



# NEWSLETTER

## Ceiba Tree Inspires *Raíces*, an Original Folkloric Youth Performance

This year, our three arts teams (Ritmo en Acción, Acción Community Theatre, and Musicians in Community) came together for their second multidisciplinary performance, called *Raíces*. The Spanish translation of roots, *Raíces* explores themes of roots and identity through folktales about the ceiba tree which grows in Latin America and the Caribbean. Recognized for its size and iconic roots, the ceiba tree has become sacred to many cultures for its majestic nature and the folklore that surrounds it. Most iconic are the tree's roots which expand below and above ground in beautiful patterns.

At the beginning of the creative process, Hyde Square Task Force youth began exploring folktales found in Afro-Latin culture, which is when the ceiba tree sparked their interest. The teams did independent research and then shared their findings. They discovered many dark myths such as those about la Llorona and el Chupacabras, which explored themes of fear and were adapted into characters for other projects. In search of something more uplifting, our youth continued research with the help of HSTF board member Lorna Rivera and Academic Enrichment Fellow Massiel Torres and eventually found the beautiful folktales that surround the ceiba tree.

Inspired by the tree, its roots, and the many tales they found referring to the ceiba as the "tree of life," youth began their thematic exploration by creating identity trees to explore their roots—where they came from—along

with their branches—their present. Then using the information gathered from these identity trees, each team began brainstorming ways to use their respective artform to storytell and share their findings with each other and the community. The goal was for youth to reflect on the importance of cultural preservation while also sharing their roots with the community. All spring, youth unpacked the many themes of the ceiba tree and created music, dance, and theatre pieces, which ultimately came together into *Raíces*.



Youth leader Alyanna Bonilla plays tambora during *Raíces* rehearsal.

*Raíces* debuted at the end of April, with four performances hosted at HSTF and several other touring performances at local libraries. Youth performers also had the chance to dialogue with the hundreds of audience members who came out to experience *Raíces* after the shows, creating the opportunity for community members to reflect together on why sharing these folktales matter.

## RAÍCES

Este año, nuestros grupos artísticos (Ritmo en Acción, Acción Community Theatre, y Musicians in Community) realizaron juntos su segundo espectáculo, *Raíces*, donde exploraron el tema de la identidad a través leyendas sobre la ceiba, un árbol enorme y sagrado para muchas culturas latinoamericanas, y cuyas raíces forman siluetas debajo de la tierra y en la superficie.

Anteriormente los jóvenes del Comité de Hyde Square estudiaron leyendas afrolatinas, descubriendo los mitos de La Llorona y del Chupacabras, y los actuaron durante otros proyectos. Con la ayuda de Lorna Rivera, miembro de la junta directiva, y Massiel Torres, becaria de investigación, siguieron su búsqueda hasta dar con la leyenda de la ceiba.

Tomando como modelo las raíces de la ceiba para representar sus orígenes, y sus ramas para representar su camino hasta el presente, los jóvenes crearon *Raíces*, una historia sobre la preservación y transmisión, combinada con música, baile, y teatro.

Desde abril, *Raíces* se presentó en HSTF y bibliotecas, dando así la posibilidad de que después de la actuación se creara un diálogo con la comunidad.

