



Youth Dreamers, Inc.



When given a voice, look what Baltimore youth can achieve. #giveyouthavoice

The Youth Dreamers: The Youth Dreamers started in 2001 as a group of nine middle school students who were part of a Community Action elective course at the Stadium School. As part of their course objective, they identified a problem in their community: too many adolescents were involved in negative acts after school because of a lack of organized activities and places to house them. Together they came up with a solution: to create a youth-run youth center that would employ teens and creatively serve children of all ages. Their voices were heard...



The Dream House- a home away from home: The Dream House became the vision towards which the original nine students and others after them worked to achieve. Continuing as part of the class, the Youth Dreamers selected an abandoned home in Baltimore's Coldstream-Homestead-Montebello community, petitioned for a zoning change, purchased the house, wrote grants and raised more than \$300,000 towards its renovations. Youth were involved in the architectural design and renovations, guided by a pro bono architect and general contractor. They designed, facilitated, and evaluated after school programs at the school while the house was under construction. They were part of creating the nonprofit with a mission to provide a unique safe haven with opportunities for youth to accomplish personal goals, develop leadership potential, and participate in improving their communities. In 2010, the Dream House opened.



How have we impacted the Baltimore community? What really matters?

Through the years, Youth Dreamers wrote more than 84 grants – raising over \$900,000, served 618 youth in Baltimore City and employed 251, helped high school and middle school students earn 17,578 community service hours towards graduation, and had the pleasure of working with 520 volunteers. All of the students who were part of the program for five years or more attended college. Some continued to serve on our Board of Directors. All of this and much more led to COUNTLESS success stories of youth and adult involvement. It also provided space for young people to have a voice, believe in their futures, and realize their potential.

Why we are closed: In September of 2013, the Youth Dreamers ended after school programs due to the loss of our partnership with Baltimore City Schools, a change in after school funding initiatives, and a general lack of support for project-based learning. At that time, we rented the Dream House to a sister organization – The Teachers' Democracy Project (TDP) and wrote a book. Through our book, we are now dedicated to showing what's possible for young people in classrooms and communities. Although inactive at the time, we continue to seek out partners and possibilities for sustainable programs and projects at the Dream House.

Our book: I Am Not a Test Score: Lessons Learned from Dreaming

This collaborative book is written by the very young people who dreamt and built Baltimore's only youth-run youth center—the Dream House. A nonfiction, how-to book, it provides a model for other youth, youth workers and non-profit organizations. It includes best practices for youth work, lessons learned, and examples of programming that focuses on real-world, project-based, community-building curriculum.



Support our organization and our advocacy by donating through our secure website! Buy our book there as well!

Have an idea for a partnership? Email us!

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