, I see myself in detention  
I see myself dreaming  
I see myself free

If you were me, you would know  
That I'm scared of sharks  
That I am not a criminal  
That I love being outside  
That I'm scared of losing my mom  
That I fear I will be nothing  
That I struggle with math  
That I am not a thug  
That I am scared of God

Home is just another project to some.  
But to me,  
It's where my family is  
It smells like fresh air  
Like shit  
Pain  
Piss  
But feels like home  
Home... Home.

If you were me, you would know  
That I dream of the world  
That I want to be BIG  
That I'm not any angry person  
Even though I like angry music  
That I want to go out like a soldier

If my voice were heard, I would say  
That I'm determined, but I need an education  
That I want to succeed  
That there's always beauty in the struggle

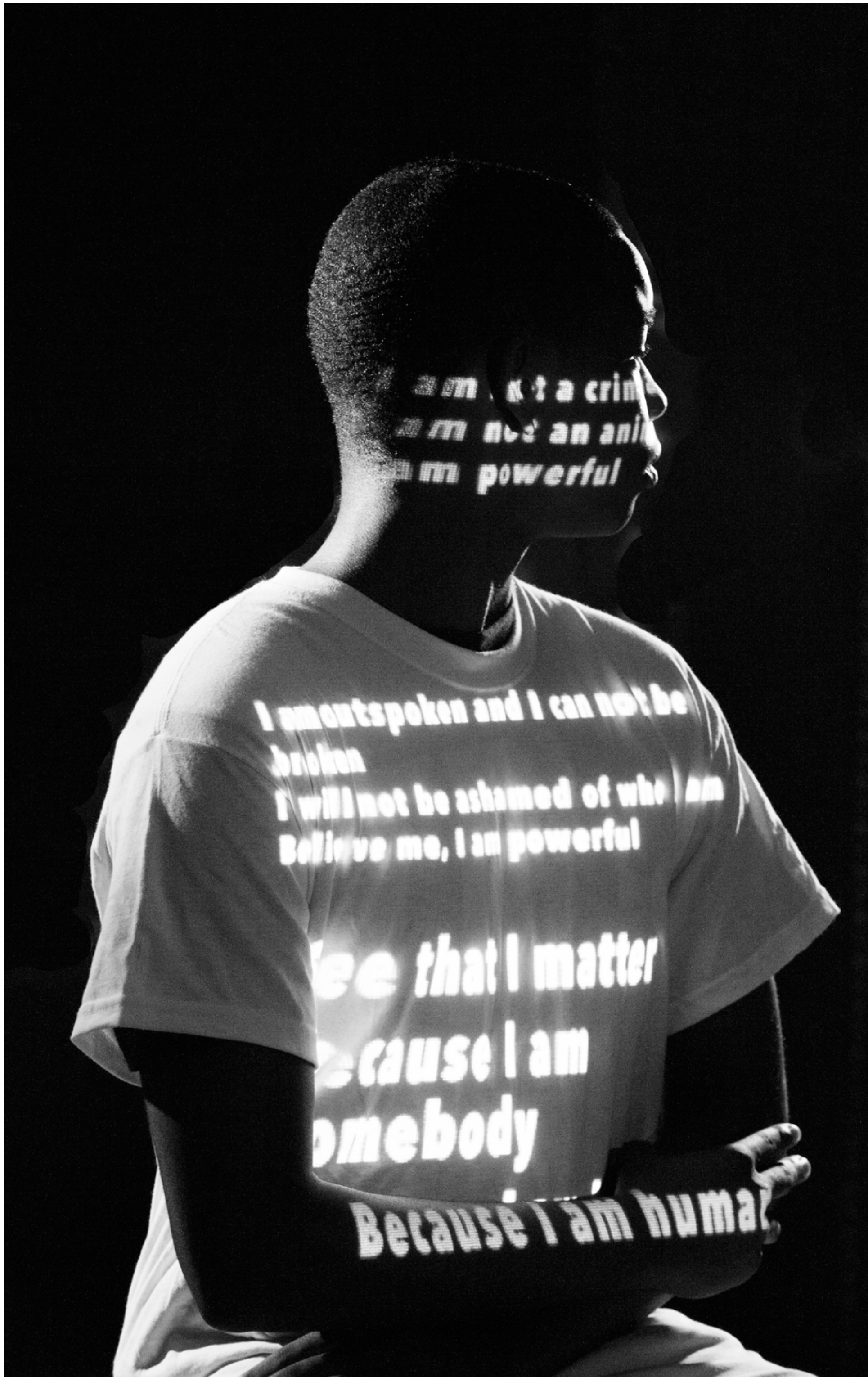
I would tell you to listen  
To see that I matter because I am somebody  
Because I am black  
Because the system is taking my life

Because I am human.



