



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **DREAM Launches Virtual Summer Programming for Harlem and Bronx Youth**

*Hybrid Programs Feature a Summer Youth Employment Component and Optional, Socially Distanced In-Person Activities on East 101st Street*

**New York, NY** — Today, DREAM launched its 2020 summer programming for youth in Pre-K through Pre-College, including the award-winning, nationally recognized REAL Kids summer learning program. Multiple offerings will run through mid-August, remaining mostly virtual while safely incorporating small-group, socially distanced play on the organization's Field of Dreams at East 101st Street. This summer, DREAM will serve over 500 New York City youth through its programming.

“This year, after several months of limited in-person socializing and physical activity, students need robust summer learning options more than ever,” said Richard Berlin, DREAM’s Executive Director. “We’re excited and proud to be able to deliver that to our scholars this summer, and we hope that, as in years past, it will give them something we believe in very deeply at DREAM: a space to play, to learn, to grow - and to just be kids.”

“When we made the decision to implement our summer programs remotely, we set big and ambitious goals to make sure all of our program elements translated virtually,” said Kalila Hoggard, DREAM’s Managing Director of Programs. “We didn’t back away from our commitment to deliver academics, athletics, and social-emotional learning programming through teams. We also maintained our commitment to summer youth employment, regardless of decisions made at the city level.”

Since 1991, DREAM has served the youth of East Harlem and, more recently, the South Bronx—first as a volunteer-run Little League for 75 kids and now, three decades later, as a growing network of inclusive, extended-day, extended-year charter schools and community sports-based youth development programs.

Summer has always been a crucial time at DREAM: for preventing learning loss, connecting youth with employment and internships, and team-building both on and off the field. What, then, does a mostly virtual summer look like?

After months of preparation, what follows is a high-level breakdown of DREAM's plans for scholars during Summer 2020, from Pre-K students to DREAM alumni:

- **Pre-K and Elementary School:** Serving over 200 students via six weeks of virtual camps, REAL Kids is DREAM's largest summer program. Programming each day consists of three hours of synchronous reading intervention, social-emotional learning activities, and physically active games and exercise sets led by paid DREAM high-schoolers, with asynchronous "virtual trips" and enrichment activities every Friday.
- **Middle School:** The DREAM University 4-week program, serving over 120 students virtually this year, offers daily synchronous programming that consists of ELA and math instruction, social-emotional learning through advisory and leadership activities, and virtual breakout "teams" for fitness programming. Plus, rising sixth graders receive an extra week of programming which serves as a middle school orientation, featuring video introductions from staff and older students, team-building exercises, and more.
- **High School:** Over 150 high school students will participate in various summer tracks, including project-based learning; SAT preparation; summer virtual employment with REAL Kids and DREAM University (see below); and virtual internships with MetaBronx, an entrepreneurship education program and startup accelerator with a strong focus on diversity.
- **Alumni (DREAM Legends):** In collaboration with SUNY, DREAM Legends will participate in the College Bridge program to prepare for the transition to college. They'll also be offered individual case management to support their success on their post-secondary path, as well as ensure that other basic needs are being met.
- **Youth Employment:** 100 students (63 DREAM Charter High School students and 37 students from Community Programs) facilitate workouts, team building activities, and support enrichment activities as paid coaches and mentors in REAL Kids and DREAM University.

When it comes to the opt-in, in-person time that DREAM is offering on its Field of Dreams, first and foremost is a commitment to prioritizing the safety of students and staff. Students will be assigned to small, socially distanced "pods" to ensure that large groups are not mixing. Rather than structured practices, this small group play will offer the chance for drills and games tailored to prevent person-to-person contact, while still allowing for the personal interaction and outdoor time that children need. DREAM will provide face coverings to ensure that everyone on the field can remain masked at all times, and hand sanitizer will be readily available.

DREAM's Summer 2020 plans are the continuation of a steadfast commitment to student and family support that only deepened as East Harlem and the South Bronx experienced COVID infection, hospitalization, and death rates that soared above virtually all other neighborhoods in

the country. With more than 89% of DREAM families living below the poverty line and approximately 56% living in a household with an essential worker who must leave their home in order to work, the organization's mission took on a new level of relevance and urgency during the pandemic—and kicked off a response that included providing all families with computers and WiFi access for distance learning, meals and groceries for those facing food insecurity, direct cash assistance for those facing financial hardship, and daily check-ins for both academic and personal wellness.

DREAM's whole child approach to education—a model that not only prioritizes academic success but also devotes equal weight to social and emotional learning, family engagement, and mental and physical wellness—has gained new meaning during this time. And it is against this backdrop that DREAM remains dedicated to building a world where youth, especially youth of color, have permission to dream—and the tools and opportunities to make their dreams reality.

For more information on DREAM and its Summer 2020 programming, visit <https://www.wearedream.org/programs/real-kids/>.

#### ABOUT DREAM

DREAM started in 1991 as Harlem RBI, a volunteer-run Little League for 75 kids in East Harlem. Almost 30 years later, the organization serves 2,500 youth across East Harlem and the South Bronx through a growing network of inclusive, extended-day, extended-year charter schools and community sports-based youth development programs. By developing an education model that is responsive to the unique academic and social needs of every child, DREAM is creating a future where all children are equipped to fulfill their vision of success.

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