



## Rising Star Award Winner Jeremiah Steen

As a young teen attending the University of Detroit's Jesuit High School, Jeremiah "Jeremy," now 22, saw a need for arts education when the Detroit Public Schools cut programming due to the system's financial distress. Engaging others, he sought donations, assembled art supplies, and started a volunteer program to teach art to city youngsters.

Inspired by his high school's motto, "Men for Others," Jeremy was only 16 when he started his own foundation. With trusted adults serving on his board, he helped raise \$25,000 for a mural project facilitated by high school and college-age young people. The Foundation went on to support 100 youth with paid internships in the arts and culture. In his young life, Jeremy has employed a wide range of opportunities to amplify youth voices, and seek equitable opportunities for traditionally under-resourced communities and families. In 2018, he became the youngest Jane Goodall Roots and Shoots Fund II National Fellow, providing him with the opportunity to work with Jane Goodall and strategically design systems to amplify youth voice in policy development.

**Coming to the attention** of The Skillman Foundation, Jeremy was invited to join the board in 2022. He became Skillman's youngest board member and gained a new platform to advocate for the aspirations of Detroit youth. In a partnership between the Steen Foundation and Skillman, Jeremy helped develop Gen-Z Design Sessions, designed to allow Detroit youth to advise leaders of major organizations, including the Detroit Pistons, Detroit Horsepower, the city of Detroit's Neighborhood Department, to implement new organizational strategies. And last year, he was among the youngest speakers ever to present at the Mackinac Policy Conference.

Today, Jeremy also serves on community service boards for the Friends of the Rouge and Detroit Audubon. Statewide, he has joined the Nonprofit Relief Fund Advisory Board for the Michigan Nonprofit Association, advocating for the distribution of \$35 million to youth-led and community-based organizations.

**His nominator wrote:** "Jeremiah Steen has an unwavering commitment to service, advocacy, and justice for all young people — especially Michigan's youth. He is constantly finding new ways to amplify youth voice across multiple industries and support the mobilization of youth power. He is the co-founder of the trademarked phrase Critical Youth Theory - the intentional resistance of a set of ideas that have historically and culturally stopped young people from holding positions of power by inspiring true innovation and ethical action with a lasting impact. Jeremiah is young, but he is powerful."

***Congratulations Jeremiah Steen!***