

# Meet Jordan.

**Promising Futures Engagement:** 2011-2012 peer educator

**High School Alumni:** School without Walls, Class of 2013

**Post-Secondary School:** Morehouse College, Atlanta, Ga., Aerospace Engineering Major, Class of 2017

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Poem 1: Experiencing Identity

<i>An Urban Youth, A Peer Educator: It's A Lot of the Same Thing</i>	
<p>D.C. isn't the only place in the world            America isn't the only country in the world            Travelling to China            Really opened up my eyes to that            I kind of took that into being a peer educator</p> <p>I learned            Situations people are going through            What they actually are interested in            What they aren't            How they think            How they interact            Learning things about new people is just interesting</p> <p>Some of my peers laughed, just jokingly            Who would listen to you?            You don't know nothing            Some of them were very supportive            Not only did they learn something            I learned a lot in the process too</p> <p>It was my first time dealing with urban youth            In a peer education setting            I was already kind of out of my comfort zone            Not trying to just teach            But actually identify with them            Reach in and grab Jordan            Sports and girls –just channel that            That's what relates to them            Honestly that's still who I am</p> <p>I didn't think I was really a leader            Didn't think they wanted to be like me</p>	<p>Oh, they don't want to succeed            They all the same            But when you actually engage with them            It's not like that at all</p> <p>I know a lot of kids in D.C. don't have a lot of opportunities            They have to be in programs            Such as Promising Futures</p> <p>Being seen as an urban youth            And as a peer educator            It's a lot of the same things            Just a difference in age and experience</p> <p>I think that a peer educator is a part of my identity            An identity is going to stick with you forever            You have to decipher            Whether you want to do something forever            Or you just want to do something temporarily            I'm still a peer educator</p> <p>As a peer educator            You're responsible to uplift            That group of urban youth            Guide them into greatness or whatever they chose to do</p> <p>As a part of the urban youth            You're responsibility is to keep the education going            Be engaged and actually learn something            Provide feedback to the educator            Your other job</p>

<p>Didn't think I had an effect on them really But by the end I did</p> <p>At one point I just generalized the population Because of the kids I was around</p>	<p>As a member of urban youth being educated It would be in your best interest To become a peer educator Whatever is done to you positively You should not only appreciate but reciprocate</p>
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Poem 2: Reclaiming Identity

<i>A Lot of People Don't Understand Urban Youth</i>	
<p>I am urban Inner-city, public school student Come from a major city Used to be a major black city, not really anymore In a situation where they have to make sacrifices Not everything's handed to them Have limited opportunities, limited resources Need like outside interference in their lives to substantiate for that</p> <p>My mom tells me There's a lot of kids who eat school lunch That's like their only meal that they eat sometimes Don't have the means to be fed at home</p> <p>I sort of meet those standards Although I was never in poverty At the same time being a minority Specifically a black male You work two or three times as hard To get the same position as the majority So yeah</p> <p>I go to an all-Black school We all work hard Would be interesting to see where I am Compared to the other students at PWIs, same major To see what the differences and similarities are Like our study habits and all that stuff But don't want to compare myself really</p>	<p>A lot of people think urban youth Are not interested They're not engaged All they want to do is hang around Be in fights, do illegal stuff When you actually interact and have conversations Engage them, you see how interested they are</p> <p>Unfortunately killings, gang activity, drugs, violence Yes, that does have to do with our urban youth Not just our urban youth Everybody</p> <p>A lot of positive things that come out of youth in urban environments Aren't highlighted Kids who graduate college at age sixteen That don't make it to the news A kid who got gunned down on Sixteenth Street Makes it to the news Not saying that shouldn't But it's like, why not both?</p> <p>People I'm close with Know the real me People I say what's up to on the street, on campus Haven't had a chance To really understand where I'm coming from A lot of people don't understand urban youth</p>

Poem 3: Shifting Identity

*Never Saw Myself As Anybody's Role Model*

There's a lot of code switching  
You have to do in life  
For schools and jobs and stuff  
Change the way you act

In terms of peer education  
Didn't really switch up  
Maybe language and content  
Dealing with people younger than you  
You don't want to offend anybody  
Say anything a parent might deem as wrong  
I was pretty much being myself

This was my first sort of leadership position  
In high school growing up and stuff  
My mom said it was really good  
I was interacting with youth  
She knows a lot about urban youth

I never really saw myself  
As anybody's role model  
I didn't think I would be good enough  
You had to be like a Michael Jackson  
Or somebody

Poem 4: Being a Change Agent

*What You Got To Do*

I'm doing something positive  
Going to positively affect my community  
Don't see my community as just my neighborhood  
My community is urban youth  
Young Black kids like me  
Who experience the same things that I do  
Or different things  
But  
We all in the same boat  
At the end of the day  
We're Black

Just like  
What my purpose is  
What I'm supposed to be doing  
Versus  
What I'm actually doing  
Versus  
What I feel like doing  
You know, you don't always feel like doing  
What you got to do  
But you know what you signed up for  
What your purpose is  
What you know that you have to

I'm doing something right

Poem 5: Reflection

*The Focus Is On Me*

I don't live everyday thinking  
"I'm an inspiration"  
I don't go around my friends  
"Hey, you should do this and that"  
I don't think about myself as a leader  
Among my fellow peers  
My classmates  
Daily, I don't identify as like leading  
I'm in a mix where we're all inspiring each other

When I'm in front of kids  
It's like the focus is on me  
In terms of leading  
I have to dig deep and say  
This is me  
This is where I am  
This is where I come from  
You can do that too  
It allows me to be somebody else

It's like seeing yourself as a leader  
I guess