



The DREAM Program, Inc.

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Executive Director Report July 21, 2004

First, I want to apologize for not being at this meeting. If anyone has questions for me, please don't hesitate to ask. I hope you enjoy your time at the camp!

The summer has been an extremely busy time for all of us in the office. We purchased the land on May 21. We have added five interns and one intern coordinator to the staff for the summer. We have two additional full-time volunteers helping up at the camp. We have a group of nine AmeriCorps*NCCC members living up at the camp for six weeks. We are running camp sessions, developing the property, working through permitting issues, running program at five sites, leading the reorganization of the Dartmouth program formerly known as Templeton, supporting the Dartmouth program that works with Armory Square, beginning to implement a new evaluation system, coordinating the initiation of a new program between students at Champlain College and families in the Birchwood Mobile Home Park, preparing for four new AmeriCorps*VISTA members to join us in the next few weeks, preparing to evacuate the office for 1-2 weeks while it is expanded to support our new staff, and doing our best to enjoy Vermont's warm months. Needless to say, it's an exciting time for us, but also extremely busy.

I think that you have all been receiving the camp updates, but things up there have been going extremely well. The small groups of children who have been coming to camp are all having wonderful experiences, development of the property is coming along nicely, and, just as we hoped it would be, the property is perfect for running a camp. One of the greatest joys of running the camp is seeing children from the different DREAM programs coming together to form great friendships. The camp staff has been incredible, the AmeriCorps*NCCC crews have been a perfect fit, and we all enjoy the property so much that we seek out time when we can get up there.

The interns have also been doing well. We have been far more successful this year at integrating the programs between sites and supporting each intern more directly. Having Andrea on board as the intern coordinator has been extremely valuable. The summer intern position will always be a stressful one with many ups and downs, but the interns are all working very hard and doing a great job.

The Templeton Dartmouth program has hit the rebuilding point as the leadership from the 2004 class graduated, Northwoods is up and running, and the families in the program have become more and more scattered. There will be some growing pains for a while, but Mike has been supporting their efforts this summer, and one of the VISTAs joining us will be working directly with the program starting in the fall (he has been a mentor in the program for four years). The Armory Square Dartmouth program is running this summer as usual.



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DREAM has also been participating in a collaborative effort to provide more mentors for children in Milton. As part of this collaboration, we applied to the Department of Education for a collaborative grant that includes support for a new program between students at Champlain College and children who live at the Birchwood Mobile Home Park in Milton. We have formed strong contacts with members of the Champlain College community and are currently developing contingency plans in case the Department of Education grant does not come through.

Four new VISTAs are coming on board with us, starting on August 15. The positions they will fill are two Family Advocates, a Development Director, and a Camp Director. We are extremely excited for this new group. They are an excellent group. As for the current staff, Elana will head out just before the new VISTAs arrive, Paul has renewed for another six months (with plans to extend that to a full year ending next August), and Jesse's year of service ends in January.

In the next couple of weeks, our office will be expanding, to encompass the current men's room next door. This will give us about a 50% increase in our office space, just in time for our three extra staff members.

Using funding from our HHS capacity grant, I have also begun consulting with a CPA to improve DREAM's accounting systems. When the new system is in place, among other benefits, I will have a much greater ability to print reports for board meetings.

We are also looking ahead to the fall, as the new school year will be upon us before we know it. We have a variety of plans in the works to improve the orientation for new staff, improve the program's trainings and evaluations, re-envision the Family Advocate's role in supporting the programs, and utilizing the Development Director to take over much of the Executive Director's fundraising role.