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Dreams for Kids, Inc.
Dream Leaders Program
Program Evaluation, Initial Report
February 2010

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Dream Leaders is a young but growing leadership development program for middle and high school students. The program has served students since September of 2008, primarily in Chicago. Having developed a successful model for Dream Leader conferences, DFK plans an aggressive roll-out of conferences in eight to ten markets in 2010. The goal for the Chicago market in 2010 is seven one-day conferences serving a total of about 600 students and a three-day conference in June for about 50 students. The first Dream Leaders conference in Washington, DC will take place in March, 2010. See the section, 2010 Goals, below for more details.

Initial and Periodic Reports

This is an initial report based on the limited history of the programs and currently available measurement data. The program is too young for reliable assessment of long-term outcomes. The organization plans significant growth of the program, which will undoubtedly shape its character and outcomes as the organization continues to accumulate experience in its execution. In addition to the opportunity to collect a much larger volume of data, there are opportunities to refine the measurement methodology. Periodic reports will be provided approximately quarterly throughout 2010 based on the organization's expanded programs, accumulated experience and refined measurement methods and data.

Key Findings

In the short run, participants in the Dream Leaders program leave with strongly positive attitudes about their ability to lead others, to accomplish important things and to make a difference. Without pre-testing it is not possible to assert conclusively that these attitudes came about solely as a result of participation in the Dream Leaders program. It is clear however



that, at the very least, the program awakens and reinforces such attitudes. In addition, Dream Leaders participants leave the program with increased awareness of local and global social issues.

In the mid-term, about half of Dream Leaders participants engage in service projects as a direct consequence of participating in the program. A majority of those projects benefitted the local or global community. Some involved supporting the work of DFK through internships or volunteering at specific events. Others involved setting up after-school Dream Leaders clubs at school or other service-oriented clubs.

It is not yet possible to comment meaningfully on long-term program outcomes. Even once the program has more history, tracking participants' career choices and life-long service orientation and relating those to their Dream Leaders program participation will be difficult. The organization however is undertaking certain initiatives, such as a social networking platform, to maintain contact with participants over the coming years. Over time, we are likely to find primarily anecdotal evidence of cause and effect between program participation and long-term life-altering choices. These things are true however of almost any educational program and should in no way inhibit program development but should instead suggest complementary programs targeted for Dream Leaders alumni.

Program Measurement Recommendations

Consolidate measurement strategies into a few, consistently applied instruments to include pre-testing and both quantitative and qualitative data.

- Pre-participation surveys
- Immediate post-participation surveys



- Follow-up surveys and interviews, including data about service projects

Program Strategy Recommendations

To further the program's diversity goals:

- Continue to emphasize Dream Leaders conferences held in central locations, rather than in specific schools, to provide a venue for a more diverse group of participants.
- Continue to work to draw participants from a broad variety of urban and suburban schools with diverse experiences of race, income and disability.

To maintain contact with participants over the coming years, to learn of their future career choices and to encourage them in lives of service:

- Continue to develop the social media platform.
- Pursue development of complementary programs for Dream Leaders alumni.

Organization & Program Background

Organization

Dreams For Kids (hereafter "DFK") is a 501(c)3 charity, founded in 1989 in Chicago by Tom Tuohy. DFK programs serve a diverse group of young people, helping them achieve their greatest personal goals and, as socially conscious leaders, make a difference in the world. Tom Tuohy, President of DFK spoke of, "empowering... young people ... who live in poverty and those with disabilities." DFK operates three programs "rooted in the belief that every person has the ability to help make change possible", Extreme Recess, Holiday for Hope and Dream Leaders, the subject of this evaluation. DFK offers programs in Chicago and Washington, DC.



Programs

Extreme Recess

In Extreme Recess, children with physical and/or developmental challenges enjoy adventure activities and life-changing opportunities such as waterskiing, snow skiing, kayaking, rock climbing, hand cycling, horseback riding, scuba diving and camping.

