



The DREAM Program, Inc.

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Birchwood DREAM Update April 2006

Greetings from DREAM!

April was an incredibly full month for Birchwood DREAM. Parents, children, mentors, DREAM staff and community partners came together this month at a number of events to celebrate an incredible year, do some hard-core community building, and give a heartfelt send-off to this year's graduating mentors.

On April 8th, DREAM mentors held a community-wide "Beautification Day" at Birchwood. This day was designed to mobilize all members of the DREAM community to enhance the beauty and physical community of Birchwood. Together DREAM mentors and families designed and implemented a number of community building projects including a bus stop, two garden planters, and a number of benches. Mentors worked with office staff to design building projects and materials were sponsored by a number of different community partners.

The event was enormously successful, with many DREAMers claiming it was the "best" DREAM event they had ever been a part of. At the end of the day community members were thrilled to have been part of the service projects, children awarded their mentors, and the sense of shared accomplishment between all who participated was tremendous. Pictures can be viewed at:

Other events this month included a Spaghetti Dinner **FUNDRAISER OR WHAT?** and UVM DREAM's Annual Spring Thing. Birchwood DREAM attended this tradition along with three other DREAM programs in the Burlington area and Birchwood DREAMers had the opportunity to meet up with many DREAM friends. As many of these children have had the opportunity to spend time getting to know each other during summertime trips and at Camp DREAM much of the afternoon was spent re-connecting with last summer's friends, introducing mentors to each other, and making plans for this year's summer. Live music, food, and a giant game of tug-o-war made for an amazing end of the year celebration and an official welcoming to the warming weather!

The final Friday of the year was spent on Champlain campus with an emotional send-off for the graduating seniors. Each senior was given a giant photograph of them with their partner and hugs and "yearbook" style messages were exchanged. Music was played from a nearby car and the group had an end of the year dance party. One mentor gave each DREAM child a stuffed animal to remember them by. The school-year ended on a tremendous note – with promises to be in touch over the course of the summer until next fall!

Champlain College also held an end of the year banquet to thank students involved in community service. DREAM mentors represented in full force, both to thank graduating seniors and to recognize new and upcoming leaders. Put on by Nancy Cathcart, Community Service Advisor, this



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heartfelt event challenged all students to continue to use their time at Champlain to give and learn through giving.

Also this month, two Birchwood DREAM mentors joined forces with mentors from UVM to attend a sexuality workshop facilitated by Kristin Fontaine from Planned Parenthood. This workshop was focused on helping mentors discuss sexuality with kids, usage of appropriate language, and how to address issues of sex and sexuality while setting appropriate boundaries with children. The workshop was useful and the DREAM Central Office intends to continue the connection with Planned Parenthood for years to come.

The DREAM Office is also excited to be hiring and planning for the summer of 2006! After an incredibly competitive hiring process it is exciting to announce this year's DREAM summer interns include Nicole Walsh (a Champlain College freshman and DREAM mentor) in addition to four other amazing interns who will be working with the Birchwood community. Stay tuned for information about orientation, training, and summer plans at Birchwood.

It is also exciting to announce that Birchwood mentor Erica Rosenthal will be working at Camp this summer as the Camp DREAM Iron Chef – one of our four full time summer camp staff positions! Camp DREAM is currently undergoing construction, gearing up for the summer months of free residential programming for DREAMers across the state. Central Office staff has been visiting DREAM families to invite all DREAM children over the age of 8 to attend overnight camp sessions. Out of the 134 children invited to Camp this summer from 8 different DREAM Programs, 15 of them are from Birchwood!

As always, you can look back at past monthly reports or other programs' reports by going to: [http://www.dreamprogram.org/documents/Local_Programs/Program_Reports/Monthly_Reports/ W eb/](http://www.dreamprogram.org/documents/Local_Programs/Program_Reports/Monthly_Reports/W eb/). And please, do not hesitate to contact us with questions or ideas.

Keep DREAMin'
Kristin Burdge
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