



DREAMS IN ACTION

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"It's Just the Way You Bring It"

Artists-in-Residence Program Helps Bring DREAMS to Life

There are dances to dance, songs to sing, stories to tell, pictures to paint, theatrical wonders to perform.

DREAMS student Chloe Farris sits on the edge of a metal folding chair, facing the four young people who will portray her story. She begins, "I woke up one morning and heard someone moaning. It was my brother, Chip. I thought he was playing a prank, like usual, but he wasn't. He was really sick. The doctors thought he was going to die."

The young actors, all of whom are enrolled in the DREAMS theater program, listen intently as Chloe speaks. One will play Chloe herself, one will play her mother, one will act out her brother's experience, and one will be the voice of his conscience. It's spring break, and these students are participating in a two-day mini-residency at DREAMS, led by Playback Theatre performance artist Raphael Peter.

The Playback workshop is part of a larger Artists-in-Residence program designed to connect DREAMS students with a wide variety of talented teaching artists. The program's goals include exposing students to new perspectives, immersing them in multicultural experiences, and providing them with the highest-quality artistic education possible.

Like all of the programming at DREAMS, the Artists-in-Residence initiative is more than just art for art's sake. At the heart of the program is the power of the arts to connect youth to their true selves and to others, to help them express through theater, music, art or dance what they might otherwise be unable to say aloud. From poverty to unsafe

neighborhoods, gang violence to group homes, many young DREAMers face tough situations every day. Through the arts, they find meaning in their experiences and make sense of their lives.

This philosophy resonates strongly with Playback Theatre, a world-renowned dramatic troupe dedicated to bringing people's personal stories to life. "The techniques (Mr. Peter) used helped us open to each other, so that we could get other people's points of view," says participant Sierra Underwood.

Tracy Wilkes, DREAMS' Executive Director, embraces Playback's approach. "When you tell your story and it's validated, that's a powerful character-building experience. It lets our students know, 'You count. You matter.'"

The 2006-2007 Artists-in-Residence schedule features an array of visual artists, actors, musicians, and dancers from around the globe. During fall 2006, with the support of UNCW Presents and the No Boundaries International Artists Colony, visiting artists included the renowned Los Angeles Guitar Quartet, Chinese painter Wei Ru, and Barbadian artist Neville Crawford. In late April 2007, DREAMS will host acclaimed dancer and director Duane Cyrus, Assistant Professor of Dance at UNC-Greensboro.

Iandry Ramiandrioso, a visual artist from Madagascar, actress/director Ashley Sparks, and dancer Tamara Thomas will teach in the program's three-week summer

intensive. For Ms. Sparks, teaching at DREAMS is a natural extension of her theatrical career. "As an artist I believe it is also my responsibility to become an educator," she says. "It is critical that we raise our young people to see the world around them as a space that they can shape."

Ms. Thomas, who held a one-week workshop at DREAMS last June, will explore hip-hop, step, and neo-traditional African dance during her summer residency. She says, "My aim is to not only build on the momentum and concepts from last summer, but to really involve the students in the creative process."

DREAMer Ashley White studied with Ms. Thomas in 2006 and can't wait to enroll again. "I liked her teaching and her dances," she says. "Dancing is a way to express life, how you feel, your emotions, and what you do. It's not about the way you look. It's just the way you bring it."



Actors Sierra Underwood, Ashley White and Marquand Ward prepare for their performance



There are dreams to dream... and there are the miracles... of seeing those dreams come true.



*"When I
draw, my
heart feels
good."*

—DREAMer, age 11



Community Partnerships

Black Arts Alliance, Cape Fear Museum, City of Wilmington—Office of the Mayor, Cuckoo's Kids, The Dance Cooperative, EVOLVE! Wilmington, Food Bank of Southeastern North Carolina, Greater Wilmington Arts and Cultural Alliance, The Jesus's Jaws, Junior Achievement of the Cape Fear Region, Kids Making It, Kiddink, Louise Wells Cameron Art Museum, Now Elements Gallery, No Boundaries Incarnational Artists Colony, Odessa, The Thalian Association, The University of North Carolina-Wilmington, WAVE Transit, Wilmington Art Association

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DREAMS is incredibly pleased and excited to announce the creation of two scholarships at the University of North Carolina-Wilmington. The Elizabeth Huston "DREAMS" Scholarship for Transfer Students and The Donald Huston "DREAMS" Scholarship were endowed this January by donors David Robertson and Mark Griffis. These scholarships will provide much-needed financial assistance for our college-bound DREAMers. The staff, students, and families at DREAMS would like to express our gratitude for Mr. Robertson's and Mr. Griffis's incredible generosity.