

**Hello, I'm Joshua Wilson.** I'm a student and athlete at Loy Norrix High School. I'm involved with JV football, Varsity Wrestling, and JV and Varsity Track. I plan to graduate high school in three (3) years so I can go on to Western Michigan University someday to become a Social Studies Teacher.

I've been working with Open Roads since I was around 8 years old. The first program I ever went to was a Junior Mechanic Program through Peace House. When I first arrived, I felt an immediate sense family, positivity, and joy. We learned how to fix up bikes and I was really interested in learning more about bikes after that. The Junior Mechanic Program went well and I brought new kids to help out whenever I could. In the summer, my twin brother David and I regularly came to the shop at Open Roads to do the fix programs.

Then, Keith, a staff member at Open Roads, approached me and suggested that I should apply for the Youth Advisory Board. I was too young at the time. So I waited about two (2) years. I applied and got accepted and so did my twin brother David. One of the reasons I cared about this leadership position was because I care about Open Roads growing so even more people can have access to these programs.

Not everyone in this community has a car and some people need to get around by bike. Growing up, my family had on and off reliable source of transportation. We didn't always have a car so having a reliable bike and knowing how to take care of it was really reassuring to me. When I started coming to the youth



board meetings, I got to meet a lot of new people and had a lot of fun practicing communication skills with the social skill games we do in programs.

Open Roads has changed my life by giving me opportunities to meet new people, like potential employers, and new friends. They also helped by giving me the chance to help other people by teaching them skills they could use for the rest of their lives. This is also helping me grow more social skills and teaching me techniques that could help me once I become a teacher. Thank you for coming out to support us. Here is my co-worker Brooklyn to introduce the next speaker.

