

NEW CITY KIDS: JERSEY CITY



If you missed our annual benefit concert, *Longing for Home*, you truly missed an opportunity to be inspired! No matter what I write in this newsletter, it will fall short. It's only when you're in the presence of the children and teens from New City Kids that you best understand the power of the ministry.

One of our seniors, Tamar, wrote and composed a song which he performed live. He was a highlight of the show. Standing in the back watching him share his talents and his story on stage I couldn't help but think of the day we met.

I interviewed Tamar two years ago. He was applying for a job at our "Internship Tryout," where we select the teens for yearlong jobs. He was nervous – one of almost 100 high school students competing to work a job after school. He had forgotten his report card so his application was incomplete, but it didn't sound like his grades were exceptional anyway. He had a beautiful voice but had a hard time singing in front of others because of nervousness. When I asked about his faith, he politely said his grandmother made him



From left: Trinity, Liz, and Tamar

attend church. But as he loosened up I began to root for him. His answers weren't perfect, but he was eagerly looking for something. I imagined him teaching children after school, visiting colleges, gaining confidence to share his voice with the world, and loving our adult staff. I imagined his faith becoming personal. I made him promise me that he would bring in his report card before I had to make a decision. I wanted to hire Tamar.

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We were sitting in a group meeting after interviews were finished. Each staff person had selected their top candidates, and I was down to my last choice. We had one more spot to fill. I flipped through my stack of files, wishing we had more positions and realizing that we were going to turn away many teens. I tried to think, of all the teens we had interviewed, who would be most impacted by New City Kids. “What happened to Tamar?” At that moment, one of our college interns slipped through the door and handed me a piece of paper – “Sorry, Josh. Someone dropped this off for you earlier today.” It was Tamar's report card. His grades weren't amazing but he had come back to make sure I got them. Looking back over these last two years, the timing was providential.

Tamar has grown in every way imaginable

since coming to New City Kids. The shy young man I interviewed now teaches a dozen kids to sing every afternoon. It is hard to believe that he used to feel uncomfortable speaking in front of people. Last year he was promoted to our teen leadership team. He threw himself into the musical life of New City Kids, serving in our band, leading worship at a dozen churches, singing at events, and performing at fundraisers. He is relentless in rehearsal, feeling critical of himself if his pitch is off or the harmony doesn't sound right. His voice has gotten stronger for it.

Tamar went on college tour last year, and this month he has to decide whether to go Hampton University in Virginia or stay in state at Ramapo College. Both colleges are great options. But what has been most special to

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me about Tamar's journey at New City Kids is what he alluded to in the song he performed last month: his faith has come alive.

Whether he pursues his passion for music or his dream of becoming a physical therapist, whether he goes to Hampton University or Ramapo College, Tamar is going to succeed. He knows who he is and is grounded in something that will not change. I know he will look back on his time at New City Kids as proof that God has incredible things in store for him and does amazing things through him.



We're humbled and grateful to everyone who gave to support our teens at *Longing for Home!* If you weren't able to attend the show, you can make a difference by giving to make the experience that Tamar has had the last two years a reality for more teens in Jersey City. Last week, our largest group ever, 20 juniors, went on our college tour (with a \$500 van repair in the middle!) Later this month we're taking the teens on weekend retreats – time away with our staff to invest in them so they can continue to be leaders to the kids we're serving. In June, we'll offer scholarships to many of our graduating seniors, helping make their dreams of going to college a reality. Your gifts make the life-transforming stories at New City Kids possible. And the next time you get a chance, come see it for yourself.

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

Josh Dornbos
Executive Director
New City Kids: Jersey City

P.S. Listen to Tamar's song, *My Father's House*, and watch *Longing for Home* highlights at vimeo.com/newcitykids.



Recording for *The Dreamer*, our 2014 fundraiser

PARTNER WITH US

\$1,200 - Give toward the college scholarships awarded in June.

\$400 - Sponsor a weekend training retreat for teens.

\$25/mo - Support a Teen Life Intern like Tamar.