

“I HAVE A DREAM” FOUNDATION®

Vision

Our vision is that one day, all children in this nation will have the opportunity to pursue higher education and to fully capitalize on their talents, aspirations, and leadership to have fulfilling careers and create a better world.

Mission

The “I Have A Dream” Foundation empowers children in low-income communities to achieve higher education by providing them with guaranteed tuition support and equipping them with the skills, knowledge, and habits they need to gain entry to higher education and succeed in college and beyond.

Program Overview

Our local chapters sponsor entire grade levels of 50-100 students in under-resourced public schools and housing developments, and work with these “Dreamers” from early elementary school all the way through high school. Upon high school graduation, each Dreamer receives guaranteed tuition assistance for higher education.

At each of our sites, our local Sponsors and program team work with a broad segment of the community — ranging from school districts and colleges to businesses, religious organizations, civic groups, and others — to provide Dreamers with the academic and social services they need to overcome tremendous obstacles and achieve higher education.

How We Got Started

The “I Have A Dream” program was launched in 1981, when founder Eugene Lang returned to his alma mater, P.S. 121 in East Harlem, to address the graduating sixth grade class. When he learned that three-quarters of the school’s students would probably drop out of school, Lang promised college tuition to every sixth grader who graduated from high school. This impromptu promise sparked a national movement that now stretches from coast to coast.



Impact

Currently, more than 4,000 Dreamers are on the pathway to college in 17 states, Washington, D.C., and New Zealand, following some 11,000 Dreamers who came before them. Dreamers often graduate and enter college at double or triple the rates of other students in the local population, and surpass the overall statewide average for students in their peer group.

External evaluations have found that our students demonstrate improvements in grades and school attendance; are better able to resist peer pressure; and show higher aspirations and more positive attitudes about school, life, and the future.

“I Have A Dream” has also inspired other initiatives across the nation, including the federal program GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) and nonprofit organizations including Say Yes to Education. In addition, many of our Sponsors, while new to education when they first became involved with “I Have A Dream”, have since become some of the nation’s most influential education leaders.

The National “I Have A Dream” Foundation

The national “I Have A Dream” Foundation was established in 1986 to coordinate and expand the network of “I Have A Dream” sites, now numbering 35 affiliates. This year, “I Have A Dream” is launching a major effort to significantly increase its impact and reach on students and communities across the nation.



For more information, visit www.ihaveadreamfoundation.org or contact:

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