

A Decade of Making Dreams into Reality: Lessons from the I Have A Dream Program

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I. THE PROMISE

Ten years ago, Eugene Lang startled a graduating class of East Harlem sixth-graders by promising to pay for their college educations. He had been advised by their principal that most of the students would drop out before completing high school; Lang hoped the tuition promise would motivate them to stay in school. But Lang soon discovered he needed to provide more than money to make the distant prospect of college a reality for his students, whom he called "Dreamers." To augment his promise, Lang rented a meeting space and hired Johnny Rivera, a young caseworker with a neighborhood social service organization, to coordinate support services for the Dreamers and their families. Over the next ten years, Lang and Rivera worked closely with the students, as mentors and motivators. Most importantly, they built caring, personal relationships with their Dreamers. The original inspiration of the scholarship promise, combined with a decade of guidance and support, produced striking results.

Today, more than eighty percent of the Dreamers in Lang's original class who are still in New York have their high school or general equivalency diplomas (GEDs).¹ The dropout rate for students in comparable inner city schools is between sixty and seventy-five percent.² The success of Lang's class is particularly striking against the backdrop of the expected outcome for the students. The elementary school that Lang's kids attended, known as P.S. 121, is ranked 611th out of the 619 elementary schools in New York City in

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1. Of Lang's 61 original Dreamers, seven moved away. Forty-five of the remaining 54 Dreamers have graduated from high school or received GEDs.

2. Dennis Kelly, *Dream Project Founder Returns to Alma Mater*, USA TODAY, June 25, 1991, at 2A.

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academic performance.³ Their principal predicted ten years ago that only one or two students from the class would make it to college.⁴ In June 1991, two of Lang's Dreamers graduated with bachelor's degrees from Bard and Barnard Colleges, while four others entered their senior years at Swarthmore, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Hunter College and the University of Arizona. Remarkably, thirty-three of Lang's Dreamers, or more than fifty percent of the class, are enrolled in college. The success of Lang's original I Have A Dream (IHAD) program spawned many others; there are now 150 IHAD programs in 43 cities in 26 states serving over 10,000 Dreamers, and dozens of other tuition sponsorship programs have been inspired by Lang's example.

American public education reform has been a topic of heated debate throughout most of the past decade. Violence, drug abuse and teen pregnancy are common, and dropout rates are high in most inner city schools.⁵ Among the many innovative educational initiatives undertaken in the 1980s, Lang's IHAD program recently has attracted serious interest from state and federal legislators. Statewide initiatives such as the Liberty Scholarships in New York⁶ and the Children's Crusade in Rhode Island⁷ evolved with IHAD inspiration and assistance. The Department of Housing and Urban Development is considering launching IHAD-style education programs in inner city public housing developments,⁸ and several members of Congress have introduced national legislation to support programs based on the IHAD model.⁹

Given these efforts to adapt the IHAD model to varied circumstances, it is particularly important to emphasize what distinguishes it from other education initiatives. IHAD programs succeed largely because of the personal, ongoing relationships Dreamers form with the Sponsor and IHAD staff over a period of roughly ten years. These guiding and supportive relationships with committed adults who are concerned about education make it possible for Dreamers to believe in their own futures and to plan for them. Most Dreamers come from backgrounds where college is a distant and unreal goal. Sponsors' tuition scholarship promises are believable because of their access to reliable financial resources and their regular contact with the Dreamers. Thus, the combination of a credible tuition promise with a long-term, inclusive program of academic and personal support make the IHAD model unique and successful.

3. See Evelyn Nieves, *The Carrot Was Money for College, But Not All Went for It*, N.Y. TIMES, July 12, 1991, at B1, B2 (giving statistics on P.S. 121 and academic outcome of Lang's original class).

4. *Id.*

5. See generally JONATHAN KOZOL, *SAVAGE INEQUALITIES* (1991) (detailing problems of overcrowding, violence, and high dropout rates in inner-city schools). See also Melinda Beck et al., *A Nation Still at Risk*, NEWSWEEK, May 2, 1988, at 54.

6. See discussion, *infra* Section IV.A.

7. See discussion, *infra* Section IV.C.

8. See discussion, *infra* Section IV.E.

9. See discussion, *infra* Section IV.D.

In order to help others learn from the IHAD program's experience, this Article reviews the structure and history of the IHAD program, examines recent private and public sector efforts at adapting the IHAD model, and considers the challenges to its large-scale replication.

II. OVERVIEW OF THE IHAD PROJECT MODEL

The core of the I Have A Dream program is the coordinated effort of a team—including the Sponsor, Project Coordinator, volunteer mentors, parents, and a local community organization—to motivate Dreamers to achieve their personal, academic, and vocational goals. The basic IHAD program begins with the promise of a caring adult, the Sponsor, to provide a college or vocational school tuition scholarship and a sustained personal relationship to an entire elementary school class of public school children. Sponsors employ a Project Coordinator (PC) who coordinates activities designed to motivate each child to stay in school, define viable career objectives, and seek higher education. Together, the PC and Sponsor build personal relationships with the Dreamers that show their concern for and commitment to the students. Most IHAD program offices are located in community-based organizations (CBOs), such as Boys' & Girls' Clubs, Settlement Houses or YMCAs, which provide office space, support services, and oversight. The Sponsor, Project Coordinator, and CBO staff work with Dreamer parents, schools, local corporations, and civic groups to provide maximum support for the Dreamers and their families as they seek their objectives.

Recent studies by independent analysts have applauded the IHAD model. In 1990 the General Accounting Office reported on a study of private sector initiatives designed to motivate disadvantaged youths to pursue higher education.¹⁰ The report concluded that while all of the tuition assistance programs studied were "promising," IHAD-style "sponsorship" programs that provide mentoring and tutoring services over a long period typically provided the most comprehensive and intensive educational services.¹¹ Another study, conducted by Public/Private Ventures, a non-profit consulting and evaluation group, concluded that IHAD's success could be attributed, in part, to the flexibility of the Project Coordinator and the caring attention Dreamers receive from the PC and the Sponsor over an extended period of time.¹²

10. See U.S. GEN. ACCOUNTING OFFICE, PROMISING PRACTICE: PRIVATE PROGRAMS GUARANTEEING STUDENT AID FOR HIGHER EDUCATION (June 1990).