# OUR YOUTH ORGANIZERS HAVE BEEN BUSY!

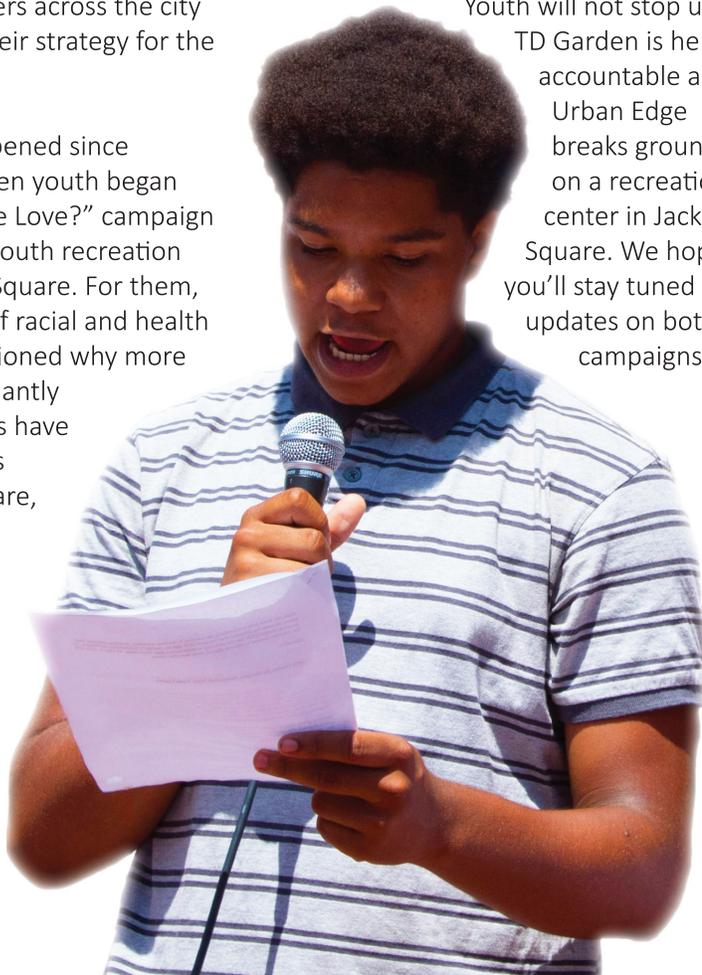
This spring, Hyde Square Task Force youth launched a new campaign focused on increasing arts education in Boston public high schools and expanding a successful arts credit-bearing program, with the support of the Nellie Mae Education Foundation. For many of our youth, the arts are an important part of their lives and a way for them to learn, explore, and express themselves. In a Boston Public School budget hearing in March, HSTF youth Victoria Massey shared that when she moved to Boston from Georgia, she was surprised that her new high school in Boston was unable to provide her with music classes, as almost all schools in Georgia have arts. "School seemed more like a prison without art programs. A school can't be good without arts," she said. Currently, youth are conducting research and holding meetings with key arts stakeholders across the city as they develop their strategy for the campaign.

A lot has also happened since February 2017 when youth began their "Where Is the Love?" campaign to advocate for a youth recreation center in Jackson Square. For them, this was an issue of racial and health equity. They questioned why more affluent, predominantly white communities have recreation facilities while Jackson Square, with many low-income black and Latino residents, has not had one in almost two decades. The campaign gained national attention last summer

when "the sleuths," a term coined by the *Boston Globe*, learned that TD Garden had failed to comply with a law requiring them to hold three fundraisers a year to support recreation centers across the state. Youth felt that TD Garden should be held accountable and owe millions to the youth of Massachusetts.

More than a year after the campaign began, developer Urban Edge has secured more than \$5 million in additional funding for the Jackson Square recreation center! This includes \$1.65 million from TD Garden, \$1 million from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, \$2 million from the City of Boston, and \$500,000 from TD Bank. It has been a huge boost to the project, but Urban Edge still needs to raise about \$6 million more to cover the full cost of the \$30 million project.

Youth will not stop until TD Garden is held accountable and Urban Edge breaks ground on a recreation center in Jackson Square. We hope you'll stay tuned for updates on both campaigns!



## ¡Nuestros organizadores juveniles estuvieron trabajando!

El Comité y la Fundación Nellie Mae advocaron por el arte en las escuelas de Boston. Victoria Massey, joven del Comité, se sorprendió de que su escuela no tuviera dinero para clases de música, a diferencia de las de Georgia, su estado natal. "Las escuelas sin arte no son escuelas", expresó. Actualmente, nuestros jóvenes se están reuniendo con accionistas para continuar su campaña.

En 2017, la campaña "¿Dónde está el amor?" pedía un centro recreativo en Jackson Square. ¿Por qué las comunidades blancas y ricas tenían centros recreativos, pero Jackson Square, una comunidad negra y latina de bajos recursos no tuvo ni uno en dos décadas? La campaña se conoció a nivel nacional cuando nuestros jóvenes descubrieron que el TD Garden no cumplía con el requisito de recaudar fondos para centros recreativos, considerándolo responsable de deber millones de dólares.

Tiempo después, la constructora Urban Edge aseguró 5 millones para el centro de recreación, incluidos 1,65 millones del TD Garden, 1 millón del estado Massachusetts, 2 millones de la ciudad de Boston y \$500.000 del TD Bank. Urban Edge aún necesita 6 millones más para realizar el proyecto. No descansaremos hasta lograr que el TD Garden asuma la responsabilidad de terminar el centro de recreación. ¡Estén atentos a las novedades de nuestras campañas!

