

Dream Your Dreams

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At DREAM, formerly known as Harlem RBI, our mission is to provide inner-city youth with opportunities to learn, play, and grow through the power of baseball and softball. DREAM has served the East Harlem community for over 26 years and has grown to two other locations in South Bronx and Newark, New Jersey. But DREAM does much more than just provide after school programs. At DREAM, we are invested in ensuring our players' success on and off the field. In our after-school and summer programs, DREAM youth will learn to practice physical literacy, achieve academic success, and embody social-emotional competencies, all of which are critical to their development.

As a Major Gifts Intern, I am responsible for assisting the Development on projects and events pertaining to our campaign. Being a 501(c)3 non-profit, DREAM heavily relies on the generosity of donors and grants to fund our work, and therefore we run an annual campaign at the start of the fiscal year. My focus this summer will primarily be with our REAL Kids Summer Program. Beginning July 5th, scholars in East Harlem, South Bronx, and Newark will embark on their six-week summer journey with us. Half of their day will be spent in the classroom to prevent summer learning loss and the other half will be spent on the field. All scholars are placed by age group on teams and all teams are sponsored by donors. I, along with two other supporting interns, will be performing site visits at the East Harlem and South Bronx locations to gather information for the weekly donor newsletter. These newsletters are integral in maintaining strong relationships with our donors. On top of the newsletter, I am also responsible for providing support for other Development events such as our annual Board of Directors BBQ at the end of the summer or corporate volunteer events.

As a Posse Scholar, I was able to browse available internship opportunities through the Posse Portal. The position posted on the Posse Portal by DREAM was actually for a Day Camp Group Leader, a paid position that I had chosen to apply for. I decided to conduct additional research on the organization before applying, which I suggest all students do, which eventually led to me finding DREAM's comprehensive list of available positions. This was where I found the Major Gifts Intern position, as well as other Development internship positions. This position, however, was unpaid and I struggled to come to terms with even applying, for it would put a significant financial strain on myself, as well as my family. But I ultimately decided to apply for the position because I wanted an opportunity to grow my development skills, especially at a much larger organization and the fact that I would be in New York didn't hurt either.

Prior to my first official day, I had assisted with DREAM's largest fundraising event of the campaign, the Bids for Kids gala. Upon arrival for set-up, I was immediately thrust into the world corporate fundraising events. I was in awe of the scope of DREAM's donors as well as resources. The gala was held at the Cipriani on 42nd, a renowned event venue that has hosted some of NYC's biggest events. Not only was the gala held at a five-star venue, but it also had some five-star guests like Mark Teixeira from the Yankees and NYFC midfielder Jack Harrison. Imagine my surprise when I was told that there would be a special performance by Grammy-nominated artist

Andra Day, accompanied by the DREAM Charter School choir. Even though I was at the venue for over 12 hours and didn't leave until well past midnight, I couldn't have asked for a better introduction to DREAM.

At the end of my first week, as a part of intern on-boarding, our supervisors sent us on a walking tour/scavenger hunt of Spanish Harlem. I was extremely appreciative of this opportunity to explore the community and experience the diverse cultures that make up Spanish Harlem. I most likely would not have made it to most, if not any of these places had I not been sent on this scavenger hunt (which my group won by the way). To make things even better, I was offered front row seats to the Yankees v. Orioles game later that evening. To say my first week at DREAM was eventful is an understatement.

I am now settling into the routine of things around the office and am preparing for my site visits next month. This past week at DREAM and DREAM Charter School was jam-packed with graduations. An extremely rewarding and humbling experience was being able to hear a speech written by one of the 8th graduates. It was one of the most inspiring and powerful speeches I have ever heard in my life, let alone by an 8th grader.