11. *Id.* at 2-3.

12. See *I Have A Dream: First Research Findings*, PUBLIC/PRIVATE VENTURE NEWS (Public/Private Ventures, Philadelphia, Pa.) Winter 1991, at 1. Public/Private Ventures' report concluded that: (1) IHAD successfully reaches very economically and educationally disadvantaged youth; (2) the early timing of IHAD intervention in children's lives is crucial and effective; (3) IHAD has a positive effect on Dreamers' attitudes toward education; (4) the PC's flexible role is uniquely well-adapted to meeting the needs of disadvantaged youth in inner-city schools; (5) support services, especially academic tutoring, are necessary

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A recent tragedy in one Dreamer's life demonstrates how the PC and Sponsor work with their students to confront a wide range of life issues. A Chicago Dreamer was orphaned when her mother died suddenly of cancer. Because she and her brother were fatherless and lived in a public housing project, she faced becoming a ward of the state. Her Sponsor provided funds for her mother's burial and served as a pallbearer at the funeral, which was also attended by her PC, her mentor, and a tutor from the IHAD program. After the funeral, the PC worked quickly to search for a suitable home for the Dreamer to prevent her from being placed in Chicago's troubled foster care system. Eventually, her PC located a woman who had known the Dreamer's mother in the housing project, but who had subsequently moved out to the suburbs, after putting herself through trade school. The PC guided the Dreamer and her new friend through the legal guardianship process, and then helped the Dreamer relocate to her new home, where she has settled in and is doing well in school. The story of the Chicago Dreamer illustrates how personal caring and timely intervention from PCs and Sponsors help Dreamers overcome obstacles in their lives and make the IHAD program effective. This commitment is evident even in the less dramatic situations to problems that arise every day, as illustrated in the following sections of this Article.

A. *The Sponsor*

Sponsors contribute to the success of IHAD projects through their personal involvement with the Dreamers and their access to financial and human resources in the community. Ideally, the Sponsors play roles that are both supervisory and parental—they are usually responsible for funding and directing the entire program, while also developing personal, avuncular relationships with their Dreamers.

Sponsors typically are involved in celebrating individual Dreamer's successes and in helping Dreamers overcome obstacles and mistakes. Sponsors learn about their Dreamers' interests and career goals, then call on personal contacts to open doors to summer jobs, special events, and individual opportunities. One Sponsor, for example, upon hearing that two Dreamers wanted to be pilots, arranged for them to visit an airport, talk with a pilot, and take introductory flight lessons. Another Dreamer who was interested in surgery visited with a cardiovascular surgeon and observed an operation. Yet another Dreamer who was interested in cosmetology was given the opportunity to help manage a local beauty parlor. Such experiences can have a terrific impact, broadening students' awareness of both the range of possibilities ahead of them and the

program components; and (6) the combination of caring from both Sponsors and PCs seems to be a particularly potent formula, especially when offered over many years. *Id.*

academic preparation needed to pursue their dream careers. Sponsors also occasionally intervene with school bureaucracies to ensure that Dreamers are tested and placed in appropriate classes, speak with parents to encourage involvement in their child's education, and recruit community figures as speakers and role models for the class. Most of all, Sponsors maintain a steady involvement with the Dreamers over what is often ten years of growth and change.

In addition to the time commitment made by most Sponsors, there is a considerable commitment of financial resources. The personal nature of the Sponsor's financial commitment provides an incentive for the Sponsor to see the project through, which in turn provides the Dreamers with reassurance that the tuition promise is reliable. For most Dreamers and their families, an abstract promise of a tuition scholarship only becomes believable through long-term contact with a Sponsor whose ability to provide access to financial resources makes the guarantee credible.

Sponsors are unsolicited volunteers; usually they are inspired to launch a local IHAD project after seeing a presentation about the program. Local IHAD Sponsors and the national I Have A Dream Foundation¹³ serve as an informal screening committee that counsels potential new Sponsors in their area on the financial and time commitments required to run a program. Several potential Sponsors have been encouraged to pursue independent non-IHAD projects because their personal commitment or available financial support seemed inadequate to carry them through the demands of sponsorship. Of the more than 200 Sponsors and Co-sponsors who have started IHAD projects to date, only one Sponsor has left his project. In that case, and in two others where Sponsors have died, the parents and Project Coordinators have continued the programs until new Sponsors could be identified.

Despite their successes and the amount of resources devoted to their programs, Sponsors face frequent challenges and frustrations with their Dreamers. Given the typical Dreamer's living environment, it is not surprising that most programs include students who are regularly exposed to violence, crime, and drugs. Nor is it surprising that the IHAD program cannot improve all Dreamers' lives immediately or permanently. For example, one of Lang's original Dreamers was convicted of armed robbery and sent to prison. With Lang's encouragement, the Dreamer studied for his GED while serving his sentence. Upon the Dreamer's release, Lang arranged for him to work in a hospital during the day and to attend LaGuardia Community College at night to study for a paramedic license. Unfortunately, after months of working and studying, he became involved in crime again and has since returned to prison. Despite such setbacks, Lang maintains that his job as a Sponsor is to provide

13. See *infra* note 15 and accompanying text.

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help and support whenever a Dreamer is ready to try to improve himself. "You wouldn't give up on your own child, so as a Sponsor, we don't ever give up on our Dreamers."¹⁴

B. *The Project Coordinator*

In IHAD programs, it's not the promised tuition payments that really make the difference, but the personal attention paid to Dreamers that effectively changes their lives. Thus, the Project Coordinator, who typically works full-time directly with the Dreamers, is the key to most successful IHAD programs. The Project Coordinator organizes tutoring, recruits and trains mentors, supervises outings and cultural events, arranges summer programs and jobs, and provides crisis intervention for the Dreamers. Most PCs visit the Dreamers' schools and homes on a regular basis, and provide an important link between the Dreamers, their parents, and the community. PCs also play a vital role in educating the Sponsor about the Dreamers' daily lives and in mediating the Sponsor-Dreamer relationship. The heart of the PC's job is being available to help with almost any facet of the Dreamers' lives—to give them a stern lecture when they're in detention, to celebrate a good report card or a birthday, to visit a troubled home, or to intervene with teachers or administrators.

