

“Life is a series of failures and mistakes and opportunities to learn.”

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My name is Jenny Ly and I am a rising sophomore from New Orleans, Louisiana. I am majoring in Political Science as well as pursuing a Secondary Education Teaching Certification in Social Studies, English, and ESL. This summer, I will be interning at the non-profit organization, DREAM, in East Harlem, NY as a Major Gifts Intern where I will be assisting the Major Gifts department to prepare for the upcoming campaign

season by assembling presentation materials as well as collaborate with coworkers to strategize plans to secure major donors. These procured funds will help fund day to day operations, as well as an assortment of other programs such as the DREAM Charter School. One of my other responsibilities will include communicating with various departments in order to create a monthly newsletter for current and potential donors.

DREAM's mission is to provide underserved youth with opportunities to learn, play, and grow through baseball and softball. Their goals are to use the power of teamwork to teach, coach, and inspire the youth of the community to strive for success and to follow their dreams. I believe the work and efforts that DREAM is continually trying to achieve are extremely admirable, as well as necessary to bridge the inequity gap in many of the communities that they operate in. Baseball and softball are typically classist sports for white players stemming from middle to upper-class families. DREAM provides an opportunity to not only diversify the potential pool of professional players and thus diversifying the league, but it is also an opportunity for team and leadership building. These skills are essential in the realm of academia as well as the job force and will provide these students with tools to succeed.

Although DREAM is incapable of dismantling the sexist confines of baseball and softball by itself, it makes a continuous effort to empower girls and cultivate their leadership skills by offering co-ed teams, which are at the core of Newcomb College Institute's mission. As self-identifying women, I'm sure many of us have faced some sort of obstacle in our paths to success in male-dominated fields. But we have shown exemplary leadership skills as well as grit and resiliency on our pursuits to success, as exemplified by our involvement with [Newcomb College Institute](#). We must reflect on the opportunities and experiences we have been exposed to that have molded us into the powerful and unwavering women we are today and ask ourselves: shouldn't every woman be offered those same opportunities and experiences? Those qualities and self-confidence are just some of the qualities in which DREAM strives to instill in its participants seeing as they are not presented with the same opportunities for growth and development.

DREAM recently celebrated its 25th anniversary and to celebrate, they filmed a video (which can be found [here](#)) that encompasses their core missions and values in five minutes and 42 seconds. And in those five minutes and 42 seconds, I knew that DREAM was the place for me to be this summer. My five learning objectives for this

internship are 1. To further develop and hone my resource development skills. 2. Improve my verbal and written communication skills. 3. Learn more about community outreach or rather culturally responsive community outreach and best practices. 4. Learn to better adapt to unfamiliar situations or environments. 5. Expand my professional network. This summer will not only be an opportunity to expand and fine tune my professional skills, but it will also serve as an educational opportunity, seeing as I hope to someday become an educator.

It has taken me 18 hard years to learn the lesson of failure and how I can transform my failures into opportunities to learn and I believe that my work with DREAM this summer will continue this lesson. As I attempt to unpack just to pack again for the internship, I sit and contemplate about this incredible journey I am weeks away from embarking on. I am excited and simultaneously nervous about where this summer will take me, but I am ready for it nonetheless.