

The Hyde Square Task Force can create new opportunities for more than 100 youth this year – **but only with your help.**

Started by a diverse group of local residents nearly twenty years ago in response to rising crime and violence involving area youth, the Hyde Square Task Force (HSTF) has grown into a nationally-recognized youth and community development organization with the potential to serve as a model nationwide.

Central to HSTF's success is its high-intensity, long-term approach that engages area youth to act as "changemakers" in their own community. Teens and older youth build skills as literacy tutors, health educators, community organizers and artists and then build relationships with hundreds of area children enrolled in after school and summer programs, where they serve as teachers, counselors and role models. **Youth gain leadership skills and learn the importance of civic engagement and personal responsibility** as tools to improve their own lives and those of their families, friends and neighbors. Not surprisingly, these experiences, together with academic tutoring and college and career counseling provided by expert staff and caring, committed volunteers, lead our youth to succeed: in 2007, **100% of our participating seniors graduated high school and will enroll in colleges this fall.**

More than that, our youth have been at the forefront of **a successful community campaign to create more opportunities for low-income families**, including new housing, small business development, and the construction of a 30,000 square foot youth and family center as a part of over \$200 million of urban redevelopment planned over the next 5-10 years. This development has been recognized as one of only a handful of projects citywide that **will help to transform Boston over the next 10 years** (Boston Globe, May 27, 2007).

For now, though, Hyde/Jackson Square remains **a neighborhood in acute need**. More than 12,000 low-income, minority and immigrant youth live within a mile radius of our offices, yet there are no Boys and Girls Club or full-service YMCA, and few other out-of-school resources to engage youth in positive activities. Over the past few years our neighborhood has sadly been the site of increasing youth violence and crime, so much so that last year the Boston Police Department designated it as one of the five most dangerous neighborhoods in Boston.

The Hyde Square Task Force endeavors to engage as many youth as possible through its programs that promote education, leadership development, and the arts. This year, in fact, we will serve **over 250 children and youth each day and reach more than 500/year** through our high-intensity programs, which meet an average of 6-15 hours/week. Yet our small size and lack of available space prevent us from expanding further. In our current storefront location we have only a single classroom, which must function as a classroom, computer lab, meeting space, and even dance studio, for more than 100 teens each week. We must rely on shared space in local schools, churches, and housing developments for our other after school, summer and community programs.

Only July 1, 2007, this will change. On this date, HSTF will expand into 4,000 square feet of program space at the Cheverus School, a former Catholic school building in the heart of Hyde/Jackson Square and just a few feet from our existing offices. This new space will allow our programs to grow and expand and enable HSTF to provide new opportunities for more youth than ever before:

- A dance studio will serve as the base for our award-winning Ritmo en Acción youth dancers, as well as serve as a practice space for other young dancers in our neighborhood.
- A computer lab will provide added capacity to our Evening Tutorial and Nuestros Jóvenes Mentoring Program which provide academic support and college and career counseling to area youth.
- A youth room will serve as a classroom and meeting space for our youth leadership teams, including our Youth Literacy Tutors, Youth Community Organizers and Community Health Ambassadors.
- A music studio will allow the many youth in our community who are passionate about music to develop skills as composers, instrumentalists, and performers.

This new space will also allow us to engage new partners and bring new resources to our community. The expanded Evening Tutorial and mentoring programs, for example, will attract new volunteers from area colleges and universities. Our music studio will deepen our existing relationship with Berklee College of Music, and open a whole new career path for our youth participants.

For a small non-profit with a total budget of less than \$2,000,000, this move will come with considerable added cost: repairs to the existing building and moving costs alone will add up to more than \$50,000, and renovating the classrooms for the dance studio, music studio, and computer lab will cost an additional \$60,000. On top of that, our new home will add considerably to our monthly rent and utilities costs – costs we hope to offset through new grants and donations in support of our expanding programs. Still, the benefits of the move will far outweigh the costs: we anticipate that we will be able to engage at least 100 new youth in the first year alone through our expanded space and capacity.

A winning prize of \$100,000 from Re-Zoom will cover almost all of the costs of the move and planned renovations and allow us to focus our resources instead on building relationships with new youth through our highly-successful and growing programs. Participation in the Re-Zoom competition will also be invaluable as an occasion for HSTF to “get the word out” to as broad an audience as possible about our current program successes and new and expanding programs. This we believe will attract even more resources –financial and otherwise – to our organization and community to combat increasing violence and crime.

Each click you make contributes to our goal of creating new opportunities for more youth than ever before – thank you for clicking!