



New City Kids

loving kids for change



Robin (left) and Derick (right), childhood friends and coworkers at New City Kids.

The odds against New City Kids succeeding are staggering. This, more than anything else, binds us to the children and teens we're serving. Only 9% of low income students will earn a college degree by the time they're 24. That means the odds of our kids growing up and earning any degree is the same as children in other communities getting into the most prestigious Ivy League schools. Children growing up without a father in their home are six times more likely to drop out of school and 15 times more likely to end up in prison.

When I interviewed Robin this past year, it seemed like the odds were stacked against him. He attends one of the hardest high schools in Jersey City: it has a 60% graduation rate and is ranked 375th in the state. His grades were low – a 1.78 GPA. He shared with me in his interview that he had few friends at school who he considered a positive influence. In fact, the only person his age who really encouraged him to do well was a childhood friend, Derick, who worked for New City Kids and told him about the job. He was hired to teach drums at our brand new Lafayette site in November.

His friend Derick was excelling. At the first staff meeting Robin attended it was announced that Derick was being promoted to a leadership posi-

tion on staff. I sat in the back and watched Robin's face during that meeting. The room was packed with the 90 teens that worked for us this year. They were announcing promotions (for teens that were excelling at work) and academic winners (teens with exceptional grades). The staff at New City Kids have become masters at shaping a culture that celebrates achievement. They acknowledged a few teens for having the most improved GPA. I bent down and whispered to Robin, "Next marking period, that's you." I didn't know how right I was.

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In February, Robin was the one being announced. He received the best grades of his high school career that marking period, mostly B's. His job coach put him on the schedule for more days – working almost every afternoon. He was proud, but you could also see determination had set in. He had just realized he was more capable than he thought, and the kids he tutored were looking up to him. When his third marking period grades came out he had a 3.75 GPA!

This spring, Robin interviewed for a leadership position with New City Kids and will be joining his friend Derick on the leadership team in September. He was also hired this summer to work as a summer camp counselor, his first summer job. In seven short months, his odds have changed.

What is happening at New City Kids is improbable. The success rate (so many teens who have come through our programs and gone on to flourish, when we intentionally hire many young



LAFAYETTE UPDATE

The pilot year of our Lafayette site was a success! We have renewed our agreement with PS #22 and Fountain of Salvation Church for this coming year!

60 children were served at the new site.

24 additional teens were hired.

Kids performed a showcase for their parents and community on June 9th showing off their newly acquired drum, keyboard and vocal talents.

people who have the odds stacked against them) is awe inspiring. Two years ago our founder, a man of incredible giftedness and charisma, left the operations in Jersey City. This is a transition that cripples many young organizations, yet instead, we've grown. We are serving three times as many children and teens as we were in 2008, and our budget has more than doubled amidst the worst recession of our generation. Over half our budget comes from donors – people like you who give because this mission is so close to their heart.

Many of you reading this newsletter have given to New City Kids and have made the improbable possible. You have held up hope in neighborhoods where it is easy to feel alone. You have allowed a community to rise up where young men reach out to their struggling childhood friends to tell them about opportunity, a community where accomplishments are celebrated and determination is fostered. Thank you for believing that what you give could make a difference. Over this past decade you have changed the odds for thousands of children.

One hundred and twelve kids started summer camp on July 5th and many are up against incredible odds. We have extended full scholarships to 18 children who wouldn't be able to attend otherwise. We provide camp at a cost of \$50/week for all families, a fraction of the actual program cost. We offered full time summer jobs

Derick is working City Sail, our free sailing school for Jersey City teens.



to Robin and 20 of his peers to staff the camp. Derick is going to help 36 teens learn to sail on the Hudson River this summer through our City Sail program. We still need to raise \$15,000 to make our summer possible at New City Kids. Will you give to make this possible?

Thank you!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Josh Dornbos".

Josh Dornbos
Executive Director
New City Kids: Jersey City



"I'm here for the kids. I want them to look up to me as a big brother and be their role model."

PARTNER WITH US

\$1,000 - Sponsor a teen this summer.

\$400 - Scholarship for a kid at summer camp.

\$100 - Weeklong sleepaway camp for a 3rd-8th grader.



Robin is a summer camp counselor and future team leader.