

## DO GOOD THIS WEEK WITH THE ALL STARS PROJECT



By: Shelbie Lynn

For 10 years, the Chicago All Stars Project has served young people on the South and West sides of the city, connecting them to the people and resources necessary to combat the forces of violence that have hit their communities hardest.

The All Stars Project was founded in 1981 and expanded in 2007 to Chicago under community organizer David Cherry's direction. Now, in its 10th year, the Chicago branch of the organization serves communities by engaging young people in after-school programs that encourage creativity and build confidence.

With two programs, the All Stars Talent Show Network and the Development School for Youth, the All Stars Project both creates safe spaces for young people to hone their talents and gain confidence, plus allows them to build connections to utilize later in life as young professionals.

To make these programs happen, the All Stars Project relies on volunteers to donate their time to the organization—whether it be working as an usher at a talent show or mentoring a young person in the Development School.

“Volunteerism is a critical part of developing after-school programs,” said Cherry. “We’re an organization that grows and develops young people, and then those young people will come back and volunteer themselves.”

The talent show features young people ages 5 to 25 who showcase their talents across the spectrum of the arts, from dancing to singing

to rapping to anything in between. Talent shows happen often, with the next event on Nov. 11. Anybody who auditions is welcomed to perform, and volunteers are needed to coordinate the event before and during the show.

The Development School for Youth is open free of charge to Chicagoans ages 16 to 21, and it pairs up professionals and businesspeople in the city with youth looking to enter the professional sphere. Once the program ends, each participant is placed in a paid summer internship.

Interested volunteers can attend information sessions on Wednesday evenings and Saturdays afternoons at the All Stars Project headquarters at 53 W. Jackson Blvd.

Next up for the organization is the funding of an All Stars Project center downtown, which would serve as a gathering space for young people participating. They hope to complete the \$7 million project within the next five years.



All Stars Project of Chicago Volunteers