

# Platinum Minds



“SOAR TO YOUR HIGHEST POTENTIAL”

## **Platinum Minds**

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*Founded in 2006,  
Platinum Minds is a  
privately funded, NJ  
501c3 non-profit  
organization.*



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## **Frequently Asked Questions**

**What is Platinum Minds?** *Platinum Minds* is a non-profit, educational and leadership development organization that provides academically motivated boys from disadvantaged, low-income backgrounds (i) a strong literacy program for students (grades 1-5) and (ii) assistance in secondary school placement, educational mentoring, and leadership development (grades 6-12).

**Why Platinum Minds?** *Platinum Minds*, created by Yvette Long, was in response to the increasing dropout rates, especially for young male students from underprivileged neighborhoods where there are insufficient resources to adequately sustain and encourage learning. With a focus on the male student population in NJ, she developed a program that reinforces and expands education in a supportive environment, celebrating achievement, leadership in the community, and the value of college and career goals.

**What are Platinum Minds programs?** *Platinum Minds* programs: **Arête Leaders: a leadership program developing young men** (Grades 6-12) with two component a. **Frederick Douglass Reading & Literacy Arête Component:** (Grades 1-5), b. **Bridges – Peers Connect Arête Component:** "Bridges" provides students with an opportunity to assume leadership roles, by joining with students from varying backgrounds and socio-economic classes. **Educational Scholarship Initiative:** Our scholarship program provides deserving students an opportunity to attend top-tier, private secondary and parochial schools. **Mentoring Initiative:** Our students are matched with a caring and supportive adult mentors and role models. **Summer Initiative:** Every summer, we work to place our students in interesting programs in which they can explore new activities, experience the out-of-doors, and have fun!

**Who are the students participating in Platinum Minds?** We work with our younger students (grades 1-5) to provide a strong foundation in reading, and then offer a more comprehensive academic and leadership program to our older students (grades 6-12) in our Student Scholar programs. This year we have 23 Student Scholars from northern New Jersey including Newark, Asbury Park, South Orange, and Jersey City. Additionally, we have another 120 boys participating in our "Frederick Douglass Reading Programs" (grades 1-5) and "Connect to Your Dreams" (grades 5-8).

**How are Student Scholars selected?** Each year, Student Scholars are recommended to our program through their school, church, or a community organization. Through interviewing and academic assessment, we identify those candidates who show great leadership potential, and a commitment to the goals of our programs. Our Student Scholars participate in the *Platinum Minds* program throughout their high school years and into college. Alumni are encouraged to return as mentors and speakers, thus reinforcing the leadership skills central to our philosophy.

**What makes Platinum Minds unique?** We are committed to ensure the success of our young men, one student at a time, and thus focus our time and resources on a core group of potential young leaders. We work with our students throughout the academic year, mentoring outside of school and during the summer months. Our goal is to ensure that these young men graduate high school, pursue higher education, and return to their communities as innovative leaders.

## Profile of *Platinum Minds* Programs

- ❖ **Arête Leaders:** (Grades 6-12) The Greek term Arête refers to “being the best you can be” or “reaching your highest concern of our communities and nation as a whole. This program develops self-confidence, leadership skills, life skills and career awareness, to best equip the students in making a difference in their schools, their communities, and their future. Activities and workshops are designed to help students think outside their norm, foster innovative ideas, and develop strong interpersonal skills, so that they can be effective in building connections to school, family, and the community. Student scholars meet twice per month where they also are also exposed to speakers in varying careers and leaders across the community.
  - **Frederick Douglass Reading & Literacy Arête Component:** (Grades 1-5) Reading is fundamental. Studies indicate that when students get off to a poor start in reading, they rarely catch up. In 2009, *Platinum Minds* launched a literacy program using a standardized Reading System along with other specially tailored programming, where Platinum Mind scholars work with small groups of elementary age boys in two -hour sessions each Saturday morning for 10-12 weeks. The pilot program started at the Neighborhood House in Morristown, NJ was such a success that it has now been expanded to include a location in Newark, and a third site, in Asbury Park, NJ, is currently in negotiation. *Platinum Minds* student scholars help act as mentors, and work one-on-one with the younger boys in this program.
  - **Bridges – Peers Connect Arête Component:** "Bridges" provides students with an opportunity to assume leadership roles, by joining with students from varying backgrounds and socio-economic classes on writing, speaking and presenting on common problems and concerns of our nation. The "Bridges" program allows our scholars to engage in round table discussion with students from suburban communities. Students learn how similar they are, how together they can accomplish more as they celebrate the uniqueness of each other’s opinions and approaches to problems, and how solutions to problems are more likely to be effective when varying ideas, opinion and resolutions are allowed to be of influence in process.
- ❖ **Educational Scholarship Initiative:** Our scholarship program provides deserving students an opportunity to attend top-tier, private secondary and parochial schools through a competitive selection process. Those who are awarded the scholarship are placed in exceptional education institutions throughout New Jersey.
- ❖ **Mentoring Initiative:** Our students are matched with a caring and supportive adult mentors and role models. Our volunteers provide guidance, understanding, and tutoring, while helping the student master difficult subjects. Mentors assist our student scholars with balancing extra-curricular activities, school work, and college preparation.
- ❖ **Summer Initiative:** Every summer, we work to place our students in interesting programs in which they can explore new activities, experience the out-of-doors, and have fun! Specialty summer camp programs in such disciplines as science and mathematics have been offered to students wishing to learn in these fields. Many of these camps incorporate academics, leadership development, health, and life skills. Participants receive instruction in a variety of sports, not traditionally offered in urban settings. They learn about the rules of the game, etiquette, sportsmanship, positive attitudes, fair play, self-esteem, taking responsibility for choices, and management of emotions. These life skills are integrated throughout the program, and instructors routinely demonstrate how they apply to real-world situations. For many, this is a rare opportunity to be carefree, without the looming threat of danger. They learn to communicate and get along with people from all over the world.