*Written by teens from the Richmond  
Juvenile Detention Center, Summer 2016*





I am not a criminal  
I am not an animal  
I am powerful

I am outspoken and I can not be  
broken  
I will not be ashamed of who I am  
Believe me, I am powerful

See that I matter  
Because I am  
somebody

Because I am human



DON'T  
SEPERATE  
US FROM  
OUR



COMMUNITY







We Need

Restorative

Justice











# The School-to-Prison Pipeline

The pipeline is a system of laws, policies, and practices that pushes students out of school and onto a path to the juvenile and criminal justice systems. Young people of color and those with disabilities are the ones most affected by the school-to-prison pipeline in Virginia. Once youth are in the system, there are few opportunities to prevent them from returning.

A student who is suspended from school may be on his own during school hours, not making progress toward graduation, and potentially spending time in unhealthy environments that can lead to more negative consequences. Prior to being committed to a Department of Juvenile Justice facility, of all FY14 admissions:

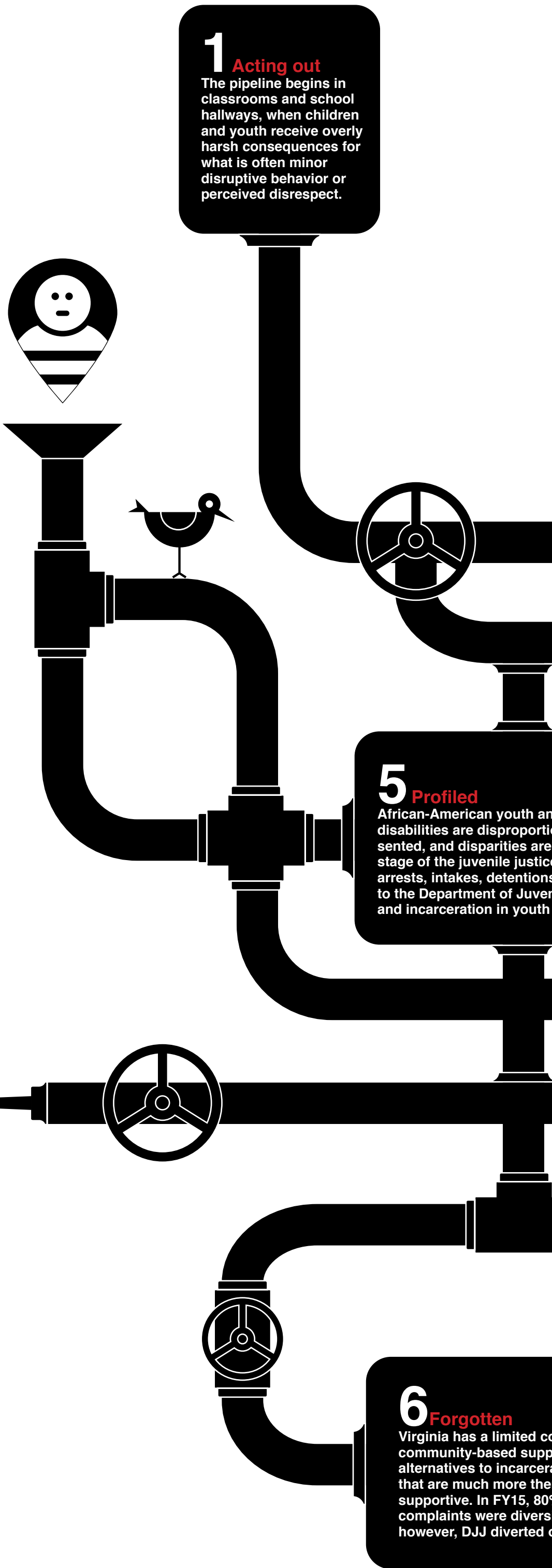
- 59% experienced physical assault/abuse
- 58% had seen parent criminal activity
- 46% had a parent who was incarcerated
- 39% had a parent with substance abuse
- 20% experienced a parent death
- 16% experienced family domestic violence
- 14% experienced sexual assault/abuse
- 13% demonstrated self-injurious or suicidal behavior

Unfortunately, consequences like suspension and expulsion aren't the only punishments administered in Virginia schools. As the number of School Resource Officers (SRO's) has increased, so has the number of youth who end up in court for behavior that in years past might have landed them in in-school suspension: we used to give kids more school as a consequence for behavior, not less – certainly not an arrest record. The support our young people need to be successful isn't found inside prison walls. In 2015, 28.2% of youth in juvenile prison passed their English Standards of Learning (SOL) test, and only 7.2% passed their mathematics SOL test. In Virginia, 79% of all students passed their English and math SOLs.

