

# METRO DREAMS

"I HAVE A DREAM" FOUNDATION® - New York Metro Area | Volume 2, Issue 1 - Fall 2007

## GRADUATION AND BEYOND

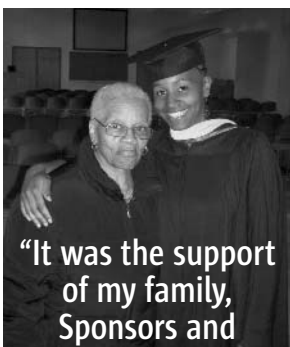
For "I Have a Dream" - New York Metro Dreamers

IHAD-NY Metro Area is celebrating some major graduation milestones this spring.

Approximately 12 Dreamers from the Ravenswood I Program will graduate from four-year colleges in the Spring of 2008, adding to the three who have already earned Associate's Degrees. These Dreamers, 92% of whom graduated from high school, attend colleges all over New York and as far away as Florida and Illinois. About 30 more Dreamers are still working towards their degrees at two and four year colleges and vocational schools. It is no doubt that these Ravenswood Dreamers have had great success with the constant support of Program Director Thierry Cazeau and Sponsor Harold Friedman. Both are still very involved with the Dreamers and are extremely proud of their accomplishments.

In other graduation news, 13 Chelsea I Dreamers, who were originally adopted in 1993 at the Elliott-Chelsea houses in Manhattan, graduated from college and accredited vocational schools in the Spring of 2007. Many more will graduate in January 2008 and May 2008. According to recent Marist College graduate Zairia Benjamin, who attended a graduation celebration at Sponsor Jeff Gural's apartment, "I'm proud of myself along with all of the other Chelsea Dreamers who have graduated from college. I know for me, it was the support of my family, Sponsors and Program Director that helped me get through college." Zairia is currently pursuing a Masters Degree in Social Work from Fordham University.

Finally, approximately 30 Melrose I Dreamers, and Sponsor Sharon Kaufman (see Sponsor profile, p. 3), will celebrate



**Program Director that helped me get through college."**

high school graduations this Spring. Program Directors Shari Alleyne and John Bermudez have worked with Dreamers on SAT Prep, College Application workshops, and have gone on countless college tours to help prepare the Melrose I Dreamers for the transition. It will be a proud moment when their Dreamers walk across the stage and receive their diplomas.

This Spring will bring many proud moments for the Dreamers, their families, and the entire IHAD-New York Metro group.

Upper Left: Dreamer Zairia Benjamin with Grandmother Ann Dixon at her Marist College graduation.

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## IHAD-NY METRO CELEBRATES SUMMER IN STYLE AT ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

On June 6, 2007, the "I Have a Dream" Foundation - New York Metro Area celebrated its annual fundraiser at the elegant Cornelia Day Resort in Manhattan. Over 200 Sponsors, donors, partners, staff members, and Dreamers came together to support and recognize the tremendous success and accomplishments of IHAD-NY Metro Area and the Dreamers over the past year.

The event was held outside on the Spa's beautiful terrace overlooking Fifth Avenue. Cocktails and refreshments were served, while mini spa treatments were offered in the salon. Evening highlights included a wonderful performance by the Chelsea II Dreamer Choir and a dramatic monologue by Samantha Torres, a poised DeHostos-Wise Dreamer. The live auction, hosted by a Sotheby's auctioneer, included a week at a private villa in Tuscany, Italy, and dinner for ten at the chef's table of the renowned Waldorf-Astoria hotel, among other luxurious items.

*Cont. on page 2.*

Right: Program Director Elizabeth Cooke with choir members from the Chelsea-Elliott II Program. (Photograph © Ray A. Llanos)



## OUR STAFF

Kara Forte, Executive Director  
 Thierry Cazeau, Deputy Director  
 Hilary Cramer, Communications & Development Associate  
 Jeff Schapira, Accountant  
 Rebecca Kane, Social Work Coordinator  
 Elizabeth Cooke, Program Director,  
*Chelsea-Elliott II*  
 Treston Lambert, Assistant Program Director,  
*Chelsea-Elliott II*  
 Derrick Tyes, Program Director,  
*DeHostos-Wise*  
 Shari Alleyne, Program Director,  
*Melrose I*  
 John Bermudez, Program Director,  
*Melrose I*  
 Ray Llanos, Program Director,  
*Melrose II*  
 Yamila Sterling, Assistant Program Director,  
*Melrose II*  
 Larry Johnson, Program Director,  
*Plainfield*  
 Faith Gordon, Academic Coordinator,  
*Plainfield*  
 Karlisle Honore, Program Director,  
*Ravenswood II*  
 Matthew Wright, Assistant Program Director,  
*Ravenswood II*

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## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, KARA FORTE

Fall is here and all of our programs are in full swing. At any of our six programs across the New York Metro Area one can find Dreamers actively engaged in a number of interesting activities.



