

“I Have A Dream” Foundation to Hold 15th annual “Dream UP” College Immersion Program in Los Angeles, California

Nearly 200 students from 8 states will come together to experience life on Loyola Marymount University’s campus

Los Angeles, CA, (July 11, 2017)—On Tuesday, July 11th, the “I Have A Dream” Foundation will hold its 15th annual “Dream UP” (University Prep) college immersion program at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, California. Over 100 students (“Dreamers”) from 8 states, entering 7th grade through college in the Fall, will come together for a week of workshops, panel discussions, service learning and team building opportunities that are geared to grade level and career specific tracks. In this college immersion experience, Dreamers will stay in college dorms, eat in dining halls, take campus tours, and participate in workshops taught by college professors. For many students, this is the first time traveling out of state and with peers.

“It is so important to our mission that we are providing Dreamers with this level of access to college culture starting at such a young age—we have students participating in college essay writing workshops as early as 7th grade,” says Donna Lawrence, President & CEO of the National “I Have A Dream” Foundation. “Our network is committed to providing Dreamers with the highest level of academic, cultural, and social experiences, and we truly believe that Dream UP is one of the most important opportunities on Dreamers’ pathway to college. At a time when low-income students are still only earning bachelor’s degrees at a rate of 9%—compared to 77% of their high-income peers, and that gap continues to widen—we are giving students access to a valuable resource that is often relegated to higher income students.”

“I Have A Dream” Foundation programs are indeed helping to narrow that opportunity gap, with Dreamers over 3x more likely to earn college degrees than their low income peers. “I Have A Dream” doesn’t only attribute their success to programs like Dream UP: the organization works with Dreamers long-term, starting as early as Kindergarten and providing a continuum of social, emotional, academic, and college tuition support all the way through college. The “I Have A Dream” Foundation, founded by philanthropist Eugene M. Lang in 1981, now has programs in 16 cities nationwide, and has served nearly 18,000 students.

“We are really looking forward to hosting this year’s program in our great city—as part of a network of thousands of Dreamers, we’re giving our students an opportunity to connect with peers from all over the country in a meaningful way,” says Debra Fine, President & CEO of “I Have A Dream” Foundation – Los Angeles. “Our partnerships with Loyola Marymount University and the University of Southern California have been such valuable resources for our Dreamers, and we are honored to be collaborating in such depth over the coming week.”

Anastasia, a Denver, Colorado 12th grader who participated in last summer’s program at City College in New York City, said of her experience, “I made many new friendships and got more knowledge on college and the process.” Dreamers have shared stories of not only academic, but social and personal growth from participating in the program: Tatyana, an 11th grader from Newark, New Jersey, shared, “I was able not to only make great friendships but, in the process able to discover who I truly was inside.” And Shayla, a Miami 10th grader, shared the long term impact of her experience: “we went over many things that I will take with me forever.”



Past Dream UP programs (formerly called the “Dreamer Conference”) have taken place at Boston College, Stanford University, University of Colorado at Boulder, University of Illinois at Chicago, Drake University, and American University. The agenda for this week’s program includes workshops on topics like campus involvement, global citizenship, and staying connected while away at college. There will be discussions around film screenings and civil rights issues, as well as opportunities for self-reflection, community service, and daily mindful meditation.

For interviews with students or to schedule a time to stop by the program, which runs through Friday July 14th, please contact Kaitlin Archambault at karchambault@ihaveadreamfoundation.org or 203-592-1005.

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About “I Have A Dream” Foundation:

The “I Have A Dream” Foundation (IHDF) is a leading education nonprofit 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 Lang, IHDF operates in 16 cities and has served nearly 18,000 Dreamers.

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. 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, over 35 years after Eugene M. Lang’s life changing promise, Dreamers have children who are attending college themselves.

Visit ihaveadreamfoundation.org to learn more.

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