

Uniquely You Submission

Michelle Wilson is a youth artist from Allentown, PA who cares about creating raw and authentic connections with youth while helping them express themselves through happy or stressful times.

Her group "Paint and Jam" meet every month at Project Silk a drop-in center for LGBTQ+ youth of color located in Allentown, PA. Michelle sets a peaceful "vibe" that is mellow and "chill" enough to listen to music and talk about life. Michelle uses these groups to talk about mental health, sexual health, HIV /STI Prevention, stress, self-care and a ton of different topics that most teens face. Some of the work developed in these groups was used for this show.

Michelle felt like this would be a great submission because it is so close to the theme!

Michelle painted about 50% of the work and encouraged other youth to participate. The original title of this exhibit is:

Love Yourself: Words of Affirmation

Michelle's take on this exhibit:

"This show was created to show the LGBTQ+ community how you can love yourself through art. Each painting was hand painted by the youth of Project Silk to express emotions that are hard to explain. As you walk through this exhibit I hope it lifts you, I hope it makes you smile, and I hope you take these quotes and find ways to bring them into your everyday life.

Each quote has an amazing way of changing the way you feel.

If you take away anything from this it would make me so happy"

Chloe Cole-Wilson, her case manager supports her creativity all the time.

"We are so proud of their work! They have taken on an extremely important role as the art curator and lead artist on this exhibit. Michelle has also lead youth workshops to create these pieces and has done so much work to create an environment during Paint and Jam sessions that are positive and supportive! Everyone that walks through the center has contributed in some way to the exhibit and that all thanks to Michelle. Your future is bright as an artist and as a human being. Everyday has been a blessing to watch you grow and become a strong leader in the space"

This exhibit is still continuing to grow. At Project Silk we invite youth to truly love and embrace themselves. Seeing these words of affirmation is the first moment of healing for some in the space. This exhibit is one of the first things youth are greeted by. It's Michelle's way of saying "You are loved and welcomed here"