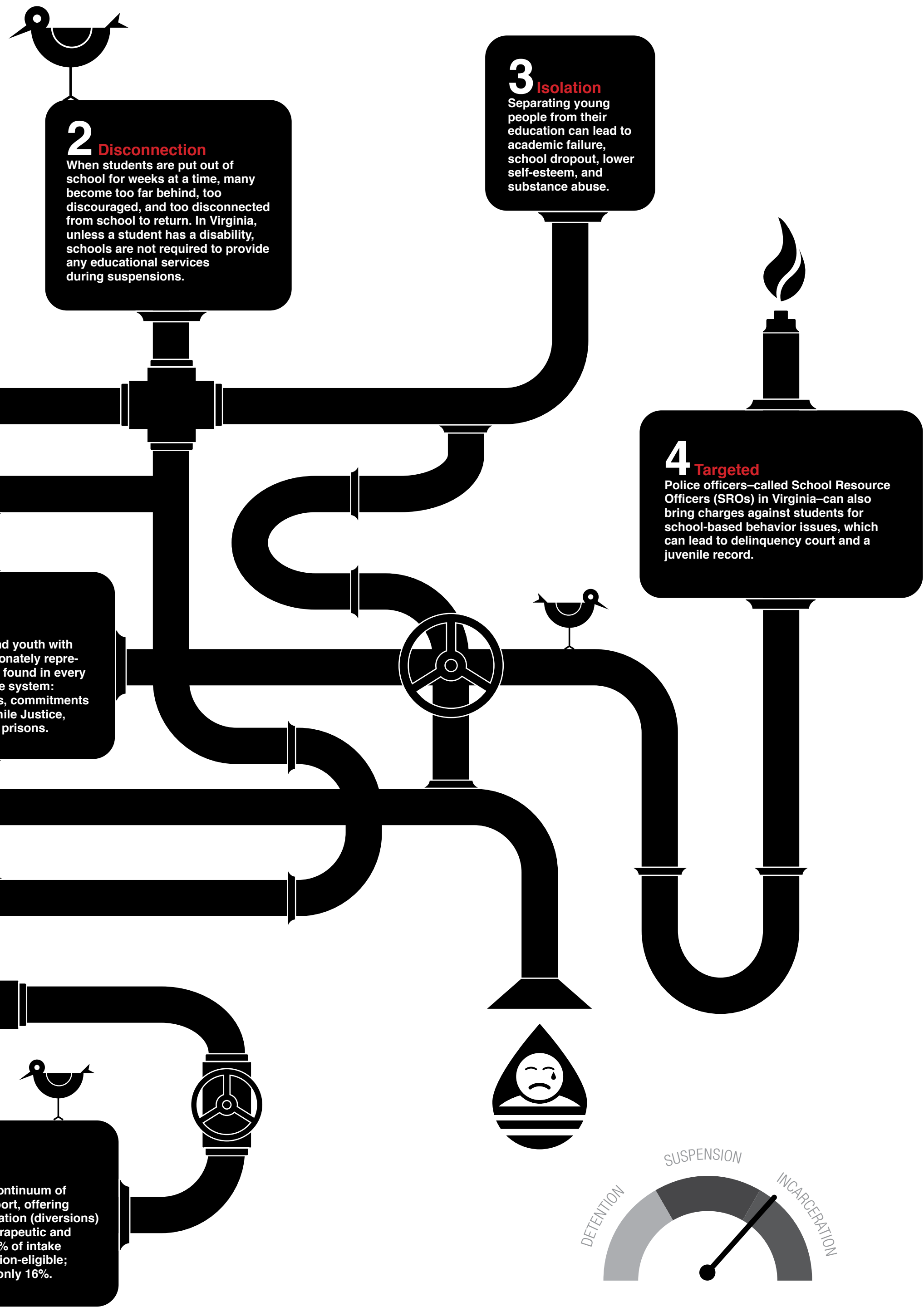
The revolving door is real. The 36-month recidivism rates in FY15 revealed:

- 77% were rearrested
- 73% were reconvicted
- 51% were reincarcerated

The outcomes for committed youth are poor. But there are ways to change the system. Not only can we transform our DJJ facilities into smaller facilities with a limited number of beds (25 or fewer), and that are more therapeutic and supportive, we can invest in a robust continuum of community-based support. Learn more at Legal Aid Justice Center's RISE for Youth campaign at [www.riseforyouth.org](http://www.riseforyouth.org).









