



Newsletter - Issue 26

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Dreamer Tramping Club trip

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What an excellent way for Mentors and Dreamers to spend time together. Just as going through an Army boot camp can build incredibly strong bonds among the troops being yelled at and exercised beyond limit by their Drill Instructor, so too does a 20 km (12 mile) hike through steep and muddy bush country forge new and deeper relationships!



The sign reads: "Out in the Wops"!

The weekend of Sept 27/28 saw 12 Dreamers accompanied by 7 Mentors and the 3 "I Have a Dream" staff head off for two nights at the Alpine Sports Club Hut in the Waitakeres. We have many memories from this first ever outing of the new Dreamer Tramping Club:

- The joy of having hour after hour of quality time to talk to the Dreamers and Mentors – without the distraction of electronic devices – while enjoying the beauty of nature and the benefits of fresh air and exercise
- The amount of noise that 10 young boys can cause when they're feeling liberated by staying in a bunkroom in a hut in the forest
- The lack of sleep that can cause for the residents of the other bunkroom in the hut ☹
- The perverse joy that comes during the "payback" the next day, as we march them along muddy tracks, through creeks, up hill and down dale for 20 kms! ☺
- The difficulty of waking these 10 boys up for dinner that night, after they've fallen straight into their bunks upon returning to the hut!
- The opportunity to relearn that old phrase, "many hands make light work," as everyone pitched in with cooking meals, cleaning up afterwards, etc.



As you can see in these photos, it was an enjoyable time for all concerned. Some of the memories and photos can't be shared, of course, as, according to that aphorism, "what goes on tour stays on tour." However, we can report that Coach Ant's name has been changed to Coach Stinky, and one of the mentors will be forever remembered as ... Undie Man!



Contemplating how not to get lost!

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Research Paper

In the excellent paper, "Schools, Skills, and Synapses," James Heckman, University of Chicago, argues that we need to devote more resources to enriching the lives of young, disadvantaged children. The paper's abstract sums it up well:

This paper discusses:

- (a) the role of cognitive and noncognitive ability in shaping adult outcomes,*
- (b) the early emergence of differentials in abilities between children of advantaged families and children of disadvantaged families,*
- (c) the role of families in creating these abilities,*
- (d) adverse trends in American families, and*
- (e) the effectiveness of early interventions in offsetting these trends.*

Practical issues in the design and implementation of early childhood programs are discussed.

Although the paper is backed up by in-depth research and data, his writing style makes a complex subject very understandable. He does a good job of exposing the flawed arguments in the book, "The Bell Curve," which asserted that genetics were the primary factor causing variable outcomes in life.

We have put this fantastic paper on our web site (www.ihaveadream.org.nz/newseventspapers under the "US Research Papers and Articles" section), and urge you to take the time to read it. It can be read in the time it takes to fly from Auckland to Christchurch, and it will change the way you think about schooling and welfare policy in NZ.

Humour

One of the key skills in socialability is a good sense of humour, and this is one thing that the Pasifika people are especially noted for. One of our volunteers, Andrew Patterson, told us about a very funny event when he took three Dreamers (Kenese, Robert and Moana) out for a quick bite one night after the tutoring session. Bear in mind that Andrew is a Palangi (i.e., white guy!) in his mid-40s, sitting there in the restaurant with three young Pasifika boys. The waitress asks Andrew if these kids are all his? Quick as a flash, Kenese says "Yes, we're triplets." Not to be outdone, Robert calls out, "Dad, can I have a coke?" Andrew is working hard to contain his laughter, and the poor waitress retreated as she tried to figure it all out.



Corporate Support

We've written in the past (see issues 20 and 23) about the great support that we have received from companies and individuals. The recent period witnessed three further examples of this corporate support, and we think it's important to recognise their efforts in the community:

- NZ Post provides free postal services to community groups like us.
- BP provided \$300 worth of petrol vouchers for our volunteers.
- Microsoft provided a donation of over \$3,000 worth of software for our new server, through their excellent partnership with Tech Soup NZ (check it out at www.techsoup.net.nz).
- HP donated us 4 ex demo PC's to enable the Dreamers to enter a new era of media capabilities.
- Wee-Yeong Eyou's work team from the ASB bank chose to donate us \$240 as part of a scheme they have running to make a donation every quarter to a chosen charity.

Charles Schultz' Philosophy

The following is the philosophy of Charles Schultz, the creator of the 'Peanuts' comic strip. Please answer the questions:

1. Name the five wealthiest people in the world.
2. Name the last five Heisman trophy winners.
3. Name the last five winners of the Miss America.
4. Name ten people who have won the Nobel or Pulitzer Prize.
5. Name the last half dozen Academy Award winners for best actor and actress.
6. Name the last decade's worth of World Series winners.