In Delaware, one Dreamer had great difficulty in school and was frequently teased by classmates about his small size and serious reading problems. His Project Coordinator worked closely with him, tutoring him in math and reading, and arranged for him to enroll in a local martial arts league. As the Dreamer began to win awards in karate contests and his self-esteem rose, so did his grades and reading skills. Dozens of similar stories from across the nation show that PCs are a crucial component in the success of IHAD programs because of their adaptability and personal commitment to their Dreamers.

Identifying and recruiting people appropriate for the job of PC is essential to the success of IHAD programs. Project Coordinators come from a wide range of backgrounds, but most are young, dynamic, social service or education professionals who have a personal familiarity with the Dreamers' communities and an intense commitment to their students. New PCs often visit other IHAD projects in their area and attend the annual national convention for basic training in IHAD program operation. Many PCs are attracted by the combination of guaranteed future program funding, minimal oversight, and the challenge of working with one group of youths and their families over a long period. IHAD succeeds partly because it provides social service professionals

14. Interview with Eugene M. Lang, Founder and Chairman, national I Have A Dream Foundation, in New York, N.Y. (Jan. 4, 1992).

a rare chance to “run their own show” in a program that offers concrete rewards to participating students and their families.

C. Parents and Community Groups

Parental participation at home and in the community is important to the success of any IHAD program. A parent’s reinforcement of education can do more to enhance Dreamer motivation and self-improvement than any other component of the program. Most Sponsors report having difficulty motivating parents to become involved and experience some problems building a good rapport with the community. Typically, parents are best at convincing other parents to participate, and several IHAD projects rely on a parent volunteer to coordinate certain activities. Recognizing the importance of a supportive home environment to a child’s education, many IHAD programs provide family outings, parenting training, and GED or continuing education classes for Dreamer families. Most programs have a parent advisory board that helps organize and chaperon Dreamer events, and advises the PC and Sponsor on Dreamers’ family needs and the community’s reaction to the program. Strong ties to the Dreamers’ neighborhood can help an IHAD program to recruit local mentors and volunteers and access existing services run by community organizations.

D. Scope of IHAD Program Activities

Dreamers receive a wide range of services from their programs—from tutoring and mentoring to job training and special trips. One New York couple that sponsors a class of Dreamers with learning disabilities arranged an Outward Bound program in Colorado that was specifically designed for their class. Other Sponsors have brought sports figures, entrepreneurs, public officials, and famous explorers to speak to their classes. Dreamers in various cities have produced their own newspapers, home movies, music videos, and yearbooks. All of these activities provide needed enrichment for Dreamers that goes beyond what they receive in school or at home.

Most programs provide academic tutoring through paid tutors and volunteer mentors. Many groups also provide incentive trips that are earned through performance in school or on Dreamer projects. For example, five Dreamers from Delaware were treated to a weekend in New York City as a reward for excellent grades and school attendance. Most projects have comprehensive summer programs that include some academic enrichment activities combined with summer job placements. Dreamers are also involved in community service projects, which help them learn the importance and value of giving back to the community.

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III. PRIVATE SECTOR VARIATIONS OF THE IHAD MODEL

Lang organized the national I Have A Dream Foundation in early 1986 to facilitate the formation of new projects.¹⁵ The first new projects were established in New York City, followed by Dallas, Cleveland, Trenton, Chicago, Atlanta and Los Angeles. Today, 150 IHAD projects in 43 cities and 26 states serve over 10,000 Dreamers. The Foundation, located in New York City, serves all 150 local programs, which are loosely joined in a federation. The local IHAD programs operate independently with little oversight or regulation by the national Foundation; in a few large cities, such as New York, Dallas, Los Angeles, and Chicago, a city-wide IHAD Foundation coordinates activities and community outreach for the many local IHAD projects. The loose structure of the national Foundation enables each Sponsor to adapt each project to suit the needs of a particular community, while maintaining the essential elements of a successful IHAD program.

A. *Evolution of IHAD Program Goals*

After ten years, the basic IHAD program model has evolved. One change has been to target younger students. Lang originally announced his offer to students graduating from sixth grade, and began working with them as they entered the seventh grade. After its first two years of operation, the Dallas IHAD program organizers concluded that they should start their program earlier to form bonds with Dreamers before the children are confronted with the social challenges such as widespread drug abuse and sexual activity. Dallas programs launched in 1990 and 1991 began with fourth-grade students, as will new projects in Battle Creek, Michigan and Louisville, Kentucky; new IHAD projects starting this year in Pasadena, California and Chicago, Illinois will begin in the third grade. This evolution toward working with younger students has turned IHAD into a model comprehensive program for disadvantaged students that picks up where Head Start leaves off.

