

# FINANCIAL HEALTH

There is value to the work we do. Here's how we raised funds and invested in young people.



Fire has helped me grow so much socially, emotionally & artistically. I've learned to be more compassionate, open-minded, optimistic & trusting.

*Fire Youth, 18 years old*



## 2017 OPERATING RESULTS

### INCOME

- Foundations 72%**  
Grants keep our cash flow consistent. Donors can be confident that Fire deserves their resources, as we have already earned the support of professional funders.
- Businesses Believing in Youth 16%**  
In 2017 we had great success connecting with businesses like the People's Food Co-op, Arcadia Brewing Company and smaller businesses who sponsor our youth!
- Earned Revenue 8%**  
We earn revenue from a few sources: occasional rentals, sales of products that youth create, and contracts to share our program model with other organizations.
- Individual Contributions 4%**  
Fire provides free programming for youth who are turning surviving into thriving. We ask you for support and you astound us with generosity. Thank you!

### EXPENSES

- Programs 66%**  
Why we do everything else! Program expenses includes hiring incredible staff, printing great program tools, buying pounds of peanuts for snacks and more!
- Administration & General 17%**  
Lights. Taxes. Trash. All the unglamorous aspects of running somewhere functioning. And, someone's gotta run the place and make sure we comply with regulations to maintain our non-profit status.
- Space 16%**  
We are one of the few arts organizations based in a neighborhood, literally on the corner! This location allows us to be a place-based space and reach young people where they are.



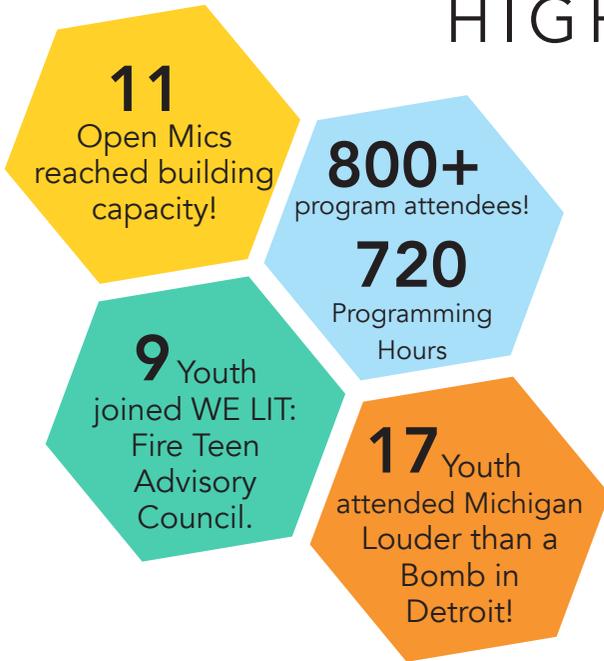
## 2017 ANNUAL REPORT



269.220.0152  
PO Box 51161  
Kalamazoo, MI 49005  
director@thisisfire.org

[thisisfire.org](http://thisisfire.org)

# HIGHLIGHTS



**Kzoo Youth Poetry Slam Teams at 2017 Michigan Louder than a Bomb**  
 We hosted the first competitive youth poetry slam in Kalamazoo with 30 registered poets. The top scoring youth made teams and trained for 5 weeks to bond and attend Michigan Louder than a Bomb with 17 other competing teams from across the state. Youth shared their stories with audiences built from communities across the state, and got to be in workshops with professional poets.

**Summer of Healing**  
 This summer we hosted an eight-week summer program with a retreat shaped around the theme of healing inside and out. Youth focused on learning about systems of oppression, and creating art works of their own. Youth also created a zine called "Big Mood." Youth who attended all eight weeks increased social and emotional learning skills by 150%, especially in social awareness!

IF MY FEARS  
 CIRCLED MY HEAD LIKE CROWS,  
 I WOULD SHRINK THEM DOWN  
 TO THE SIZE OF THE GRAYS BENEATH ME-

**WE LIT: Fire Teen Advisory Council**  
 The Teen Advisory Council is at the core of our organization. In 2017, they hosted activities on retreat with the Board of Directors, welcomed new members, built community and planned a New Years' Eve Lock in.



Here at Fire, I have become more open about who I am without having to feel shame over my talents. Fire is truly a shameless space for leaders.  
*Fire Youth, 15 years old*

## New Spatial Elements

If you haven't been in the space, come by for our monthly Open Mics each First Friday and check out the lavender and bright orange walls, locker shelves, supportive floor seating and meditative seats.

## Stronger Relationships with Youth Arts Organizations in the State

Fire was chosen to be one of four arts organizations to be coached by the Neutral Zone in Ann Arbor to grow our youth-driven space practices. Our Teen Advisory Council and staff also got to attend a retreat with other youth arts organizations from Detroit and Ypsilanti.

## Classroom Visits

In 2017 we visited 10 English Classes at Loy-Norrix High School and Kalamazoo Central to expose youth to spoken word poetry and invite them to grow themselves after school. We believe in connecting across sectors!



## LETTER from the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Supporters,

We're in the middle of a growth spurt. Fire has had the most consistent programming in our history and is building a unique community in the middle of Edison neighborhood with young adults. 2017 was a year of launching new projects like the first statewide competing youth poetry slam team from Kalamazoo, and strengthening programs like the Teen Advisory Council. We hosted our first Queer Prom and an eight-week Summer of Healing. One board member described us as "young, scrappy and dynamic," and I think it's true. Thanks for showing young people they are believed & valued.

In creativity,

Allison Kennedy