



The DREAM Program, Inc.

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Franklin Square DREAM Update March 2006

At present, there are 29 children from 15 different families involved in the DREAM Program at Franklin Square. These children range in age from 6 to 13 years of age.

March has been an awesome month for Franklin Square DREAM! They continued the theme of community building throughout the month, focusing Fridays on group activities, having an incredible parent/mentor social, and planning a fundraiser for next month.

Fridays were very active this month, even with a week off for Saint Michael's Spring break. The group went swimming and played at Raquette's Edge in South Burlington one week. The children had an incredible time! They were delighted to be running around in bathing suits (not snow suits!) and splashing around, rather than throwing snow balls. Especially since it was snowing that very afternoon.

They spent one Friday in the woods behind Saint Michaels in small groups of mentors and mentees searching high in tress, deep in mud puddles, and hidden in debris for natural treasures that were on their scavenger hunt list of goodies. After all the groups had found and shared their items the treated themselves to s'mores made on an open fire.

DREAM mentors worked with parents to plan a "DREAM Mentor/Parent Social." Making use of the Franklin Square community center, mentors and parents (representing five different Franklin Square families) came together to learn more about each other, share snacks, and talk about DREAM. Considering that most of the parents had never spent time together before, DREAM mentors provided some simple get to know you games which helped parents learn about each other, their backgrounds, and their families. Parents and mentors took turns introducing themselves, sharing stories, and answering "interview" questions to break the ice.

At the end of March DREAM mentors held a Spaghetti Dinner fundraiser on the St. Michael's College Campus. This fundraiser – supported by Bove's, a local Burlington restaurant – collected over \$600 for the group's end of semester Culminating Experience and a community building event. DREAM families were encouraged to attend to help out and share in the fun!

The DREAM Central Office has been working with mentors to switch gears from strengthening their current programming towards new ways to build capacity and plan for next year. This spring, half of the current mentor group will be graduating from St. Michael's College. The current challenge is to recruit, orient, and train a group of mentors who will not only work incredibly well with current DREAM children, but whom will strengthen the program so that it will continue to grow and expand to meet the need of the entire Franklin Square community. The DREAM community is excited take on this challenge in the months to come!

Keep DREAMing!
Elizabeth

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