While motivating Dreamers to attend college was the focus of Lang's original program, that goal has also been modified over time. IHAD programs typically include outstanding students, learning-disabled students and all skill

15. Currently, the national office has just four staff members, a budget of roughly \$300,000, and a projected budget for the 1991-92 year of \$517,000 to carry out its full agenda. The national Foundation relies on Sponsor donations, annual dues, and contributions from other foundations, corporations, and outside individuals for its support. It serves as a clearinghouse for public information about the IHAD model and programs, provides support for new Sponsors and training for new PCs, collects and evaluates information on the operations of IHAD projects, coordinates an annual national IHAD conference, and produces publications through which Sponsors and PCs exchange ideas. The national staff is also responsible for maintaining media and government relations, developing speaking platforms for IHAD representatives, and assisting program growth nationwide. Interview with Ann Winters-Bishop, Executive Director, national I Have A Dream Foundation, in New York, N.Y. (Jan. 14, 1992).

levels in between. College is not a realistic goal for all Dreamers; some lack the inclination or ability to continue past high school but could greatly benefit from trade schools and job placement. In response to the diverse goals and needs of participants, most Sponsors now focus on graduation from high school with functional literacy and vocational qualifications as a threshold objective for all Dreamers, while providing motivation, tutoring assistance, and college tuition scholarships for those Dreamers interested in higher education. In this way, IHAD is not only a scholarship program, but also a dropout prevention program which creates opportunities for all types of students. Rather than selecting and isolating a few students who show promise at an early age, the IHAD program relies on the bonds formed between Dreamers with different academic abilities to motivate students at all levels.

B. Various IHAD Program Types

As the IHAD program goals have evolved, the structure of individual projects has been tailored to meet local needs and resources, as well. IHAD program organizers have experimented with new ways of raising funds and selecting Dreamers, while still retaining the key elements of a committed individual Sponsor, full-time support and services from a PC, an inclusive tuition scholarship promise to an entire class of students, and a guaranteed source of funding.

Early programs closely followed Lang's model and were funded by a wealthy individual or couple. Today, different program models have emerged. Several churches and a college are providing funding and special resources for their own Dreamer classes, while other programs are funded more broadly by the community. Lang has resisted direct sponsorship of a Dreamer class by corporations or other institutions, fearing that institutional sponsors would provide money but not the personal leadership, accountability, and intimate relationships an individual Sponsor provides. In the programs that are financed by a church or college, an individual or couple serve as the Sponsor for the class, taking on a ten-year commitment to provide the same individualized support and attention that Lang did for his class. The institutional involvement of the church or college also helps the Sponsors gain access to volunteers and services from the student body or congregation.

Grinnell College in Iowa is the first college to start an IHAD program; a Grinnell alumnus serves as the Sponsor while the college supplies a program director, operating funds, facilities, and volunteers. Several Grinnell trustees provided the financial contributions to launch the project. The Grinnell program sponsors roughly 100 Dreamers in nearby Des Moines.

Students at Stanford Business School are currently raising funds to endow the first student-organized IHAD program. The Stanford group seeks to

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sponsor one fourth-grade and one fifth-grade class in East Palo Alto, where high school dropout rates exceed seventy percent.¹⁶ The group hopes to attract volunteer mentors, tutors, and management interns from Stanford, and it has already set up a successful pilot volunteer tutoring program. The Stanford students need to raise \$450,000 to launch their project; as of February 1992, they had raised \$310,000, and they anticipated announcing the project to East Palo Alto students by June 1992.¹⁷

Religious congregations have also launched their own IHAD projects in several major cities including New York, Chicago, Hartford, Dallas, and Fort Worth. In Washington D.C., a suburban and an inner city congregation have joined in sponsoring a project, while in Portland, Oregon, the St. James Lutheran Church and Temple Beth El jointly sponsor a program. In each case, either the pastor or an individual or couple from the congregation is identified as the project's Sponsor and assumes the role of building a personal relationship with the Dreamers.

Existing programs have also taken many different approaches to raising the necessary funds. In Trenton, for example, a group of Co-sponsors each pledged to contribute \$2,500 to \$5,000 per year over a ten year period, rather than contributing the money in a lump sum.¹⁸ In Denver, an enterprising group of young professionals was inspired by a speech Lang gave to a Big Brothers conference. With the help of a professional fundraiser, they have raised roughly \$500,000 from local individuals, corporations, foundations, and civic groups. The group currently sponsors two IHAD classes, with a third on the way.¹⁹ Most strikingly, Portland, Oregon IHAD projects are being funded by the settlement of a major lawsuit. In 1991, Pacific Power & Light of Oregon (PP&L) settled a long-standing legal battle with consumer advocates by promising to donate up to \$5.1 million to several community organizations.²⁰ As a result, PP&L will provide a \$1.3 million grant and up to \$875,000 in matching funds to the existing Portland IHAD Foundation, enabling it to launch IHAD projects for up to 500 Oregon fifth-graders.²¹

IHAD Sponsors have also experimented with shifting the selection criterion

16. *Building Futures Now for Children at Risk*, PMP FORUM (Stanford Univ. Graduate School of Business, Stanford, Cal.), Summer 1991, at 1.

17. Telephone Interview with David Michael, Graduate Student, Stanford Graduate School of Business (Feb. 13, 1992). See also *'I Have A Dream' Fundraising Nears Halfway Point: \$200,000 Raised Already*, GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS REPORTER (Stanford Univ. Graduate School of Business/Public Management Program, Stanford, Cal.), Oct. 4, 1991, at 2. James Mitchell, *MBAs Help With ABCs*, SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS, June 16, 1991, at 4.

18. Telephone Interview with Sandra Persichetti, Sponsor, I Have A Dream Foundation of Trenton (Feb. 19, 1992).

19. Telephone Interview with Kelly Felice, Executive Director, I Have A Dream Foundation of Colorado (Feb. 18, 1992).

20. *PP&L to Fund Local Oregon Programs to End Battle over Nuclear Plants*, ELECTRIC UTILITY WEEK, June 3, 1991, at 14.

21. *Id.*

that brings Dreamers together. In Boca Raton, Florida, a local resident interested in sponsoring an I Have A Dream program found that most of the low-income, minority families in Boca Raton live in one public housing project on the outskirts of town. The children of the project attend a dozen different schools. To target resources where the need was greatest, the Boca Raton IHAD program is based in the housing project, rather than a single class or homeroom in a local school. The project provides the same comprehensive, long-term services and tuition guarantees as other programs, but the Dreamer class is made up of all of the housing project residents attending the fourth through the ninth grades in local schools.

