



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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An In-Person Return for DREAM's Free, Award-Winning Summer Programming

DREAM's nationally recognized summer programming is returning in person, with hopes of mitigating the past year's academic and social-emotional losses for students in East Harlem and the South Bronx.

New York, NY — This July, DREAM launched its 2021 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, fully in-person and guided by the policies that have kept DREAM Charter Schools safe and operational over the past year and a half. DREAM will serve over 1,000 New York City youth through its 2021 summer programming, including the majority of its current school population.

"It's time to deliver to our families the safe, in-person programming that they need and deserve," says Richard Berlin, Executive Director of DREAM. "We know that kids learn best in person - and that in person doesn't have to mean in a classroom. Kids need space to be kids. And after over a year away from their friends and teachers, this summer, we need to communicate to them that the pressure is off. They can get out on the field, be with their friends, and practice the first real skill they learned: how to play."

Studies demonstrate that, on average, students in the United States lose 39% of their school year gains during the summer months. That's why preventing learning loss is a critical part of DREAM's summer programming, and for 95% or more of participants in recent years, it has worked to keep them at or above grade level in between semesters. But as Berlin emphasizes, mitigating lost learning as a result of the pandemic and preventing the "summer slide" of a typical year aren't the only goals.

"This summer, kids need time to heal," adds Kalila Hoggard, Managing Director of Programs. "Play-based programming like ours, focusing on social-emotional health as well as academics, gives them the structure and support to do just that."

Here is a high-level breakdown of DREAM's plans for scholars during Summer 2021, from incoming Pre-K students to DREAM alumni:

- **Pre-K and Elementary School:** Serving 800+ students over six weeks of camp, REAL Kids is DREAM's largest summer program. Programming each day consists of two hours of reading enrichment, social-emotional learning activities, and physically active games and exercise sets led by college aged youth workers and paid DREAM high-schoolers, with field trips and outdoor activities every Friday.
- **Middle School:** The DREAM University 4-week program, serving over 120 students, offers programming that consists of ELA and Math instruction, social-emotional learning through advisory and leadership activities, and team-based athletic programming. Plus, rising sixth graders receive an extra week of programming which serves as a middle school orientation, featuring introductions from staff and older students, team-building exercises, and more.
- **High School:** Over 70% of high school students will participate in various summer tracks, including project-based learning; SAT preparation; and summer employment with REAL Kids and DREAM University (see below).
- **Alumni (DREAM Legends):** 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.
- **Youth Employment:** 100 high-school aged students facilitate workouts, team building activities, and support enrichment activities as paid coaches and mentors in REAL Kids and DREAM University.

For DREAM, which has been open for hybrid learning since October 2020, ensuring that kids and families have an in-person summer is the next step on the path to reopening their doors on a fulltime in-person basis come the first day of school.

“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,” says Berlin. “Our summer 2021 plans are the continuation of a steadfast commitment to student and family support that only deepened as East Harlem and the South Bronx experienced outsized COVID infection and death rates.”

With more than 89% of DREAM families living below the poverty line and approximately 56% living in a household with an essential worker, 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, free meals and groceries, direct cash assistance, and daily check-ins for both academic and personal wellness.

This 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 helped sustain a community over the past year and a half. 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 mission, visit www.wearedream.org.

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 over 2,000 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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