

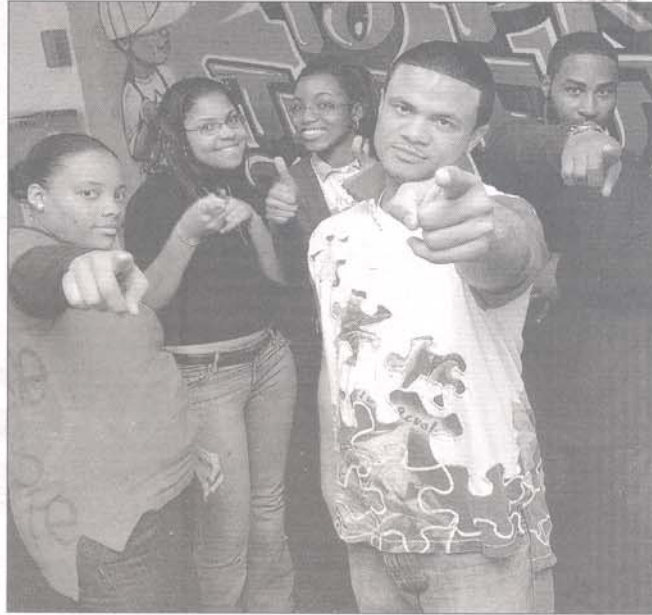
DAILY NEWS

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NEW YORK'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

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B'klyn activist turns mom's home into teen center & wins kudos for community impact



Divine Bradley (front), with Team Revolution members, has won BRICK Award — and \$10,000 grant to his youth center — for changing lives. Photo by Frances Roberts

Hip hopper is change artist

BY GINA SALAMONE
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

WHEN A BROOKLYN hip-hop artist needed the turf to transform troubled teens into budding leaders, he didn't have to look too far from home.

Divine Bradley converted his mom's house into a popular community center — and now the 24-year-old will be celebrated for reaching out to thousands of the city's youth.

"I didn't know exactly how to go about doing it," Bradley said. "I just did it."

He's one of 12 BRICK Award winners chosen from among 1,000 young Americans and Canadians who made a change in their communities.

And Bradley's winning more than just applause. At the April awards show in Times Square, he'll pick up a \$10,000 grant for his nonprofit.

Bradley started Team Revolution in Canarsie in 2000 after he noticed there wasn't much for teens to do after school.

"It started off on streetcorners and ended up on my porch at my mother's house, and then to the basement."

By 2002, the program was such a hit that he needed to upgrade to a bigger space. "I asked my mom, 'Can I get the first floor and the basement?'" Bradley recalled. "But I needed to pay her rent. We ended up raising close to \$25,000 in

two weeks to secure this location and have our own space."

With the money, Team Revolution built a movie theater, recording studio and administrative space. Bradley also teamed up with other local organizations and set up HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns, beautification projects, educational forums and trips, talent showcases, block parties and cultural awareness programs.

His work was noticed by Do Something, a nonprofit founded by actor Andrew Shue that runs the BRICK Awards to recognize entrepreneurs and activists 25 years old and younger.

"We're looking for people who have a measurable impact on people's lives," said Emily Luke, who oversees the awards and grants programs.

Bradley has since revamped Team Revolution and now runs it out of a Canarsie storefront. At its core is the L.E.A.D — Leadership Etiquette and Discipline — Program, run by Michael Smith, a Canarsie barbershop manager who would overhear kids talk about family problems with drugs and criminal activity while he was cutting hair.

"I give them the ability to talk about things that they hide behind in the streets by being tough or being part of a gang, when really they're angry because of circumstances that they're living in," Smith explained.

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