



Six years ago, two Knights of Malta, Brendan Fisk and Barney Phillips dared to dream of a brighter future for inner-city Connecticut youths. Since then, their dream has become a reality as the Shepherds Program has grown from five students at one school to sixty across three schools. Thirty students have now graduated. Ninety percent of the graduates are currently enrolled in institutions of higher learning.

Shepherds' mission is to provide disadvantaged Connecticut youth with the opportunity for a quality education at a non-public high school and the introduction of a positive role model - a Mentor- to their lives. "Shepherds is designed to overcome circumstances in their lives which are beyond their control" as Shepherds' Sponsors and Mentors empower at-risk youth with Knowledge, Opportunity and Vision.

Jabar Smith, a member of Shepherds inaugural class is a Finance major in his Junior year at St John's University. Jabar embodies the spirit and commitment to community service which Shepherds strives to instill in each student:

"I watched Mr. Fisk balance his precious time between family, work and myself. I was inspired and compelled to do good. My motivation is to some day help someone, the same way Mr. Fisk helped me. Someday, I will be able to say not only was I a student in the program, but now I am a Mentor/ Sponsor. It will take some time till then and we need more caring people to help deserving teens. Please keep this dream alive."

Since inception, close to 100 benefactors have "kept the dream alive". The Mentor/Student relationship has had a profound impact on many lives. Brendan says, "Those who participate as Sponsors and Mentors find their own lives enriched in a special way. As I assisted a young person, then witnessed the positive effects in his life, it made a marked difference in my life. Simply reaching out to someone is a genuine and profound human gesture."

To reach out and learn more about Shepherds, please call (203) 259-8442; email ShepherdsProgram@aol.com or visit their website at www.ShepherdsInc.com.