



★ THE DREAM HOUSE ★



I WENT LOOKING FOR BALTIMORE IN WAVERLY



I WENT LOOKING FOR BALTIMORE IN WAVERLY
AND I SAW A HOUSE THAT HAD BEEN ABANDONED
THAT WAS BROWN WITH TALL GRASS,
SHATTERED STEPS, NO WALLS
NO CEILINGS AND NO SASS.

I WENT LOOKING FOR BALTIMORE IN THE YD YOUTH CENTER
AND I FOUND CREATIVITY.
ONCE I GOT THERE, I FELT FREE
AND I WAS SURPRISED BY ALL THE KIDS WHO WELCOMED ME.

I WENT LOOKING FOR BALTIMORE IN THE DREAM HOUSE
AND OPENED THE DOOR TO NEW POSSIBILITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS.
I FELT INSPIRED AND MOTIVATED THROUGH MY SUCCESS.
I SEARCHED HIGH AND LOW FOR QUIRKINESS, FUN AND INSPIRATION
AND I FOUND BALTIMORE.

Written by Jessica White and Miriam Harris

The Youth Dreamers and their Dream House



Center: The Dream House

Clockwise from top left: The beginning of the Dream House 2004, Volunteer Day 2008, Interviewing Subcontractors, Demo Day, Homework Club in the finished Dream House, YD Block party FunFest, Painting the mural in the back stairwell

“Youth are uniquely equipped to change the world because they can dream. They choose not to accept what is, but to imagine what might be.” –Archbishop Desmond Tutu

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Youth Dreamers cut ribbon on New 'Dream' Center



On Saturday, May 8, 2010, a joyful crowd lined up in front of 1430 Carswell Street—children, adults, community leaders, elected officials, neighbors, families, and friends—to cut the ribbon for the Grand Opening of the new Youth Dreamers community center. Teacher Kristina Berdan (left front) and students from The Stadium School are excited to finally cut the ribbon for their new home. Below are before and after reconstruction of the Carswell St. house. (See article on Page 12)



Youth Dreamers Cut Ribbon on New 'Dream' center



By Ron Kipling Williams

One day, nine years ago, a core group of five students at The Stadium School took up the challenge to create something in their own backyard — a community center.

On Saturday, May 8, 2010, a joyful crowd lined up in front of 1430 Carswell Street—children and adults, community leaders and elected officials, neighbors, families, and friends—to cut the ribbon for the Grand Opening of their new Youth Dreamers home.

"It's been an emotional joy ride," said Miriam Harris, who was a sixth grader in 2004 when she became a part of Youth Dreamers. "It seemed a million miles away."

"A million miles" ago, The Stadium School—a public school founded by 16 parents, teachers and advocates who wanted a system outside of the academic box.

"We wanted the world to be a classroom," said Jay Gillen, teacher and Baltimore City Public Schools coordinator for the Baltimore Algebra Project.

Teacher Kristina Berdan challenged The Stadium School Five during her social engagement class to come up with an idea.

Mildred Harris, Miriam's sister and one of the core five said they wanted a recreation center that would counteract gang violence, black on black crime, and teen



pregnancy that plagued their neighborhoods. "We wanted youth to be successful instead of being dead," said Mildred.

It was this kind of commitment and resolve that led students to embark on a proposal writing campaign to potential donors.

The first was Youth as Resources, a non-profit dedicated to funding uplifting youth

programs.

Next, was Sen. Barbara Mikulski, who wrote Youth Dreamers into a federal bill to the tune of \$70,000.

Upon site investigation Youth Dreamers eyeballed the Carswell property, a dilapidated two-story house that had been vacant for about forty years, owned by the Homestead United



Methodist Church.

Grandmother Mildred Harris—matriarch of Homestead and

one of The Stadium School founders—cared for the former property owner before he passed away.

"This is our neighborhood, this is our community," said Grandmother Mildred.

The neighborhood was not pleased, however. Many objected, citing potential influx of crime and violence.

Youth Dreamers circulated the neighborhood, knocking on doors hoping to allay their concerns.

When Youth Dreamers went to their Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals hearing to obtain a multi-use license, however, opposing neighbors

were in attendance. The Youth Dreamers prevailed.

Still, Youth Dreamers wanted to win the hearts and minds of their neighbors. They regularly gave gifts to their neighbors, as well as to involve them in the project. Eventually, they won them over.

United Methodist negotiated with the Youth Dreamers and sold the property to

them. They remain a staunch supporter.

As Youth Dreamers continued to engage in numerous creative fundraisers, other partners came aboard such as Angela Mitchell of State Farm Insurance.

Through Mitchell, they received about \$130,000 in funds, including an \$87,306 grant from the State Farm



Youth Advisory Board.

Mitchell became a funder, ardent supporter, board member and matriarch. She died before she could see the fruition of the project.

Andy Powell, a former contractor with Struever Bros. Eccles & Rouse, came onto

the project pro bono, teaching youth about all construction phases.

Laura Penza of Penza + Bailey Architects donated thousands of dollars worth of expertise to assist with the design of the youth center.

During their ceremony, Charles Sanders of Starbucks Coffee presented Youth Dreamers with a box of coffee and a check for \$10,000.

Berdan cautioned, however, "Yes we have success, but we still struggle to keep the doors open."

They have commenced a First Year Funder campaign—encouraging individuals to give \$100 a month for one year.

Berdan recounted a story when house renovations were underway, and she and the

Youth Dreamers were clearing out parts of the dilapidation:

She found a broken vinyl record. It was "We Are Family," by Sister Sledge. According to her, it was a sign.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, they led the crowd in their rendition of the song. Instead of singing "I've got all my sisters with me," they sang "I've got all my YD's with me."

To learn more about Youth Dreamers and to make a contribution, contact them at 410-962-7003, or visit their website at www.youthdreamers.org.

The Dream Lives on!

During the day, The Dream House will be available for meetings and programs that we outsource, such as a GED program and programs to support grandparents. We have surveys ready for community members to let us know what they would like. The Stadium School teachers will be able to sign up to bring their students over to use the space and computers. The Teacher-Director will teach Project Class to a wider variety of students in order to always engage them in managing the nonprofit. This project-based peer-to-peer course can be tailored to the interests and needs of students and ties directly into the Voluntary State Curriculum standards in Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, Visual Arts, and Theater. These are just some of the ideas that we have for our daytime hours!

****Funding is needed to support the Teacher-Director and staff salaries...**

We will continue to run our current after school programs and summer art program, but now at The Dream House! At 2:30 students from Abbotston Elementary will walk over to the house for Homework Club from 3:00 to 4:00. Their middle school buddies and high school-supervisors will walk over for work. This dedicated "quiet time" will allow for tutoring, enrichment and relationship building before the real fun begins!

****Funding is needed to support program supplies, snacks and student stipends...**

At 4:00, any number of wonderful classes will take place! Some, like Homework Club and Health Club, will be designed, run and evaluated by students. Some will be taught by volunteers who have completed our Workshop Proposal Application. To date, we have had a yoga class and a pillow making class. This model allows individuals who want to teach their passion to do so. They give their time and talents, and we provide young people, space and supplies. In addition, our partnerships with local universities allow students to "test" their teaching skills. This year, we had Towson University students teach Edible Art to our elementary aged children!

We will offer more programs for high school students, including college prep courses. We will strengthen the mentoring between college students and high school students so that it is as strong as our high school-middle school-elementary school mentoring model.

****Funding is needed to support workshop supplies and snacks...**

We will continue to host events to engage members of the community—young and old! We will also rent our space out for meetings, events, and programs.

****Funding is needed to support general operating costs such as utilities, phone, etc...**

We are OPEN to ideas as we work to keep our space active, joyful, and sustainable.

Through successes and failures, we have made it this far! As our dream lives on, it will bring more challenges, mistakes, and adventures.

Your generous support is always appreciated!!!

The Stadium School Youth Dreamers, Inc.

1430 Carswell Street
Baltimore, MD 21218
410-952-7003

youthdreamer@hotmail.com
www.youthdreamers.org



2011
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PROJECT DATA



PROJECT DATA

Please answer questions in space provided. Answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

NOTE: This sheet and a selected image will be sent to the Committee in advance.

