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Welcome to the 21st issue of our newsletter. We hope you enjoy catching up with the progress of our programme over the 3 past months.

What it Takes To Make a Student

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This is the title of the attached article, which was printed in the NY Times on 26/11/06. We urge you to print this out, find a quiet time and place to read it, and then to reflect on what it implies for our education system in NZ.

You may or may not be aware of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in the USA, which has been described as President Bush's most ambitious piece of domestic legislation. It aims, by 2014, to eliminate the achievement gap between black and white kids, and between poor and middle-class kids.

This article takes an in-depth look at the two debates occurring in the US over this vital issue, i.e., the **causes** of the achievement gap, and the **cures** for it. Its conclusions have relevance for us, namely that although the achievement gap can be overcome, it requires systems, resources, people, funding and commitment beyond what are typically found in most mainstream schools, especially those serving poorer communities.

In fact, I urge you to read it at least twice, because the research behind the article is so wide-ranging, the scope of the discussion is so broad, and the implications are so significant, that it takes a while to comprehend it all. Ultimately it will be a political decision whether to address this achievement gap, but it is the community that will drive the politicians. If you agree with the conclusions of this article, we must unite to make it happen.

Paint Ball Adventure

Dreamers got to take out their frustrations with each other in an action packed game of boys versus girls paintball shootout! After an “all guns firing” trigger happy start, it was soon realised that strategy and teamwork were essential in order to not get hurt by those balls of paint travelling at lightning speed towards you. The girls looked a little nervous at the start taking on the boys, but they soon gained confidence after their initial win over the boys on the first game.

The girls then went on to take the top score beating the boys in the overall championship! Go Girls!

What was especially pleasing to see was some of our more reserved shy girls who would normally take the side line in a sports game, stepping up and getting right into it, even after taking some big hits.

The Dreamers recommended we plan a future game of Dreamers versus their Mentors! This sounds dangerous to me!!!



Above: Dreamers get ready to battle!



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Dreamers Camp at Port Waikato



We had a fantastic four days at this historic camp at Port Waikato, first established in the 1920's to provide seaside holidays for the children of poor families.

Some of the key activities included:

- We hiked up "Bald Spur," which was quickly renamed "Killer Hill," but everybody made it, and felt tremendously proud of their achievement. It was steep enough as we tackled the initial slope, but you really got a sense of the incline when you saw the fixed ropes installed so you could pull yourself up the hill!
- The sand castle building competition brought out some creative flair and artistic skills.
- The confidence course and the low ropes course demanded agility, team-work, athleticism ... or, as you can see in this picture, the willingness to dive through the ropes into the mud!

But it was the spelunking adventure (i.e., caving) that was the highlight of camp. We went over 1 km into this unmarked cave, slipping and sliding through the mud and water, marvelling at the stalactites, sustaining various bumps and bruises, and thoroughly enjoying it.

What was especially interesting to the Dreamers, and the parents and mentors that joined us, was reading the Camp Creed, set down back in 1932 during the first decade of the camp. We have reprinted the Creed on the next page of this newsletter, because we think it's instructive to realize how the important values do not change over time. Ant and Lynn created a great Camp Record Booklet for each Dreamer, so that they could plan and then report on how they'd lived out each of the Creed's values during the various camp activities.



The Creed of the Waikato Children's Camp



If I want to be a happy, useful citizen I must have:-

COURAGE AND HOPE.

I **MUST** be brave – this means I must be brave enough and strong enough to control what I think, what I say and what I do, and I must always be hopeful, because hope is power for improvement.

WISDOM.

I **MUST** act wisely – in school, at home, playing, working, reading or talking. I must learn how to choose the good, and how to avoid the bad.

INDUSTRY AND GOOD HABITS.

I **MUST** make my character strong – my character is what I am, if not in the eyes of others, then in the eyes of my own conscience.

Good thoughts in my mind will keep out bad thoughts. When I am busy doing good I shall have no time for evil. I can build my character by training myself in good habits.

I must be truthful and honest – I must know what is true in order to do what is right. I must tell the truth without fear. I must be honest in all my dealings and in all my thoughts. Unless I am honest I cannot have self-respect.

KNOWLEDGE AND USEFULNESS.

I **MUST** make my mind strong – the better I know myself, my fellows, and the world about me, the happier and more useful I shall be. I must always welcome useful knowledge in school, at home, everywhere.

HEALTHINESS AND CLEANLINESS.

I **MUST** make my body strong – my eyes, my teeth, my heart; my whole body must be healthy so my mind can work properly. I must keep physically and morally clean.

HELPFULNESS AND USEFULNESS.

I **MUST** use my strength to help others who need help – if I am strong I can help others, I can be kind, I can forgive those who hurt me, and I can help and protect the weak, the suffering, the young and the old and dumb animals.

CHARITY.

I **MUST** love – I must love God, who created not only this earth but also all men of all races, nations, and creeds, who are my brothers. I must love my parents, my home, my neighbours, my country, and be loyal to all these.

HUMILITY AND REVERENCE.

I **MUST** know that there are always more things to learn – What I may know is small compared with what can be known. I must respect all who have more wisdom than I, and have reverence for all that is good. And I must know how and whom to obey.

FAITH AND RESPONSIBILITY.

I **MUST** do all these things because I am accountable to God and humanity for how I live, and how I can help my fellows, and for the extent to which my fellows may trust and depend upon me.

Volunteer Profile

We're going to start this section with a great quote:

The moment you definitely commit yourself is the moment providence also happens. All kinds of things occur to help you which otherwise would not happen. A whole stream of advantageous events flow from your decision. They bring all kinds of unexpected chance meetings and material assistance which no one could have foreseen. Whatever you can do, or dream you can do, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it. To make your dream come true, begin.

- Goethe

This sums up our feeling of gratitude and humility when we think of the wonderful people that have signed up as volunteers with this "I Have a Dream" project in Mt Roskill. Although Ant and Lynn provide the structure, the activities, and the energy to make it all happen, we would be unable to deliver the services to our 53 Dreamers without the 100+ Tutors and Mentors that help us day in and day out.



We've been especially blessed by the number and quality of the people who have just completed our most recent Mentor Training Course. These photos show most of the class participating in our 7 week training course. We look forward to profiling some of these individuals in future newsletters, but today we wanted to recognize and celebrate their willingness to get involved in the life of a child.

When you read the NY Times article attached, you will get a sense of why the mentoring role is so important in the lives of disadvantaged youth. The quotes in the section below capture the vital importance of our mentors in the lives of our Dreamers.

Quote of The Day

Character is formed, not by laws, commands and decrees, but by quiet influence, unconscious suggestion and personal guidance.

- Marion L. Burton

The degree to which I can create relationships which facilitate the growth of others as separate persons is a measure of the growth I have achieved in myself.

- Carl Rogers

"The "I Have a Dream"® Programme helps children from low-income areas reach their education and career goals by providing a long-term program of mentoring, tutoring, and enrichment, with an assured opportunity for higher education."