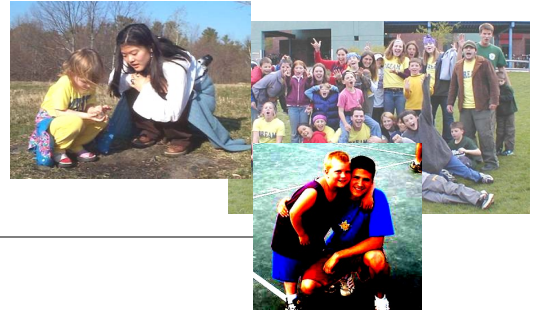




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The Willowbrook DREAM Update May 2009

Greetings from DREAM! Here is a summary of the exciting events and developments that occurred during May. You can always look back at past monthly reports or other programs' reports by going to: <http://www.dreamprogram.org/about/localprograms.htm>. And please, do not hesitate to contact us with questions or ideas.

Willowbrook DREAMers had a full month filled with amazing programming, a very well put together fundraiser, and even a special event slipped in at the very last moment. It was a sincere sign that saying good-bye for the summer took a lot of consideration and hugs. All of the mentors made plans to be in contact with their mentees either by mail and/or coming to visit them during the summer!

Highlights from this month include:

- Vikings surprise DREAMers in celebrating the upcoming Cabaret Dinner,
- Awards and Ice Cream Party, and
- An end of the year mural!

Fridays: The core of DREAM happens every Friday when DREAM mentors meet with their partners in group and one-on-one settings. The meetings occur on college campuses, onsite at the children's homes, and at spaces around the community. This month, Friday program included:

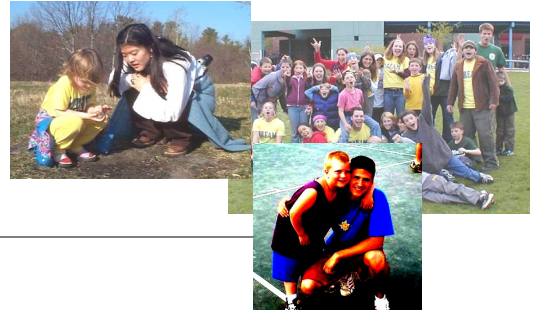
- Vikings raid Friday programming, to celebrate the upcoming Cabaret Dinner: The DREAM office surprised all of the DREAMers getting ready for the Cabaret, in Viking costumes and boats, singing their own rendition of the Gilligan's Island theme song, while passing out homemade fortunes with fortunes made to emphasize all of the great accomplishments and memories from the year!
- Awards and Ice Cream Party: With the famous, "You did it!" attitude, mentors made paper plate awards and passed them out during an ice cream party in Bennington College's secret garden, the Friday after the Viking Cabaret.
- End of the year mural: On their last Friday, one-to-one time was the strongest it's ever been. To wrap it up, the group came together for a game of "Wax Museum" and made a huge mural to hang in Willowbrook's community room. It was a wonderful way to recap all the fun they had over the year!

Special Events for Children: Special events included:

- On the Saturday following their last day of programming, mentors and mentees went on an excursion to the movies, to see Pixar's UP.



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Fundraisers: Fundraisers are an important component of the program. They help build ownership amongst the children in the running of the program, and also provide a fun forum to build leadership and organizational skills. This month:

- Viking Cabaret Dinner, was a SUCCESS!: You've heard about it and finally all the pieces came together wonderfully with each mentor and mentee presenting an original piece they had worked on together. These pieces included poetry readings, photography, visual artwork, lacrosse tricks, skits and tap dances! Hosted on Bennington College's campus on May 17th, around 40 family members from Willowbrook came to support their kids and eat plenty of local dishes donated or made by DREAMers. Students and other Bennington community members were also present and enjoyed the creative energy shared between mentors and mentees.

Camp Specific: DREAM's beautiful 50 acre camp is a resource for everyone involved in the program. It is equipped to run program and overnights all seasons. Activities at camp this month included:

- The introduction of DREAM's first ever TRAIL CREW! Six super excited Americorp staff members are going to spend their summer months on the trails and living at Camp DREAM, working to improve our existing trails and infrastructure!

Alumni Involvement: DREAM prides itself on its dedicated alumni network (graduated mentors AND NOW MENTEES!). This network leverages its growing financial and knowledge resources for the program and children. This month, the alumni network was involved by:

- DREAM Alumni gathered from all over the Northeast for their annual Retreat at Camp DREAM. During this time, alumni got to leave their mark at Camp by helping clean up Camp and work on mosaics. It also marked the first time an alumni mentee attended an alumni retreat.

Keep DREAMing!

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