



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

# SUCCESS STORY: YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

**Durrea**

**Metrocenter YMCA – Alive & Free Program**

Durrea's life has been deeply impacted by the disease of violence. His troubled childhood began right from the womb: he lost his father at the age of two weeks. "I was raised by a mom who was a victim of the community's number one enemy: crack cocaine," says Durrea.

He became gang affiliated and sold narcotics at a very young age. It wasn't long before he was incarcerated. And there, came the moment of change. In 2008 his best friend was killed in a gang-related shooting at Southcenter Mall. Being incarcerated--and unable to truly say goodbye to his friend--Durrea committed to changing his own life.

Following release, Durrea enrolled in an Alive & Free Life Skills class held at YouthSource. He was unsure if the class was going to help him. He challenged and tested his instructors. He struggled to confront his deeply rooted ways of infected thinking and acting. Staff and participants offered persistent and encouraging support. In time, Durrea realized that Alive & Free held a valid prescription for positively changing his life. He began to see a new path for himself. He developed a strong commitment to using his leadership skills and his ties to his community to show other young people how to stay Alive & Free.

Durrea continues to grow in a healthy and productive manner. His career dream now is to become a



personal trainer. Durrea credits the opportunity to change and start his recovery from the disease of violence to the Alive & Free program. "This program saved my life. It helped me save my own life."

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

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**Everyone is welcome. Financial assistance is available.** The **YMCA of Greater Seattle** strengthens communities in King and south Snohomish counties through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.