



Background Information on “I Have a Dream: The Lower 9th”

A Project of the Louisiana Children’s Museum’s Play Power Outreach Program

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The Louisiana Children’s Museum’s outreach program “Play Power,” empowers youth in the face of disaster recovery. This outreach program spans all ages across 6 parishes but has found a particular interest in working with the 7th grade students at Martin Luther King Jr. Charter School for Science and Technology in the lower 9th Ward. The “I Have a Dream” project was devised to help students channel emotions about their devastated community in a productive way, and to provide a compelling foil for applying basic math skills in new and relevant ways.

Project Goal: To help the 7th graders at MLK design creative, urban plans for the Lower 9th Ward. Currently, this community is a blank slate. Students are dared to dream of a vision that fulfills their wildest hopes.

Project Phases:

- Information Gathering (research)
 - Document Existing Site (assets and absences)
 - Guest Speakers (from related disciplines and industries)
 - Case Studies (functionality of a community)
 - Discussion of the 5 promises set forth by America’s Promise
- Define your vision
 - Inspirational Images Collage
 - Written Description
- Conceptual Design
 - Circulation Paths
 - Bubble Diagrams
 - Loose Sketches
- Final Design
 - Plans
 - Renderings (by hand or on computer)
 - 3-D Models
- Presentation and Critique

Project Objectives:

- To allow students to see the various components needed for healthy community building.
- To give students a fun way to apply basic math skills, a subject they admitted to being fearful of in a survey conducted at the beginning of the school year.
- To give these students a voice and a role in the rebuilding of their own devastated community.
- To give these students hope for their future.
- To inspire these students to investigate the design and construction industries that will continue to generate jobs in New Orleans in their lifetimes.
- To arouse renewed respect for their community: the people and physical environment.



The work of these students has been supported by a number of professionals and students in the field. Their final presentations will be open to the public in an exhibition at the Louisiana Children's Museum at the end of May.