

# “I HAVE A DREAM” FOUNDATION®

## Kindergarten Through College in a Year: “I Have A Dream” Foundation to partner with First Lady’s “Better Make Room” on Year-Long Documentary Project

**October 27, 2016 (New York, NY)**—This Fall, the “I Have A Dream” Foundation will launch a year-long, multimedia documentary project that will follow students—“Dreamers”—in every grade from kindergarten all the way through college and career. The project will include a January blog and social media account “takeover” of Better Make Room, the First Lady’s education initiative geared towards encouraging Generation Z to pursue higher education.

The project will follow Dreamers from every grade in 11 cities for the entire school year, and check in with them at critical points—first days of school, college applications, graduations, internships, and as they respond to current events, challenges, and accomplishments along the way. At the end of the project, we will have a better understanding of what school—and life—look like when students have access to the long-term, individualized social, emotional, academic, and financial support the “I Have a Dream” Foundation provides.

“We have realized that there’s really no way to capture the full depth and breadth of a Dreamer’s experience, short of undertaking an 18+ year documentary project. But this year, we have Dreamers in every grade from kindergarten all the way through college—so why not start now?” says Donna Lawrence, President & CEO of the “I Have A Dream” Foundation.

“We have partnered with the ‘I Have A Dream’ Foundation on a number of projects in the past year, like the First Lady’s ‘College Signing Day’ and ‘Beating the Odds’ Summit. It has stood out to us just how much persistence and long-term commitment Dreamers and their programs demonstrate on the path towards higher education. Better Make Room is really about raising these kinds of voices, so when we heard about this project, it seemed like a perfect match for our #BMRTakeover series,” says Don Yu, Director of the Better Make Room Campaign.

A closer look at some of the featured Dreamers (photographs & interviews available):

- **First grader Allik**, from Des Moines, Iowa, wants to be a lawyer so he can “help the city and help the world.”
- **Second grader Gabby** from Des Moines, Iowa wants to be a teacher because “Teachers can help people with math and reading. They keep children safe.”
- **Fourth grader Essence** from New York City has been a committed and enthusiastic founding member of her program’s community service club, helping to plan and implement three projects related to homelessness in her community.
- **Fellow fourth grader Pacifique** from Des Moines, Iowa says, “I want to become a scientist and help discover ways for people in other countries to get clean water and clean air.”

- **Seventh grader Devan** from Hailey, Idaho says he loves being a Dreamer because of the huge support IHDF-Idaho gives to him and his future, especially in going to college (something he feels like he never could have done without the program).
- **11th grader Brisa** from Denver, Colorado was accepted to a highly selective STEM summer program, and is working to major in a STEM-related field and become the first in her family to graduate from college.
- **Martisia is a college senior** from Atlanta, Georgia who is a first generation college student graduating in December with a degree in Biology and a concentration in secondary education. Upon graduation, she plans to teach in a high needs school system to spark the interest of STEM back into the classrooms.
- **Juanita** from Los Angeles, California is a graduate student at California State University Fullerton, and is working towards her M.A. in Social Work.

For a full list of Dreamers featured in our documentary project, sample social media posts, and more information, visit <http://ihaveadreamfoundation.org/k-through-college-in-a-year/>.

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#### **About “I Have A Dream” Foundation:**

The “I Have A Dream” Foundation (IHDF) is a national non-profit organization focused on breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty through a comprehensive program of support that follows the same group of young people (“Dreamers”) from elementary school all the way through college. Founded 35 years ago through the vision of Eugene M. Lang, IHDF operates in 16 cities and has served over 17,000 Dreamers in over 200 programs.

The numbers: 51% of students in U.S. public schools—over 25 million children—are low-income, and only 9% of low-income students earn a bachelor’s degree, compared to 77% of their high-income peers. 90% of Dreamers complete high school, compared to 70% of their low-income peers, representing an additional \$2.9 Billion in earnings over their lifetimes. Dreamers are nearly 3 times more likely to earn a bachelor’s degree than their low-income peers, with almost 70% enrolling in college. Without this level of support, the cycle of poverty continues: 65% of children whose parents have no more than a high school diploma live in poverty. Now, 35 years after Eugene M. Lang’s life changing promise, Dreamers have children who are attending college themselves.

#### **About Better Make Room:**

In 2014, First Lady Michelle Obama launched her Reach Higher initiative to inspire every student in America to take charge of their future by completing their education past high school, whether at a professional training program, a community college, or a four-year college or university. As part of her

Reach Higher initiative, the First Lady kickstarted a new public awareness campaign, Better Make Room, to target Generation Z, or young people ages 14-19, to celebrate education, change the national conversation, and reach students directly where they are, giving them a space to create content while navigating the college-going process.

Better Make Room is part of the non-profit, Civic Nation, and leverages traditional and new media platforms to celebrate student stories in the same way that we often celebrate celebrities and athletes. With partners in the business, philanthropic, media, and education realm, this campaign stretches across the country to inspire students and give them the tools they need to reach higher for college.

**Contact:**

Kaitlin Archambault

Director, Marketing & Communications, "I Have A Dream" Foundation

[karchambault@ihad.org](mailto:karchambault@ihad.org)

203-592-1005