



The DREAM Program, Inc.
P.O. Box 361
Winooski, VT 05404
(802) 655-9015 tel
(802) 654-8598 fax
www.dreamprogram.org



The Highgate DREAM Update March 2009

Spring arrived and DREAM thrived! Read on to find out what happened in March. 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.

The rebuilding effort at Norwich picked up a head of steam and is rolling along. DREAM at Highgate appears to be on its way and was marked by a number of big days in March.

Highlights from this month include:

- A cohesive group of mentors organizing their group and planning out all their DREAM events for the rest of the school year!
- DREAM mentors reconnected with kids and called them for the first time this semester!
- DREAM mentors traveled to University of Vermont in Burlington to observe and shadow an established DREAM program and pick up some helpful hints.

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, featured two Fridays of programming specifically for mentors to prepare for the children coming to campus.

- A road trip to UVM in Burlington to shadow another program and pick up some helpful hints. It was a great trip and they got to use all their Norwich University resources for the first time (vans, office assistance, etc.).
- A meeting to call kids and families for the first time and plan their first FUNdraiser.

Special Events for Children:

Final preparations for the Teen Retreat took place and all the Highgate teens were informed of the trip. Two of the teens are planning to attend and are excited for its arrival in April.

Capacity Building: The mentors are constantly working on bringing new children and mentors into the program and improving the program. In March, recruiting continued, the group continued to meet regularly and began to become a great team.

Mentor Training: The DREAM Central Office is in close communication with the mentors as to their individual and group needs. The Office continues to develop training modules to fit the mentors' needs, and encourages them to go on retreats and have other bonding events – it is



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important for the children and mentors to have a tight and energized mentor group. This month, training activities included:

- A trip from the office to review mentor boundaries, guidelines and driving procedures. The mentors finished all their training so they are ready to bring kids back to campus.

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:

- The new group of mentors continued planning a fund raiser and postponed its start date to April.

Camp: 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. DREAM completed its schedule of Winter Adventure Camps and began to look ahead to Teen Retreat and Summer Camp.

Other:

- With a ten thousand dollar grant from the James Trust, DREAM has purchased a veggie powered Volkswagen. In our first month of owning and operating this car, we have traveled over 1,000 miles on waste vegetable oil at 40mpg! DREAM now operates two veggie vehicles, which allow us to support our mentoring matches in a cleaner more responsible way.
- This month, DREAM's program staff was trained in motivational interviewing by Pat DeLeon, DREAM Board member and Spectrum Youth and Family Services staff member. Motivational interviewing is a client-centered, directive method for enhancing intrinsic motivation to change by exploring and resolving ambivalence. Using the skills gained from this training, we hope to increase our ability to support mentors in having difficult but sometimes necessary conversations with their mentees.
- With our hiring process in full swing, the DREAM office has been busy hiring summer interns, camp staff, and full time office staff for the 2009-2010 academic year! We have added three new positions to next year's office line-up: Teen Resource Director, Driver of Responsible Citizenship, and Evaluations Coordinator. Please visit our website for full descriptions of these jobs, and information on other employment opportunities with the DREAM Program.
<http://www.dreamprogram.org/resources/jobs.htm>
- A bit too late for Oscar season, March marked the official release of, "DREAM Environmental Pictures," newest video! With a grant awarded from the Environmental Protection Agency, Teen DREAMers teamed up with a local video production company to create an amazing film about their environments! <http://www.dreamprogram.org/dreamcast/>
- This month The DREAM Program officially announced their plans to open their first regional office, and start two new programs in Massachusetts in the fall of 2009. In his first, 'State of the DREAM Address,' DREAM's Executive Director, Mike Loner announced these plans, while graciously thanking all of DREAM's families, parents, mentees, mentors, alumni and supporters who have



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made the last ten years so magical and the future so bright!

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Keep DREAMing!

Mike Ewan

Program Empowerment Director