



# The Youth Dreamers, Inc.

**Our mission is to provide a unique safe haven with opportunities for youth to accomplish personal goals, develop leadership potential, and participate in improving their communities.**

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## **The Youth Dreamers:** The Youth

Dreamers started in 2001 as a group of nine middle school students that 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.



## **The Dream House:**

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 also involved in the architectural design and renovations, guided by a pro bono architect and general contractor. Nine years later, they celebrated the Grand Opening of the Dream House! In 2010, the Youth Dreamers separated itself from the Stadium School to become a stand-alone youth-center that served all students from the community.

## **How have we impacted the Baltimore community?**

Since 2001, Youth Dreamers have written more than 84 grants – raising over \$900,000 – we have 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 this and much more has led to COUNTLESS success stories of youth and adult involvement.

## **Our Transition:**

In September of 2013, the Youth Dreamers ended programs as we knew them, due to a lack of funding and support for project-based learning. We now rent the Dream House to a sister organization – Baltimore Teacher Network (BTN), a growing network of professional teachers, researchers and community activists, with a stake in the public discussion of teaching and learning. With this rental income, Youth Dreamers are launching a scholarship program that will give youth the opportunity to set their goals as we mentor them through college with a personalized support system.

## **Our Book:**

### **I Am Not a Test Score: Lessons Learned from Dreaming**

This is a collaborative book about what Youth Dreamers and their adult allies learned from dreaming and building Baltimore's only youth-run youth center—The Dream House. This nonfiction, how-to book provides a model for other youth, youth workers and non-profit organizations. It includes best practices for youth work, lessons learned (inside and outside the classroom); and examples of programming that focuses on real-world, project-based, community-building curriculum. Woven through the text is research on the negative impact of testing and inspiring stories of others standing up to the practice.



**Support the publication of our book/scholarship program by donating through our secure website!  
Learn about being on our Board of Directors while you are there!**

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