The Boca Raton project, as well as the church and college-sponsored classes, are examples of how the IHAD program has been adapted to different circumstances while still retaining key elements of the IHAD model: the long-term, personal involvement of Sponsors and Project Coordinators in the lives of Dreamers, and the extension of an inclusive tuition guarantee to an entire, identifiable class or group of public school students.

IV. STATE AND FEDERAL INITIATIVES BASED ON THE IHAD MODEL

Given Lang's success in improving his original Dreamers' academic performance, and the media attention generated by the national growth of the program, many state and federal legislators are now looking for ways to support early intervention and tuition scholarship programs that draw on the IHAD model. However, IHAD programs traditionally have been privately funded, relatively small, and free of bureaucratic structures. Replicating IHAD's success on a large scale, with public funding and the inevitable financial insecurity and bureaucratic control that follows, has proven to be difficult in the few places it has been attempted.

A. Liberty Scholarships

The New York Liberty Scholarship and Partnership programs were an important initiative that ultimately fell victim to statewide political and budgetary problems.

In 1988, Governor Mario Cuomo of New York proposed a comprehensive plan, inspired by the success of the I Have A Dream program, to make a college education a possibility for all of New York's disadvantaged students. The Liberty Scholarships were designed to provide grants to pay for much of a student's non-tuition college expenses at any of the State University or City University branches for students from families earning below \$26,000 annual-

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ly.²² To be eligible, students had to apply for a federal Pell Grant and a New York Tuition Assistance Program grant to pay for tuition. They also had to be under twenty-two years of age, enter college within two years of receiving a high school diploma or GED, and meet citizenship and residency requirements.²³

In an effort to match the comprehensive services provided by IHAD, a separate Liberty Partnership program awarded grants to help colleges and community-based organizations set up counseling, mentoring, and support services for Liberty Scholarship students.²⁴ As originally conceived, the program also guaranteed every seventh-grade student whose family fell below a certain income level tuition for a state college or university.²⁵ When the bill became law in July of 1988, however, the guarantee to seventh-graders was not part of the package.²⁶ A *Washington Post* editorial commented on the limitations of the bill that passed:

[T]he changes [the Liberty Scholarships bill] underwent suggest some limits of the Lang idea when it moves beyond the individual scale.

The New York law is a nice piece of financial aid in its own right. Expected to cost around \$70 million its first year, it offers a new grant to cover [college expenses and dropout-prevention programs] What's gone is any specific mention of catching individual students early. The Governor also lost out on an attempt to consolidate the dropout-prevention programs with which the state is rife, a move that would have approximated Mr. Lang's emphasis on intensive personal attention and counseling. Legislators found that these elements presented intolerable logistical problems, and naturally enough they wanted the new money to be available to their constituents right away, not in six years.

. . . [T]he new legislation also sidesteps the more interesting question raised by Mr. Lang's successes: Is it mainly the money that makes the difference, or the counseling? Do kids drop out because they know they can't afford college—or because they simply can't imagine it? The question is far from answered, but the experience of those working in the Lang program strongly suggest the latter. That in turn suggests that unless the new dropout money is accompanied by substantial changes, it will make the state colleges an extended entitlement without truly reaching more lives.²⁷

The Liberty Scholarships and Partnership program would have served over 90,000 students by 1994, when it was scheduled to go into full operation.²⁸ Unfortunately, due to New York's fiscal problems, both programs were cut out of the budget in 1991.²⁹ News accounts reported the disappointment felt

22. James Barron, *Cuomo Signs a Bill on Liberty Scholarships*, N.Y. TIMES, Aug. 7, 1988, at 31.

23. *Id.*

24. *Id.*

25. Eugene Lang *Writ Large*, WASH. POST, July 25, 1988, at A10.

26. *Id.*

27. *Id.*

28. See Barron, *supra* note 22, at 31.

29. Elisabet Van Nostrand, *Higher Education's Lower Expectations*, NEWSDAY, Aug. 7, 1991, at 7; *Liberty Scholarships Rise Again in State Education Report*, UPI, Sept. 30, 1991 available in LEXIS, Nexis Library, Omni File.

by students who had excitedly anticipated the Liberty Scholarships following their much celebrated announcement.³⁰ Given the state's ongoing budget problems, it is uncertain if the Liberty Scholarships and Partnership programs will be revived.

The experience of the New York program demonstrates the importance of insulating any state-sponsored early intervention and tuition assistance program from the ebb and flow of budget politics. It also highlights the recognition that financial assistance alone is not enough to make college or even high school graduation a realistic goal for many disadvantaged students, as indicated in the *Washington Post* editorial. Despite this realization, some programs focus almost exclusively on the tuition promise.

B. *The Taylor Plan*

Patrick Taylor, a self-made millionaire oilman, started a tuition guarantee program in New Orleans in 1988 which has since spread to seven other states.³¹ The Taylor Plan is a laudable initiative that helps students meet the cost of college. But it does not follow the IHAD model of providing years of educational support through personal relationships with a PC, Sponsor, and mentors. It also places academic limits on who may participate, and thus fails to serve those students most at risk of dropping out of school.

After speaking to a group of 147 at-risk students attending Livingston Middle School in New Orleans, Taylor was convinced they needed to believe they could afford college in order for them to work hard and stay in school.³² Taylor promised a full scholarship, tuition plus all expenses, to any of the seventh- or eighth- graders he addressed. "Taylor's Kids," as he called them, had to meet other criteria—they had to graduate with a "B" average or better in a pre-college curriculum, and any who became pregnant or were convicted were ineligible for the grant. Today, 126, roughly eighty-five percent of the original group, are still in high school, of which twenty-six are high school seniors prepared to attend college based on Taylor's offer.

