

# “Saved by the Bell”: The Detroit Years

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If you were born between 1975 and 1990, had a TV in your house — and used electricity on Saturdays — chances are your life was unconditionally and irrevocably influenced by “Saved by the Bell” (SBTB).

Fear not: If you weren’t influenced by SBTB in its heyday, you eventually will be. It’s only a matter of time until a U.S. president, weaned on SBTB, steals another country’s mascot, calls “time out” during a congressional vote or parties in the Oval Office just like in Principal Belding’s workplace.

Which brings us to the first of many SBTB–Detroit theories: Detroit is “Saved by the Bell” — and our fair metropolis can be saved by us, the “Saved by the Bell” generation. This has nothing to do with a certain North Farmington High School and Ms. Barbara’s Dance Studio alumna (former SBTB star Elizabeth Berkley), but rather that Detroit is the rarest of places: a wrinkle in space–time where young people can come up with crazy schemes, huddle up and — in the span of just a few commercial breaks — make the impossible come to comical fruition.

See if you can tell the difference between Detroit and SBTB’s fictional setting, Bayside:

- A French teacher cashes out her 401(k) to open a crêperie in a 48–square–foot space downtown. It becomes to Detroit what Rick’s Café Américain was to “Casablanca,” moves to midtown, adjacent to the DIA, and will soon double in size. [Good Girls Go To Paris Crepes, 15 E. Kirby (Park Shelton Bldg.), Detroit]
- A saleswoman leaves the corporate world, leases a long–vacant building and opens a doggy daycare in a neighborhood better known for drugs and prostitution than dachshunds and poodles. City and suburban dog lovers alike embrace the enterprise, and the daycare continues to grow and add new services. [Canine to Five: Detroit Doggy Daycare, 3443 Cass Ave., Detroit]
- Four cinephiles (film geeks) chafe at the lack of art–house offerings in Detroit; with \$6,000 they convert the auditorium of a decommissioned public school into an independent movie theatre. Eclectic films attract eclectic audiences. Plus, there’s a pool table in the Men’s Lounge (boys’ bathroom). [Burton Theatre, 3420 Cass Ave., Detroit]
- Neighbors buy a pair of burned out, crime–ridden rowhouses in Detroit’s Corktown neighborhood for \$1,000 after they are seized by Wayne County. Incrementally renovating the units, they transform the area into a place where neighbors and supporters can come to share ideas, experiences — and soup. [Spaulding Court, Corktown, Detroit]
- The gang discovers and revives Bayside’s radio station. They create their own shows, then use the station to help keep The Max from closing when its owner — the school board — wants it shuttered. Slater saves the day. [Season 2, Episode 3: Save the Max]
- So, gang, here’s the plan ... we’re going to show the world what this shrinking city (and its aging Jewish community) really is: one of the greatest laboratories for innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship in all recorded history. And we’ll get Kelly (the hot one) to go to the homecoming dance with us instead of Chicago!

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