

# Dream Outside the Box

Dream Outside the Box is a cooperative program between Trinity Galewood, student volunteers from Concordia and Dominican Universities, and the after-school program at Amundsen Park District on Chicago's West Side. In three eight-week sessions this school year, the college students met weekly with 15 kindergarten to Grade 5 students to help them dream bigger about future careers.

The goal is to give children a glimpse of where they could be someday—places they won't consider unless they are exposed to them. Neighborhoods that lack extracurricular educational opportunities and exposure to new things, like many Chicago neighborhoods, are often "dream deserts" for children with the result being a limited vision for their future.

Dream Outside the Box was developed as a college student organization in Columbia, Mo., in 2009 to help lead children in Grades K-5 out of such dream deserts through imaginative programming that shows them new opportunities. Now a non-profit organization based in Fort Worth, Texas, Dream Outside the Box has thus far served children in 107 cities.

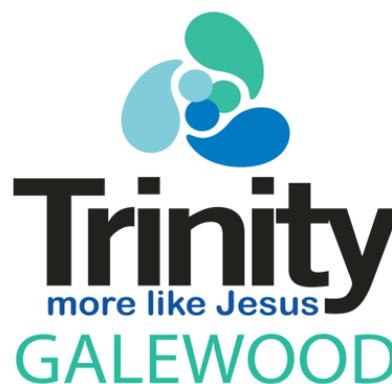
Working with the program on behalf of Trinity Galewood this year were Craig Larson, high school youth ministry coordinator at Trinity Lisle and a former social worker at OPRF High School; Allie Back from Trinity Galewood and CUC student in charge of recruitment; Niecy Robinson, Chicago Park District coordinator; Kayla Jackson, a Dominican student and Trinity Galewood intern; and Amanda Skubinna, Trinity Lisle's Children, Youth and Family Director; plus other student volunteers.

The college students plan each session using curriculum suggestions from Dream Outside the Box. Sessions have introduced children to botany, engineering, medicine, dentistry, and more. The young children have done things like apply surgical stitches to a banana, use engineering principles to build a church out of gumdrops, and practice dental hygiene on eggs. Each session begins with activities to calm children from any frustrations of the day and excite them for the after-school career path. "It's a big deal for them that we take the time to invest in their day and their problems," says Katherine Lutz, student volunteer from Concordia and Trinity Galewood's DCE intern this year.

"My own fear and panic inside doesn't matter," Kayla Jackson added, admitting that taking on this responsibility is a big deal for the student volunteers as well. "The kids are just so happy to be there. And happy to see us. On the second day, they were waiting at the door and yelled 'they came back' as they ran out to greet us."

"Dream Outside the Box is an intentional move for us to be there in the community instead of here in the church," said Trinity Galewood's Pastor Dave McGinley. Amundsen Park is only three blocks from the corner of Narragansett and Wabansia where the church is located. The park is a natural partner for extending the connection with area children that is a core feature of Trinity Galewood's ministry year-round.

Trinity Galewood ran three eight-week sessions this year, serving 15 children each session. Volunteers work with the kids in two groups, divided by age. They hope to be back with the kids in Amundsen Park in the fall.



*Allie Back with older students at Dream Outside the Box*