Project Name The Youth Dreamers Dream House Location 1430 Carswell St, Baltimore, MD 21218
Owner The Youth Dreamers, Inc.
Project Use(s) youth-run youth center
Project Size 2945 square feet Total Development Cost \$324,671
Annual Operating Budget (if appropriate) \$129,000
Date Initiated March 2001 Percent Completed by December 1, 2010 100%
Project Completion Date (if appropriate) May 2010

Attach, if you wish, a list of relevant project dates

Application submitted by:

Name Kristina Berdan Title Teacher-Director
Organization The Youth Dreamers, Inc.
Address @ The Dream House, 1430 Carswell St. City/State/Zip Baltimore, MD 21218
Telephone (410) 952-7003 Fax (410) 554-1111
E-mail youthdreamer@hotmail.com Weekend Contact Number (for notification): 410-952-7003

Perspective Sheets:

Organization	Name	Telephone/e-mail
Public Agencies		
Architect/Designer	<u>Penze Bailey Architects</u> <u>Laura Penza</u>	<u>ltpenza@penzabailey.com, 410-435-6677 Ex 119</u>
Developer	<u>Struever Brothers, Eccles & Rouse</u> <u>Kate McShane-Oeming</u>	<u>kmcshane@jumpstartraining.org, 443-324-4026</u>
Professional Consultant	<u>Univ of Maryland School of Law</u> <u>Brenda Bratton-Blom</u>	<u>bblom@law.umaryland.edu</u>
Community Group	<u>Baltimore City Council</u> <u>Mary Pat Clarke</u>	<u>marypat.clarke@baltimorecity.gov, 410-294-3022</u>
Other	<u>Youth Dreamers (founding member, 7th grade)</u> <u>Chris Lawson</u>	<u>chrs.l.lwsn@gmail.com, 410-537-0426</u>

Please indicate how you learned of the Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence. (Check all that apply).

- Direct Mailing Magazine Announcement Previous Selection Committee member Other (please specify)
 Professional Previous RBA entrant Online Notice
Organization Bruner/Loeb Forum Friend

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Signature Kristina Berdan

Digitally signed by Kristina Berdan
DN: cn=Kristina Berdan, o=Youth Dreamers, Inc., ou=
email=youthdreamer@hotmail.com, c=US
Date: 2010.12.07 11:17:20 -0500

Date 12/6/10

2011
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PROJECT
AT-A-GLANCE



PROJECT AT-A-GLANCE

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NOTE: This sheet and a selected image will be sent to the Committee in advance.

Project Name The Youth Dreamers Dream House

Address 1430 Carswell St.

City/State/ZIP Baltimore, MD 21218

1. Give a brief overview of the project.

"Youth are uniquely equipped to change the world because they can dream. They choose not to accept what is, but to imagine what might be." -Archbishop Desmond Tutu

The Youth Dreamers is a nonprofit organization founded by middle school students and their teacher with a dream to decrease the amount of youth violence in our community by building a youth-run youth center—The Dream House. We began in 2001 with just 9 students and since then have grown to hundreds of youth and adult allies who have helped us become a 501(c)3, purchase a house, design the house with a pro bono architect, work through the phases of construction with a pro bono general contractor, raise all the funds for renovations and programming through grants and fundraisers, and more.

We currently serve middle school and high school students who do all the work to keep the nonprofit alive. They write grants; plan fundraisers; design, implement, and evaluate after school programs; create community art; organize community events; prepare public speaking engagements; run workshops; volunteer at the nearby free health clinic; and more. Many of these students are also employed in our after school programs that are designed and run by youth, serving younger children from the nearby elementary school.

The Youth Dreamers is more than just a 501(c)3, or a group of distant dreamers. We are doers, and we do what we can for our people in the most innovative way we know how – we act on what we believe. People said we would not make it, but we did. (written in part by Keyani Kenny, 11th grader)

2. Why does the project merit the *Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence*? (You may wish to consider such factors as: effect on the urban environment; innovative or unique approaches to any aspect of project development; new and creative approaches to urban issues; design quality.)

"Today it seems as though our youth are to blame or being blamed for the ills of the world. I am pleased to see a place and a space that is all their own, a place to call home, a place to create and a place to be nothing more than themselves." –Regina T. Boyce, Community Outreach Liaison for Baltimore City Council President Bernard C. "Jack" Young

Everything about the Youth Dreamers and the Dream House is innovative. From the very fact that young people are involved in every stage from the vision, to the creation of a nonprofit, to designing the house, to continuing to manage the nonprofit. Through valuable collaborations, we learned about the phases of construction, from foundation to finish, so that we could be included in the way our house was built. Laura Penza, our architect, held meetings with us to discuss the logistics of design, and to help guide us to choose the things we wanted in our house. Students from University of Maryland's School of Law worked with us first to become a nonprofit and then to present to the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals when we had to change the zoning of the house. The community, family, and friends came out for service days to demo and rebuild the house.

The effects the community are truly the fruits of the Youth Dreamers' hard labor. When we first came here, this house was an eyesore -- buried in needles, trash, and mattresses, and stripped of life. Now, this part of the community is a lively, positive place. See the community art--murals, banners, stepping stones, mosaics and benches, all created by children and community members with help from our community artist. See the repaired windows and painted walls where children who used to vandalize now work to beautify. See the countless volunteers and patrons who come to our service days and block parties. See the children who rely on our after-school programming as a means of release, safety, mentoring, and employment each day.

We have taken urban issues like crime, violence, vacant houses, lack of engaging educational opportunities, and negative stereotypes of young people and turned them upside down. Through nine years of hard work, we have created the Dream House--a beautiful, safe, stimulating youth-run youth center out of a dilapidated house and along the way, brought many opposing and skeptical community members into our family, learning so many important real world skills along the way. (written in part by Miriam Harris, 12th grader)

2011
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PROJECT DESCRIPTION



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1. Describe the underlying values and goals of the project. What, if any, significant trade-offs were required to implement the project?

"This shows that the city's young people aren't necessarily to be feared, but nurtured, and when they are, look at the awesome results!" –Tanika Davis, Baltimore Sun reader

Founded by nine middle school students in 2001 with a dream to decrease violence among youth after school hours, the Youth Dreamers, Inc., above all, continues to value youth voice and input in changing the world. This year, we focused our youth-adult Board of Directors retreat on revising our mission and goals, now that the Dream House is open. Our mission is to provide a unique safe haven with opportunities for youth to accomplish personal goals, develop leadership potential, and participate in improving their communities. Through the Dream House, we hope to provide a supportive environment for youth to express themselves creatively, define and accomplish their goals, be themselves and embrace individuality. We hope to provide youth with leadership and management skills by employing youth to mentor peers and run programs, engaging youth to serve in their communities, and ensuring that youth serve on the Board of Directors and help build the organization. Finally, we hope to change the perception of youth by fostering positive connections between youth and adults, providing an outlet to build youth voice, and providing multiple opportunities for youth.

From its meager beginnings to this beautiful space we have created, youth have actively participated in the process. The only trade-off we can think of would be ending our relationship with the Stadium School where we were founded. Because of decisions made by the school to move away from project-based programs, we are now on our own, with neither programming nor salary support. This has been a challenge in several ways. First, students used to manage the nonprofit in a class taught by our Teacher-Director during the school day. This curriculum allowed them to learn and practice grantwriting, fundraising, designing programs, organizing community events, and more. In addition, we had relied on half of our Teacher-Director's salary to come from the school. Now we must find creative ways to manage the nonprofit and staff the center.

2. Briefly describe the project's urban context. How has the project impacted the local community? Who does the project serve? How many people are served by the project?

"It takes a lot of dedication and devotion to do what they did." -John Thomas, neighbor

The Dream House is located in a low-income, rather violent community in East Baltimore, MD. Surrounded by one block of very committed residents, a high school, a middle school, an elementary school, and a free health clinic, it is part of a "campus" that provides services to mostly youth. The Dream House has had an impact on the community in many ways. In the beginning, residents on the block, including John Thomas, were opposed to creation of a youth-run youth center. Based on negative stereotypes of Baltimore City youth, they feared that the youth would bring trash, violence, and noise to their protected dead end street. However, after numerous community meetings, attended by both Youth Dreamers and residents, they began to change their minds. Youth Dreamers have built relationships with many of the residents through block parties, Christmas caroling and delivering homemade wreaths to each resident, creating mosaic house numbers for each resident in our summer program, inviting them to participate in service days, and more. Mr. Jimmy mows our lawn, Ms. Edith donates furniture from her office, and Mr. Wayne swings by to help at clean ups. When someone smashed the windows at the free health clinic next door, Youth Dreamers made signs, flyer the neighborhood and spoke to residents, asking them to approach the young people who were vandalizing. The residents suggested that we build horseshoe pits so they could watch over the clinic and the youth center when we were not there. Several months later, we wrote a grant and held a service day to do just that. Not only did the vandalism stop because of these efforts, but the young offenders were identified. The clinic held a meeting with them and their parents which resulted in the youth doing community service hours at the clinic. This was a win-win for everyone, especially since the youth continued to volunteer beyond their required hours.