Holiday for Hope

With over 1,000 homeless and severely underprivileged kids celebrating in Chicago and similar events hosted in countries all over the world each December, Holiday for Hope is the largest event in the world for homeless and underprivileged children.

Dream Leaders

Dream Leaders is a leadership development program for middle school and high school students. The program brings together young people of diverse abilities and backgrounds to serve their less fortunate peers, create positive social change, celebrate humanity, and become leaders capable of transforming the world. Experiential learning takes place through community service and service learning opportunities in after-school clubs, in-school workshops, and Dream Leader Conferences. Participants learn to see beyond their circumstances such as disabilities, poverty, discrimination and personal loss to envision and assert themselves as leaders, understand local and global social issues and take action.

Dream Leaders Program

Objectives and Intended Outcomes

Immediate, short-term outcomes are in the realm of personal development. The Dreams Leader's events and activities are transformative experiences where participants come to view themselves not simply as recipients of services but as efficacious agents of change.



Participants grow in self-esteem, diversity skills and they begin to see opportunities for action and leadership.

Intermediate outcomes include self-led Dream Leaders clubs in the participants' schools and service projects that benefit both local and distant communities. These service activities reinforce the short-term outcomes of enhanced self-esteem and self-efficacy.

In the long-term, the desire is that the Dream Leaders programs will influence lifestyle choices and foster life-long attitudes of community awareness and service. Participants will be more likely to stay in school, go on to college, choose programs of study that will enable them to continue in a lifestyle of service, and ultimately lead fulfilling lives of significance.

Abby Kritzer, Direction of the Dream Leaders Program, provides these program objectives:

- Empower all kids to be civically responsible leaders.
- Educate teenagers on social issues affecting their local and global communities (including the Millennium Development Goals) and sustainable approaches to addressing them.
- Provide kids with ongoing positive activities that will benefit their local and global communities.
- Break down barriers between kids and parents of different race, socio-economic status, ability, religion, and gender by giving them a common goal.
- Improve communication and relationships between parents and their teenagers.
- Engage teenagers and their parents in ongoing community service opportunities.

Figure 1 is a simple logic model of the relationships between program, customers and outcomes in the Dream Leaders program.

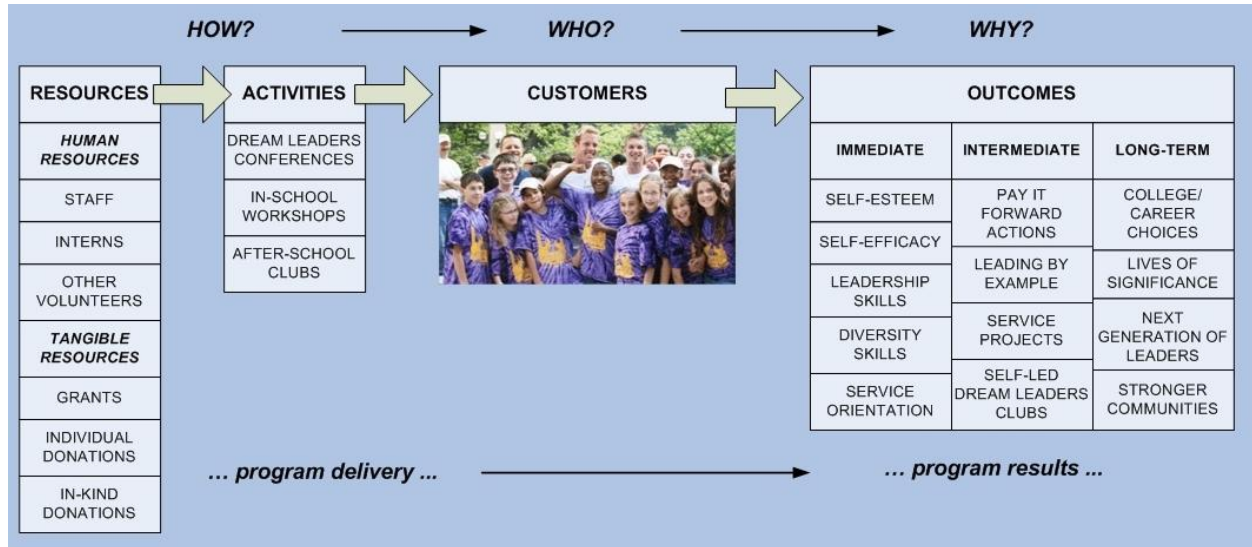


Figure 1: Dream Leaders Program Logic Model

Evaluation Questions

The program objectives and intended outcomes are the substance of evaluation questions – the questions one should ask in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

