

Girls Rock Detroit: Maddie Long Haul Productions // MCACA Creating Connection project

CYNTHIA CANTY: When you learn how to make art – whether it’s oil painting or playing in a rock band – you develop more than just a talent. It can also help you learn some pretty important life lessons about things like failure and vulnerability. In our final Creating Connection story, we return to Girls Rock Detroit where one camper, Maddie, found the confidence to open up and be herself.

MADDIE: Well, let’s get this show on the road! MADDIE: Girls Rock is a camp. Everyone there just learns how to make music and it's really fun. I’m Maddie, I’m fifteen years old. The first year I did it, I was a deejay.

MUSIC

Deejaying has been something that I've been wanting to do for like a really long time now. I deejay a lot of different kinds of electronic music. I don't have like a definite stage name. The one I'm going by right now is ZTroit, you know Detroit with a “Z”.

MUSIC

I learned that people at Girls Rock Detroit were going to be okay with me messing up. The dress rehearsal, I did a deejay set and the sound was like really messed up. I didn't know what buttons I had hit. I was like crying and stuff but luckily no one was really upset about that. They were just like no big deal. It's not like I was performing at Madison Square Garden or something. (LAUGHS)

MUSIC

The second year I went to Girls Rock Detroit I was interested in finding out what it was like to be in a band. I chose keyboard 'cause I knew how to play the piano a little.

MUSIC

I did a lot of the songwriting for my band, a song called Fly. It was about opening up to new things.

LYRICS: It’s time for you to move out of the nest and fly ...

MADDIE: This song kind of represents my transition. I actually came out to my mom partly because of Girls Rock Detroit. I just figured if the people at Girls Rock Detroit were going to be accepting of the fact that I'm gay, then my mom might be accepting too. It feels really good to get that off my chest, honestly.

LYRICS: There’s a big delicious world to discover

MADDIE: And I'm also autistic so I have a hard time making friends. When I first found out about my autism I wasn't super open about it. Part of being autistic for me is having, like, awkward body movements. Sometimes I'll jerk my head. I don't understand body language that well. At school people can just be really stupid and mean towards me which I don't understand whatsoever. But when I started meeting the people at Girls Rock Detroit I realized that people were going to be okay with it so I just spat it out. I'm autistic and I'm proud of that.

MUSIC I don't think I would be the person that I am today if it wasn't for Girls Rock Detroit. I definitely feel like I have found my community. It feels really good because it lets me know that I'm not alone when it comes to, like, my struggles and stuff.

MUSIC

BACK ANNOUNCE: Maddie's story was produced by Dan Collison and Elizabeth Meister of Long Haul Productions, for the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs "Creating Connections" project. Thanks to Ros Hartigan, Melissa Coppola, and the 2018 Girls Rock Detroit rockers.