We currently serve students who attend the three schools surrounding us. Some are employed in our programs, earning money for their families and/or for them to buy things for themselves. Others attend our programs, and are part of the scaffolding mentorship we provide from college students who teach workshops and mentor the high school students, to the high school students who tutor the middle school students, to the middle school students who tutor the elementary aged students. Currently we serve about 70 students of all ages. We are working on expanding to include daytime programs for adults in the community, as many have asked for GED Prep and computer classes.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION (CONT'D)

3. Describe the key elements of the development process, including community participation where appropriate.

"It's not like a bunch of adults are telling what them what to do. It's their dream we're helping to sustain."

-Andy Powell, pro bono contractor

The development process began with the vision of nine middle school students in 2001 to build a youth-run youth center. With help from the University of Maryland's Free Law Clinic, youth working with adults created the nonprofit, wrote the mission and bylaws and formed a Board of Directors. In 2004, after researching and ranking homes in the neighborhood, we purchased a vacant former parsonage from a church in the community. Again with help from UMD, students presented at the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals to change the zoning of the house from residential to multipurpose. Students then searched for an architect and found the perfect one in Laura Penza, who invited groups of students to her office to design the house. Next we found a pro bono general contractor, Andy Powell, who developed a budget leading to rounds of fundraisers and grantwriting to raise the estimated \$324,000 needed. He taught groups of students the phases of construction and invited subcontractors to meet with them. Enter the community and partners, who participated in our two Demolition Days in 2006, landscaped the shared space between the clinic and the youth center in 2008, painted rooms, helped us move, created mosaic signage, and more. Thanks to amazing youth, supportive adult allies, and valuable partnerships, the Dream House held its Grand Opening in May of this year!

4. Describe the financing of the project. Please include all funding sources and square foot costs where applicable.

Funding for the renovations of the Dream House came from private donations and the following:

The Department of Housing and Community Development-\$75,000

US Department of Housing and Urban Development-\$70,000

The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation- \$50,000

Betty Lee and Dudley P. Digges Memorial Fund- \$25,000

The Abell Foundation-\$25,000

Adalius Thomas, formerly of the Baltimore Ravens--\$20,000

T. Rowe Price Foundation--\$10,000

We have received additional funding for ongoing programming from a variety of sources such as Angel Soft Angels in the Classroom Award, Annie E. Casey Baltimore Direct Services Grant, Baltimore Community Foundation, Baltimore Office of Promotion and the Arts, CitiFinancial, Commonwealth Foundation, The David and Barbara B. Hirschhorn Foundation, Inc., Home Depot, Jane and B. Daniel Jr. Fund, Katzenberg Fund, Metlife Foundation Discovering Communities Initiative, Morgan Stanley, Open Society Institute, Parks and People Foundation, Quality of Life Giving Circle, Starbucks Foundation, and State Farm Insurance.

5. Is the project unique and/or does it address significant urban issues? Is the model adaptable to other urban settings?

"Today it seems as though our youth are to blame or being blamed for the ills of the world. I am pleased to see a place and a space that is all their own, a place to call home, a place to create and a place to be nothing more than themselves." –Regina T. Boyce, Community Outreach Liaison for Baltimore City Council President Bernard C. "Jack" Young

Our Dream House is unique in that it is youth-run, and is important because it addresses several significant urban issues. We have built a safe haven out of a dilapidated vacant house where youth work, hang out, and learn. We have created many youth jobs, such as teaching and mentoring; youth-adult teaching opportunities; administrative opportunities; service opportunities; and Board of Director positions. We have worked to change the perception of youth as the problem to youth as the solution. Our after school programming allows young people to choose us instead of the streets. We have provided opportunities for youth to value education, either through managing the nonprofit, tutoring peers, or being tutored by peers. We provide a scaffolding mentorship of adult allies mentoring college students, who mentor high school students, who mentor middle school students, who mentor elementary aged students. Every age group has the chance to inspire a generation and to be inspired by a generation different from their own. In that way, strong relationships are built, the future is seen through the eyes of many, and everyone has a hand in making the future better for everyone. We are certain that this kind of project can be replicated in other communities, and we hope to some day teach other youth how to build their own Dream House, based on their dreams and aspirations for community. (Written in part by Dominique Davis, 12th grader)

2011
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
COMMUNITY
REPRESENTATIVE
PERSPECTIVE



COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by someone who was involved, or who represents an organization that was involved, in helping the project respond to neighborhood issues.

Name **Mary Pat Clarke** Title **Council Representative**
Organization **Baltimore City Council** Telephone (**410**) **396-4814**
Address **100 N. Holliday Street 5 Floor** City/State/ZIP **Baltimore MD 21202**
Fax (**410**) **545-7585** E-mail **marypat.clarke@baltimorecity.gov**

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Signature **Mary Pat Clarke** Digitally signed by Mary Pat Clarke
DN: cn=Mary Pat Clarke, o=US, ou=Baltimore City, ou=City Council, email=marypat.clarke@baltimorecity.gov
Reason: I am approving this document
Date: 2010.12.08 10:10:00 Date **December 08, 2010**

1. How did you, or the organization you represent, become involved in this project? What role did you play?

As the City Council representative for The Stadium School and for the Dream House, I have been actively involved in the Youth Dreamers Dream House project since 2003. The Youth Dreamers evolved from a Project-Based Learning initiative, directed by Kristina Berdan, a teacher at The Stadium School (TSS), the first community-created middle school in the Baltimore City Public School system. Youth Dreamers was initially comprised of TSS middle school students who have, through the years, developed the Dream House vision of a "youth place" for the peer support, youth advocacy, self-realization, mentoring and academic achievement of their peer-developed mission.

Youth Dreamers now includes college and high school alumni who loyally maintain their ties --- as well as other youth from the neighborhood. Amazingly and inspirationally, the youth-dominated Board and membership raised the funds to purchase an abandoned church rectory just a block from The Stadium School --- and attracted help from all of Baltimore City to renovate and design it as the perfect "home" for implementing their multi-faceted mission. Through these years between vision and reality, I have helped garden, paint and plan Zoning Board appeals, have helped fundraise and served on the Advisory Committee; and, in 2005, I introduced Youth Dreamers to now-annual summer art courses taught by graduate students at Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) where I formerly served on the faculty.

2. From the community's point of view, what were the major issues concerning this project?

The Youth Dreamers Dream House is located in the Coldstream-Homestead-Montebello (CHM) neighborhood which has long struggled to overcome the blight of vacant houses and drug activity. The actual site is in CHM's 1400 block of Carswell Street where tight-knit neighbors have valiantly kept their block almost entirely drug-free throughout even the worst of times. So when the Dream House was first proposed, Carswell neighbors were opposed, fearing that a youth center would attract disruptive teenagers and possibly even criminal drug activity. A Baltimore City Zoning Board hearing was required for approval of a youth center use of the vacant for-sale rectory. So Youth Dreamers went door-to-door and discussed their proposal with Carswell neighbors and also participated in community meetings on the issue. In the long run, Carswell neighbors agreed that the Youth Dreamers are responsible young people, but they still feared the "magnet effect."

After much negotiation, the Zoning Board did approve the Dream House use, but Youth Dreamers have kept in touch with neighbors as renovation and landscaping occurred. They have also now demonstrated that the Dream House is so well managed and peer-protected that it does not attract problems. In fact, the neighbors are supporters now, and some of their grandchildren are Dream House participants.

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. Has this project made the community a better place to live or work? If so, how?

Neighbors will agree that the immediate neighborhood is a better place to live because of the Youth Dreamers Dream House project. A derelict vacant rectory is now a shiny bright beacon of Victorian charm, inside and out. Mainly because of the Dream House impetus, beautiful greenway landscaping has been designed and implemented from The Stadium School on Gorsuch Avenue to the Dream House on Carswell Street and around the corner to the grounds of the Shepherd's Clinic at 2800 Kirk Avenue and to the campus of Baltimore City College. Mainly through its association with the Youth Dreamers Dream House project, the Shepherds Clinic has opened its doors to youth art exhibits and community meetings. Most of all, however, the Dream House has become a community in itself, a safe haven of creative activities which benefit the membership and neighborhood youth at large.

