



Breaking Down Barriers through Creativity in Community

A partnership between the MFA in Community Arts Program at MICA and the Youth Dreamers

The **Youth Dreamers, Inc.** and **MICA's MFA in Community Arts Program** have partnered to bring high school students together with graduate students in a year-long course called *Breaking Down Barriers through Creativity in Community* that takes place at the Dream House.

Classes include:

- Social Justice Curriculum
- Program Planning and Fundraising
- Grantwriting, Evaluation and Sustainability

In the Fall, MICA graduate students and Patterson High School graphic design students work collaboratively in small teams to design a series of arts-based, social justice workshops that will take place in community in the Spring. Students fundraise for these workshops, develop plans for sharing information/recruitment, and create tools for evaluation, essentially learning key components of programming and non-profit management.

In the Spring, these teams of two graduate students and two high school students facilitate their workshops in community spaces like elementary schools and local youth nonprofits. They come together to reflect, debrief, and evaluate their work along the way.

“Together we create something that is rooted in the community, while expressing its struggles and aspirations. The art produced through this procedure is for the people, with the people, by the people, and the end belongs to the people. Its process is embrace and democratic; its results nurture and build community.”

-Community Artist Lily Yeh

THE FINE PRINT ABOUT BOTH PROGRAMS

The **M.F.A in Community Arts (MFACA)** prepares artists to define their art practices as a means of civic engagement, community organizing and development, activism, education and more. Students experience how art and artists help communities articulate their own history, cultural identity, interests and needs---and how community in turn inspires the artist's own creative potential. Real work with real consequences!

The Youth Dreamers, Inc. is a non-profit organization that created the Dream House, the only youth-run youth center in Baltimore. Founded in a middle-school Community Action class fifteen years ago, the Youth Dreamers and their community partners worked tirelessly to find, purchase, and completely renovate an abandoned house at 1430 Carswell St. in the Coldstream-Homestead-Montebello neighborhood. These students had a dream to decrease violence after school among young people by establishing a youth-led space for community, service, and constructive activities. In 2010, the Dream House opened. In 2014, seven Youth Dreamers in high school and college published *I Am Not a Test Score: Lessons Learned from Dreaming*, a nonfiction, how-to book that provides a model for other youth, youth workers and non-profit organizations.

WANT TO KNOW MORE? Contact Jessica (jesswhite0217@gmail.com) or Kristina (youthdreamer@hotmail.com)

WANT TO SUPPORT OUR WORK? Donate through our website www.youthdreamers.org



**A Peek into
*Breaking Down Barriers
 through Creativity in
 Community at the Dream House***

MICA'S vision and values as well as Youth Dreamers' vision and values guide our work together....



Graduate students created mandalas that reflect their core values and those of MICA and the Youth Dreamers that resonate with them. Patterson High School students created autobiographical collages with the same guidelines.

The first day the groups came together, they paired up, interviewed each other and then created "symbolic accessories" for each other that reflected the stories they heard.



"Learning is a problem-posing process, where collaborative partnerships evoke communication and dialogue, and meaning is constructed. Mindful pedagogies can open up the space where education can become authentic liberation, the process of humanizing, the praxis of learners empowered to transform their world."
 - Andrea Marie Hyde and James G. LaPrad