



Young Detroit Builders

Press Release

For Immediate Release

Young Detroit Builders Announces A Special Letter from the Executive Director

Detroit, Mich. - June 21, 2011

Dear Friends,

It's been 19 years since I began work on starting a YouthBuild program in Detroit. It has now been 15 years since we enrolled our first YouthBuild Detroit students. Over 800 young adults have come looking for a new direction in their lives, one which would enable them to support themselves and their families and be a positive force in their community. I have had the honor and privilege to be a part of hundreds of these young peoples' transformations. I have experienced over and over again incredible awe when I listen to their life stories of pain, loss and deprivation. We have shared many tears and hugs in 15 years. Yet they have the strength and tenacity to continue to strive and struggle to build better lives.



I have had the opportunity to work with remarkable people in this mission; people who give more than any employer could ask for; professionals who become passionate about their work in this arena where there are no easy answers. Everyday is a new beginning and never like the day before. Every student has their scars and comes to YouthBuild to heal. We are the ointment and, sometimes, the healers. We come to care about them as much as our own children.

We have faced many challenges as an organization but have managed to survive each one. Today we face the challenge of an economy which has little to spare for programs like ours. We are learning to survive with less and do more.

One of my dreams was to have a home of our own so we would not have to expend precious resources on relocation and starting over every four to five years; a place in which we could invest and develop to meet all the needs of our complex and comprehensive program. That dream was achieved this year with our move onto W. Lafayette.

The corollary to that dream was to have a "shop" in our facility where students would be able to carry out projects using our own shop tools and equipment. They could build outdoor furniture, bird houses, decorative items, or signs...products which could be sold or given as gifts. We are getting there. We have the tools, though some are older and need some help to get them working in top order again. We have the space and just need some help in getting that space set up and operational. I expect

that will happen in the near future.

I could go on with all my hopes and dreams for our young people but the real purpose of my letter is to let you know that I will be leaving my beloved Youth Build program at the end of July. It is time. I turn 66 in July and my daughter and son-in-law live in the Seattle area with my gorgeous, fast growing granddaughter. I want to be a Grandma and have a role in her life...more than brief visits a couple of times a year.

It will be very difficult to leave. Detroit is my home and it runs deep in my soul; decades of memories and friendships. It will take awhile to finish my business here and I may be around for a year or so but I am planning some travel to Kenya, my son-in-law's home, and some substantive time in northern Michigan.

*The Board of Directors is busy seeking a new Executive Director who will pick up where I leave off. I have agreed to volunteer some time for a few months to provide for a smooth transition. I want to reassure our supporters and friends that **Young Detroit Builders** will continue to provide a top quality, one of a kind program to those young people who most need it.*

I want to thank everyone who has made and continues to make YouthBuild Detroit and Young Detroit Builders the incredible sanctuary it is.

Farewell,

Beverly Manick

Founded in 1993, Young Detroit Builders is a non-profit organization that works with youth to rebuild Detroit neighborhoods through its YouthBuild Detroit/AmeriCorps program. The YouthBuild program helps 18-24 year-olds who have not completed high school to prepare for the GED test and learn life management skills while helping to build affordable housing for low-income families. YDB is also part of the Partnership for Permanent Supportive Housing, a coalition of three agencies, which takes a holistic approach to meeting the needs of Detroit's low-income and homeless population.

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