



New City Kids

loving kids for change



Mya (left), with her mentor and role model Jackie Thompson, Teen Life Internship Director.

Last week Mya, one of our Teen Life Interns, sat upstairs at New City Kids finishing her homework. She works at New City Kids two to three afternoons a week, but even on her days off she'll come by to do her homework or to volunteer. As a junior in high school, Mya is determined to keep her grades up; she knows that these are the grades colleges will consider next year. Some of her classmates tell her she is working too hard, but Mya sees many opportunities before her. Mya and many of our teens are working hard: balancing their internships, keeping good grades, and being positive role models to the younger kids in our programs. I admire their determination, I know it must be overwhelming, especially when they are surrounded by voices telling them it isn't worth it.

If giving in to feelings of being overwhelmed determined our actions, Mya and I would have never met. In July 2011, Jackie (our Teen Life Internship Director) and I overcommitted ourselves when we agreed to drive to the Booker T. Washington housing projects and pick up kids for our summer camp each day. New City Kids doesn't usually provide transportation, but a

number of families didn't feel comfortable with their kids walking and we really wanted them to be able to attend camp. Providing transportation meant we brought kids home too, not only at the end of the day but any time a kid was sick, got in trouble, or had a family commitment. Some days, we shuttled back and forth between New City Kids and Booker T. four or five times. One thing that made it feel worth it was the excitement the boys and girls showed as soon as they saw the New City Kids' van pull up in the morning. One of those little girls had a contagious laugh, a beautiful smile, and she always thanked us for bringing her. Her name was Mya.

"I HAVE GROWN AS A PERSON BECAUSE OF NEW CITY KIDS. THIS PLACE INSPIRES ME TO BE MORE MATURE, DO BETTER IN SCHOOL AND HAVE HEALTHIER RELATIONSHIPS IN MY FAMILY." - MYA

I lost touch with Mya and her Mom after that summer. We tried to work out logistics for her to attend After School Center but it didn't work out.

Last year, in the weeks before we launched our new Lafayette After School Center, Mya's mom reached out to me. She shared some really overwhelming news; they were being evicted and would soon be homeless. I was overwhelmed on their behalf and didn't have answers, but was committed to seeing them through that difficult season. After four years I was reintroduced to that little girl with the contagious laugh, but she was now a driven young woman. Over the next several weeks I talked with Mya and her mom almost every day as they navigated emergency housing and finding a new apartment. In the same weeks where it must have felt like everything was falling apart,



Mya (circled) at summer camp in 2011.

Mya applied for a position at New City Kids and was hired as a Teen Life Intern.

Mya has flourished at New City Kids. Jackie, who used to pick her up on those summer mornings, is now her adult staff mentor. Mya's experience this year at New City Kids has shaped her view of herself and what is possible for her. She has become a role model to younger kids in our program. She performed in our spring production, learned to sail through our City Sail program, and she's sharing her vocal talents as part of our band. She's also attending New City Kids' SAT class and is looking forward to college tour in the spring. She is growing personally and in her faith, distancing herself from peers who are negative influences and surrounding herself with people

JERSEY CITY UPDATE

100 high school students are on our Teen Life Intern staff!

All three After School Center sites are up and running, serving over 200 kids each day!

All 23 seniors on staff are applying to college.

14 music classes are teach kids keyboard, drums, bass guitar, and vocals.



Will you give this holiday season to make New City Kids possible for teens like Mya and the kids that look up to them? A gift of \$5,500 provides a teen with a year long internship. \$1,000 will help a small group of teens to experience an off site retreat this winter. \$25/month will contribute toward a scholarship for a child to attend one of our afterschool programs whose family cannot afford to pay. As you consider the ways you have been blessed this holiday season and then look around at all of the circumstances in the world you wish you could change, don't be paralyzed by feeling overwhelmed, you can make a difference.

Blessings,

Josh Dornbos
Executive Director, Jersey City
New City Kids

who are an encouragement to her. She says, "I have grown as a person because of New City Kids. This place inspires me to be more mature, do better in school and have healthier relationships in my family."

Mya is a reminder to not let seemingly insurmountable obstacles overwhelm me. To keep giving even in the face of setbacks and barriers, believing that there is hope.



Mya during City Sail this summer.
She learned to sail on the Hudson River.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

\$5,500 - Sponsor a Teen Life Internship.

\$1,000 - Pay for a winter retreat.

\$25/mo - Contribute toward a scholarship for a child in After School Center.

DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT

Want your gift to go further? See if your employer will match your gift, up to 2x by visiting www.newcitykids.org/matching.

