

Meet Terrisha.

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

High School Alumna: School without Walls, Class of 2013

Post-Secondary School: Virginia Commonwealth University, Mass Communications Major, Class of 2016

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Poem 1: Experiencing Identity

<i>Urban Youth, an Identity Celebrated</i>	
<p>I've been Considered a leader in positions Joined things to teach other peers But never called a peer educator</p> <p>Just that title on my resume Gave me responsibility within the community It became part of my identity Who I am It really did just shape me</p> <p>When we Started to learn about youth in DC Sexual health stood out to me I decided to do research on that Sparked something in me A new passion I wanted to be a part of that conversation Gave me a new purpose</p> <p>The different things we did Throughout the city so frequently Took up a lot of time The way we work together Outside of doing a workshop Inside of doing a workshop Working on presenting a workshop Working on the logistics of one We wouldn't change once the workshop was over Started pouring over into different aspects of my life Talk about school during Promising Futures</p>	<p>We just Brought whatever experience we had Incorporate that into how we present Each thing we did – it was a piece of us We had to create it Express ourselves Be ourselves Trying to relate to peers But also get your message across</p> <p>Everything we did We were all uncomfortable with I know I was Wouldn't let us stay in our shell Had to get out there Push those boundaries I put a lot of limits on myself "I don't want to do that. I can't do that," I am shy, scared But doing it – was me doing something different Being a different version of myself Put in a leadership position Our leadership will show</p> <p>Give a little bit of yourself Show a little bit about yourself I kind of learned more about Me being myself Helping create the flash mob dance I didn't know I could do that</p> <p>Though I'm not a part of an organization that says</p>

<p>Then at school, talk about Promising Futures</p> <p>The whole experience was new We were asked to use hip-hop What our bodies actually did Sing and dance Just be ourselves, urban youth That was celebrated Usually you're kind of asked to be more refined Not be what you have been or grown up to be or act What you grew up or whatever attitude you're used to having Promising Futures, it was for urban youth</p>	<p>"You are a peer educator"</p> <p>I don't think I just stopped Having been socially responsible I try to look for the same qualities in other things I join I can bring a little piece of Promising Futures into that organization I know the things I learned Financial literacy, sexual health, emotional health I think it's so important To keep it within me Continue to grow within myself</p>
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Poem 2: Reclaiming Identity

<i>Not Having the Same Opportunity</i>	
<p>Urban youth Don't have as many opportunities As those people who go to private schools Or have higher incomes</p> <p>What people say The perceptions people have on urban youth Kind of affect how I see myself</p> <p>People say that urban youth Are lazy Not as intelligent Don't really do much Resources are lackluster because of their performance I knew it wasn't the truth We are not lazy We don't sit around and do nothing</p>	<p>We actually apply ourselves and get good grades We try to do things in our community We better ourselves</p> <p>Made me feel bad Like I was not as smart as others I was not as well off as others I would not have the same opportunities as others</p> <p>People don't look at you In the way that you think you are People are seeing you in a different way Than you try to portray yourself They don't know exactly what you're doing in your life What your grades are But they still think that</p>

Poem 3: Shifting Identity

<i>I Know the Truth about Urban Youth</i>	
<p>When I started As a peer educator That's when my identity started to change</p>	<p>A lot of people started to see us as that, too Act a certain way Prepare myself a certain way Continue to do socially responsible work</p>

<p>I don't think my perception of urban youth changed I just think that it made me feel like if I can do this Other people can I know the truth about urban youth Hopefully me doing this And other urban youth doing things like this Can change that perception</p> <p>Programs like Promising Futures Other enrichment programs Kind of gives you that advantage That you otherwise might not have as an urban youth With all that knowledge and a platform Came a responsibility to tell others about it</p>	<p>Within my community and beyond I would meet different people From different schools around the city They would know me "She's the girl from Promising Futures. She is a peer educator." They probably saw me with one of the shirts</p> <p>You know what the program has done for you But having to sit and think Articulate it in a different way other than within your own head Being proud of what you've done All the accomplishments Differences and changes you see for the better The things I took away from it To decide who I am after I had fun</p>
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Poem 4: Being a Change Agent

<i>I Enjoyed the Work</i>	
<p>I just kind of Changed my ideas of myself My perception of myself</p> <p>I was able to get help From my peers</p>	<p>Gave me the confidence To lead something research-based To my peers</p> <p>I enjoyed the work It was really important to me</p>

Poem 5: Reflection

<i>I Looked at Myself</i>	
<p>What Newt Gingrich said about D.C. youth Kind of stuck with me During my high school career</p> <p>Just seeing how people React to you On the train Lets you know how they feel about you Not verbal words Body language You just get that vibe</p> <p>Even though I am an urban youth</p>	<p>Work we did Made us feel important I'm doing something really important Someone can trust me To do these important things</p> <p>Having a mentor who believes in you Believes you are worthy of learning new things Sharing new things Sharing what you know Going to different places – like New York</p> <p>I reached out about an internship</p>

There were opportunities for me
To be a better version of myself
I looked at myself
As somebody who
Could do more, say more, knew more

Promising Futures
Other programs I've been in
Helped with self-confidence
Just the resources
Enriching intelligence
Being cultured
Opportunities to better myself
It's a platform
Being a peer educator
The title
Gave me a new sense of responsibility

There wasn't one available
I made one for myself
Ever since then
I was shocked with myself
Proud of myself
A bold move
I would not have made otherwise
Without Promising Futures

I will tell anyone
I am an urban youth
I know what urban youth can do
I'm a product of programs
Important to me
I want to give back