



*Building self-esteem through creative self-expression and
community interaction*

2011-2012 CityStep Social Impact Report



"I love my CityStep family."

-Student from Amigos 1YP

For 29 years CityStep has been bringing the Harvard community and the Cambridge community together to celebrate creativity and the arts. This year we are excited to present the first-ever **CityStep Social Impact Report** conveying the program's outputs and outcomes and showing how CityStep has **changed the lives** of undergraduates and middle schoolers alike. Through post-program surveys and interviews, we have gathered data on how CityStep at Harvard **cultivates creative self-expression** and self-

Letter from the Executive Board

confidence in youth, fosters **mentoring relationships** between undergraduates and middle school students, and **inspires undergraduates** to pursue careers in education and **public service**.

We would like to extend our **heartfelt gratitude** for your support for our mission. We would not be able to make such a great **impact** if not for all our wonderful partners and supporters in Harvard, Cambridge, and beyond.

Ooh Aah!

The 2011-2012 CityStep Executive Board



Our Mission

In a unique collaboration between Harvard students and the Cambridge community, CityStep, a Harvard undergraduate organization, combines the spirit of public service with the performing arts. CityStep enriches the educational experience of Cambridge public school fifth, sixth, and seventh grade students through a curriculum of dance and other creative activities. **By introducing students to the performing arts as a medium for self-expression, an outlet for creativity, and as a means to enhance self-confidence and a sense of community, CityStep gives the Cambridge students a meaningful educational experience.**

CityStep seeks to:

- Channel the spirit of urban life and the energy of middle school students into **creative forms of self-expression**.
- Promote the values of **hard work, dedication, and cooperation** through the performing and visual arts.
- **Unite** a demographically diverse population of public school students with a diverse group of Harvard undergraduates.
- Foster **self-respect and self-confidence** in local middle school students by helping them realize a tangible goal – the annual CityStep Show
- Create **a positive and unique experience** for Harvard undergraduates that integrates service and the arts.
- Forge closer bonds between Harvard College and the surrounding community by uniting undergraduates with Cambridge students in **meaningful mentoring relationships**.





Uniting Harvard and Cambridge Communities

This year, CityStep at Harvard partnered with the Amigos School, Fletcher-Maynard Academy, and Kennedy-Longfellow School, conducting both in-school and after-school programs for grades 5-7.

- Over 90% of company members said that participating in CityStep helped them feel **more connected** to the Cambridge community.
- “I feel like CityStep is one of my few opportunities to leave the Harvard bubble and **make a real, lasting impact** on the city I live in... CityStep is unique in its ability **to bring people together**.” –Heather Buffo, CityStep teacher for one year
- “CityStep has made me feel **a sense of ownership and responsibility** to the city of Cambridge.” --CityStep teacher for one year

3

Cambridge Public
Schools

6

CityStep Classes

Involving over

50

Harvard Students

Serving over

120

Middle School
Students

Over

160

Hours of Teaching

Building Creativity and Self-Confidence

When asked about their favorite aspect of CityStep in the end-of-year survey, CityStep kids responded:

- “Being able to show my creativity and **express myself.**” –Serena, 3YP
- “Performing. Showing **how hard we worked.**” –Student from Amigos 2YP

Sarah Collazo, a fifth grade teacher at the Amigos School, said that CityStep has helped her students increase their **self-confidence**:

- “It tends to be that by the end of the year the student that you’re most concerned with is up there [on stage] and doing everything...They really kind of come into their own and I think that that’s been one of the **most rewarding experiences** for me as a teacher, seeing that for my students.”



“The best part of CityStep is creating the dances and having freedom while doing it.”

–Mia Tyarez, 3YP

90% of CityStep students in 3YP reported feeling confident about creating their own dances. While all three CityStep programs promote creative expression, the CityStep curriculum particularly emphasizes choreography in the Third-Year Program, and the 3YP piece in the spring showcase is entirely choreographed by the students.

Promoting Mutual Understanding

Through CityStep, undergraduates have been able to form mentoring relationships with Cambridge middle school students. In Kennedy-Longfellow 1YP, every student indicated that they strongly agreed with the statement, “My CityStep teachers make me feel like they really care about me.” All the classes combined responded with an average rating of 8.75 out of 10, with 10 being strongly agree.

- 93% of company members said that CityStep enabled them to form relationships with Cambridge public school students.
- “I count all of the kids I have taught (almost 60) as friends. I have many on Facebook and they continue to talk to me, ask me about college life and for advice.” –CityStep teacher for two years
- “One girl told me I was like a sister to her and others have just been so loving.” –Jana Christian '12, Executive Director

CityStep also helps promote mutual understanding amongst students.

“Sometimes I see relationships forming with kids that aren’t usually connected socially in school...I feel like when they have that one common shared experience, it opens the door for new friendships to form.” –Sarah Collazo, 5th Grade Teacher at the Amigos School



"In many ways I feel like a sister to Marina...That's what CityStep has done- it's let me be a role model, but also a friend."

-- Elizabeth Felts '14, teacher, poses with her former student from Amigos 1YP at the 3YP Graduation



"The best part of CityStep is seeing the teachers."

--Noore (right) from Kennedy Longfellow hugs Nora Eccles '14, one of her 1YP teachers



"I've built an especially significant mentoring relationship with a boy who struggled with confidence issues and social integration when I first met him but who is now an excellent performer and willing to put himself out there in social settings." --Siva Sundarum '13, 3YP Classroom Director, dances with the 3YP class during the All-Day Rehearsal



Inspiring Service at Harvard and Beyond



"I can't imagine my undergraduate experience without CityStep. It fills a void that no class or other extracurricular could fill...No other public service organization makes you feel as involved and invested in your work as CityStep does."

—Rachel Hansen, CityStep teacher for two years

"CityStep has shown me new ways to pursue a future in service."

—CityStep teacher for one year

Undergraduates in CityStep this year resoundingly praised CityStep as an incredibly impactful and positive service experience. In response to the question, "On a scale of 1 to 10, how has CityStep affected your undergraduate experience?" members rated CityStep an average of 8.9 out of 10, with 10 being very positively.

Over 50% of CityStep company members said that

their experience in CityStep has made them more strongly consider or decide to pursue a career in education or public service.

Future Careers



- Education
- Public Service
- Other

"CityStep has helped me realize that our time and efforts can and should be used for causes greater than ourselves."

—CityStep teacher for one year

CityStep at Harvard

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