Taylor built on his efforts with "Taylor's Kids" in order to convince the state of Louisiana to adopt a statewide program known as the Taylor Plan.³³ Under the Plan, any Louisiana resident under the age of 18 from a family earning below \$25,000 annually is eligible for a full-tuition state university scholarship if they take 17.5 credit hours in a college prep curriculum, maintain at least a 2.5 grade average in those courses, and score at least an 18 on

30. *Id.*

31. See Sandy Sheehy, *Raising the Levels of Hope and Expectations*, FORBES, Oct. 21, 1991, at 332, 332, 334.

32. The following program description was derived from a telephone interview with Carlos Crockett, staff assistant at the Patrick F. Taylor Foundation, on November 21, 1991.

33. *Louisiana Plan Opens College for Many Poor*, N.Y. TIMES, Aug. 30, 1989, at B7.

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the ACT (a college aptitude test similar to the SAT).³⁴ In the years 1990-1991, roughly 1,000 students received grants under the Plan, costing the state \$1.97 million.³⁵ There were 1,307 Taylor Plan students in Louisiana colleges in the fall of 1991, with 3,400 applicants for the spring semester.³⁶ Taylor has devoted himself to proselytizing widely for the plan; in the last two years, Arkansas, Florida, Indiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Maryland, and Texas have adopted similar state tuition assistance plans, although budget limitations have prevented some from operating.³⁷

There are substantial differences between the IHAD and Taylor models. Taylor's grant is conditioned on specific academic performance standards, while the IHAD tuition promise is open to any Dreamer who makes it to college. Taylor's program also lacks the comprehensive, long-term, personal involvement between Dreamers, Sponsor, and PC that is crucial to the success of IHAD programs. Finally, the Taylor Plan focuses only on improving access to a college education, while IHAD programs provide the services necessary for both college-bound students and students of average ability and motivation, who otherwise would have dropped out of high school, to reach their full potential.

C. *The Children's Crusade in Rhode Island*

Of the many statewide educational initiatives that claim to be inspired by the IHAD model, the Rhode Island Children's Crusade has most successfully incorporated its key elements. In September 1989, Rhode Island's then-governor Edward DiPrete announced the Crusade.³⁸ The Crusade offers mentoring and support services and the prospect of a college tuition scholarship to all Rhode Island students in the third grade.³⁹ To enroll in the Crusade, children and their parents must sign a contract with the non-profit Children's Crusade Foundation, which administers the program. The students promise to do their best academically, to send the foundation their report cards every term, to stay in school and off drugs, and to avoid early parenthood. If the students fulfill the contract and graduate from high school, they may receive a full-tuition scholarship at a state university or its equivalent in tuition assistance to spend

34. *Id.*

35. Telephone Interview with Carlos Crockett, *supra* note 32.

36. *Id.*

37. William Raspberry, *Taylor Plan Proves High School Needn't Be a Dead End*, CHI. TRIB., Apr. 29, 1991, at 13. See also *Arkansas Governor Signs 'Taylor Plan' Law*, PR NEWSWIRE, Mar. 5, 1991, available in LEXIS, Nexis Library, Omni File; *Florida Enacts College Accessibility Law*, PR NEWSWIRE, June 18, 1990, available in LEXIS, Nexis Library, Omni File.

38. . . . *And Quality in Schools*, WASH. POST, Sept. 4, 1989, at A26.

39. The following program description was derived from a telephone interview with Sylvia Robinson, Executive Director of the Children's Crusade Foundation, on January 14, 1992, and from informational materials provided by the Children's Crusade Foundation (on file with author).

in private or out-of-state colleges.

The foundation provides grants for groups such as colleges, churches, and social service organizations to recruit and supervise volunteer mentors. Mentors are screened, then sent to a Mentorship Academy at Rhode Island College for six hours of basic training, followed by quarterly in-service training programs. Mentoring is done individually or in groups, with no more than five students per mentor. Mentors make a commitment to work with the Crusade for at least one year. So far, groups affiliated with the Crusade have recruited 1,500 mentors.⁴⁰

The Crusade promise will be extended to each third-grade class in Rhode Island until the class year 2000. An initial mailing in December 1990 to all 10,000 second-graders in the state announcing the Crusade and inviting parents to enroll their children elicited 3,400 replies. The Crusade eventually hopes to enroll 3,000 low-income students per year, since those students are considered most at risk for dropping out of high school.⁴¹ To insulate the program somewhat from reliance on the state budget for operating funds, the Crusade plans to use a combination of public funds and private contributions to fund its endowment. But, the recent recession and resulting state budget crisis in Rhode Island have been quite severe, making it difficult for the state to fulfill its financial commitment to the Crusade. The foundation currently has \$4.2 million in the bank, including an endowment of roughly \$3 million, and an operating budget of \$1 million, which will steadily increase as the Crusade extends to additional class years.⁴² The Crusade is hoping the state will provide roughly \$1.5 million in support each year over the next ten years, significantly less than initially planned.⁴³ The foundation is also trying to close the potential gap between its revenue and outlays by seeking scholarship commitments from private colleges in the region and federal grants currently available for anti-drug and dropout prevention programs.⁴⁴

The Crusade's funding mechanism, its broadly inclusive scope and its reliance on volunteer mentors and private civic groups reduces the twin threats of budget politics and state bureaucratization. However, the Crusade is still somewhat dependent on state funds and lacks Sponsors to mobilize community resources and motivate individual students through personal, long-term relationships. The Crusade's performance will test both the importance of the Sponsor's role and the viability of statewide early intervention programs based on the IHAD model.

40. *Id.*

41. *Id.*; *R.I. Children's Crusade Opens to Children*, UPI, Jan. 28, 1991, available in LEXIS, Nexis Library, Omni File.

42. Telephone Interview with Sylvia Robinson, *supra* note 39.

43. *Id.*

44. *Id.*

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D. Proposed National Legislation

One possible solution to the funding problem that state programs face would be federal grants to local projects based on the IHAD model. Both houses of Congress are currently considering major education bills that would provide federal matching funds for early intervention initiatives modeled on the I Have A Dream program.