4. Would you change anything about this project or the development process you went through?

No. I can attest that every phase of this project has been exhaustively and transparently discussed and decided by the Youth Dreamers and their adult partners --- and thoughtfully "amended" in the case of unforeseen obstacles. The process has been a model of teamwork in decision-making and optimism in light of setbacks. It has been my honor and pleasure to be involved.

2011 RUDY BRUNER AWARD DEVELOPER PERSPECTIVE



Please answer questions in space provided. Answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

This sheet is to be filled out by the person who took primary responsibility for project financing or is a representative of the group which did.

Name Kate McShane Oeming Title Director of Community Partnerships
Organization Struever Brothers, Eccles & Rouse Telephone (443) 324.4026
Address 1040 Hull Street City/State/ZIP Baltimore, Maryland 21230
Fax () E-mail kmcshane@jumpsttraining.org

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Signature Kate McShane Oeming Date 12/8/2010

1. What role did you or your company play in the development of this project? Describe the scope of involvement.

During the construction of the Dream House I was the Director of Community Partnerships for Streuver Bros, Eccles and Rouse, a large development, construction, and property management company in Baltimore, with projects up and down the East Coast. As a company committed to community involvement, we annually organized the James W. Rouse Community Service Day as a vehicle for acting on this commitment. We were introduced to the Youth Dreamers and the Dream House and their vision for building a youth center when we were scouting out potential sites for JWR Day.

In September 2007, volunteers from Streuver Bros, the Youth Dreamers, and the surrounding community spent the day stripping siding from the long-vacant house and removing overgrowth from the yard. By the day's end, we were hooked and wanted to do more.

Over the course of the next three years, we took the project on as our primary pro bono construction project. In that capacity we donated the services of our excellent construction manager, Andy Powell to coordinate and oversee all construction aspects of the project. Andy quickly picked up on the spirit of the organization and involved the Youth Dreamers in every aspect of coordination and organizing a construction project. As a result, they learned first hand about construction budgets, scopes of work, putting a project out to bid and working with subcontractors. Andy so enjoyed his involvement with the Youth Dreamers that he eventually joined the board. We also deployed one of our field superintendents to the house. His services were provided free of charge and he oversaw the work of the subcontractors. In addition, he self-performed much of the work on the house. These two donations allowed for the smooth rehab of the house and totaled well over \$1,000,000.

2. What trade-offs or compromises were required during the development of the project?

In any construction project there are trade offs that are required to complete the project within budget. By donating our construction expertise, our hope was to minimize the trades offs that were required. To some degree there was value engineering required to keep the project within budget. Part of the skill in the management and execution of the construction process is understanding how to build the project more efficiently and cost effectively. The team, Streuver Bros. deployed was great at this and as a result delivered a completed construction project within budget with very few trade-offs.

3. How was the project financed? What, if any, innovative means of financing were used?

The degree to which the project was financed is due to the extraordinary efforts of the Youth Dreamers themselves. We donated our time and talent to help stretch as far as possible the money that had been raised.

4. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of the project?

When I first met with the Youth Dreamers and saw the house, I thought there was no way this project could get done. By the end of the meeting, I thought there was no way this project wouldn't get done! There's an energy and a can-do spirit that is contagious and wonderful – it permeates and informs all aspects of the organization. That is what keeps the Youth Dreamers alive and thriving.

Least successful? Frankly, I can't think of a least-success aspect of this project!

2011
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PROFESSIONAL
CONSULTANT
PERSPECTIVE



PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANT PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by a professional who worked as a consultant on the project providing services other than physical design or planning (e.g., legal services).

Name	Brenda Bratton Blom	Title	Co-Director, Clinical Law Program
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Signature Brenda Bratton Blom Date Dec. 10, 2010

1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project?

The Youth Dreamers was represented by the University of Maryland School of Law Clinic from before incorporation through June of 2010. During this time, we worked to provide legal services that built the organization and prepared them to purchase and renovate the project.

When I first met the youth, it was through their efforts to recruit a legal team. They were, from the first moment, focused on their goal of finding an appropriate space in which to build their vision of a center for youth in their community. Their vision showed that they believed that the young people living in this neighborhood struggling with poverty and crime were fundamentally great kids who needed a place that was positive in outlook and safe for them. Over the next years, we linked law students enrolled in the clinical program with young people (middle and high school aged) to learn and teach what was necessary to make that dream become reality. The first years, the youth learned about land records and how to find out who owned a property and what liens were recorded on a property. They walked their community, choosing houses that were for sale or were vacant. They prepared an analysis of the pros and cons of each location, the costs and benefits of each property and they ranked them, and then began the process of contacting these owners and negotiating for their dream.

Once a property had been chosen, they had the awesome task of applying for a zoning variance. In what unfolded as an amazing lesson in public relations and civic responsibility, they convinced the zoning board to issue the variance, and began the process of funding and building their dream. This, too, they took on with the vigor of youth and the optimism that comes from a dream. The work they have done to make this dream come true is awesome. And they know have the capacity to live this dream.

2. Describe the project's impact on its community. Please be as specific as possible.

There are several ways that this project has affected the community:

1. The young people themselves have had their lives changed forever. They know that even if people expect little of them, they can take on very difficult problems and change both the expectations of others, and the world in which they live. And they know how to run an organization, how a board of directors works and how to change a space.
2. The block on which they build their dream is changed. When they first purchased the house, the young people went door to door to reach out to the neighbors. When they appeared at the zoning board hearing, they were surprised (and hurt) to find that the few skeptical neighbors has convinced the others and the community association that they should be afraid of these young people and the youth center. Through the patience of the young people, combined with their good works in the community (mowing the grass of the seniors, barbecues in the summer for the neighbors, etc.), they have won the hearts of those who opposed them.
3. These young people have won the hearts of service providers and funders who have met them. Again, transforming the dominant narrative that our young people are dangerous and in trouble, in walk these wonderful young people, presenting their transformative dream and their unending optimism about what is possible. I can't imagine a more powerful and and important thing to do!
4. Future lawyers have been affected, too! In the years that we have provided legal services for these young people, and their adult advisors, I have watched as young lawyers see the power of the positive in law. This is so important - as we begin to believe that lawyers do no good! They have learned to teach their clients about the choices possible, to partner with their clients to achieve great and positive goals, and to work relentlessly to provide the kind of positive results one hopes for their clients.

PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANT PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. How might this project be instructive to others in your profession?

There are several ways that this project has been, and is, instructive. First, echoing again the message from the last section, it is important for lawyers to remember to support those organizations making a difference in a positive way. Probono work is critical for the legal profession and for democracy. And, once a lawyer has been touched by the dreamers, they can never be the same.

This group has also inspired law professors. While hosting the AALS Clinical Law Section Annual Meeting last March, I was privileged to host a tour of Baltimore, and the Dream House was on the tour. I had many law school professors approach to tell me how inspired they were - and that they were heading back to their cities and towns across America with a new sense of what work was possible when representing young people. This message - recurrent in the work on the Dream House - is essential for us to move forward in America.

The work has also be part of an on-going conversation about how to structure empowering organizations for youth. We have done some interesting legal work that gives young people the ability to control their organizations without running afoul of the law. It has been challenging and interesting and we are part of moving a body of law forward.

4. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

The most successful aspect is the successful completion of the Dream House. Because it is the completion of the Dream. We built an organization and allowed the youth to succeed.

The least successful aspect is the inability of the school system to figure out how to support this project. This means that the organization is struggling with the sustainability outside of the school structures.

2011
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
ARCHITECT
OR DESIGNER
PERSPECTIVE



ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by a design professional who worked as a consultant on the project, providing design, planning, or other services.

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Signature  Date 12/8/10

1. Describe the design concept of this project, including urban design considerations, choice of materials, scale, etc.

As a complete renovation of a late 1800s Victorian rectory that had been vacant and left for destruction by the elements and Maryland's wide temperature range, the building's adaptive reuse has re-energized a community in Baltimore City.

