



The DREAM Program, Inc.
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May 11, 2006

Elm Street DREAM Update April 2006

April was a fabulous month for Elm Street DREAM! The group planned their annual end of the year “Spring Thing” fundraising event, there was the final parent/mentor social of the year, as well as a farewell to seniors BB-Q at Elm Street.

Fridays this month were packed with fun! The mentors continued using this time to focus on the relationships between individual mentor matches, spending their afternoons in a variety of ways. Some highlights of the month were getting outside to play and roam around campus and downtown Burlington and make trips to North Beach. This month DREAMers also went climbing at Petra Cliffs, painted their own pottery at Blue Plate Pottery, and discovered the ECHO Center in downtown Burlington. These partnerships with local businesses have been sponsored by Mobius and the Chittenden County Mentoring Network. UVM Mentors are excited to build upon these relationships and provide opportunities for DREAM children beyond their usual afternoon activities.

The final Friday DREAM of the year was the annual Spring Thing held on the Redstone Green of University of Vermont. The DREAM bus provided transportation for the children and families which provided for a little bit of a party before arriving to the big event. Once there, they were greeted by their mentors, four other DREAM programs from around the state, and students from UVM with food, games, live music, and prizes. This year the 50/50 raffle was even proudly won by a DREAM parent! At the “Spring Thing” 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. It was a beautiful and fun afternoon for all DREAMers.

The groups decided to have their culminating in Montreal, which was funded in part by a grant that mentors wrote to the DREAM Alumni Organization. It was an awesome experience for both the mentors and children. They were able to learn a little about the culture of Montreal from walking around the city, learn about jungle life when watching the 3-D IMAX, explore electricity and other wonders at the science center, and experience various ecosystems at the bio-dome. It was a day of fun and exploration that was enjoyed by all. Check out pictures online at:

This month’s LAB meeting was again a bit of a social for the parents and mentors to enjoy. They shared stories, enjoyed homemade goodies, and discussed past happenings as well as upcoming events. It was extremely helpful for the mentors to hear what the children had already done in Montreal and what should be held for school trips, allowing the mentors to continue to plan the culminating trip. Mentors and parents were also able to talk about other upcoming events as well as concerns and issues that have been coming up between the two groups.

DREAM mentors also attended a training training/workshop on ways to talk to their partners about sexuality that was coordinated by the Central Office and put on by the Chittenden Educational Coordinator from Planned Parenthood. It was a very informative discussion which covered usage of appropriate language with children as well as time for mentors to share some past experience while receiving advice from both a professional and their peers. The DREAM Central Office was happy to have facilitated the gathering and hopes to continue the connection with Planned Parenthood for future training opportunities.



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The final DREAM event for this school year was the senior farewell BB-Q held at the Elm Street family center. The afternoon was full of games, great food, and stories that the families and mentors have shared in throughout the years. The seniors also sang a revised version of "I Will Survive" letting everyone know how much they will miss them all and how awesome the underclass mentors will be for the program throughout the next years. The event was a truly incredible example of DREAM tradition and of "passing the torch" as well as a testament to the strength of the DREAM community that has been built in the Elm Street community over the past few years.

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 UVM. 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.

The DREAM Office is also excited to be hiring and planning for the summer of 2006! Throughout the month of March DREAM staff have been engaged in a highly competitive hiring process and are thrilled to see this summer's staff team coming together for the month of May. Stay tuned for information about orientation, training, and summer plans at the Elm Street 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, 34 of them are from Elm Street!

This was an astounding year for Elm Street DREAM! The mentors have created a board among themselves to create sustainability for their program, elected two new chairs, Aly Daniel and Julia Risk, and have begun planning for the upcoming fall. The group has decided to focus their new mentor recruitment in the fall of 2006 and is excited about the next year and upcoming months of DREAM events!

Keep DREAMing!
Elizabeth

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