In the Senate, the reauthorization bill for the Higher Education Act of 1965⁴⁵ includes provisions that would allocate roughly \$85 million in federal matching funds to the states to support early intervention programs roughly similar to the IHAD model.⁴⁶ The main Senate education bill passed on February 21, 1992.⁴⁷

In the House, Representative Nita Lowey introduced a bill last year that would create a National Liberty Scholarship and Partnership program modeled on the New York programs.⁴⁸ The national program would provide federal matching funds for statewide programs combining tuition guarantees with tutoring, mentoring, and enrichment programs for disadvantaged youth. Lowey's proposal has since been incorporated into a comprehensive education package which the House passed on March 26, 1992.⁴⁹

Both the Senate and House proposals⁵⁰ provide matching funds for state assistance to early intervention programs that provide college tuition assistance, mentoring, and tutoring services for low-income students. But neither bill contains provisions specifically encouraging states to support private-sector programs that have the IHAD structure of a PC and Sponsor working with one identified class of students over a long period. Given the New York and Rhode Island experiences and the budget problems of most states, federal matching funds may be crucial to statewide experiments with IHAD-style programs. However, federal matching funds would reach local programs only after passing through state and local educational bureaucracies, which may drain available resources and impose burdensome oversight requirements.

45. S. 1150, 102d Cong., 1st Sess. (1991).

46. *See, e.g.*, 137 CONG. REC. S2927 (daily ed. Mar. 7, 1991) (statement of Sen. Jeffords concerning S. 585); 137 CONG. REC. S14981 (daily ed. Oct. 22, 1991) (statement of Sen. Simon concerning S. 1845, Financial Aid for All Students Act of 1991).

47. *See* 138 CONG. REC. S1969 (daily ed. Feb. 21, 1992).

48. Lowey initially introduced her plan as H.R. 2350, The National Liberty Scholarship and Partnership Act of 1991. *See* 137 CONG. REC. H3148 (daily ed. May 15, 1991).

49. *See* 138 CONG. REC. H1782 (daily ed. Mar. 26, 1992).

50. The Senate and House education bills, and their proposed support for IHAD-style programs, are scheduled to be combined through a conference committee later this year. *See* 138 CONG. REC. H1977 (daily ed. Mar. 26, 1992).

E. National Initiative by HUD

An exciting federal initiative directly adopting the IHAD model may arise from recent discussions between Secretary Jack Kemp of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Eugene Lang.⁵¹ HUD has made a preliminary commitment to fund pilot programs in four inner city housing projects similar to the existing IHAD project in Boca Raton, Florida. If they are established as planned, the projects will be financed by federal funds and local private contributions, and will rely on a local university for special educational support. The model programs will be jointly run by an advisory board of tenants, housing authority officials, representatives of HUD, corporate donors, and a local college, all operating under the direction of a Sponsor. A major challenge in defining the configuration of these model projects will be how the Sponsor and Project Coordinator are selected and what kind of government oversight and regulation will be required, if any.

One of these model programs, also currently in the planning stages, will be located in the Dearborn housing project in Chicago. The program is designed to sponsor 120 Dreamers, comprised of every third-grader in the housing project. HUD, through the Chicago Housing Authority, will provide operations funds and salary for the program's PC. Illinois Institute of Technology, a nearby technical college, will provide educational facilities, expertise, and volunteers. IBM is considering extending their current support of a local intergenerational learning center so that Dreamers and their families will have access to professional tutoring, GED, and job training services. Current plans call for the Sponsor to be a local civic leader who will be responsible for raising the funds for the tuition guarantee from the local corporate community and for carrying out a personal commitment to work with the Dreamers for ten years. The Chicago model HUD/IHAD program plans to be operating by the fall of 1992, with other programs to follow later in the year. Other pilot programs will be located in New York City, Trenton, and Chester, Pennsylvania.

In contrast to the federal legislation and state programs discussed above, the HUD initiative offers the prospect of federally supported public-private partnerships that directly follow the IHAD model in serving youth in some of America's most troubled neighborhoods and schools. It will be a great challenge for such partnerships to retain the autonomy and flexibility typical of local IHAD projects while mobilizing the support of both private sector volunteers and federal agencies.

51. The following information regarding the HUD initiative is based on an interview with Eugene Lang. See *supra* note 14.

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V. CHALLENGES TO BROAD-SCALE REPLICATION OF THE IHAD MODEL

As illustrated by the previous examples, the IHAD model can be adapted to meet different needs, but it may be difficult to retain the key features of the IHAD model in large-scale, publicly funded programs.

A. *Unique Role of the Sponsor*

The success of the IHAD program depends on the active and personal participation of Sponsors, who bring unique resources to bear on the needs of disadvantaged youth. The Sponsor plays a role which cannot be duplicated by public employees serving in a large-scale, publicly funded project. Sponsors are typically individuals with substantial community contacts and resources which allow them to intervene on behalf of their Dreamers and to offer their Dreamers special access to events and individuals.

The funding structure of IHAD programs also contributes both to the Sponsor's public credibility and to the program's lack of bureaucratic controls. Most Sponsors have either donated or raised over \$500,000 for the operation of their IHAD program. This substantial investment of their time and resources gives the Sponsors a great deal of control over their program budgets. In addition, because they are respected for having contributed so much money to the education of disadvantaged children, Sponsors typically have considerable power in dealing with school and state bureaucracies. A public employee trying to fill the role of Sponsor in a state-run program would lack both of these characteristics. Finally, Sponsors commit more than cash and personal time to a program; for many, their program becomes a personal passion that inspires them to work overtime to find creative ways to help their class of Dreamers.

A public-private partnership, such as the HUD initiative described above, can successfully attract committed volunteers to act as individual sponsors for IHAD-style early intervention programs that operate with public support. However, there is probably a limit on the number of such individuals in any given community, making it difficult to set up hundreds or thousands of IHAD-style projects in any one city or state.