The only freestanding structure on a street of brick row homes, the structure itself offered a unique opportunity to express the character of the architecture, as well as its intended use as a youth-run youth center. The vibrant colors used thoughtfully for the exterior trim celebrate architectural characteristics of the Victorian structure as well as the vibrant spirit of the Youth Dreamers.

The existing cedar shakes were stripped and repainted a neutral color to provide a background and neutralizer for the exciting wood trim colors selected by the Youth Dreamers. The existing slate roof was repaired, windows were replaced with energy efficient windows, new insulation and drywall was installed, and a new wrap-around porch was added to the original front porch, to better take advantage of the site. The porch also acts to reduce the apparent scale at the open side yard and also to expand the covered space for more students.

Adjacent to a large open green space, the positive activities of the Youth Dreamers spill out into the community in the most natural way. Partnerships were formed with many neighbors, resulting in an evolution of the design over the many years in design and construction. With approval to use the open space, the outside activities (and site improvements) expanded. A dramatic site evolution occurred when a partnership with the adjacent Shepherd's Clinic formed, with opportunities for parking and space to the rear of the structure.

Inside, the existing spaces were adapted to allow separate active and quiet functions as well as private and public areas for community use. Paint colors, furniture and decorative items are expressive, and clearly express student involvement and passion. It is a wonderful and joyful environment for youths and adults of all ages.

2. Describe the most important social and programmatic functions of the design.

Although some neighbors were skeptical of the Youth Center concept at first, the Youth Dreamers worked diligently to gain trust and appreciation. Neighbors have now embraced the Youth Dreamers and their mission, which has become a true asset to their community.

The Youth Dreamers Dream House provides a supportive environment for students to express themselves, accomplish goals, learn leadership and mentoring skills, and offers a chance to help change the public's perspective of youth capabilities. The Youth Dreamers have coordinated community events, from outdoor picnics to computer training for neighbors.

Generally, the upper level is the student lounge, while the first floor holds most public community functions and the second floor holds most of the homework areas. Rooms have been designated functionally by program requirements, by the students themselves, and evolved as program opportunities became available through grant awards, community input and new ideas. The Youth Dreamers designed the functions of the Dream House themselves, and the professional architectural and engineering guidance mostly included preparation of required documents for building permit and construction and maintaining building code compliance.

Grant writing has resulted in new computer stations, and students teach neighbors how about computers and how to stay in touch with family members and others. Such programs have increased interaction between generations. The many partnerships created with the Youth Dreamers and their Dream House have enhanced the vitality of many organizations.

Student involvement in the design process has offered an education that most students (or even adults) do not have an opportunity to participate in. There have also been members of the community that have come forward with stories of the building's past history and words of support and gratefulness for the Youth Dreamers' vision, which has helped the Youth Dreamers realize the importance of history and what they are doing. Interestingly, although many students at first believed that all middle school students must write grants and attend Zoning Hearings, they have also learned the importance of community service and what they are doing today, as history in the making. Under Kristina Berdan's positive leadership, many have learned invaluable real life lessons in making a positive difference.

ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. Describe the major challenges of designing this project and any design trade-offs or compromises required to complete the project.

Having been abandoned for many years, the existing building was in a terrible state of disrepair. Paint was peeling in huge chunks, wood framing was rotted, infrastructure was old and in need of upgrading, the roof was leaking, windows were broken, and there were remnants of homesteading and even dead animals. The first challenge was perhaps to see the potential, and to understand the ramifications associated with realizing their dreams. The Youth Dreamers' excitement at finding such a 'cool' building so close to their school was very infectious, and as they researched their options, they remained optimistic.

Initially, accessibility to the building by persons with disabilities presented a challenge. Site constraints were rather tight. A ramp was designed in the front and integrating that into the landscape was challenging and would have been quite costly. The partnership with Shepherd's Clinic brought the exciting opportunity to ramp less conspicuously from the new front door at the rear of the site, and neighbor concerns about parking on Carswell were dissolved as well.

Originally, an elevator was incorporated to provide accessibility to the community computer center, originally proposed for the upper level. At the Baltimore permit office's request, the elevator was changed to a new stair, when the existing main stair was deemed acceptable only as a second means of egress. This resulted in moving the student lounge to the upper level and keeping community functions on the main level, which really works wonderfully. Challenges often result in improvements.

The Zoning Variance for a change of use was a challenge for the students. Although surprised that there would be any community concerns, the students remained positive and responded directly to each of the concerns raised at the Hearing. The Zoning Variance was a huge learning opportunity, not only because of the legal process, but also the students learned to respond to community concerns.

Current challenges include fund raising for the sustainability of the valuable Youth Dreamer Dream House program. The students have learned that fundraising is much easier when there is a capital improvement project, but funding is more difficult for operations of programs.

4. Describe the ways in which the design relates to its urban context.

The Dream House has evolved into a wonderful hub connection between residential, school, non-profit and community green space. Reflecting the Youth Dreamers' mission and the spirit of community involvement and partnership, the Youth Dreamers Dream House is clearly a central place for the community. No doubt about it, the Dream House has an exciting, dynamic and welcoming presence.

Carswell Street is a small residential dead end street with brick row homes on the entire south side of the street and halfway on the north side, ending with the Youth Dreamers Dream Home in a central location to the street. There is parking along both sides, although it is quite tight when cars are parked on both sides. As a freestanding structure, the Dream House is the oldest and most unique structure on the street.

The Dream House property is adjacent to open green space to the west and sits in the shadows of Baltimore City College High School, a beautiful large stone building perched on the hill to the north. The rear yard, although originally a scrubby and trashy wooded slope, has been opened up to the Shepherd's Clinic and open to parking and a planted island at the entrance on Kirk Avenue. At the end of Carswell Street, there is a path and steps leading to The Stadium School, and the Youth Dreamers are able to easily walk between the school and the Dream House.

The vibrant colors on this unique Victorian structure present to the community a very special place for youths. The Youth Center provides a physical 'exclamation point' to the street, and clearly indicates the exciting work the Youth Dreamers are doing for their community. As their mission to provide a safe, fun place for youths after school has evolved into a wonderful facility, the Youth Dreamers themselves provide a beautiful beam of light and hope for the future!

2011
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Signature **Chris L. Lawson**

Digitally signed by Chris L. Lawson
DN: cn=Chris L. Lawson, o=The Youth Dreamers, Inc., ou=mailto:Chris.L.Lwsn@gmail.com, c=US
Date: 2010.12.07 15:18:08 -0500

Date December 6, 2010

1. What role did you play in the development of this project?

In the beginning, several of my middle-school peers and I entered into a course called Community Action. In this course, our teacher engaged us in conversations about the community we live in, and listed the pros and cons of the neighborhood. One of the main problems we discussed was the lack of places for youth to go after school. After thorough discussion, she asked, "So what are we going to do about it?" We replied, "Let's build a youth center". We didn't want just any youth center, but one that was run and managed by the youth. Our vision was to change the perception of youth in our community, and we thought that creating a safe stimulating place that kids can go after school would be serve that purpose.

As a founding member, I felt a responsibility to make sure that we followed through with our vision. Throughout the years I've been pretty involved with Youth Dreamers, going to workshops at the public library to learn how to become a nonprofit organization and working with the University of Maryland's School of Law to file the organization as as 501(c)3, giving presentation to different groups of people to share our vision and dream, learning the many phases in constructing and developing a house, learning the different blueprint notations to ensure an accurate layout of the house we are looking to transform into our Dream House.

Staying true to my commitment to transform our dream into reality. I continued to stay involved with the Youth Dreamers throughout high school and college years. In college I majored in African American Studies, to learn more about the populating that I saw myself working with the most in life. In addition, I minored in Leadership Studies, which just seems a perfect fit after all I have done and learned by working to develop this vision. Now a graduated from the University of Maryland, I am now back working at the Dream House as the Youth Leadership Development Specialist, teaching youth how to be change agents in the communities they reside.

2. Describe the impact that this project has had on the your community. Please be as specific as possible.

We wanted to get a better understanding of adult perceptions of youth, and we figured what better way to do that than to go out and do some oral histories in the neighborhood that surrounds us. From their point of view, they know that there are not a lot of resources available to our youth, which has unfortunately push students to be more destructive and truant. Although these adult know what youth needed and saw that we were trying to address those issues, they were a little hesitant to get on board.