For example, head over to our Chelsea II program and you may catch a glimpse of our third and fourth grade Dreamers working hard in computer class, using technology to improve their math and reading skills, or singing like angels in the choir. Over at DeHostos, the fifth and sixth grade Dreamers may be found busily working on their first “I Have a Dream” newspaper, engaged in a theatre arts activity, or visiting a local college. Further uptown in the Bronx, our Melrose I Dreamers are all about college, college, college! As high school seniors, they are busy touring colleges and making big decisions about which universities they will apply to. Down the hall from the senior Dreamers are our eighth grade Melrose II Dreamers where it is all about high school, high school, high school! Their Program Directors are working with the Dreamers to help them choose the best possible high schools. These

talented Dreamers are also trying out their acting skills as they prepare to present Arthur Miller’s famous play “The Crucible” later this spring.

Hop over to the borough of Queens, and sneak a peak

at what our Ravenswood II Dreamers are up to. These fourth and fifth graders may be found on a Saturday hard at work with their individual tutors mastering the fundamentals of math and literacy. During the week, catch up with them as they complete an array of arts projects, while also working hard on their school work. Last, but definitely not least, check out our Plainfield, New Jersey Dreamers. Catch them working hard on their studies after school or swimming or cooking at the nearby Jewish Community Center.

Dreamers of all ages are taking advantage of everything that the “I Have a Dream” Foundation – New York Metro Area has to offer. I am not only proud of their academic success, but also of the fact that they continue to be exposed to a wide variety of artistic and cultural activities. I hope you enjoy seeing them in action throughout this issue of Metro Dreams!

## ANNUAL FUNDRAISER, cont.

In his remarks, Board Co-Chairman Jeff Gural shared with guests that becoming an IHAD Sponsor is one of the most worthwhile things he has ever done. Executive Director Kara Forte, who has been with the organization for seven years, said that she is more committed than ever to carrying out the mission of the “I Have a Dream” Foundation.

The evening was truly a phenomenal way to help raise funds to support the “I Have a Dream” – New York Metro Area Programs and their Dreamers.

Left: The Chelsea-Elliott II choir entertains guests. Right: Two-time Sponsor Jeff Gural shares stories of his experiences with IHAD-NY Metro at the spa event. (Photographs © Ray A. Llanos)



## COMICS

by Khaaliq Hutchinson

(Ravenswood II IHAD Dreamer, 5th grade)

I always like to draw comics in my spare time. I like writing and drawing a lot also. I don't know why I love comics, but I just love them. I like reading Marvel Comics, DC Comics, and the kind of comics in Captain Underpants. I like all kinds.

I also like making them. My favorite kind of comic is superhero comics. So I make those kinds of comics. My comic book character is Kevin Livingston or Heat Kid. He can burst in flames, fly, shoot blasts, and also has this "Flame It" power. When he says "Flame It" in his place is a flame. He can turn invisible and clone himself. My latest comic is "Heat Kid."

## MY TRIP

by Isaiah Williams

(Plainfield IHAD Dreamer, 8th grade)

This summer I went to Camp Mariah with the Fresh Air Fund. It was not as fun as last year, but I still had a good time. The first thing we did when we got there was put away our luggage and then we went into a dining hall for a meeting. The camp people talked to us about some stuff and then we got to go to our cabins. I was in cabin 10A. The next day we went on a hike up to the mountains, had some s'mores, and then hiked back down for lunch. We had pizza and tacos every day. Maybe to you that is a miracle, but the tacos were not seasoned and plain and the pizza was all sauce and no cheese. Even though the lunches weren't that good, we had the best dinners: fried chicken, corn, green beans, macaroni and cheese, fruit salad, vegetable rice with broccoli and beef. Well enough of that, let me get to the main points of the summer.

First we had a swim meet, and I came in first in all of them and got an award. Then the night before we were going home, we stayed up really late and ate some candy, granola bars, and soda. We didn't get in trouble, even though we had the lights on and we were laughing and talking.

Well, that was my summer.

# DREAMER ORIGINALS

## SPONSOR PROFILE: Sharon Kaufman

When Sharon Kaufman was in graduate school for social work, she spent time working in the South Bronx. Through her internships there, Sharon met families that were struggling, and grew to love and appreciate the community. It was around this same time that her family established a foundation dedicated to improving education for children.