How did you do?

The point is, none of us remember the headliners of yesterday. These are not second-rate achievers. They are the best in their fields. But the applause dies. Awards tarnish. Achievements are forgotten. Accolades and certificates are buried with their owners.

Here's another quiz. See how you do on this one:

1. List a few teachers who aided your journey through school.
2. Name three friends who have helped you through a difficult time.
3. Name five people who have taught you something worthwhile.
4. Think of a few people who have made you feel appreciated and special.
5. Think of five people you enjoy spending time with.

Easier?

The lesson: The people who make a difference in your life are not the ones with the most credentials, the most money, or the most awards. They are the ones that care.

Celebrating The End Of Another Year

After the past few years of organising large-scale end of year events to celebrate the graduation milestones of our Dreamers from Primary and Intermediate school, it was nice to finally celebrate the end of this year in a more relaxed style with a family day at the beach for our Dreamers, their parents, our volunteers and staff.

A great day was had by all who attended as we filled up two buses outside our Dreamers centre and travelled an hour north to Wenderholm beach - an Auckland Regional Park. Someone up-stairs remembered to "turn on the sun" that day, so it was action packed with swimming, games in the sand, and the good old "Kiwi BBQ", featuring Mad Butcher sausages and Watties Tomato Sauce!! (That's the real word for "Ketchup" for you Yanks!)

We were able to pay our respects to our wonderful volunteer mentors and tutors and provide them all with a wonderful book "Three Cups of Tea" (a #1 New York Times Bestseller) all hand signed by our Dreamers. Meanwhile, the Dreamers tried to pay their respects to their Sponsor and Project Coordinator by trying to drown us in the ocean!??



Above: Some of our Dreamer boys burying themselves in the sand.

Below: Our volunteers await their end of year presentation of gifts from the Dreamers



End of Year Dreamer Achievements

The end of our first year at high school saw some Dreamers receiving recognition for their outstanding efforts at school this year. At Mt Albert Grammar school, Robel Hailu received the special Photolife Graphics Art Award for his outstanding achievements in Art which saw him completing the NCEA level 1 Art course this year (2 years ahead of schedule). Robel took the initiative to officially thank Deputy Principal Yvette Williams for letting him complete the NCEA course early by presenting her with a sculpture he had hand-carved during the year at an official "thank-you" celebration attended also by his Art teacher - Allan Young, Faculty Head - Milica Zjajic-Moon, Robel's mum and all of us "I Have a Dream" staff.

Robel also received additional awards for 1st in class in Maths & Art. He was joined by a number of other Dreamers who all received

Year 9 class certificates for their efforts in various subjects this year (Anoovi Marwah: Technology, Anna Moala: Physical Ed, Mosa'ati Mafileo: English & Music, Mikaele Nuku: Art, George Pohahau: Physical Ed & Technology, and Wesley Tumai: Science). At Mt Roskill Grammar, May Wuatai was given a Sheppard House Merit Award. Well done to all of you!!



Robel presents his hand sculptured head to Deputy Principal Yvette Williams.



Robel, receiving the Photolife Graphics Art award presented by the Local Member of Parliament, and previous Prime Minister of New Zealand, Helen Clark.

Volunteer Profile - Sad Loss of Dedicated Volunteer

We had a sad loss in October of another committed volunteer. Nancy Phillip was one of the "Reading Mums" lead by Mary Gilmour, who started reading to the Dreamers at Wesley Primary School 5 years ago as part of our focus on literacy.

At Nancy's funeral, one of her many good friends, Karen Kennedy, announced that the American Womens Club (AWC, of which Nancy was a stalwart member!) has created THE NANCY PHILLIP HAND OF FRIENDSHIP TROPHY, and asked Wesley Primary School to donate it annually to a deserving student at the school. The award comprises both a lovely trophy and a monetary gift. The basis for selection each year is:

1. Friendship is a virtue to be encouraged. It is manifested in many different ways.
2. The hand of friendship can be extended by a very quiet deed, accomplished without fanfare.
3. Extending the hand of friendship can be demonstrated by many little acts of kindness or, in some instances, by a heroic act that might involve reaching out to someone in need or someone who is not popular.
4. Those who extend the hand of friendship do not expect to be rewarded for their deeds.
5. The particular acts of friendship undertaken may seem trivial to the giver but are truly meaningful to the recipient.
6. Those who extend the hand of friendship are more concerned with the happiness of others rather than their own happiness.

The Principal of Wesley Primary, Rae Parkin, was thrilled with this generous recognition of Nancy's efforts there, and she said that this award fits in exactly with the ethos of the school.

Quote of The Day

The aim of education is the knowledge not of facts, but of values.

- William Inge

"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."