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News

DREAM service group raises nearly \$10,000 for summer trip

BY KATIE SILBERMAN, THE DARTMOUTH STAFF

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This June, while most students return home or settle in for the summer, a handful of undergraduates will take nearly 20 local underprivileged children to California for a two-week outdoor adventure.

These High Adventure trips are sponsored by DREAM, a non-profit mentoring program founded in 1999 by several Dartmouth graduates. They allow any teenagers affiliated with DREAM to help plan and raise money for an expedition to the place of their choice.

DREAM pairs undergraduate students with local residents of low-income housing communities. The program, which has expanded to five other college campuses, holds weekly meetings with mentors and their partners, and recent meetings have focused on integrating itself into the communities of the families involved.

"This term, DREAM has been doing a lot to try and make a bigger impact in the kids' lives than just mentoring," DREAM Co-Chair Susie Fox '07 said.

One of the ways volunteers hope to increase that impact is through the High Adventure program. The program begins in early fall, when the children involved announce their destination of choice. Other chapters of DREAM have sponsored trips to Alaska, Colorado and Washington, DC; this summer's proposed trip to California is the first for Dartmouth's chapter.

"High Adventure is one way to open up a new world and new opportunities to kids who for the most part haven't ever been farther than Boston," Fox said.

Although run by Dartmouth students, the DREAM program is not technically affiliated with the College and receives no funding from COSO. Those attending the trips -- which usually cost around \$20,000 -- spend all year raising the money through independent fund-raising events. The fund-raising aspect of High Adventure is essential to the purpose of the program, Fox said.

"The idea is to empower them and make them realize that they can set a goal and see real results," Fox said.

So far, DREAM has raised nearly \$10,000 for High Adventure, and plans to continue adding to that number throughout the year. Besides several on-campus fund-raising activities, including a DREAM sponsored "Dance-a-thon" this Friday, the program hopes to involve the children in the actual money-raising activities. Although the early fund-raising was mostly student-run, much of the upcoming events will be organized and chosen by



Courtesy of DREAM

DREAM High Adventures summer trip in Colorado in 2002.

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the children themselves, said John Cyr '06, co-leader of High Adventure.

"It's very self-empowering for these kids to set a goal and work towards that goal and accomplish that goal," he said. "Now that we have a foundation of finances, the kids will be much more involved in the fund-raising."

While in California, DREAM mentors hope to take the students to see some National Parks, Sea World, Disneyland and the Redwood forests, Cyr said.

"We're trying to provide them with some of the opportunities that we all take for granted," Fox said. 

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