

December 2007

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It's been another busy, fun and productive year for the Dreamers, volunteers and staff of the IHAD project in Mt Roskill, Auckland. We send our warmest wishes to you, our newsletter readers, for a wonderful Christmas.

Graduation from Intermediate School

Saturday Dec 15th saw over 200 people gather at the Dreamer Centre for a shared lunch, great speeches from Ant and Lynn, the awarding of certificates to the Dreamers for completing their two years of study at Intermediate School, and awards for special accomplishments during the year.

They're off to High School in Feb 2008, so there will be big changes happening in the IHAD programme next year. We will be adjusting our schedule to allow for the Dreamers' greater involvement in extra-curricular activities, but we still anticipate a strong demand for the benefits of the Dreamer Centre as a quiet refuge, a homework centre, and a place for catching up with friends, tutors and men-



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Dreamers Dominate School Prize Giving!

Congratulations goes out to many of our Dreamers who dominated the school prize giving ceremony at Wesley Intermediate this week. As they move on from Intermediate to High School next year they leave a legacy of achievement behind them at Wesley Intermediate School where 33 of our 53 Dreamers attend. 19 Dreamer students took home 37 of the awards presented by the school! Whilst we can't mention everyone in this newsletter, a special mention goes to Ana, Salote and Robel who took the top Academic Awards for their classrooms. In addition, Robel was also awarded the Jarvis-Smith Art Award and Mosa'ati was awarded Top Performing Arts Award and Top School Involvement Award. A special mention also goes to Raela who took out 5 of the Top Sports Awards - Girls Soccer, Basketball, Athletics, Cross Country, and All-round Sports award. Others who made us proud were Kenese who was awarded Most Improved Year 8 Boy in the school, and Ana who along with Top Sports Award for Rugby and Touch also managed to secure the overall girls award for Best All-rounder in all school curricular and extra curricular areas. Well done all you Dreamers who received awards, you make us all proud to be journeying with you!!

Recognition for Ant and Nina

At the conclusion of the graduation event, we were pleased to facilitate the recognition of the 8+ years of selfless community service that Ant and Nina have contributed to the Wesley community in Mt Roskill, Auckland. Pip Duncalf from the Orangi Kaupapa Trust awarded them a sizeable cheque, which they MUST spend on themselves! This Trust was started by an anonymous donor who instructs the Trustees to select people working in the non-profit sector, recognizing that their efforts and successes are not matched by the salaries they earn, compared to what they could command in the private sector. Interestingly, the Trust will not accept applications, preferring to rely on a network of people who nominate deserving candidates.

We can't think of more appropriate people than Ant and Nina! They started an outreach activity from their Church in 1999, and created the Wesley Urban Hope Trust to focus their efforts on serving the disadvantaged children in this area. Because they saw such need, and felt a personal mission to address that need, they steadily worked themselves out of their full-time employment over the course of 3 years, and devoted their efforts to setting up the All Stars Club (a kids life skills programme), and many other sports and arts after school programmes to keep the kids off the streets.

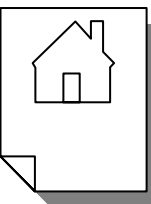
It was this work with the community that made Ant such an ideal person to become the Project Coordinator for the first IHAD project in NZ in 2003, at which Ant has continued to bring his immense energy, enthusiasm and empowerment to the children of this community. As we all know, a person cannot bring this level of support to others unless they are supported in their personal lives, so we are all equally in gratitude to Nina for her support of Ant and their 3 kids.



History: Ant & Nina (wearing red) with NZ Prime Minister Helen Clark (Centre) and the team from Auckland City Elim Church during the opening of the Community Learning Information Centre at Wesley Primary School in the year 2000.



Above: Ant & Nina in more recent times with their 3 children, Elyahna, Elijah, and Isaiah.



It all Starts in the Home

There's a report from the Educational Testing Service in the US which draws some important conclusions from years of study. The ETS researchers show that just four variables – which are all beyond the control of schools - can predict with impressive accuracy each State's results on the Federal 8th grade reading test.