With the help of the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), and her family's foundation, Sharon's idea to start a chapter of "I Have a Dream" in the South Bronx became a reality. In 1998, she officially became a Sponsor, when she agreed to "adopt" 40 third graders living in the Melrose Houses in the South Bronx. She remembers, "I ultimately chose 'I Have a Dream' because it was a real hands-on way of helping."

Sharon's role as a Sponsor has changed tremendously since the program first began. Early on, she worked at the center, along with the Program Directors John Bermudez and Shari Alleyne, three to four days a week: first setting up and prepping, then recruiting the kids, and

ultimately interacting with the Dreamers. "I should mention," Sharon said in a recent interview, "that John and Shari have been with the program [as Program Directors] since the kids were in third grade. I have no doubt that their commitment, dedication, and love is a huge part of the reason that our Dreamers and our program have been so successful."

### "She is mentor, coach & grandma for the Melrose I IHAD family"

As the Dreamers grew and the program progressed, Sharon began inviting small groups of Dreamers to her house in upstate New York. She felt it was important for the Dreamers to get out of the city and into a casual and comfortable environment upstate. These trips also allowed her to interact with her Dreamers on a more personal level, and really get to know them. They went apple picking and made apple pies, played ball outside, and went on hikes in the woods. Now, when the Dreamers

go on college visits, Sharon's house acts as a stopping point where they can spend the night.

"Sharon goes above and beyond sponsorship for the Melrose program," said Program Director Shari Alleyne. "She is mentor, coach, and grandma for the Melrose IHAD family. Sharon opens her home and heart to the staff, Dreamers, and families. She is our angel."

Sharon's Dreamers are now seniors in high school and ready to graduate. She reflects on her experience: "every year brought its own special challenges and own special rewards. It is amazing for me to think back to the day we had the kickoff. I looked out at the audience and at the kids' beaming faces. Now, here I am, about to watch them graduate. It is very exciting and very rewarding."

Sharon's wish for her Dreamers is that they have great success in college and beyond. "I feel very proud of them. They are going to be, in whatever road they take, successful."

"I am just ready to start writing college tuition checks!"

# CHELSEA-ELLIOTT II



Left: Dreamers get ready for a tug of war at Dreamer Field Day in Central Park. Above: Chelsea II Dreamers during their annual trip to Sponsor Jeff Gural's country house.

# MELROSE I



Above: Dreamer Stephanie Sosa poses with IHAD Founder Eugene Lang at the IHAD-NY Metro spa event. Left: Melrose I Dreamers visit Dorney Park, PA with younger Dreamers from Melrose II. (Photographs © Ray A. Llanos)

# SUMMER PRO

# MELROSE II



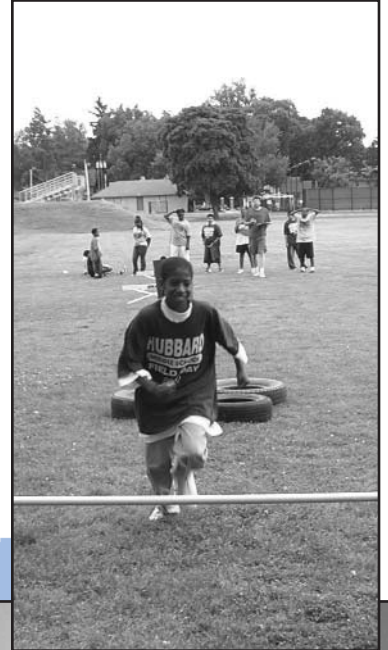
Above: Dreamer Mychelle Easley designs her own summer t-shirt. Left: Dreamers learn about magazine publishing from Beyond Race Magazine publisher David Terra. (Photographs © Ray A. Llanos)

# DEHOSTOS-WISE



Above: Program Director Derrick Tyes and DeHostos-Wise Dreamers participate in the Garden in Transit Project. The vibrant flower decals that they painted now adorn hoods, roofs, and trunks of the New York City taxi fleet. Right: Dreamer Samantha Torres with her painting. (Photographs © Barbara Sinclair)

# PLAINFIELD



Top Right: Dreamer Denzel Mathews at the Hubbard School Field Day in Plainfield. Above: Plainfield Dreamers at The Lion King musical this summer.

# PROGRAMMING

# RAVENSWOOD



Above: Ravenswood Dreamers Skye Fearon and Maegan Melendez at the My World and Me Goldman Sachs Community Teamwork Project. Right: Ravenswood Dreamers pick apples at Stuart's Farm.



