Shadae McDaniel  
City Leader, All Stars Project of New Jersey

In 2014, I met—and fell in love with—the All Stars Project and its Afterschool Development approach as a new way of engaging poverty. I have always loved to perform—discovering dance as a teenager and growing up poor in Teaneck was a life-changer for me—and I immediately saw the effectiveness of the All Stars’ performance approach as a key tool for helping not only inner-city youth but people of all ages to grow and develop.

What do I mean by “performance”? Think of early childhood, when the developmental power of performance is on full display: young children are enthusiastically supported to play, to pretend, to imitate—to perform—what they don’t know how to do. It is how we all learn to speak, to walk, and so much more. As children get older, play, performance, and pretending all give way to more “scripted” expectations. This can be especially devastating for inner-city youth who, without the support to perform and try new things, can get locked into narrow, negative, and potentially dangerous roles.

Many of the young people we work with are in survival mode. So, to be able to partner with them in creating a space in which they can perform outside of their daily life experiences—with boldness and creativity—is a source of constant inspiration and joy.

Across the Garden State, a new coalition of business, civic, and community leaders, and front-line practitioners, academics, and other caring adults is enthusiastically joining our young people to create a New Play for New Jersey. I am honored to be working with thousands of people from all walks of life who share our commitment to break the cycle of poverty and create a more inclusive New Jersey.

At All Stars, everyone performs—and everyone grows! I invite you to join us.

Shadae McDaniel MSW is the City Leader of the All Stars Project of New Jersey. She received her BA from Howard University and MSW from Rutgers University. Over the last 15 years, she has worked with thousands of inner-city youth in the New Jersey nonprofit sector.
All Stars Project of New Jersey

ELEVATOR PITCH
The All Stars Project, Inc. (ASP) is an action and thought leader in the emerging field of Afterschool Development, a new way of engaging poverty. Through its free programs for inner-city youth and their families in Newark and Jersey City, the All Stars Project of New Jersey helps people to transform their lives by using the developmental power of performance as a tool for growth – onstage and in life.

OUR STORY
From the first moment the All Stars project set foot on the streets of Newark, New Jersey, in 1999, the organization has worked to bridge a longstanding and often tense “urban-suburban” divide that has resulted in 20-30% of children living in poverty in one of the country’s wealthiest states. The ASP does so through Afterschool Development, which gives youth in poor areas a chance to “perform in new contexts” in order to overcome a lack of opportunity.

Afterschool Development programs introduce young people to adults from different communities who can help them to expand their view of the world and their capacity to navigate and shape their lives. This kind of development the capacity to see and act on new possibilities dash takes place when people transcend their daily life experiences and expectations. It’s a key insight the ASP applies to all of its programming.

Since 2013, many of the new contexts for the ASP’s participants have been created at the Scott Flamm Center for Afterschool Development. Located in the downtown arts district and innovation corridor of Newark, the Flamm Center is a vibrant and popular hub for performance and development, and it brings together people from diverse communities throughout the state. Expanded civic, community, cultural, and corporate partnerships helped to drive ASP’s expansion into Jersey City in 2017.
“The Flamm Center, and particularly our increased afterschool programming, has allowed us to intensify our role in Newark’s continued renaissance,” says Shadae McDaniel, City Leader for the All Stars Project of New Jersey. “We are also proud to be at the forefront of a national Afterschool Development movement of community leaders and front-line practitioners from hundreds of organizations in New Jersey and around the country.”

In the last two decades the ASP of NJ has raised over $24 million from over 3,000 individuals and hundreds of corporations and foundations, among them EY, Fidelity, Goya, Investors Bank, MetLife, Onyx Equities, PSEG, PwC, RBC Capital Markets, and Victoria Foundation, Inc.

The generosity and enthusiasm with which thousands of adults including some of New Jersey’s most successful business leaders, embrace what we call involvement philanthropy – the building of direct relationships with inner-city youth – has helped to inspire young people from New Jersey’s poorest communities to grow in ways they could never have imagined,” Shadae says.

The organizations Afterschool Development programs include:

**The All Stars Talent Show Network (ASTSN)** involves thousands of young people ages 5 to 25 in producing and performing in hip-hop talent shows in their neighborhoods and continues to be ASP of NJ’s community gateway to development through performance.

In the **Development School for Youth (DSY)**, young people ages 16 to 21 learn to perform as professionals through workshops led by corporate executives. In New Jersey, over 1,500 young people have graduated from the DSY and hundreds of companies have sponsored summer internships and generated millions of dollars for inner-city communities.

**Operation Conversation: Cops and Kids (OCCK)** is an innovative police-community relations program run in partnership with the Newark Police Department that uses performance, improvisation, and conversation to help inner-city teenagers and police officers to cultivate positive relationships with one another. Founded in 2006 in partnership with the New York City Police Department, OCCK has received the CISCO Community Policing Award from the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

Collectively, the programs have involved 20,000 youth and over 4,000 adult volunteers from all walks of life, including some of the state’s most successful business leaders.

The All Stars Project, Inc. is a national nonprofit organization, with programs in six cities (Newark, Jersey City, New York, Chicago, Dallas, and the San Francisco Bay Area), headquartered in a 31,000 square-foot performing arts and development center on West 42nd Street in New York City. It is 100% privately funded and works with over 350 corporate partners, 3,400 volunteers, and 20,000 inner-city youth and families each year.