



# tender BRIDGE

## About The Tender Bridge

The Tender Bridge (TTB) provides at-risk children who live in East Baltimore with year-round 1:1 mentoring relationships to help them avoid a life of drugs and crime, and increase their probability of becoming happy productive citizens. TTB, founded in 2003 by Noel Acton — “Mr. Noel” — a well-known figure in East Baltimore, is 100% volunteer-led.

Our coach-mentors meet the kids where they are, going directly to their blocks to pick them up. Their participation in sports is the hook to keep them engaged while the mentoring and support we provide will help them bridge to successful adulthood. TTB does not “assign” mentors to the children — a relationship naturally forms between a child and a volunteer through the time spent together playing a sport. We believe that the cycle of poverty in East Baltimore can be broken one young person at a time.

## Our Impact

TTB saves lives. We change the odds that our participants, who live in one of the poorest areas of Baltimore with some of the highest crime rates, will survive and thrive. Our program provides the forgotten kids of the city with critical adult support and engagement that builds self-esteem and confidence, helps them develop skills to deal with their unique challenges, and removes hurdles that are difficult for any child to overcome on their own.



Our Bridge to Independence Program provides older kids with individualized support. Sometimes completing a job application or accessing dental care is a challenge. We also guide them with more difficult issues such as finding housing or starting a business. We provide the support they need to build a strong platform to live independently as they transition to adulthood.

## THE FACTS

- More than 50% of children we serve in East Baltimore never graduate from high school
- The unemployment rate is more than 20%
- Our kids come from environments with little adult supervision and often experience rampant addiction, neglect, and abuse

## OUR RESULTS

- More than 700 kids served
- More than 200 kids have remained with TTB for multiple years
- More than 50 of our kids have made it to adulthood with a job and a bank account
  - one is currently a NFL player for the Carolina Panthers
  - one is a licensed electrician
  - many are self-supporting fathers

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## About our Programs

- Ice hockey
- Sailing
- Mountain Biking
- Bridge to Independence
- Bridge to Entrepreneurship



**OUR PROGRAMS** provide Baltimore’s most at-risk youth with access and exposure to sports often considered elite due to the location and cost to play. Through ice hockey and sailing, kids learn powerful lessons. In hockey, they learn that they can quickly master very challenging skills that set them apart from their peers, which helps build confidence and experience success that can translate to school and employment. In sailing, they overcome fears, and accomplish feats that they initially view as impossible. Learning to control their own boat is a model for how they can learn to control their own lives and future.

We also support our young men in additional sports such as football and baseball offered by schools and other organizations, allowing us to stay involved with them year-round as the sports seasons change.

### WHAT DOES IT COST?

**\$1,900 per participant** — includes meals, transportation and sports equipment. The Tender Bridge is operated 100% by volunteers so all funds raised go directly to the serve the kids!