1. Does the program improve self-esteem and ideas of self-worth and enable teens to see themselves as leaders?
2. Does the program break down stereotypes and connect teens from diverse backgrounds?
3. Does the program engage teens in service and encourage a life-long service orientation?

Scope and Geography



From September 2008 through 2009, there were 347 participants in Dream Leaders programs in Chicago and Milwaukee. In the first quarter of 2010, one Dream Leaders Conference will take place in Chicago in February. The program will expand to Washington, DC with a Dream Leaders Conference in March. Additional events will take place throughout the year in both markets and several others.

Location	Participants	New Participants
Harlan Community Academy, Chicago, IL	250	250
Whitney Young Magnet High School, Chicago, IL	30	30
CITIES Project School, Milwaukee, WI	10	10
Illinois Center for Rehabilitation and Education (ICRE), Chicago, IL	12	12
Dream Leaders Conference, August 2009, Chicago, IL	22	17
Dream Leaders Conference, November 2009, Chicago, IL	34	28

Figure 2: Participants by Event

Racial / Ethnic Composition of Participants

Although a stated goal of Dream Leaders programs is to provide exposure to racial diversity, they have thus far served an urban, predominantly minority constituency. This was particularly true among the 250 participants from Harlan Community Academy, Chicago, IL where enrollment is 99% black.

Participant Race	%
Black	76
White	10
Hispanic	7
Asian	3
Other	4

Figure 3: Overall Participant Race



The population at Whitney Young is quite diverse both in terms of race and income but the Dream Leaders program was much smaller there than at Harlan.

School	Black	White	Hispanic	Other	Low Income
Harlan Community Academy	99	<1	<1	<1	68
Whitney Young Magnet High School	30	31	21	18	35
CITIES Project School	79	9	6	3	75

Figure 4: Composition of Key Participating Schools

Dream Leaders conferences which are held in central locations, rather than in specific schools, have the potential to provide a venue for a more diverse group of participants. Efforts to include students from schools targeted for their diversity enhance the potential for exposing students to greater diversity and breaking down barriers. Additional participation from schools such as Maine South in Park Ridge, IL, New Trier High School in Northfield / Winnetka, IL will add racial and economic diversity while participation from Morgan Park High School and Rauner College Prep Charter School, both in Chicago, will increase participation by those with disabilities.

School	Black	White	Hispanic	Other	Low Income	Disability
Maine South	<1	89	6	4	3	NA
New Trier	<1	88	2	9	2	NA
Morgan Park High School	92	3	2	3	71	13
Rauner College Prep	19	2	56	22	85	16

Outcome Measurement Strategies

Current measurement data includes:



- Testimonials – Comments of program participants about the benefits of the programs. Of particular importance are comments relevant to the evaluation questions.
- Exit Surveys
- Follow-up Surveys
- Information About Service Projects

Short Term Outcomes – Results

Exit Surveys

DFK has data from the early Dream Leaders programs from exit surveys developed without necessarily focusing on evaluation questions similar to those listed above. They do however contain other relevant, quantifiable data.

Exit surveys from Harlan Academy show that an overwhelming majority, 98.75%, of those responding would recommend the program to others (161 responses from 250 participants). When asked, on a scale of 1 to 10, “Did the Dream Leaders Program make you feel like more of a leader?” the average response was 7.9 with a standard deviation of 1.9. The most frequent response was 10, occurring 55 times. From the Harlan exit surveys, these are the most readily quantifiable observations that are relevant to the evaluation questions. The surveys contain a wealth of narrative comments that will require additional analysis.