*Youth organizer Shayne Clinton speaks at a State House protest.*

# SPOTLIGHT

# COMMUNITY

## LATIN QUARTER HAPPENINGS



With deep gratitude, we share the news that Nashira Baril resigned from the Hyde Square Task Force (HSTF) Board of Directors after 15 years of service to our youth and community. She was board Vice President for many years, and her leadership and contributions to HSTF have been invaluable. We wish her and her family all the best, and we are thrilled that HSTF alumna Galicia Escarfullery has taken over as Vice President of the board.



Mark your calendar! This summer, Hyde Square Task Force will continue our ¡Viva el Latin Quarter! summer series. Starting in July, we will host a variety of free, family-friendly events that will take place once a week on the Blessed Sacrament Church Plaza. We hope to see you there!

¡Viva el Latin Quarter! event updates can be found on our event calendar on [www.HydeSquare.org](http://www.HydeSquare.org).

# EDUCATION

## MEET GRACIE PONTES



This winter, we were excited to welcome Lisa Lozano as our new College Success Coordinator! She has hit the ground running and is already helping recruit new graduating high school seniors into our college success program for next year.



In February, our youth organizers received the Antonia Orfield Citizenship Award by the New England First Amendment Coalition, which honors individuals who have promoted and defended the first amendment throughout the region.



We're delighted to partner again with the Nellie Mae Education Foundation on our new arts campaign. We've appreciated the opportunity to get to know fellow grantees and learn about their amazing work. Our youth can't wait to participate in the Youth Leadership Institute this summer!



Gracie is a fifth year student in our College Success Program, and part of the Success Boston Coaching for Completion

Initiative at the Boston Foundation. She is 23 years old and immigrated to Boston from Cape Verde ten years ago. After graduating from high school, she enrolled at Bunker Hill Community College (BHCC), where she has been studying and working with a Hyde Square Task Force College Success Coach for the last four years.

Gracie says that having a coach has definitely been helpful. "As the first in my family to go to college, there are a lot of things I didn't know. Joél, my coach, will always guide me to the right information." Recently, she had a big issue with her financial aid and Joél

helped her through it, offering both practical suggestions and emotional support. She says Joél isn't helpful with only financial aid. They talk or email back and forth regularly about all aspects of her college experience—things like academics or balancing schoolwork with her part-time job.

Gracie will earn an associates degree in business from BHCC. She has worked hard to get to this point, and Joél is quite proud of her. She is currently working with Joél to research transfer options, as she plans to earn a bachelor's degree and eventually a master's in business administration. Ten years from now Gracie sees herself as a business owner or executive. Her final words? "Everybody knows how stressful college can be. Coaches are definitely something I would advise everyone to have. When you need someone to talk to, they'll guide you to the right path."



**Hyde Square Task Force**  
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*Transforming Youth, Transforming Community*  
*Transformando los Jóvenes, Transformando la Comunidad*



# *Bailemos!*

DANCE FOR YOUTH  
FUNDRAISER FOR HYDE SQUARE TASK FORCE

DANCE THE NIGHT AWAY WHILE RAISING  
MONEY FOR HYDE SQUARE TASK FORCE'S  
YOUTH ARTS PROGRAMS!

TICKETS ARE \$25. GET YOURS AT:  
[WWW.HYDESQUARE.ORG/BAILEMOS](http://WWW.HYDESQUARE.ORG/BAILEMOS)

MORE INFO: [SARAH@HYDESQUARE.ORG](mailto:SARAH@HYDESQUARE.ORG)  
\*CHILDREN UNDER 12 ARE FREE.

SATURDAY, MAY 12TH | 5-8PM  
HYDE SQUARE TASK FORCE  
30 SUNNYSIDE STREET, JAMAICA PLAIN, MA

4:30PM: DOORS OPEN  
5:00PM: DANCE LESSONS  
SALSA: LED BY BURJU PEREZ & EURY ORTIZ  
BACHATA: LED BY ANGELINE EGEA  
CUBAN MOVEMENT: LED BY JONATHAN BURKE  
KIDS CLASSES: LED BY HSTF YOUTH  
6-8PM: SOCIAL DANCING, RAFFLE &  
YOUTH PERFORMANCES