

## **Facts About TRUE Skool, Inc.**

**OUR MISSION:** TRUE Skool uses cultural arts to educate and empower youth from different backgrounds and cultures to become leaders for positive social change in their communities.

We advance our mission by infusing creative self-expression, nonviolent conflict resolution, youth activism, and community service into our programs.

**OUR PHILOSOPHY:** We believe that in order to truly reach our most troubled youth, we must adopt new models of leadership that are culturally sensitive, socially relevant and responsive to the realities of urban strife. As such, we adopt and promote hip hop culture as a means of effectively communicating with, relating to and influencing today's youth.

Hip hop is more than just music; it is a social movement that has grown explosively since the 1970s as a response to societal ills that still plague urban communities today: lack of jobs and economic opportunities; violence in our neighborhoods, schools and homes; broken families that drive abandoned youth to gangs; underperforming schools; and a lack of community resources.

We believe that by cultivating the artistic skills of youth, we can channel youth energies and ideas into positive modes of self-expression through music, dance and art. We do this work with a foundation of values rooted in social justice, leadership and community engagement.

**OUR PROGRAMS:** Our primary programs include:

1) Adopt a Community - In partnership with community organizations, businesses and residents, TRUE Skool volunteers provide community clean-ups, including the removal of garbage and illegal graffiti; create community gardens and assist with yard beautification; and develop community-sanctioned public art in the form of murals. Our 2010 community is the Walker's Point Neighborhood.

2) Urban Arts Program - Participants are offered opportunities to learn about positive outlets for their artistic energies, including art on canvas, DJing, and breakdancing. Youth are encouraged to develop themselves as artists, to participate in TRUE Skool gallery events and to create income-generating opportunities.

**OUR IMPACT:**

\* TRUE Skool targets youth ages 14-19, many of whom are considered at-risk or are involved in the juvenile justice system; 66% of participants come from one of Milwaukee's most diverse and impoverished communities (53204 and 53215)

\* 85% of youth participants referred through the courts system have no repeat contact with law enforcement within the 12-month mark of participating in our programs

\* In 2008, TRUE Skool served over 1500 youth; in 2009, we served over 2500 youth and adults

\* In 2009, at the Adopt a Community Kick-Off event over 100 TRUE Skool volunteers removed over 40 incidents of illegal graffiti, picked up over 100 bags of litter and eradicated gang-related graffiti from a building on South Cesar Chavez Drive, replacing it with a community mural that garnered positive community response and national attention being featured in one of the Travel's Channel shows about Milwaukee.

\* TRUE Skool's 2009 Adopt a Community initiative saved the City of Milwaukee \$\$\$ by providing free removal of illegal graffiti over a three-month period to the Cesar Chavez BID. During the months of July to September, the Chave BID spent zero dollars on illegal graffiti removal.

**LEARN MORE:** TRUE Skool is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization serving youth since 2004. Please visit our website at [www.trueskool.org](http://www.trueskool.org).