Exit surveys from twenty-four participants at a Dream Leaders Conference showed that the conference was effective in helping them with self-esteem and self-image as a leader, see what they have in common with others of different backgrounds and become more interested in global issues and motivated to engage in service.



Question	“Yes, definitely” responses
Did the DLC make you feel better about yourself and what you’re capable of?	79%
Did the DLC help you see yourself as a leader?	83%
Did the DLC help you recognize what you have in common with others from different backgrounds?	88%
Did the DLC make you care more about helping others?	96%
Did the DLC help you gain an understanding of global issues?	88%

Figure 5: DLC Exit Survey Results

Testimonials – Self-Esteem

“The DLC made me feel like my words were important and they made me feel like my words can make a difference.” –Kelly, Age 16, Dream Leaders Conference

“I’m more confident about myself and willing to take charge...I’ve become a better overall person. I’ll try to help spread the word about the program and do more good deeds in the name of the program.” - Henry M., Age 18, Harlan Community Academy

Testimonial – Self-Efficacy

I gained more knowledge about how to reach my goals and more confidence that my goals are attainable.” –Monnika, Age 17, Dream Leaders Conference

Testimonial – Leadership Skills

“After being in Dream Leaders, I have learned how to communicate with others more, and how to speak in front of others. I really recommend this program to other kids because it helps you come a better person, and also become a leader, something I wasn’t before I started this program!” - Alyssa C., Age 16, CITIES Project School, Milwaukee

Testimonial – Diversity Skills



“It helped me to realize the importance of people, disabled, orange, black, white, blue, or whatever.” – Terri K., Age 14, Harlan Community Academy

Testimonials – Service Orientation

“DLC caused me to realize that I’m capable of helping to make change in the world, and social issues like discrimination against woman in other countries and no educational opportunities shouldn’t be ignored.” - Layla, Age 16, Dream Leaders Conference

“DLC gave me communication skills by working with new people, ideas to start my own drives or fundraisers for causes I’m passionate about. And new friends!” –Amarianne, Age 15, Dream Leaders Conference

Intermediate Term Outcomes – Results

Data indicates that about half of the participants at the August and November 2009 Dream Leaders Conferences in Chicago engaged in service projects. A portion of those involved assisting DFK with other events or programs but many were community service projects with local or global impact. Individual participants and teams of participants at the August and November conferences undertook at least two dozen service projects. A list of sample projects appears in Appendix II.

Follow-up Surveys

Intermediate outcomes can be measured by checking for retention of the hoped-for attitudinal changes after some period of time. Twenty six participants from the August and November Dream Leaders Conferences responded to an online survey with the results shown in Figure 6. The responses were strongly positive. 92% of respondents reported very much improved self-esteem and self-efficacy as a result of attending the conference. 81% very much felt the conference effectively helped them see themselves as leaders. Three quarters felt strongly that the program improved their attitudes about diversity and service.



Question	No Opinion	Not At All	Somewhat	Very Much
Did the Dream Leaders program help you recognize what you have in common with others from different backgrounds?	0%	4%	23%	73%
Did the Dream Leaders program make you care more about helping others?	4%	0%	23%	73%
Did the Dream Leaders program make you feel better about yourself and what you are capable of?	4%	0%	4%	92%
Did the Dream Leaders program effectively help you to see yourself as a leader?	0%	4%	15%	81%

Figure 6: Online Follow-up Survey

Findings

There is ample evidence that in the short run, participants in the Dream Leaders program leave with strongly positive attitudes about their ability to lead others, to accomplish important things and to make a difference. Without pre-testing it is not possible to assert conclusively that these attitudes came about solely as a result of participation in the Dream Leaders program. It is clear however that, at the very least, the program awakens and reinforces such attitudes.

In the intermediate term, there is good evidence that a substantial number of participants (the data suggests about half), remain inspired by their experience at the Dream Leader event and have begun to take action, leader others and make a difference by engaging in service projects.

