“I Have a Dream” Foundation of Boulder County added its 14th Dreamer Class, sponsoring the entire second grade level of students eligible for free and reduced lunch at Rocky Mountain Elementary School in Longmont. The 50 Dreamers were inducted into the new Rocky Mountain Class during a ceremony on April 29th at Skyline High School, where many of these young Dreamers will graduate.

Connie Syferd, Assistant Superintendent of the St. Vrain Valley School District; Stephen Hoel, Principal of Rocky Mountain Elementary; Lori Canova, President and CEO of “I Have a Dream;” and Cesar Guzman, an Aspen Class parent, provided words of advice, encouragement, reflection, and hope for the newly dedicated Dreamers. City of Longmont Mayor Dennis Coombs read a book written by AmeriCorps member Lauren Snelgrove especially for the Rocky Mountain Dreamers.

Each Dreamer will be provided with over 10 years of educational, social, and emotional support through a variety of programs that include tutoring, mentoring, STEM and literacy skills support, service learning opportunities, health and wellness workshops, and college and career preparation. Upon high school graduation, Dreamers will be eligible to receive a $10,000 scholarship to use toward college or vocational school.

“I Have a Dream” is grateful to the 36 Rocky Mountain Dreamer sponsors who have made the commitment to fund one or more Dreamers to participate in this new class over the next 10 years. In addition, funds raised from one-time donors at the Longmont Breakfast and Dream-Maker Luncheon went towards the scholarship fund for these 50 Dreamers. While funding for a new class comes from a variety of sources, individuals donors step up most often. For many individual donors, a story from a Dreamer or a memory of those who supported them during their youth motivates them to get involved.

The Rocky Mountain Class is just one example of the commitment “I Have a Dream” has made to Boulder County and the low-income community to help Dreamers become achievers, empowering them to continue “to and through” college and beyond.
I’m very busy, so time is hard to give. So I financially support the ‘I Have a Dream’ program to help students make it to college and reach their dreams.”

-Karen Bernardi

I Have a Dream” matches the passions and values that Karen Bernardi holds dear - education and helping others achieve their dreams.

Karen previously was a mentor with “I Have a Dream” and donated to the program. She was inspired to step up as a Rocky Mountain Dreamer sponsor after hearing board members and Dreamers speak about “I Have a Dream’s” deep impact.

Karen knows about the power of giving. At one point, she was a single mother struggling hard to get by. “A friend lent me the money to go to real estate school,” she said. “That act of kindness and financial help really helped me turn my life around.”

Jim and Edie Hooton were pulled to become Rocky Mountain Dreamer sponsors when they attended the annual fundraising luncheon. Jim had previously assisted “I Have a Dream” in putting a software program into place, but it was the luncheon that inspired them to become Dreamer sponsors.

“You could just hear how important the program was to the Dreamers and their families, and you could see the passion of the staff and volunteers,” Edie said. “We were drawn to all that energy.”

“I Have a Dream’ provides a very tangible benefit, and we liked that,” Jim said. “It is such a well-organized program and uses every last dollar effectively and wisely.”

“And it’s a local program, so you can see how your donation is being used,” Edie added.

“There’s such a reward in knowing you can make such a difference in these kid’s lives by helping to sponsor the class, and you also inspire their families. There is such a wonderful ripple effect from the ‘I Have a Dream’ program.”

-Jim Hooton

Helping Others Achieve Their Dreams
Karen Bernardi, Rocky Mountain Dreamer Sponsor

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Sponsors Make Dreams Come True
Jim and Edie Hooton, Rocky Mountain Dreamer Sponsors

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Sponsor interviews by Kim Glasscock
Gabby Granillo
Broadway Dreamer Class Alum

Gabby Granillo (left) when he joined the Broadway Dreamer Class
After graduating from Boulder High School in 2006 along with other members of the Broadway Class of Dreamers, Gabby Granillo has become an important part of the Boulder community.

He graduated from the University of Colorado, where he majored in sociology, and he now works as a Juvenile Service Professional at the main courthouse in Boulder.

He’s been in this position for two years, helping juveniles who are in legal and financial trouble. Gabby is able to use his personal background to get through to these kids.

Gabby’s time as a Dreamer inspired him to pursue his current career. “From working with the ‘I Have a Dream’ Foundation and at-risk youth, I wanted to promote the importance of education to these kids who are getting arrested, because a lot of the time they don’t go to school or have family support,” he said.

Not only is Gabby successful in his job as a Juvenile Service Professional, but in March he became a member of the Boulder County Leadership Fellows program, which is a Boulder Chamber/Community Foundation program. This program is made up of a group of 30 emerging leaders from different sectors in and around Boulder County. It is an opportunity for him to connect with people in other fields and gain valuable professional networks.

To the current Dreamers, Gabby has one piece of advice:

“Continue what you’re doing, focus on your education, and take advantage of the resources that ‘I Have a Dream’ provides.”

Gabby Granillo (left) graduating from Boulder High School

Interview by AmeriCorps Member, Emily Winters

Gabby Granillo (left) when he joined the Broadway Dreamer Class

“I feel like I have really good rapport with those kids. I grew up in housing projects throughout the majority of my life. I grew up on government assistance programs. I know what that’s like. I can relate to what they’re all going through right now.”

