

# 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