Several very moving testimonials suggest a long-term, life-changing impact of the Dream Leaders program (See Appendix I). In spite of these forward-looking statements, little quantifiable data is available regarding long-term outcomes. The program is too young to classify any results as long-term. Even with the passage of time, an accurate understanding of long term outcomes will be problematic unless the organization develops a means to stay in contact and engaged with program alumni. See a further discussion in the recommendations in the Executive Summary section, above.

2010 Goals

Chicago

Seven Dream Leader Conference - 600 Students

Tentative Dates: February 20th, April 10th, May 8th, June 26th, August 21st, September 25th, November 6th

One 3-Day Conference - June- 50 students

Community Service- 10 Projects

- January- Education- Create Mural at Low-Income School
- March- Work with a local homeless shelter
- April- Volunteering at food depository
- May- Helping with a beautification project/ trash pick-up
- June- Serve-a-thon with Chicago Cares
- July & August- Volunteering at Extreme Recess, sports for kids with disabilities



- October- The 10 Campaign- See below for details
- November- Distributing turkeys to families in need
- December- Holiday for Hope- Volunteering with homeless Children during the Holidays

Expansion

Dream Leaders Conferences in 10 cities or regions throughout the US.

1. Washington DC- First DLC March 20th
2. Michigan
3. Peoria, IL
4. California
5. Boston, MA
6. New York City, NY
7. New Orleans, LA
8. Denver, CO
9. TBD
10. Chicago, IL

The 10 Campaign

The 10 Campaign is a global movement empowering youth living in poverty and those with disabilities to unite with others to change the world on 10-10-10. On Sunday, October 10, 2010 thousands of inspired children and adults of all abilities will work together on various



service projects to improve their local and global communities! The 10 Campaign is like a walk-a-thon, rather than walking; volunteers will partake in service activities around the world and collect pledges in support of their hard work. Though Dreams for Kids major offices are in Chicago and Washington DC, the 10 Campaign will take place in cities all over the world at various community centers, social agencies, schools and recreation facilities.

Social Networking and Media

In 2010, Dreams for Kids will launch social networking platform, expanding the existing MyDreamsforKids.org, connecting kids to each other and to project building locally and globally. With a 20 year history in Chicago, our database of supporters and local partners are extensive. Our relationships with all major press outlets are deep and loyal. Our social networking platform will be developed by a major IT firm and will include a micro-financing and networking platform similar to Facebook, with capabilities to build projects online and reach hundreds of thousands of visitors.

Mentors

We are busy developing a new mentoring component with our Dream Leaders that will pilot in Chicago this year. Every teen that goes through the Dream Leaders Conference in Chicago will have the option to get a mentor. The mentors will be carefully screened professionals and will be matched with the Dream Leader based on similar interests, experiences, and backgrounds. The mentors will accompany their Dream Leader on various community service projects and support them through their Take Action Project, all while building meaningful relationships and acting as positive role-models for the teens.

Appendices

Appendix I: Testimonials of Long-Term Impact

George's Story



When I was 4 years of age, I was taken away from my mother and put into government care. My mother was on all types of drugs, she was an alcoholic and she had no money. My brother, sister and I were placed in a new home every month for about three years.

When I was six years old, my brother, sister and I were placed in one home for two years. There, I was mentally and physically abused roughly every day, simply because I was not their child from birth. When I was eight years old, our house got broken into. My foster father was shot right in front of me. I watched him die. He bled to death. We were moved from that household that same night and my sister, brother and I were all separated. I continued going from home to home until I was 11 years old. I was placed into a group home and I felt unloved. I didn't want to see another parent ever in my life. I was sick and tired of someone who would sit in my face and tell me that they would give me a "try" and give me up a month later.

Dream Leaders opened my eyes to the world of people that have had experiences similar to mine, if not worst. It also opened my eyes to ways that I can help those people and they taught me that I could help and prevent those horrible actions from happening to others. I have matured since meeting the Dream Leader staff, and I will keep learning! My school has every sort of team and sport organization, so for my Take Action Project, I said "let's start an organization to help high school students that live around Morgan Park High School." What team do you know of that actually helps the neighborhood!!??!! We will do fundraisers and support kids in the school that are having problems in school and with peer pressure. I see kids

walking around the school with dirty t-shirts and it's wrong because every one that goes to my school has potential to do good, but they are repeatedly put down by their peers and themselves, so we are going to help them!