# DREAMER MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM EXPANSION

In 1994, the Chelsea-Elliott I IHAD Program recognized a need for counseling and mental health supportive services for their 96 Dreamers and families. As a result, Dr. Barbara Eisold, one of the program's co-Sponsors, hired Elizabeth Cooke, LCSW to direct what became known as The Dream Annex. This counseling center provided mental health services and helped address emotional, behavioral, and social difficulties among Dreamers and their families.

Over the course of eleven years, The Dream Annex provided individual, group, and family counseling, while also developing a parent support group that helped build trust between the parents and the program, as well

as a network of resources.

Now, as Program Director for the Chelsea-Elliott II IHAD Program, which began in 2003, Ms. Cooke included the Dreamer Mental Health Program as an essential program component for the 79 Dreamers that the new program serves. Recognizing the positive impact the Dreamer Mental Health Program has had on the Chelsea-Elliott Dreamers, this fall the program was expanded to include two additional IHAD-NY programs: DeHostos-Wise IHAD and Melrose II IHAD.

The Dreamer Mental Health Program also functions as a professional training facility. The Chelsea Elliott

program has had a long-standing relationship with the Fordham University Graduate School of Social Work, which provides an opportunity for their social work interns to train in clinical social work, community based social work, and administrative studies under the supervision of a licensed certified social worker.

Each program site has been assigned two clinical social work graduate student interns who will facilitate individual and family counseling. Each program is also offering group sessions for Dreamers to give them the opportunity to come together with their peers to receive support, address age-appropriate topics of interest, and express themselves in a safe environment. Each Dreamer Mental Health Program will evolve as Dreamers grow so that services remain relevant and age-appropriate.

The Dreamer Mental Health Program will undoubtedly continue to benefit all of the Dreamers and families it serves.

## HIGH SCHOOL & COLLEGE RESOURCES FOR DREAMERS & PARENTS

*Dreamers and parents can use these sites to access helpful information on selecting appropriate high schools, colleges and universities. For assistance in accessing these sites, please contact your local "I Have a Dream" Program.*

### COLLEGE

**The College Board**  
[www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

The College Board is a not-for-profit membership association whose mission is to connect students to college success and opportunity. Each year, the College Board serves seven million students and their parents, 23,000 high schools, and 3,500 colleges through major programs and services in college admissions, guidance, assessment, financial aid, enrollment, and teaching and learning. Among its best-known programs are the SAT®, the PSAT/NMSQT®, and the Advanced Placement Program® (AP®).

**CampusTours**  
[www.campustours.com/company](http://www.campustours.com/company)

This worldwide leader in virtual college tours and academic multimedia has been working with hundreds of colleges and

universities since 1997. CampusTours was founded to provide an intuitive gateway to official university multimedia, and currently more than two million people visit the site annually to experience college presentations.

**FinAid**  
[www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org)

This award-winning site has grown into the most comprehensive source of student financial aid information, advice and tools – on or off the web. FinAid has earned a stellar reputation in the educational community as the best web site of its kind. It's comprehensive, it's informative, it's objective – and it's the first stop on the web for students looking for ways to finance their education. This site offers some of the best 'how to' guidance on securing financial aid. Access to FinAid is free for all users.

### HIGH SCHOOL

**ACORN's High School Choice Workshops**  
[www.nycschoolfinder.com/about\\_us](http://www.nycschoolfinder.com/about_us)

This program provides middle school students and their parents with a better understanding of the high school selection process in New York City through workshops and phone counseling. Their goal is to make sure that students in our

communities are matched with the best possible high schools for them. This website offers information, tips and suggestions for researching different types of high schools, specialized high schools and the specialized high school admissions test. Call 718-246-7900 ext. 343 for more information on the high school selection process and to find out about schools that may interest you or your child.

**Local School Directory**  
[www.localschooldirectory.com](http://www.localschooldirectory.com)

A free site designed to provide basic public and private school information to students, parents, teachers and school administrators. Data is organized into national, state and local pages that statistically break down pertinent information regarding many of the nation's public and private schools. On individual school pages, visitors are allowed to update school information and add their names to a growing alumni list. Visitors can also add their names to a school mailing list where school administrators can login and email all mailing list subscribers. Each school page has an interactive events calendar that visitors can view and update.

## PROGRAM DIRECTOR'S CORNER

*Larry Johnson is the Program Director at the "I Have a Dream" - Plainfield Program in Plainfield, New Jersey.*

One question that is inevitably asked of all of our students is, "What does it mean to be a Dreamer?" I am always thrilled and sometimes surprised by the answers, which have very clearly changed as the Dreamers have gotten older. In third grade, a common answer included the field trips or quality of snacks in the after school program. In sixth grade, Dreamers would mention the summer program, special events, and one-on-one help from our volunteers. Now in eighth grade the Dreamers tend to answer by focusing more on the future as they share what colleges they want to go to or what careers they want to have.

