



**The DREAM Program, Inc.**

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May 11, 2006

## **Franklin Square DREAM Update April 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.

April has been an amazing month for Franklin Square DREAM – as warm weather starts growing DREAMers are excited to get outside and start making plans for this upcoming summer.

Over the past month, DREAM mentors have noticed that DREAM children from Franklin Square have been having tension amongst the different age groups of children – rivalries between kids of similar peer groups, and negative teasing between older and younger children has been apparent at DREAM functions. Mentors have spent extra time trying to creatively problem solve solutions to address these problems by A) structuring Fridays with a bent towards easing these tensions and providing space for constructive interactions between age groups, and B) focusing energy during DREAM meeting time to talk individually about each child's needs and develop action plans for each child.

For one DREAM Friday the group took advantage of the good weather and spent the afternoon on campus having a field day. They had wheel barrow races, burlap sack races, water balloon tosses, and various tag games. The competition was structured to be appropriate for different ages to interact with each other – and allowing children to express themselves individually and enjoy innumerable games. This activity mediated a lot of the tension between children and redirected energy into positive outcomes. It was a blast for all!

Another Friday the mentors split the children by age, allowing the older mentees and their partners an opportunity to go to the skate park. It was fun for them to have some time without younger siblings and neighbors, and receive positive individual attention from their mentors. Meanwhile the younger mentees and their partners headed over to UVM for the annual DREAM “Spring Thing” fundraiser event. There they played games, such as tug-o-war, listened to live music, and shared food with other DREAM programs and UVM community members. Here, young DREAM children had the opportunity to meet up with other DREAM friends from around the state. As many of these children have had the opportunity to spend time together 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 at Camp DREAM.

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 make sure that the partners of graduating seniors are aware of the upcoming changes and recognize their options for new mentoring programs outside of DREAM. The mentors have also been planning for the mentor recruitment and training push of fall 2006 and elected a new co-chair, Brittney Walker, to join Cailie Burns in the upcoming year.

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 Kylie



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Edwards (a St. Michael's freshman and DREAM mentor) in addition to four other amazing interns who will be working with the Franklin Square community. Stay tuned for information about orientation, training, and summer plans at the Franklin Square community.

Camp DREAM is also 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, 22 of them are from Franklin Square!

The SMC-Franklin Square DREAM Local Program is moving steadily into the summer months and excited to end the year on a high note for all! Next month will be their last event of the year, a family BB-Q and celebration at Oak Ledge Park in Burlington.

Keep DREAMing!  
Elizabeth

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