*Black youth make up 20% of  
Virginia's population, but account for...*  
**43% of all juvenile intakes;  
56% of all juvenile detainment;  
and 67% of commitments**



# THE STATS DON'T LIE

Virginia sends more students to law enforcement than any other state in the country.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Susan Ferris, Virginia tops nation in sending students to cops, courts: Where does your state rank? Center for Public Integrity (Apr. 10, 2015)



*The most frequent reason students were  
referred to law enforcement was:*  
**DEFIANCE OF AUTHORITY  
AND INSUBORDINATION**



**COST TO INCARCERATE  
ONE CHILD, FOR ONE YEAR IN VA:**

**\$145,000+**

**AMOUNT SPENT TO EDUCATE ONE CHILD,  
FOR ONE YEAR (RPS). \$14,000**



*High school dropouts are **3.5 times** more  
likely to be arrested, and **8 times** more likely  
to be incarcerated*

**KEEP KIDS IN SCHOOL!  
END THE SCHOOL TO  
PRISON PIPELINE!**



**Arresting students doubles the  
chances that they'll drop out  
of school...**

*Even when controlling for college expectations,  
middle school grade point average, and a  
number of demographic factors.*







# WANT TO HELP?

There are so many ways to make a difference. Join the movement.

**Tell us your story**

If you or a family member have experienced issues in the juvenile justice system and have thoughts on how to make things better, we want to hear about it. Visit: [www.riseforyouth.org/take-action/tell-us-your-story/](http://www.riseforyouth.org/take-action/tell-us-your-story/)

**Contact your state legislator**

Tell them youth prisons don't work, but alternatives do! You can find your legislator at: [www.whosmy.viriniageneralassembly.gov/](http://www.whosmy.viriniageneralassembly.gov/)

**Write an op-ed or letter to the editor** on why juvenile justice reform is needed. For writing tips download the RISE for Youth Action Kit here: [www.riseforyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/RISE-Action-Kit.pdf](http://www.riseforyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/RISE-Action-Kit.pdf)

**Join us** for our spring actions during the General Assembly Session. Visit: <http://www.riseforyouth.org/news/upcoming-events/>

**Learn about the Youth for RISE Advocacy Network**

Youth and young adults ages 13 to 24 with experience in the juvenile justice system and/or interest in juvenile justice reform are encouraged to join the Youth for RISE network. For more information visit: <http://www.riseforyouth.org/about/youth-for-rise-advocacy-network/> or contact Da'Quon Beaver at: [daquon@justice4all.org](mailto:daquon@justice4all.org).

**Spread the word**

This newspaper has been designed specifically to be cut up and turned into posters. Post them throughout your community space, school, gallery, storefront window, or city.

**Download our free teaching and training tools**

These tools are designed for professionals in law enforcement, education, the Department of Juvenile Justice, and adults who advocate on behalf of and with young people. Visit: [www.performingstatistics.org](http://www.performingstatistics.org) for free teaching exercises.





# SUPPORT YOUTH ADVOCATES

Teens and young adults who have experience with Virginia's juvenile justice system are working together to end the school-to-prison pipeline.

The Youth for RISE Advocacy Network (YRAN) believes youth voices need to be part of the policies and platforms that impact their lives, communities and futures. YRAN works with youth and young adults in the Richmond metro area who have personally experienced the juvenile justice system or who are interested in improving the system.

YRAN partners with the Performing Statistics project to co-organize exhibits, police training workshops, and public actions aimed at dismantling the school-to-prison pipeline.