B. *PC Adaptability and Lack of Bureaucratic Controls*

Typically, overhead and management expenses not directly linked to providing services to the Dreamers are very low for IHAD programs, largely because the Sponsors and other volunteers provide a substantial number of administrative services free of charge. Sponsors tend to require minimal reporting and financial accounting of their PC's, and as a result, Project

Coordinators are free to devote themselves to serving the Dreamers' needs without burdensome oversight.

Most IHAD projects have attracted very capable and independent PC's, who take full advantage of the unstructured nature of the program to devise innovative ways of working with the Dreamers and their families to address a broad range of their needs. A program that relied upon public funds and was subject to the oversight and control typical of public social service programs would lack much of the flexibility and energy of the IHAD program.

Providing a PC for a relatively small group of students for a period of six to ten years is also very expensive; PC salaries make up the majority of the operating expenses of IHAD programs. Neither the Rhode Island Children's Crusade nor the Taylor Plan incorporates funded staff members capable of providing their students with comprehensive, individualized services comparable to those provided by the PC in IHAD programs.

C. IHAD Visibility and Scale

Most IHAD projects benefit substantially from the media attention and public enthusiasm generated by their unique nature. Many of the special opportunities open to Dreamers because of the cachet of the program might not be available if thousands of students participated in a comparable publicly funded program. However, the size of the program alone is not a barrier to accessing community resources. As the number of programs in some cities has multiplied, IHAD staff and board members have successfully mobilized large-scale commitments by corporations and community organizations. In Chicago, for example, where there are thirteen programs operating or starting up this year, the staff has organized comprehensive participation in the IHAD program from major corporations and local universities. In such cases, large donors and volunteer groups are attracted by the potential for having a significant impact through the citywide scale of the IHAD program. A state program, such as the Children's Crusade in Rhode Island, can successfully generate popular support if it is broadly inclusive and combines public and private resources.

D. Cross-Cultural Contact

The I Have A Dream program brings people together and builds personal relationships across the economic and racial divides that separate many Americans. Over time, Dreamers and their families develop bonds with mentors and PCs and the Sponsor that often expose them to new experiences and social realities. The IHAD program also has a striking "eye-opening" impact on the Sponsors, who become personally involved in and exposed to the problems

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facing inner city youth.⁵² For most, their participation in the IHAD program is their first exposure to the disadvantaged community in their city. Sponsors have become motivated as a result to assume larger advocacy and social service roles in the community.

Joe and Carol Reich in New York, inspired by their experience with their Dreamer class, plan to spend a million dollars establishing an experimental public school in Brooklyn.⁵³ After convincing the Pfizer Corporation to donate an unused office building, which the Reichs subsequently rebuilt, the couple set up a network of volunteer tutors, mentors, and support services for the entire 350-student elementary school.⁵⁴ The school is scheduled to open in 1994 and will be run by a joint board of parents and community leaders.⁵⁵ Although the Reich's story is exceptional, their initiative illustrates how several sponsors have developed a personal stake in improving education and opportunities in areas of their community where they otherwise might never have become involved.

VI. CONCLUSION

Any public program that attempts to replicate the success of the IHAD program should seek to do the following:

(1) Programs should provide a stable, dedicated source of adequate funding to cover both the basic tuition promise and operating costs. Most Dreamers have difficulty believing in the reliability of the tuition promise, even with the personal presence and commitment of an identifiable individual. Public programs should strive to ensure that parents and students can have confidence in their offers of assistance.

(2) Public programs should identify ways to involve citizens from a broad spectrum of backgrounds as participants and volunteers. The bridge that the IHAD program builds across the racial and economic divisions in our cities is one of its most important elements. In particular, individuals who can fulfill the roles of PC and Sponsor are crucial. Sponsors should be volunteers who are willing to make a firm commitment of their own time and money to work with a particular class. Public officials can be very influential in recruiting and rewarding talented individuals to work as volunteer Sponsors in the public

52. Montgomery Brower, *For a Host of Philanthropists Inspired by a Common Dream, Charity Begins at School*, PEOPLE, Oct. 5, 1987, at 74; Marilyn Webb, *The Great White Hope: 'Mr. G.' and His Brownsville Dreamers*, NEW YORK, Jan. 16, 1989, at 50.

53. Joseph Berger, *After Two Years, Couple Can Give New York a School*, N.Y. TIMES, Nov. 21, 1991, at B3.

54. *Id.*

55. *Id.*

schools.

(3) Project Coordinators should have the resources and flexibility to meet the various needs of their students. The PCs are both the key to IHAD's success and their salaries are the main expenses involved in operating the programs. Simply providing tuition guarantees without the complementary, ongoing involvement of a PC to motivate students and parents, to advocate for the students' interests, and to mobilize community resources will have little effect on disadvantaged students. Adequately funding PC positions without imposing substantial bureaucratic burdens on the PCs' actions is one of the greatest challenges faced by public programs.

(4) Finally, programs must build public support and enthusiasm in order for an educational enrichment program similar to the Liberty Scholarships to succeed. Of course, this requires great effort by the public education establishment and elected officials, but only with a highly visible push from the top, and broad-based cooperation from the business and philanthropic communities, can such a program succeed. The relative success of the Children's Crusade in attracting broad public support and volunteer participation may be due to the relatively small size of the state. While in Rhode Island 3,000 students comprises all the low-income students at one grade level, in New York or nationwide, 3,000 students represents only a small fraction of the students in need.

The I Have A Dream program has grown very rapidly over the past decade. In its early stages, IHAD was occasionally criticized for reaching only a few students at great expense; yet with roughly 10,000 Dreamers today, and several statewide programs based on IHAD models, its impact has become significant. As state and national legislators continue to consider ways to adapt the lessons of the IHAD model into publicly funded programs, they should consider the following points: IHAD programs succeed because they intervene early in a child's education, promise a concrete hope for a college education, and provide long-term, reliable, and supportive relationships with concerned and caring adults. It may not be possible to replicate the IHAD program on a massive scale, but it should be possible to incorporate these simple insights into any effort to create a publicly supported education initiative that effectively serves disadvantaged youth.

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