



New City Kids

loving kids for change



Ten years ago, on my second day working at New City Kids, I was told to come in my bathing suit. We were taking a group of students who had excelled in the City Sail program on a celebratory boating trip. I met a young man that day who would go on to personify New City Kids for me. Derrik was a wiry, athletic, and eager 12-year-old boy. I was struck by how warm and personable he was and by his tenacious effort to get up on water skis that day. He asked a lot of questions in an effort to get to know me as we sat in the back of the boat. He had a curiosity in his eyes, eager to see the world. You wouldn't have known he was growing up on one of the toughest blocks in Jersey City or that beneath that smile he often felt like his world was falling apart.

Last month, I had the honor of attending Derrik's college graduation. He's the first person in his family to earn a college degree. Since graduation he has started working a full time job at a solar energy company. That 12-year-old boy has grown up to be a man and defied odds.

I reconnected with his mom, Tanya, on Derrik's graduation day. She was beaming, watching her baby boy celebrate his achievement. Here's her story:



Derrik teaching drums in 2013.

My family became connected with New City Kids in 1999 when my son Derrik was five years old. I was looking for a summer program to keep him busy. We, as parents, didn't want him hanging out on the block with the wrong children. I passed by and saw the banner. I signed him right up. He loved it, and always came home happy and talking about his experience for the day.

Derrik went to the summer camp for many years. When he became old enough to apply for a job at New City he asked and I said go for it. He started going to worship practice after work. On certain days there was City Sail that he was also a part of. He taught kids how to read music and play drums. As time went by he was promoted. Now he had more responsibility, but he handled it very well, and made sure his work was done. I had no worries about him wanting to hang out in the street with his friends. There was no time for that.

As a young man growing up in the hood, the streets of Jersey City are not easy. Some of his friends wanted him to join a gang. They wanted him to believe that by joining he would be safe in the streets. Then he would see some of his friends standing on the corner, always having the nice clothes and the latest phones. I told him that's no way to live: fast money only gets you in trouble. You have to work for anything you want in life; nothing comes free without a price tag. He saw his friends get arrested and knew that wasn't for him. He made me proud that he listened, as hard as it might have been with all the peer pressure. He stayed a part of New City Kids. They helped him in high school to prepare for college. He went on college tour and from there knew what college he was going to. In his mind he didn't think he could do it, but with the help of Josh being there by his side he entered

Rider University in 2013 and graduated in 2017. New City Kids is an awesome program that helps many families and children succeed despite these streets.

“I LOVE MY SON DERRIK DEARLY. I’M GLAD HE’S HAD...AMAZING MENTORS THAT HAVE BECOME FAMILY, AND HELPED GUIDE HIM THROUGH HIS JOURNEY.” –TANYA JAMES

I wish more of the kids in Jersey City would be a part of this awesome program. I feel that there would be less kids growing up thinking that standing on the corner or being in gangs is a better life. There would be more children learning about God, learning that there is so much more productive things you could do with your time than be in the streets. More of these teenagers would finish school and go to college and make something of themselves. I love my son Derrik dearly. I’m glad he was able to be a part of New City Kids. I’m glad he’s had and continues to have amazing mentors that have become family, and helped guide him through his journey.

–Tanya James

Today the days of being afraid to go home, pressured to join gangs, tempted by easy money and allures of life on the street seem far behind Derrik. And yet, as I watched him graduate, I was struck by the importance of our work at New City Kids. There are so many young people today whose situations are like Derrik’s.

We know the needs: parents look to summer camp to provide a safe place for their children to learn about God and come home happy. There are teens in City Sail this summer who are being pressured to join a gang, and we know from experience that teens we hired at the internship tryout in June are being tempted to sell drugs.

The opportunity to be a part of what is happening at New City Kids will change the way they see the world and themselves.

Will you help us offer experiences like the one Derrik had to the youth of Jersey City? We need scholarships for kids to attend Summer Camp, supplies for City Sail, and sponsorships to offer our high school students summer jobs. Thank you for making this ministry possible. You’re literally changing lives.

Sincerely,



Josh Dornbos
Executive Director
New City Kids



On college tour together in 2012.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

\$1,000 - Sponsor a teen for the summer.

\$500 - Contribute toward a City Sailor’s experience.

\$200 - Provide a scholarship for a kid to attend Summer Camp.

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.

JERSEY CITY UPDATES

- 18 seniors graduated, and for the ninth year in a row, 100% will be attending college in the fall.
- Summer Camp registration is almost full – we’ll be serving 115 kids this summer! Camp starts July 10th.
- City Sail started June 26th, serving 36 youth.
- 16 of our alumni, including Derrik, graduated with the college degrees this spring! It was amazing to cheer for them as they accomplished this huge milestone.