One question that is not asked as often is, "What does it mean to be a Program Director (PD)?" Like the Dreamers, I have changed my answer through the years as I have "matured"

as well. (That sounds much better than "aged.") In the past, I felt that my primary focus was to provide, protect, and



Program Director Larry Johnson with Plainfield Dreamers at the "I Have a Dream" Foundation's annual Dreamer Conference. (Photograph © Ray A. Llanos)

advocate. Later, as the Dreamers got older, I became more of a mentor and counselor. Now, like the kids, I work by looking ahead - I remind them of how the decisions they make now can affect

their futures and try to provide them with the opportunity to be more responsible young men and women.

One thing that has never changed for me as a PD though is how I continue to be amazed by the growth and development of our Dreamers. We have a very diverse group in our program with students that excel in art, math, writing, science, and dance. We have future forensic scientists, lawyers, nurses, chefs, teachers, entrepreneurs, and artists. We have Dreamers that will be wonderful spouses, parents, and role models. Many of our children will help others; some will travel the world; and more than a few I know will "pay it forward." Hopefully, they will all love what they do. We have some truly amazing young men and women, and I consider myself lucky to be able to work with them.

So, to me, being a PD means helping our Dreamers plant the seeds now for what will be a beautiful harvest in the future.

## DREAMERS OF ALL AGES COME TOGETHER FOR

## *Dreamer Field Day*

On July 13, 2007, Dreamers from IHAD-NY Metro came together to participate in the Second Annual Dreamer Field Day. The weather was beautiful, and the Dreamers flocked to Central Park decked out in their IHAD t-shirts, ready to play. The Field Day was a great way to bring Dreamers of all ages together to feel the unity and importance of being a part of the IHAD-NY Metro group.

At the beginning of the day, all of the Dreamers formed a huge circle to stretch. After breaking up into different age groups, everyone enjoyed kickball, soccer, and other activities. Towards the end of the day, a spirited tug-of-war battle began, with lively cheering from the Ravenswood, DeHostos, and Chelsea Dreamers.

According to Deputy Director Thierry Cazeau "Field Day was a great time for all of the Dreamers to get to see each other, socialize, work together as a team, exercise, and have a good time. All of the Program Directors did a great job with the planning, and I look forward to many more field days in the future."

Special thanks go out to all of the Summer Youth Employment Program Workers (SYEP) who worked at the IHAD-NY Metro programs throughout the summer. Many of these volunteers were our own Melrose I Dreamers, who got some important employment experience, and at the same time became mentors for the younger Dreamers.



Right: Dreamers and staff from across IHAD-NY Metro come together on Dreamer Field Day. (Photograph © Ray A. Llanos)

**"I HAVE A DREAM" FOUNDATION® - NY Metro Area**  
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**JEFFREY GURAL & STAN PICHENY**  
Co-Chairmen

**KARA FORTE**  
Executive Director

The mission of the "I Have a Dream" Foundation® – New York Metro Area is to empower children and families living in under-served areas of the tri-state region to reach their college and career goals by providing a dynamic, long-term program of mentoring, tutoring and enrichment with an assured opportunity for higher education.

For information about "I Have a Dream", details on becoming a Program Sponsor, or to make a donation, please contact:

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# HOW YOU CAN HELP

## BECOME A SPONSOR

By becoming a class Sponsor, your generous contribution covers tuition assistance and Program costs for an entire class of students for nearly a decade. A Sponsor can be an individual or a group of individuals willing to secure funding for students and build personal relationships. We welcome the support of corporations, foundations, as well as civic and religious organizations.

## BECOME A PARTNER

Contributing to "I Have a Dream" Programs helps us to reach more children and enhance our services. Your donations or in-kind gifts can be earmarked for tuition scholarships, summer programs, field trips, operating costs, tutoring/mentoring programs, and educational enrichment.

## BECOME A VOLUNTEER

As a volunteer tutor or mentor, the bonds you form can change a life and last a lifetime.

**For more information please contact:**

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## WE ARE EXTREMELY PROUD OF OUR SUCCESS!

While the average high school graduation rate in New York is 40%, *our Dreamers graduate at a rate of 80% or more!*

This is double the New York City average for African American and Latino students.

Of these graduates, more than two-thirds go on to pursue a college or vocational education. Many of our Dreamers are the first in their families to go to college.