Want to bring the Performing Statistics exhibit to your community? Want to support these brave young advocates? Go to our websites to find out how:

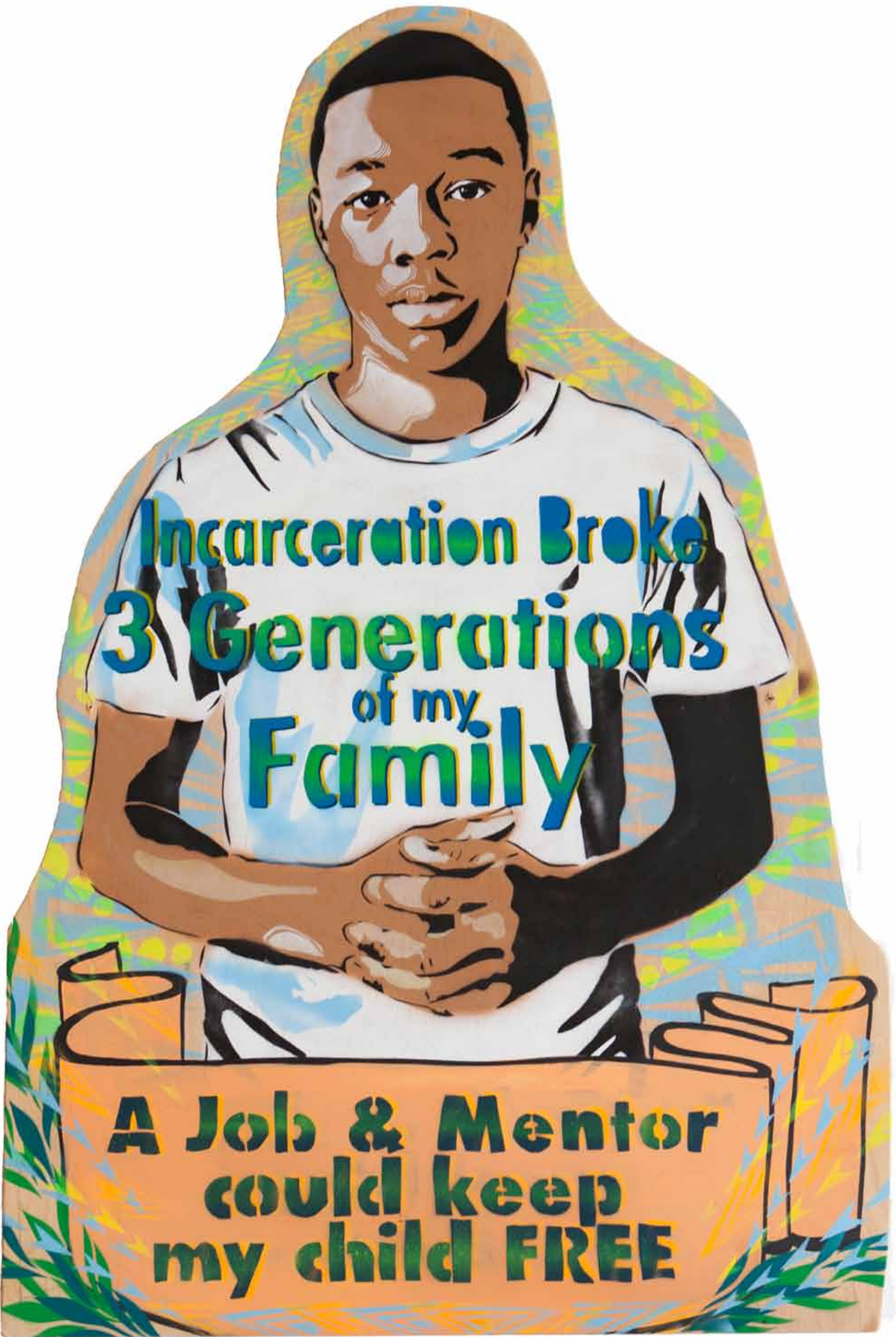
[www.performingstatistics.org](http://www.performingstatistics.org)  
[www.riseforyouth.org](http://www.riseforyouth.org)













# PRISONS DON'T WORK

**Bring this mobile exhibition to your community and spark a dialogue on why the system needs to change.**

Prisons don't work. They cost too much (Virginia spends \$145,000 to incarcerate one youth for one year vs. \$14,000 to educate one student in Richmond). Isolation is not what our youth need (in FY15, 64% of committed youth had a diagnosed mental health need). And prisons don't prepare our youth to re-enter their communities, homes, and schools (73% of youth are reconvicted within three years). The stats don't lie. Prisons don't work: not for youth, not for their families, not for our communities, and not for you.

You can be a megaphone for youth trapped in the system. Join Performing Statistics and the RISE for Youth coalition as we work to make Virginia more whole, safe, and just for all!

This work is also a mobile exhibition. Learn how to bring the conversation to your community or discover public events, days of action, and advocacy opportunities at [www.performingstatistics.org](http://www.performingstatistics.org).