We had one community meeting in which I thought was the breakthrough for both the resident and the Youth Dreamers. After years of gaining support and funds to find a place we could potentially call home, all of it could be taken away in one second by the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals, if the community could not see what we envisioned. We truly believe that what our youth need are positive role models in their communities who have their best interest at heart, and our Dream House is here to bring about change in the youth that we serve. Students have learned that college is attainable despite their families' history with education. They learn that they don't have to fall within a statistic and that they are able to study subjects that others may think are too challenging. They come to our center as a place to follow their dreams and ambitions in life. This project has had a tremendous impact on the community in which we reside. For example, although one of our programs is only two days a week, the students continue to come every day to relax and chill and to be a part of the Dream House even when they do not have to be there. Our neighbors have too come around and have embraced us, wanting to know more about our plight as an organization and services we provide as it may relate to their children and grandchildren and neighbors.

3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? Did you participate in making them?

Compromises-

The house that we purchased from the neighboring church was zoned for a residential occupancy, so in order for us to use the facility as a center, we had to get the zoning changed into a multipurpose facility. We posted a sign letting the community know what our intentions were as well as canvas the neighborhood to answer any questions that residents may have. We felt as though many if not all neighbors supported our efforts, but when we went to zoning we were shocked to see we had opposition from the community. The Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals asked for us to go back and see if we can resolve any of the issues that residents had. Come to find out most of the residents were concerned about increased traffic on the street, too many students causing mayhem, and about the center becoming a place that would attract destructive misdemeanor crimes. We reassured them what our mission and vision were for the facility and agreed that we would not use the main street, but share the Shepherd's Clinic parking lot which is between the two locations. We also guaranteed that our center would not be open at all hours of the night, that the latest that we would be open would be 8:00pm. This gave some residents relief and allowed them to be on board with the project.

Trade-offs-

Most of the work students do to manage the nonprofit is done during the school day which used to fit the curriculum model that the Stadium School had. Now that the school is no longer supporting that model, which has made us successful the past years, we thought that it was time to thank them for the opportunity to get where we are today and move on to find other partnerships who value the interactive real world learning skill that will enable the project to flourish even more.

4. What do you consider to be the the most and least successful aspects of this project?

The most successful part of this project is the leadership displayed by the youth who are committed to the organization. From the beginning, youth have been the key component in making this project successful. Youth make the decisions for the organization! Any adults and mentors associated with The Youth Dreamers, Inc. are here to provide insight and vital information in the best interest of the organization so that youth can make a highly informed decisions. Our adult allies and partners understand why we value the youth's opinion and decisions and are in support of the model we like to uphold.

The least successful aspect of this project is the ability to maintain funds to stay up and running. Although the youth and their allies raised over \$800,000 dollars over the past 9 years to renovate the building that serves as the Dream House, it is challenging, especially now, to obtain the funds needed to stay sustainable and to expand our programs. It took us 9 years to raise the funds to build the house, but we only have 12 months each year to raise funds to keep the center open.

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Nine years later, a school project that many thought was only a dream becomes a reality

The Youth Dreamers defy the odds to open their own after-school center near Waverly



Deja Joseph, 13, a more recent member of the Youth Dreamers looks at one of the many wall decorations in the new youth center near Waverly. Nine years after middle school students in teacher Kristina Berdan's class first conceptualized it, they're getting their "Dream House," where they can go for after-school programs. (Lloyd Fox, Baltimore Sun / April 29, 2010)

By Jill Rosen, The Baltimore Sun
 8:32 p.m. EDT, May 6, 2010
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Waverly (Baltimore, Maryland)

On a back wall of the brightest house on Carswell Street hangs a piece of paper, protected in plastic to keep it from crumbling. It's a promise, impetuously made nearly a decade ago by sixth graders who lived nearby. They were going to open an after-school center. They each scribbled their name in marker, to seal the deal.

No one thought they'd ever really do it. Not even their teacher, who helped them draft the pledge.

Yet the kids and their teacher from a rough part of town incorporated, raised more than a half-million dollars, fought government bureaucracy, changed a neighborhood's mind about inner city kids and turned a derelict eyesore into something

beautiful.

Their center — they call it The Dream House — opens on Saturday.

"It definitely took patience and willingness to fail," says Chekana Reid, a college girl now who's about to turn 21 and can barely recognize her girlish signature on the pledge she signed when she was 12. "We never gave up."

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Kristina Berdan had only been teaching a few years when, in 2001, she created a community action elective at Waverly's Stadium School. The former ballerina was fresh off a social action workshop and eager to try some things out on the only nine kids in school who chose her class over basketball, art or African drums.

She challenged them to think of a project that could change their world. When they started talking about a youth center, she tried to gently rein them in — she wanted them to pick a project they could actually complete. Clearly, this wasn't it.

But the kids wouldn't budge. And signed the pledge to prove it, vowing patience, courage and perseverance in their endeavor, as if, alive for barely a decade, they had any idea what those words even

meant.

"I never really thought it would happen," Berdan says. "But they were so determined."

Guided by Berdan, who wears a shirt that says, "Ask me how to dream," the kids researched how much money they'd need to buy property and fix it up. They wrote a budget and sent 40 letters to politicians and public figures, brightly asking for help. They heard back from just three.

Disappointed but undaunted, they wrote more, all the while arranging bake sales, T-shirt sales and car washes, dropping small bills and handfuls of change into their bank account. Talent shows. Street campaigns with buckets. Artwork auctions and candy-grams.

Their big break came over the summer when **Sen. Barbara Mikulski** snared them \$70,000 of federal money. Suddenly, with real cash, paper work and taxes to contend with, Berdan knew they needed legal help. They scored what ended up to be nearly \$200,000 of legal advice over the years, pro bono, from the University of Maryland's Law Clinic.

With the attorneys' help, the classmates turned themselves into a nonprofit. They called themselves The Youth Dreamers.

When the new school year started — and each year after that — the dreamers added to their ranks as more students signed on to Berdan's suddenly popular community action class. One dreamer's mother, a trustee at Homestead United Methodist Church, helped them get a deal to buy the old parsonage house, just a short walk from their school. For \$12,500, it seemed like a great deal — until they factored in the hundreds of thousands of dollars in renovations it desperately needed. The house, unloved in for at least 20 years, was literally falling apart.

Another dreamer's father approached architect Laura Thul Penza at a Govanstowne Business Association meeting to assess the property, see if it had a prayer. When she agreed, the kids immediately put together a thank-you letter, slathering it with slickers. Smitten, Penza not only looked over the property, she stayed to redesign the house for free — at least \$70,000 worth of donated services.

With every last step of the process, Berdan didn't have the specialists just do the work themselves — though that certainly would have been quicker and more efficient. Instead, she had the pros show the kids how to do it all themselves — how to write grant letters, how to file a zoning appeal, how to work with blueprints and pick construction materials, how to get bids from sub-contractors and choose the best. She asked for the kids' opinions and actually listened when they answered.

"It's not like a bunch of adults are telling what them what to do," says Andy Powell, the project's pro bono contractor who volunteered his time while working at first for Struever Bros, Eccles & Rouse and then stuck with the project when he left to work for **Towson University**. "It's their dream we're helping to sustain."

Dominique Davis and Miriam Harris were sitting on the front steps of the Dream House recently, thinking about what it means to them. They're juniors in high school who've spent the last six years working to see it open.

It's a grand Victorian, the only one in sight, with bold colors that almost shimmer in the late afternoon sunshine. The Dreamers like to tell the story of the rainbow paint job — some had wanted a bright blue house, others lemon yellow, but they compromised on a creamy white one with crayon-box details in blue, yellow, orange, lime and lilac. Inside, it's brighter still, with a warren of rooms for meeting or studying and still more for learning to cook and using computers.

Like those who signed the original pledge, Dominique and Miriam have outgrown the need for an after-school refuge. But they know that was never really the point. "I feel like I built a home not just for me but for others," Dominique says, adding that what she got for herself in the deal was some gumption. She felt important here, like what she had to say mattered. "They gave me a voice," the girl says. "Now I speak up loud and proud."

Berdan and the dreamers certainly ran into their share of hurdles over the years — the neighbors who lived on Carswell Street being a flat-out roadblock. The home owners, many of who had lived on the cul-de-sac for decades, clung to what they considered to be a serene nook amid a pretty rough community. A youth center sounded to them like a magnet for unruly teenagers, trash and traffic — they wanted nothing to do with it and

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united to oppose the dreamers zoning petition.

