

**BALTIMORE
URBAN
DEBATE
LEAGUE**

VOICE · PURPOSE · POWER



85%

BUDL participants since 2004 who have graduated on time and been accepted into colleges across the country, many on scholarship.

ON THE COVER

Fifth grader Darren Meredith is a second year elementary debater at City Springs School. Dependable and hard working, Darren spends hours on research and speech writing. He even drops in to watch spar matches between middle school debaters. "Math used to be my favorite subject," he says. "Since I have been in debate, I've been reading a lot. Now, I want to be a lawyer."

VOICE

Meet the future of Baltimore. Like hundreds of others like them, these city school students have found the key to academic success and leadership. They are Baltimore Urban Debate League (BUDL) debaters, part of a growing movement that is transforming the lives of elementary, middle and high school students across the city. Through debate, they become engaged learners, critical thinkers and leaders — confident advocates for themselves and their communities. Most important, they find a voice, a purpose and the power to succeed in school, college and life.

In Baltimore's most challenged schools, BUDL debaters discover the fun in research, reading and writing — and in *speaking their minds*. It's time you heard what they have to say.

“In school, you can’t always talk about things. In debate, I am free to argue and express my attitude.”

– Charisma

CHARISMA COLES
6TH GRADE
CITY SPRING SCHOOL

Soft-spoken Charisma Coles found the power of her voice in debate. Although she started in the novice division, she now debates varsity, competing against other top students in the program. Success in debate has bolstered her confidence and strengthened her conviction. The 2012 Distinguished Winner of the Martin Luther King Jr. Day Writing Competition for the Middle

School division, she read her winning essay on unsung Civil Rights leaders at the Walter’s Art Museum. Representing her school at the Transform Baltimore rally, she spoke about the building conditions at her school to the press, City representatives, and community members.



94%

Daily rate of attendance for BUDL participants, compared to 88% for general school population.

PURPOSE

Many kinds of students are drawn to BUDL debate teams – some are argumentative, some quiet. Others are passionate in their beliefs, or desperate for venues to channel their intense curiosities. In schools with few intellectual outlets, debate can transform a disengaged learner into a focused scholar. It can turn a truant into an eager student leader. Debate helps students make a direct connection between being intellectually prepared and personal success. It's a proven motivator, and BUDL debaters do better on standardized tests and in class. They become school leaders and go on to success in college.

“I like to win.”

– Morgan

MORGAN KIRKMAN
7TH GRADE
CITY SPRING SCHOOL

Smart, focused and competitive, Morgan Kirkman is an academic leader at City Springs School. A BUDL debater since 4th grade, Morgan uses debate to harness her leadership abilities, enhance her public speaking, and hone advanced analytic skills. “To be a good debater, you need to be able to take both sides of an argument,” she explains. “I like getting

smarter. Debate helps me do that.” A frequent winner of medals and trophies and an Elementary Finalist in the BUDL Elementary/Middle School Championship, the aspiring lawyer has discovered a path and a purpose. “I want to study psychology in college, like my sister,” she says, “and then I’m going to law school.”



#1

BUDL is the largest and most successful urban debate league in the nation.

POWER

BUDL works as a club, a competitive league and as a class. As students take ownership of their learning, they come to appreciate the very things they often dislike about school – research, reading, writing, seeing both sides of a position, trusting others and presenting their ideas. They see their classmates and teachers as supporters and friends, and their participation in debate practice, summer debate camps and local, national and international tournaments opens up worlds of empowering opportunities that many never imagined existed for them.

“It can be hard to feel like what you have to say matters. In debate, it does.”

– Nathan

NATHAN MCTEER
SOPHOMORE
FOREST PARK HIGH SCHOOL

Before Nathan got involved in debate at the beginning of 9th grade, he believed that “what I thought was real was good enough,” he says. A year later, his eyes have been opened to other points of view. As a student leader with the Forest Park varsity debate team, Nathan has taken control of his education and the responsibility of filling in his learning gaps. He’s competed in tournaments

in Newark, Atlanta, and at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He’s traveled to debate camp in Kansas, and he is focused on college. “My favorite thing about debate is the freedom to explore ideas,” he says. “You’re not really free until you can explain to other people *how* you are free.”



STUDENTS INTO SCHOLARS

Since 1999, BUDL has grown from a project reaching 90 students and 16 teachers in eight Baltimore City high schools to a citywide program that has changed the lives of more than 1,000 elementary, middle and high school students in public schools throughout the city. Our goal is make debate, with its demonstrable academic and social benefits, an integral part of every public school in Baltimore.

TRANSFORMING STUDENTS INTO SCHOLARS AND MENTORS

BUDL debaters are athletes of the mind. They train rigorously after school with BUDL-trained coaches. Honing crucial skills in research, critical thinking and rhetoric, they learn teamwork, respect for other points of view and winning and losing with grace. Outstanding seniors mentor young debaters, developing leadership skills and discovering the joys of giving back.

BUDL debaters are winners. Taking their rhetorical skills on the road, BUDL debaters participate in monthly citywide tournaments and competitions throughout the Baltimore region and around the country. Winning top honors at national and international matches, they gain confidence and motivation, skills essential to success in college and life.

BUDL debaters are motivated. Debate doesn't take vacation. Instead, team members and their teacher-coaches spend their summers prepping for the academic year, hosting local debate camps and participating in competitive debate institutes on college campuses across the country. They spend their summers sharpening their minds and focusing on winning.

BUDL debaters set their sights on success. Our College Access Program counselors provide year-round college counseling, assistance with college essay writing, entrance test preparation and help with scholarships and financial aid applications – all of which helps explain why BUDL debaters go on to college in numbers that far exceed the average for city school students.

JOIN THE DEBATE

Transforming students into scholars takes time, energy, and financial support. As BUDL-supported debate teams grow in number, more students and more schools are raising expectations for excellence and bringing new hope to hundreds of young people. Support for BUDL makes it possible to continue to offer – and to expand – this proven program with training, support for students, travel expenses to tournaments and camps, and more.

BUDL is helping tomorrow's at-risk urban students redefine their ideas of success. Help us fulfill our goal of bringing more schools in this richly rewarding competitive sport for the mind. Join with us today so that we can implement this proven program in more schools and more classrooms.



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2601 N. Howard St.
Suite 150
Baltimore, MD 21218
410-752-BUDL
www.budl.org