

SPEAK UP

By Devin Ford

The arts are an incredibly powerful way for people to find their voice. They have the ability to motivate, inspire and change lives. Throughout the program we heard over and over again that our youth are bored, there is nothing to do, they have no direction, & they feel that the adults in their lives do not care or don't listen. What if we gave all our young people a positive way to have a voice?

My mission was to show the kids that they have the tools to tell their story and change their community. What was their story and how do we get them to tell it?

Trust was essential. The first two days were spent doing icebreakers and round table discussions with a licensed therapist. We were able to dive into some deep issues by letting the kids anonymously write down their thoughts and throw them into a box. We then read the answers out loud and it gave them a chance to share their struggles without embarrassment. Many of the breakthroughs with the kids was a direct result of Officer Davis sharing her own story.

Although we had releases from the kids parents we made the decision to not show their faces. During interviews, only myself and the producer were present. We learned that these young people were strong and had faced things that most people could only imagine. We learned that they were hurting. They needed an outlet, a voice.

During my time at the Strickland Youth Center I met a group of committed individuals who truly love and care about these children. They fight for them every day. A special thanks to Judge Naman, Jana Mayo, Geoff Tynan & Riley Brenes for making the program a reality.

-Devin Ford

Director: Devin Ford

Producer:
Bucher Kyle

Detention Officer:
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For more information from a story published in Lagniappe in the August 31, 2017 to Sept 6, 2017 issue. click the following link. [Art Program](#)