Though the students eventually won, they devoted themselves to changing those neighbor's minds. They knocked on every door to introduce themselves and nearly drown the block in handmade presents — Christmas wreaths for their doors, mosaic planters, spider plants in sweetly-painted pots. Miriam remembers once picking up "every piece of trash from here to Gorsuch Avenue."

John Thomas, who lives right across the street from the Dream House, was among those who fought the Dream House. Now his grandkids can't wait to go there in the evenings. "It takes a lot of dedication and devotion to do what they did," he says.

And tenacity. That's what Miriam thinks allowed the dreamers to win folks over. "It's all about relationships," she says, sounding quite sage for a 17-year-old. "That's how you really change things. You get inside someone's head."

With the center on the verge of opening, Berdan, who's felt wed to the project for the last nine years, is finally allowing herself a life. She's engaged, to "a very patient man," she says, and expects it won't be long before she leaves town to be with him, something she's put off time and again because of the project.

"You sort of get caught up in it," she says. "And as a teacher, the power of this was amazing. They learned skills they are going to use the rest of their lives."

A few years ago Chekana Reid, while working on the house, dipped her hands into blue paint and pressed them onto the front steps of 1430 Carswell. Other kids did the same thing and now the steps are covered with dozens of hand prints. Inside there are similar touches everywhere, kind of a happy graffiti.

As if they hadn't just left an impression on the whole city, the kids wanted to leave a mark. Like Deja Joseph, one of the younger dreamers, who used a turquoise marker to write on a table: "Live your life to the fullest."

"Everyone," she says, "is going to be able to see that you did something."

Jill.rosen@baltasun.com

<http://twitter.com/jillrosen>

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TanikaDavis at 12:25 PM May 07, 2010

This is a great article, beautifully written by Jill Rosen. It shows that the city's young people aren't necessarily to be feared, but nurtured, and when they are, look at the awesome results!





Kristina Berdan is the kind of teacher more Baltimore City schools need, and our society needs to do more to encourage her brand of youth development. OSI-Baltimore recognized her audacity, and made her one of its Community Fellows, helping this project along. Sen. Mikulski found funding; dozens of volunteers donated time, money and sweat equity.

Bravo to all involved in this amazing project! Reading about it makes me proud to live in Baltimore!

[Discussion FAQ](#)

Controversy Over Miranda Warnings For Terror Suspect

This day in history

-  **On May 8, 1962** the musical comedy "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum" opened on Broadway
-  **On May 7, 1975** President Gerald Ford formally declared an end to the "Vietnam era"
-  **On May 6, 1937** The Hindenburg burned and crashed in Lakehurst, N.J., killing 35 of the 97 people on board and a Navy crewman on the ground.
-  **On May 4, 1970** Four students were shot and killed on the campus of Kent State University
-  **On May 3, 1802**, Washington, D.C. was incorporated as a city
-  **On May 2, 1970** jockey Diane Crump became the first woman to ride in the Kentucky Derby
-  **On May 1, 1786**, Mozart's opera "The Marriage of Figaro" premiered in Vienna
-  **On April 30, 1970**, President Richard M. Nixon announced the U.S. was sending troops into Cambodia
-  **On April 29th, 1962** rioting erupted after a jury acquitted four LAPD officers of beating of Rodney King
-  **On April 28th, 1945** Italian dictator Benito Mussolini was executed by Italian partisans



From dream to reality



New turf for Ravens



Iraqi teens learn baseball



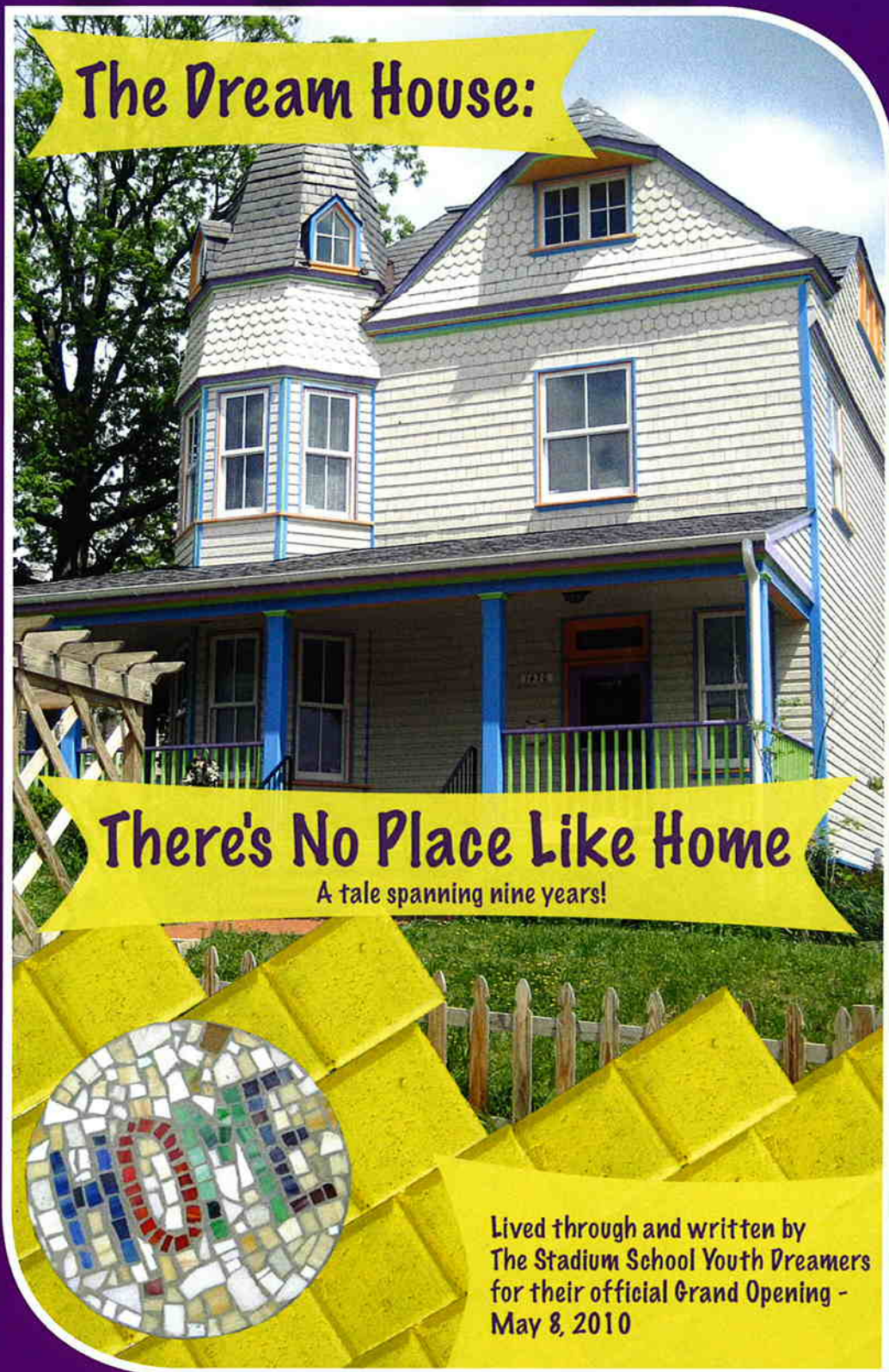
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HOUSE

The Dream



The Dream House:

There's No Place Like Home

A tale spanning nine years!



Lived through and written by
The Stadium School Youth Dreamers
for their official Grand Opening -
May 8, 2010

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HOMER

Chapter 1

Once upon a time, there were nine students in an elective course at the Stadium School who were challenged to change their community. They decided to create a youth run youth center because they noticed that youth were having problems after school, finding somewhere to be and things to fill their time. The teacher who led this class jumped at the idea of students making change, and she encouraged them to pursue the idea.

The nine youth were excited and they began to do research on the subject of after school opportunities. They were surprised to learn that police call the time between 3:00 and 6:00 the

"danger zone" because kids are more likely to get caught up in sex, drugs and drama because there is no one around to supervise them or give them something constructive or remotely fun to do. The Youth Dreamers sprung into action and began to seek out help for the process of trying to find a suitable house to use for the youth center and trying to raise money to renovate it.

Thus they began their journey and sought out assistance from



adult allies who shared their dream. The Youth Dreamers began by doing school wide fundraisers such as bake sales and tee shirt sales. They also did a letter writing campaign. Seventy letters were sent out and only three responses came back. They were overjoyed when they received word from Senator Barbra Mikulski who gave \$70,000 by earmarking the Youth Dreamers into a federal bill. The Youth Dreamers researched houses and explored many possibilities until they picked out 1430 Carswell St, a former parsonage owned by the Homestead United Methodist Church, as their home. Then the work really began. The Youth Dreamers had come so far, but they still had a long way to go...



