



Urban Core Provides Afterschool Enrichment to Youth

When we were younger, most of us had someone waiting for us when we got home from school. Whether it was a mother, father, grandparent, or cousin, there would always be someone there to ask us that simple question, “How was your day?” Now picture yourself coming home from school where the streets are filled with rusted cars on cinder blocks, where every other corner has groups of people shooting dice and killing time. You get home and don’t hear, “How was your day?” In fact, nobody’s home, and you’re kind of glad since the last thing you want to listen to is your parents fighting about money and the recent eviction notice the landlord nailed to your front door. Without anyone in the house, you go outside and feel uneasy. You grew up with the kids hanging out on the corner, but now they act like they don’t know you and you’re scared to talk to them. Further down the road there’s a school, and in this school there’s a group of 100 kids who you heard participate in fun afterschool programs each day. You walk down to this school, past shopping carts and garbage, hoping to partake in some of the fun. But when you get there, you see a rowdy and disorderly cafeteria with only 2 or 3 adult leaders who are struggling to control the situation. You aren’t aware that the school district provides miniscule funds that perpetuate low teacher to student ratios (you’re just a kid!), you only see the chaos of an understaffed afterschool program, and this discourages you even more.

Now imagine the above scenario happening throughout San Francisco. What message is this sending to the city’s school aged youth? How do we expect to provide adequate enrichment programs to students when we fail to allocate necessary funds for qualified staff? Identifying a need to improve upon the teacher to student ratio in San Francisco schools, our highly successful Urban Core Internship Program was developed to lessen this burden on the city’s overloaded system of care. Through an innovative design and solid vision, Urban Core places college interns in underperforming schools to provide individualized and tailored services to youth. For many disadvantaged youth the idea of going to college doesn’t even seem like a possibility. But through spending time with a committed and diverse group of college students (interns come from a variety of disciplines including art, dance, liberal studies, kinesiology, and education), Urban Core helps them believe that college is a real option for them.

For as little as \$400 per semester, Urban Core interns nurture students hopes and dreams. Interns provide afterschool enrichment in the truest sense of the term; they promote a culture of personal attention and offer students something better than what they are accustomed to (i.e. neglect, hostility, and impatience). Urban Core interns help kids read their first book that has more words than pictures, help them understand their multiplication tables, and encourage them to use their imaginations when thinking about the future. The program puts adults on the front lines of delivering services, and does it for a fraction of the regular cost.

The success of Urban Core is gaining support from outside sources. This past October, the JC Penney Afterschool Grants Program awarded Urban Core with \$5,000. The \$5,000 check was presented to us during the National Lights On Afterschool Week at the Shih Yu-Lang Central YMCA, and Urban Core’s full time Director, Andrea Jones, was on hand to accept the check from local JC Penney store manager, Mr. Tom Munkers. Andrea has been working with youth



since 1997 and recently received her Master's of Education from San Francisco State University.

As we continue to provide youth with well-staffed afterschool programs, we are making significant strides in reaching our goal of lowering the teacher to student ratio to 1:5. Thanks to Urban Services YMCA's donors we are able to positively impact the lives of youth in San Francisco's lowest performing schools.

Urban Core currently staffs 13 interns from San Francisco State University who receive a small \$400 stipend. If you would like to learn more about the Urban Core Internship Program and how to sponsor a college intern please contact Andrea directly at 415-292-3026.