The four variables are:

- The percentage of children living with one parent
- The percentage of children 5 or younger whose parents read to them daily
- The percentage of 8th graders who watch 5 or more hours of TV per day
- The percentage of 8th graders absent from school at least 3 times a month

These findings are not exactly surprising, but this knowledge does demand a response from the educational system in addressing the shortcomings that some children bring to school.

If you wish to read the full report, you can see it on the ETS home page (www.ets.org). The report is titled "The Family: America's Smallest School."

In the News

The Sunrise breakfast show on TV3 on Dec. 11th interviewed Robel Hailu, Ant and Scott. The clip is loaded on the front page of our web site.

It's difficult to get across in a short TV segment the complexities of the social, political, financial and educational issues that an IHAD project addresses. The factors that lead to adverse educational outcomes are multi-faceted, and they take generations to develop. Therefore, our solutions have to also be multi-faceted, and they will also take a generation to take effect.



Dreamer: Robel Hailu

This is why the 15 year timeline of an "I Have a Dream" project is so successful, as has been proven by over 14,000 children and 190 projects in the US. While our research reports on the Mt Roskill project don't yet show sustained academic improvements across the board, there are a number of very positive aspects. For example, the Dreamers, as compared to the Control Group:

- Are less likely to be involved in gangs
- Get on better with their teachers
- Are good at asking for help when they need it
- Spend more time communicating with their parents, and enjoy doing so!
- Have a broader variety of career aspirations
- Think that smoking cigarettes and drinking alcohol are not good

Results like this are a testament to the work and commitment that Ant, Lynn and all our volunteers put into the lives of the Dreamers.

Robel Gets the Tools to Pursue His Artistic Talents

We are thrilled to report that Renaissance, the Apple distributor in NZ, has donated a high-end Apple Mac computer to the IHAD project. This will be available in the Dreamer Centre, so that Robel and the other Dreamers can pursue their artistic talents. You can see a sample of Robel's artwork in this illustration here which he created in the space of about 5 minutes using a computer mouse and Microsoft Paint (which comes standard



(which comes standard with the Microsoft Windows operating system). In the space of a few minutes he had attracted a large crowd of Dreamers peering over his shoulder in awe at his creation. You can imagine the endless possibilities Robel will now have with the right tools behind him!

We are deeply indebted to Mal Thompson, Paul Johnstone and the team at Renaissance for their support of our project.

Mentors Make Small Talk With Dreamers Over Pizza

Breaking the Ice between new Mentors and Dreamers can always be a little tricky. So to get all our newly trained Mentors to meet some of our Dreamers our Mentor Coordinator Lynn Su'a put together a fantastic Friday evening of pizza making and basketball at the Dreamer Centre. Fun was had by all as both Mentors and Dreamers made their own pizzas alongside each other whilst chatting away and getting to know each other. It wasn't long before the pizzas were in the oven and everyone was off to the basket ball courts for a battle of the sexes basketball game. After the males finally gave into the fact that the girls had beaten them (again) everyone returned to the Dreamer Centre to satisfy their stomachs on their delicious home-made pizza. The pizzas came out perfect - Yes even with Coach Ant behind the oven!!



Mentor Appreciation Event

A great time was had by all on Tuesday Dec 11th at the beautiful home of Jackie and Chris Reeves (yes, he truly is a Superman ☺). They kindly provided the use of their house, farm, swimming pool, tennis court and private beach at Kauaroa Bay on Waiheke Island for a party to allow us to say thank-you to all of our mentors. Not only did they turn on some lovely warm weather for us, but they also provided a wonderful spread of food and quite a few delicious beers and wines

As you can see in this photo below, Lynn was up to her old tricks of organising some "ice-breaker" games involving crazy photos with the mentors, but with this crowd, they weren't really necessary ☺

Also, the great team at Fullers Ferry provided the ferry tickets and a bus to transport us from Auckland to Waiheke. It is this kind of generosity from the Reeves and Fullers that inspires us all.



Quote of The Day

To succeed in life, you need three things: a wishbone, a backbone and a funny bone.

- Reba McEntire

"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."