# HOW WOULD INCARCERATED YOUTH TRAIN POLICE?

## Connecting Youth, Police, and You

Formerly incarcerated youth, their families, artists, and advocates are working together with the Richmond Police Department to train the city's entire police force. This interactive training session uses the artwork made during our summer intensive with the Richmond Juvenile Detention Center to engage officers around youth development, trauma-informed approaches to policing, and the impact the juvenile justice system has on individuals, families, and communities.

Our 2016 training sessions culminated with a community dialogue featuring youth impacted by the criminal justice system, police officers, and community members to rewrite real life interactions between a young person and a police officer so they did not end in arrest. Their rewritten scripts were performed for those in attendance, inspiring urgently needed, raw, and honest conversation.

By acknowledging all parties as part of the solution, we are moving beyond stereotypes on all sides and beginning to shift culture, perceptions and policies in lasting ways.

**Do you train law enforcement, teachers, or other adults who work with youth?**

Let us know if you'd like to partner to help bring our training to your community.









# DISMANTLING THE SCHOOL-TO- PRISON PIPELINE

Free teaching tools for your classroom,  
workshop, or community dialogue

This is more than a publication: It's a handheld and mobile exhibition full of amazing art, writing, and dreams shared by a group of youth impacted by the juvenile justice system. It's not just for you to read. Cut it up. Put it in your room, school, or community space. Use it to better understand the issue. Use it to hear from those most impacted by the system. Use it to help guide, prompt, and facilitate discussions in a classroom, public space, dining room, or political center of power.

**Are you a teacher?** Working with educators, advocates, and artists, we've developed a free, Virginia SOL-ready curriculum. Use the newspaper as a powerful teaching tool to engage, educate, and inspire your students to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline in their own school.

To download the free curriculum and find out ways to get your students or community involved, go to our website: [www.performingstatistics.org](http://www.performingstatistics.org)









## How can we keep kids free?

This summer the teens worked with filmmakers from across the city to create short films in response to the question, “How can we keep kids free?” The teens wrote, designed, and filmed their powerful movies. These short pieces share stories of resilience, potential, and power, and also lay out ideas for solutions to the school-to-prison pipeline. To see films use your blippar app to scroll over the image to the right and watch them come to life.

## Want to bring the project to your hometown or city?

Each summer in Richmond, VA, we host an art and advocacy initiative where 3 days a week, for 8 weeks, a group of incarcerated youth leave their detention facility, and come to ART 180’s teen art center, called Atlas.

There they work with artists from across Richmond— and lawyers from Legal Aid Justice Center—to produce a series of media campaigns and mobile exhibitions.

These exhibitions are traveling across the state (to schools, museums, public spaces, police departments, and more) to help spark dialogue, train police officers, and push politicians to support reforms that will help make our communities safe, just, and whole. The exhibit can be used to host conversations, actions, workshops, and more. Are you an activist, educator, museum, or community space who is interested in engaging these issues? Contact us to find out how we can share the teen’s powerful exhibit with your community!



Photo by Mark Strandquist



Photo by Mark Strandquist

[www.performingstatistics.org](http://www.performingstatistics.org)

## Contact us

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Valerie Slater, Coordinator, RISE for Youth Coalition,  
Legal Aid Justice Center, [valerie@justice4all.org](mailto:valerie@justice4all.org)

For creative youth programming  
ART 180  
[www.art180.org](http://www.art180.org)  
804-233-4180

For legal resources  
Legal Aid Justice Center  
[www.justice4all.org](http://www.justice4all.org)  
804-643-1086

**More information about the project**  
[www.performingstatistics.org](http://www.performingstatistics.org)  
[www.riseforyouth.org](http://www.riseforyouth.org)

### Guest teaching artists

John Blake, Terry Brown, Kate Deciccio, OK Keyes,  
Catherine Komp, Malena Magnolia, Ben Surber,  
Elizabeth Williams, and Craig Zirpolo

### Intern

Miranda Rosenblum

### Adult mentors

Kelvin Belton, Terence Scruggs, Dean Turner

### Partners

ART 180, Youth Self-Advocacy Through Art program  
Legal Aid Justice Center, JustChildren program  
RISE for Youth campaign and the  
Youth for RISE Advocacy Network,  
Richmond Juvenile Detention Center  
post-dispositional program,  
Richmond Police Department

### Gratitude for

Richmond Public Library  
Community Idea Stations  
Catherine Komp and Angela Massino  
Justice4Families, Tracey Wells-Huggins  
National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture, Wendy Levy

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### Photographers

Craig Zirpolo  
Elizabeth Williams

### Art direction

Michael K. Wright

