

# Meet Demane.

**Promising Futures Engagement:** 2013-2014 peer educator

**High School Alumna:** Benjamin Banneker Academic High School, Class of 2014

**Post-Secondary School:** Trinity Washington University in Washington, DC, Business Administration Major, Class of 2018

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Poem 1: Experiencing Identity

<i>Being a Peer Educator Ties in with Being an Urban Youth</i>	
<p>I was a leader            I was not a peer educator            An introvert            Never comfortable talking            Until I joined Promising Futures            My confidence level boosted            0 to 100 real quick            The way I think about the world            HIV stigma, healthy relationships, the LGBTQ            community            Being open-minded            I was born with these characteristics            Just didn't find it            Had to grow into it</p> <p>Never described my role            Never done that before            If they asked me now            I would say it was a wonderful experience            Able to outreach            Just be myself            That's what it was all about            Being myself</p> <p>While with the other peer educators            Had lots of fun            Glad to get to know each other            People with different backgrounds            Spent a lot of time together</p>	<p>You can tell            I'm a peer educator            I'm all for my peers            Spreading their worth            Look at me            What I'm doing in the community            Spreading happiness and greatness            That's what it was all about to me</p> <p>An urban youth can become a peer educator            Create your own movement            You don't have to join one            Invite a group of friends            Let them help you            See what everyone wants            Get to know your community            Be an innovator            Think outside of the box            Be a leader, be an example            They will follow your footsteps            Go on and do it</p> <p>Being a peer educator and urban youth            Same thing            I've always reached out in my city, Washington            D.C.            Advocated to youth from everywhere            In the city            Being a peer educator ties in with being an urban            youth</p>

<p>I have told people  I was a peer educator  I don't necessarily believe  I could have told them  You show them</p>	<p>That's what it's all about</p>
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Poem 2: Reclaiming Identity

<i>Now Thinking About it, I am an Urban Youth!</i>	
<p>Though urban means city  Being an urban youth  You can go out  All around the state  Around your city  Where you don't live at  It's just about going different places  Not just one place at one time</p> <p>I have to really sit down and think  If I'm actually an urban youth  I'm a role model in my community, yes  I believe  I educated urban youth  From DC  From the DMV  We served urban youth  Citywide  In my age group</p> <p>When I watch the news every day  So much negativity  Hardly anything positive about youth these days</p>	<p>Either killing each other, robbery  It's just foolery  They're different from me</p> <p>It's always a stereotype  About the generation of today  It's how you carry yourself  It's good to learn about others  What they go through  Different backgrounds and such  To me, I'm just like an urban youth</p> <p>It's a lot of things said about us  How we take on things  How deviant we are  Our mind state  Our actions  Are different than adults  People we look up to – like our parents, our  grandparents</p> <p>Now thinking about it  I am an urban youth  Most definitely</p>

Poem 3: Shifting Identity

<i>An Urban Youth Can be an Example</i>	
<p>I was in the background  Never out there  Never spoke to people</p> <p>As I went on  My journey as a peer educator  I grew as a leader  Got comfortable</p>	<p>A lot of people don't have a role model  They don't have people  To show them  What is right and what is wrong  An urban youth can be an example  To other people  Where you live  Surrounding areas around your city</p>

<p>Became an extrovert Met different people I loved it</p> <p>I feel like a good girl Well behaved in school Got good grades Never gave a teacher problems My mom problems A non-problematic child</p> <p>I do believe I'm a neutralizer Who can neutralize What other people are saying To take away That negative stereotype meaning from urban youth Though it's maybe a negative bunch It should always be one or few people that are positive It's good with the bad Instead of all bad That's what I think</p>	<p>I told a lot of my peers about my experiences I was a senior in high school while doing it It was cool They liked what I said about it A few people actually joined</p> <p>I'm involved on campus, in college I'm a part of the community at Trinity Doing what I love to do Working on a club event Instead of being home Watching reality TV Something to keep me busy</p> <p>As a youth of today We have to have a voice for ourselves Do that People will take us much more seriously I have to just go out there Show my leadership That's what I've always believed I'm a role model for my setting</p>
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Poem 4: Being a Change Agent

<i>We Have To</i>	
<p>Step up to the plate We have to Show that we care We have to</p>	<p>That's why a lot of people Don't take us seriously Most of us don't take ourselves serious We have to step up That's what it is</p>

Poem 5: Reflection

<i>Others Will Catch On</i>	
<p>There are a lot of positive things happening It's not displayed It's not shown Not enough shown on the news "Why? That's all you show?" "What's going on? What's up with that?" It ain't cool</p>	<p>Those things come from my heart Don't tell me Show me That you believe I am these things I don't think that they have to tell me I know I am these things Others will catch on They don't have to tell you</p>

I care about  
What people think  
But I really don't want to know  
That's how the whole world operates  
People always focused on  
What other people think  
You need to think about yourself  
Who you are  
  
It's good people think of me  
As a leader, motivator, innovator

It's me  
  
I shared my experiences with my family  
Put it on my resume  
Something good for me to build my experience  
Always the same Demane  
Open to new people, learning too while doing it  
I was proud  
This is how I see myself