

Meet Taylor.

Promising Futures Engagement: 2012-2013 peer educator; 2014 youth builder

High School Alumna: School without Walls, Class of 2013

Post-Secondary School: Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA, Communications Major, Class of 2017

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Poem 1: Experiencing Identity

<i>I Was Fortunate Enough to be Urban</i>	
<p>What's around us Helps us Keeps us in a nice bubble We're comfortable with how everything is When we go outside We don't know anything else</p> <p>Before I was a peer educator I didn't know a lot of things Happening in my own city It did help open my eyes to the city But also nationally and in the world</p> <p>If I hadn't become a peer mentor I wouldn't have known about synthetic marijuana Would've been foreign to me Would've been like that's not possible That cannot happen in D.C. Had I not joined I would have been a lot more naive to things Happening around me</p> <p>I don't go outside of the areas where my friends and I hang out I'll just be with them in Southeast Don't know about different quadrants or neighborhoods Don't go Becoming a peer mentor It actually helped Open my eyes to the different parts of the city</p> <p>Go outside of my comfort zone By doing that</p>	<p>We were used to each other My own little bubble of friends We weren't out to seek new friends or new people Definitely opened my eyes up They are from different backgrounds and stories See that potential Everyone makes mistakes Where it's okay A chance to reconcile</p> <p>It helped me grow Because of the very thing that we had to do I saw myself as timid I also saw myself as outgoing, to people that knew me I wasn't afraid To question people, that I knew I saw myself as both</p> <p>Being a peer educator Helped me be creative. Think outside the box Connect with people. Be more open Feel confident in myself. Make myself assertive Teaching me Be assured of myself</p> <p>Definitely helped me Accomplish a lot more Open myself up to new things To a lot more Allowed me to see youth in a way</p> <p>Stating</p>

<p>Made me more aware “Okay this is happening over here” We have to combat these things happening over here The summer program Was really nerve wracking I was just nineteen Those kids were between fifteen and seventeen Weren’t that much younger than me Felt they weren't going to listen to or respect me Seemed impossible By trying to relate to them Understand where they came from Not necessarily a friend But someone who’s been there That actually help me gain their respect I was able to get them to do the work</p> <p>Opened my eyes to a lot more youth in the city Everyone isn’t like me or where I'm from</p>	<p>I did all these different things to help individuals In the city Bring awareness to different things In the city I do give credit to becoming a peer mentor As to how I look, how I go about, what I go about in college Actually help me land my position As the health and juvenile justice chair for the NAACP</p> <p>Going to middle school in my neighborhood Going to high school at School without Walls Being in Promising Futures I was lucky enough to experience all types of people All types of backgrounds in income</p> <p>I’m from D.C. Yeah I was fortunate enough to be urban</p>
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Poem 2: Reclaiming Identity

<i>Context</i>	
<p>A kid growing up in the city Having the city experience Mixed income Different things happening in one place Different people, atmospheres Happening all over the city, simultaneously Everything is happening</p> <p>DC is an urban city I've heard people use the term “urban” to sound more polite than saying ghetto People assume that We’re loud We don't really know what we're talking about We don't really have the funds We don't have a means to an end Preposterous Assumptions are never good</p>	<p>Don’t assume that I may be this way You don’t know me You don't know my background story People act the way they were brought up In the environment they were brought up Don’t generalize Learn about it. Then speak on it</p> <p>My definition of an urban youth It would depend on the context that I was being described as that Made me really think deeply as to what that means What other people may think Urban is fine to use When you use it in terms of replacing the word ghetto It’s lost its meaning</p>

Poem 3: Shifting Identity

Helped me Start Something

I was exposed to a lot of things Not negative things Just Things in general Opened up my eyes to the world and people People that I've run into in college They're from the suburbs and small towns They're not exposed to those things They have assumptions of people from the city which are not true Had to really think About what I want to do	I try to educate people about different things I definitely did my research To make sure what I'm saying is correct I don't give out false information I'll let them know my credentials I was a peer educator We learned different things We spoke all around the city Would share information Tell people about different events Helped me start something
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Poem 4: Being a Change Agent

Just Wondering Why

Wondering why things were the way they were Not necessarily changing them Just wondering why Everything that I was or still am	Becoming a peer mentor helped me I grew Made me think Where I've been. Where I'm at now. Where I want to be Everything fits into its own space
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Poem 5: Reflection

I'm Proud

I still consider myself a peer educator to this day I have knowledge Can relate to people Help them understand different things Speak for myself It's actually helped me to see myself in a more positive way Not everyone from the city is loud	Not everyone from the city lives in a negatively influenced environment Those are the types of things that bother me Being a youth from Washington D.C. I'm proud of it I feel very confident being from the city A youth from Washington D.C. I don't know how people take that sometimes
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