- Gabby Granillo
Congratulations 2014 Casa & Iris Class Graduates!

Among the seven graduated Dreamer classes, over the past 24 years, 90% have graduated from high school. Of the graduates, 85% have gone on to college or vocational school.

With support from tutors, mentors, class and Dreamer sponsors, and “I Have a Dream” staff, this year six Dreamers from the Casa and Iris classes graduated high school and were recognized during a graduation celebration at the Xilinx Retreat Center on May 21. Each graduate is now eligible to use his or her tuition-assistance scholarship, which is the hallmark of the “I Have a Dream” model. The scholarship provides added encouragement for Dreamers to not give up on their education and to continue “to and through” post-secondary education.

Typically, graduation consists of 50 Dreamer graduates, however, in 2014 an entire Dreamer Class was not slated for graduation. The Casa Class Dreamers were in kindergarten through eighth grade when they were sponsored by Debbie Lane and Steve Szabo from the Casa de la Esperanza housing community in 2000 and the Iris Class Dreamers were second through sixth grades when they were sponsored in 2008, resulting in staggered graduation dates.

At the graduation celebration after each Dreamer was introduced to the friends, family, sponsors, teachers, and staff in attendance, they said a few words at the podium, highlighting which school they were graduating from and what their future plans included. Whether through phone calls or emails or home visits, the graduates referenced their deep appreciation for their program directors, Francisco Mejias and Rigo Tostado, who worked tirelessly motivating them to succeed and assisting them with the college enrollment process.

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Poem by Casa Dreamer
Alejandra Corchado Rodriguez
Alexander Dawson Class of 2014 & Regis University Student 2018

I come from a place of love and nurture.
Where you earn what you have and work for what you want,
Where a college education for the older generations was not a reality.

So, as a first generation,
Yes, I am full of expectations.
And I have accepted, this weight on my shoulders,
And although some may see it as a burden,
I see it as an opportunity.

But sometimes,
It can feel like too much to carry,
And just when I’m about to crumble, I realize that,
I am not alone.

I come from a place of support and trust.
Where no matter my decision or the direction of my intuition,
Like it or not,
I have someone there for me,
To guide and help me.

I’ve learned from my mistakes and instead of walking in one place,
I’ve decided to take a chance.
A leap of faith.
And although many before have strayed,
I am determined,
To turn this road less traveled into a well paved path,
That every child, every teen, every being will be able to look upon it one day
And think:
"Yes, I will walk down that road someday"
And there will be no doubt in their minds that college is possible...

I come from a place of change and new beginnings.
Where education is a must.
And it is thanks to people like you,
That a Dreamer like me,
Can stand a little taller,
Smile a little wider,
And know,
That my future looks brighter.

For like the great Martin Luther King Jr,
I too have a dream,
And thanks to you
That dream is becoming a reality.
Adult volunteer mentors are needed to provide Dreamers with long-term, reliable, and supportive relationships, to offer one-on-one guidance and support, and to serve as positive role models. Mentors see their Dreamer at least twice per month for a minimum one-year commitment. Training and mentor handbook are provided.

To learn more about becoming a mentor contact:
Mentor Volunteer Coordinator
Phone: (303) 444-3636 ext 19
Email: mentors@ihaveadreamboulder.org

“I get appreciation enough just watching these kids grow and their excitement in participating in new experiences. The thing I like about appreciation events is the opportunity to meet other mentors and share experiences and tips.”

-Bill Barclay, Dreamer Sponsor & Mentor

Tutors are needed to work with the Dreamers during both after school and summer programming. The tutoring experience varies based upon the age of the Dreamers they work with. Tutors working with younger Dreamers will assist in facilitating literacy and math workshops as well as provide support for a enrichment activities. Tutors working with older Dreamers tend to provide one-to-one or small group subject specific homework help to Dreamers.

To learn more about becoming a tutor contact:
Tutor Volunteer Coordinator
Phone: (303) 444-3636 ext 40
Email: tutors@ihaveadreamboulder.org

“I really liked seeing how much fun the kids have in science class. Both the science girls and the science boys groups made great progress.”

-Sam Yang, Tutor

“I really enjoyed Tuesday reading. I think it was very successful and it gives Dreamers the chance to analyze a book (without even realizing that they're analyzing the novel in depth!) and also feel free to share ideas.”

-Ashley Kim, Tutor
"I Have a Dream" Foundation of Boulder County
3012 Sterling Circle, Suite 200
Boulder, Colorado 80301

303.444.3636
www.IHaveADreamBoulder.org

Upcoming Events

July-August
Crayons 2 Calculators
Backpack School Supply Drive

October 2nd
17th Annual Dream-Maker Luncheon, Omni Interlocken Resort in Broomfield
Attend our largest event of the year and hear moving testimonials from Dreamers and parents

November-December
Adopt-a-Family Program
Provide gifts to our Dreamer families who are in need of assistance during the holiday season

Our Underwriters

Daily Camera
Dene Yarwood,
Wright Kingdom Real Estate
Elevations Credit Union
EKS&H
Greenwood & Myers Mortuary
Kaiser Permanente
Times-Call
Village At The Peaks

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