

Across the world, teens are coming together to improve their lives and motivate their communities, creating **hope** for a better future.

You're invited to take part in their journey.

the story

City at Peace was established as a local project in 1994 in response to the increasing violence and division overwhelming youth. It was clear that there was an urgent need to address teens' complex needs. What was certain was the effort would have to be intensive and long-term to be effective, and it would have to be dynamic and relevant to engage teenagers. With these aims in mind, City at Peace was born.

Using the performing arts and community action as vehicles for impact, City at Peace developed a year-long, youth-led creative process that empowers teenagers to transform their lives and create positive change in their communities. The City at Peace approach advanced the field of youth development, going beyond risk reduction and asset building to empowering youth themselves.

The initial response to City at Peace's success was so extraordinary that groups from around the country inundated the City at Peace office, hoping to initiate projects in their own communities. City at Peace convened a team of national leaders in 2000 to determine how to best assist these communities. The outcome was City at Peace-National, launched in 2001.

Since then, City at Peace has grown quickly. Today, its national headquarters are based in New York City, with active local programs operating in the US and internationally.

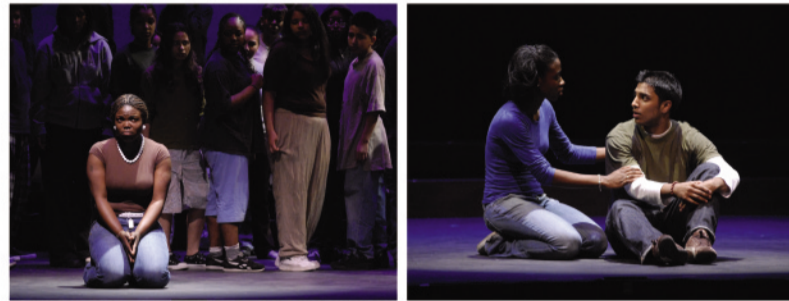
- Local programs are active in New York City, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., Santa Barbara (CA), Charlotte (NC), and Baton Rouge (LA). Internationally, there are programs in Israel and in Cape Town, South Africa.
- Over 2,100 youth have completed City at Peace programs.
- City at Peace participants have created 59 original musicals for more than 100,000 audience members.
- City at Peace Community Action Projects are underway in each location.



“When I first joined City at Peace, I was scrambling to figure out where I stood in this world or if I even had a place to stand here . . . I feared what tomorrow would be.

Luckily, now I can say I wake up every morning and face it with hope and with the knowledge that change can and will happen. City at Peace is the reason I can.

- Jessica Lomonaco, 18, City at Peace-New York



the program

Each local City at Peace project works with a diverse group of teenagers through an intense, year-long artistic process exploring and addressing the complicated forces and events (e.g. racism, sexual discrimination, abuse, peer pressure) that they encounter on a daily basis.

Because diversity is essential to City at Peace, each program includes youth who represent as wide a range of experiences, lifestyles and backgrounds as possible. Teens are chosen for the program based on their desire and potential, not on their performing ability or talent.

Led by a leadership team of youth, and working with professional local community artists and mentors, they have two goals:

- 1) Write, produce and perform an original musical from their real-life stories and their vision for positive change.**
- 2) Design and execute community action projects in their cities based on this emerging vision.**

The creation of these original works combined with the community action projects give a voice to youth concerns and ideas, and provide forums for addressing community issues. The teens take the raw materials of their lives and conflicts and transform them into performances, providing a road map for change for themselves and their audiences.

In addition to its local programs, City at Peace has also established the National Youth Council, whose members come from local City at Peace projects, to further amplify the voice of youth and impact national issues of concern to youth.

the results

Our evaluation results since 2002 demonstrate our impact and show why this program is so crucial to our youth:

- GPA average increased by 0.4 (one-half letter grade)
- 99% finished high school
- 91% went to college after graduation
- 92% of City at Peace youth said they resolve conflicts differently as a result of the program
- 88% showed significant increases in their ability to plan for the future
- 80% increased commitment to their communities
- 80% reported improved leadership skills