COURAGE

Chapter 2



were concerned about the youth center bringing violence, noise, trash and vandalism to the neighborhood. No matter what the Youth Dreamers said, the residents were still opposed. So the Youth Dreamers held a meeting facilitated by Community Conferencing. Many residents and Youth Dreamers attended, and the Youth Dreamers tried to address the residents' concerns. Then they held a five-on-five meeting with five Youth Dreamers and five representatives from the community. The Youth Dreamers returned to the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals and so did some of the residents to oppose them. They moved forward with their presentation, meeting the requirements of the law, and they won...but they still didn't feel that they had won because their future neighbors weren't thrilled.

After changing the zoning, the Youth Dreamers negotiated with Homestead United Methodist Church to purchase the house. Then the real fundraising began. Youth Dreamers continued to hold school wide fundraisers, plan yearly fundraising events, and write many, many grants to raise the \$324,000 needed for renovations.

Through the years they faced unexpected delays in construction, funding challenges, and changes at the Stadium School. But through all of this, Youth Dreamers and their amazing, supportive adult allies, had the courage to continue...

The Youth Dreamers had found the perfect house, but they needed to go through a zoning appeal hearing to change the zoning from residential to multi-purpose. They set up a community meeting at Homestead United Methodist Church to share their dreams for the house. When no one showed up, they took to the streets and canvassed the neighborhood with their flyers. After hearing about their plans, almost everyone on Carswell St. signed a petition supporting the zoning change. Youth Dreamers in the Project Class at the Stadium School worked with student attorneys from the University of Maryland to learn the laws of changing the zoning in order to create a presentation for the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals. When they arrived downtown, twenty strong, they found residents there to oppose them. After a conversation in the hallway, they learned that residents

KNOWLEDGE

Chapter 3

Although they weren't in the Dream House yet, the Youth Dreamers designed after school programs to stimulate brains and employ students. The first after school program was Homework Club. A team of Youth Dreamers came together to design the program which included making flyers, recruiting middle school students through an application and interview process, recruiting elementary aged students to participate and more. Homework Club caters to students at Abbotston Elementary school. Students receive help with homework and extracurricular activities when they are done. Students also get to play games and have a snack towards the end of the day. Each month, staff members are evaluated and at the end of the year, everyone in the program evaluates it. These evaluations are used to revise the program the following year. Another after school program is Health Club where girls can share thoughts, experiences and feelings related to health, relationships, and sexuality. A team of Youth Dreamers works with pro bono experts in the health field to design workshops for the girls. Community Art deals with art and exploring the basics of creation to help beautify and change the community for the better. Students in this program have created banners that are hanging in the parking lot,

mosaic stepping stones that are used as pathways, and mosaic house numbers for neighbors. One of their greatest projects was creating a huge mosaic sign for the new Joy Wellness Center that they can see from their kitchen window. The Summer Arts Program is a huge hit over the summer. MICA students teach art in the afternoon, and high school Youth Dreamers create a personalized curriculum to make it a full day program.

Youth Dreamers continue to create programs based on the needs and desires of their peers. They also have a Workshop Proposal Application on their website for anyone who wants to teach their passion at the youth center. Youth Dreamers continue to fundraise and write grants to fund these programs at The Dream House...



HEART

Chapter 4

The Youth Dreamers could not have gotten as far as they have without the love and support of many people, foundations and organizations. Youth As Resources provided their first funding and were the first organization to really believe in the dream. Senator Barbara Mikulski responded to a one page letter by earmarking the Youth Dreamers into a federal bill for \$70,000. In the very beginning, parents of Youth Dreamers and community members came together to form an Advisory Board to guide the youth. The Stadium School supported the expansion of the Youth Dreamers mini course into a full day Project Class at the school.

Brenda Bratton-Blom of the University of Maryland School of Law jumped on board to help with becoming a nonprofit, writing the mission statement and bylaws, going through a zoning appeal hearing, and purchasing the house. Student attorneys have represented the Youth Dreamers



during their formative years and beyond.

The Homestead United Methodist Church sold the Youth Dreamers their old parsonage and continues to support the Youth Dreamers in their endeavors in the community.

Angela Mitchell of State Farm Insurance became the godmother of the Youth Dreamers through not only her generous funding of the program through State Farm, but also through her participation on the Board of Directors and her constant support and networking.

When it was time to renovate the house, many people showed great kindness towards the Youth

Dreamers such as Laura Penza of Penza+Bailey Architects. She worked for years with the Youth Dreamers to help design the youth center. Andy Powell came on as the pro bono general contractor while he was at Struever Bros. Eccles & Rouse. He worked with teams of Youth Dreamers to teach the phases of construction. The teams were responsible for teaching the rest of the Youth Dreamers and the Board of Directors, hiring the subcontractors and monitoring the work. Kate McShane organized several volunteer service days to help the Youth Dreamers demo the house in preparation for renovations and landscape the two acres of shared space between the clinic and the youth center while she was at Struever Bros. Eccles & Rouse.

The Shepherd's Clinic has become a partner of the Youth Dreamers, providing a place for the youth to volunteer in exchange for service-learning hours and space for some of their programs. They share their parking lot with the Youth Dreamers and are always willing



to help out and show their support.

The Board of Directors of the Youth Dreamers has been the backbone of the organization. Many members have stayed on the board for years, committing time, ideas, energy and love. Their newly formed Advisory Board is made up of members committed to keeping the Dream House alive and well.

Many organizations and foundations have provided funding and support through the years and they are honored on our Wall of Fame at The Dream House.

Ms. Kristina, the original teacher of the Community Action mini course, continues to work with the Youth Dreamers and

their adult allies in a job that she considers the best in the world.

Three of the original Youth Dreamers—Cierra Cary, Chekana Reid and Chris Lawson have continued to stay involved even as they ventured onto college.

For those not specifically named, know that in our HEARTS, you are the key to our success. You all have a special place in our new HOME and will be welcome for years to come as we “write” the next chapters of our tale....

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

—Margaret Mead



The Dream Lives on!

During the day, The Dream House will be available for meetings and programs that we outsource, such as a GED program and programs to support grandparents. We have surveys ready for community members to let us know what they would like. The Stadium School teachers will be able to sign up to bring their students over to use the space and computers. The Teacher-Director will teach Project Class to a wider variety of students in order to always engage them in managing the nonprofit. This project-based peer-to-peer course can be tailored to the interests and needs of students and ties directly into the Voluntary State Curriculum standards in Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, Visual Arts, and Theater. These are just some of the ideas that we have for our daytime hours!

****Funding is needed to support the Teacher-Director and staff salaries...**

We will continue to run our current after school programs and summer art program, but now at The Dream House! At 2:30 students from Abbotston Elementary will walk over to the house for Homework Club from 3:00 to 4:00. Their middle school buddies and high school supervisors will walk over for work. This dedicated "quiet time" will allow for tutoring, enrichment and relationship building before the real fun begins!

****Funding is needed to support program supplies, snacks and student stipends...**

At 4:00, any number of wonderful classes will take place! Some, like Homework Club and Health Club, will be designed, run and evaluated by students. Some will be taught by volunteers who have completed our Workshop Proposal Application. To date, we have had a yoga class and a pillow making class. This model allows individuals who want to teach their passion to do so. They give their time and talents, and we provide young people, space and supplies. In addition, our partnerships with local universities allow students to "test" their teaching skills. This year, we had Towson University students teach Edible Art to our elementary aged children!

We will offer more programs for high school students, including college prep courses. We will strengthen the mentoring between college students and high school students so that it is as strong as our high school-middle school-elementary school mentoring model.

****Funding is needed to support workshop supplies and snacks...**

We will continue to host events to engage members of the community—young and old! We will also rent our space out for meetings, events, and programs.

****Funding is needed to support general operating costs such as utilities, phone, etc...**

We are OPEN to ideas as we work to keep our space active, joyful, and sustainable.

Through successes and failures, we have made it this far! As our dream lives on, it will bring more challenges, mistakes, and adventures.

Your generous support is always appreciated!!!

The Stadium School Youth Dreamers, Inc.

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THE YOUTH DREAMERS, INC.