Cortez's Story



I was born on December 25, 1991. I weighed 1 pound and 7 ounces in addition to having asthma and a hole in my heart. I was born premature since my parents did drugs before conceiving me which was stopping me to develop into a full baby. I stayed in the hospital a couple of months before I was able to come home. I had to fight to stay alive since my body was underdeveloped.

When I arrived home my father was in jail and my grandmother decided to take me in since my mother was unable to. Growing up in a family with no role models, and who either did drugs or sold drugs there was no room for emotions. I grew up becoming a stone cold individual fighting my way through school gained the respect of my family and peers. It wasn't until I got into a fight with my father did I find out how badly I could be beaten.

It was through a series of fortunate events that I was connected to Dream for Kids. I am elated to say that once I was connected with Dream for Kids, I learned my true potential as a leader. There were many times that I thought coming from the "ghetto" that I would not be able to amount to anything but a mere statistic. It is Dream for Kids that have developed me into a leader and taught me to take action. I cannot express my gratitude for this because I interacted with a wide range of people who I never thought I would interact with. I am slowly watching my action plan come off the ground and become reality. I intend on changing the world and Dream for Kids is giving me the tools to do so.

Carrie's Story



I was born with Cerebral Palsy, a brain injury that caused me to have a lack of oxygen coming through the birth canal when I was born. When I was four I was put in Foster Care for five years. Today, I live at the Illinois Center for Rehabilitation and Education (ICRE), a residential program for young adults living with disabilities. At ICRE, I was introduced to the Dream Leaders Program run by Dreams for Kids. With the help of Dream Leaders, I realized I want to do more. I am so proud that with the Dream Leaders, the students at ICRE and I we raised enough money to send not one wheelchair but five wheelchairs to children with disabilities in developing countries. I also created a video with the other Dream Leaders at ICRE to educate people about what it's like to live with a disability (<http://vimeo.com/5845753>). I love the program and want to keep it alive, but to me being a Dream Leader means so much more than just raising money. In my eyes, it's more about giving another person someone to talk to, giving them hope, and letting them know they CAN. Life is more than people realize.

Appendix II: Sample Service Projects

1. Can drive for local food pantry
2. Towel/Blanket drive for animal shelter
3. Letters to homeless children
4. Toy drive for homeless children
5. Volunteering at Holiday for Hope
6. Letters to people with disabilities
7. Poems on Global Issues Awareness
8. Bake Sale fundraiser for kids with disabilities
9. Mother's Day Cards Sale for kids with disabilities
10. Breaking Down Stereotypes Pizza Party
11. Chicago Joe's Sports Fundraiser for DFK
12. Fundraising Carnival
13. Disabilities Awareness Video
14. Bake Sale to send wheelchairs to children with disabilities overseas
15. Kids Making a Difference Video
16. Social Awareness Speech
17. Dream Leaders Service Club



Appendix III: Consultant Bio

The consultant, Douglas Picirillo began planning for this study began as a project for a graduate course titled, “Measuring Outcomes and Assessment” while pursuing a Master of Human Resources Management degree program at the School of Business and Nonprofit Management at North Park University in Chicago. As an assignment for a graduate class, the design and planning of the study took place under the supervision of an expert in the field, Professor Gianfranco Farruggia Ph.D. The consultant, Douglas Picirillo, is an experienced business leader, manager of volunteers, non-profit board member and project manager and software professional in management information systems. His professional experience includes many years in marketing and market research, including the collection and analysis of demographic, causal and behavioral data. Mr. Picirillo holds a BA from Trinity International University in Communication and Organizational Leadership and an undergraduate certificate in Marketing from Harper College. He has received the Master of Human Resources Management degree and graduate certificates in Leadership, Organizational Development and Conflict Management from North Park University.