



dreams

ARE POSSIBLE

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THAT'S WHAT SHE SAID

September 9 saw 10 local women take the stage to relate moving, personal stories at "That's What She Said." The Bloomington Center for Performing Arts hosted the popular event, and Dreams Are Possible was chosen as the recipient of a portion of the gate receipts that night. Thanks to an arrangement with the folks at TWSS, DAP will receive 20 per cent of ticket sales.

DAP had an informational table after the main event, along with other non-profits and local businesses. According to DAP Program Director Cecelia Long, "We had several people who were interested in supporting our program financially or volunteering."

Dreams Are Possible is grateful to have been chosen as the recognized charity at That's What She Said. Thank you to everyone involved, especially the women who shared their stories.



HOW WE FIND OUR STUDENTS

Cecelia Long, Program Director at Dreams Are Possible, explains how she puts students in the seats each semester:

"Women join us from all over our community and find us in multiple ways. We get a lot of referrals from recent graduates who are excited to share our program with their friends and family. We've had several generations of women in the same class, learning together and encouraging each other: aunts, mothers, sisters, grandmothers, and granddaughters. Five women are graduates from our program, all from the same family, joining three different classes!



Cecelia Long

I often do neighborhood outreach and share about our program and other resources at our neighbors' doors or at community events. Many of our residents may not have the connections to find us, so I really make an effort to meet people where they are. We also get referrals from community partners like Labyrinth House, Project Oz, YWCA Strive, Prairie State Legal Services and many churches.

When I speak with a potential participant I ask them a lot of questions to determine if our program is a good fit for their needs and interests. I ask them to share where they are in life, if they're currently working and satisfied, if they're making enough money, and what their goals and dreams are for themselves and their families. ***We're all still trying to figure out what we want to be when we grow up.*** I look for women who are ready to make a change in their life; ready to try something different, who imagine themselves in a better career, and have the ability to commit to all of our classes. I often make referrals to Heartland Community College or YWCA Strive if someone's goals seem more aligned with other programs. We are grateful to have women joining us from all ages and in all stages of life with the courage to try something new and work towards their goals and hold onto their dreams."



CATCHING UP WITH MARY

Greetings and best wishes to all of those who have been supporting the work of Dreams Are Possible over these past three years. We are deeply grateful that you consider the work being done at Dreams to be a mission you too believe in and support.

This has been a very challenging time for the Dreams Are Possible staff and students. Our amazing instructor, Sara Keene, has been out sick for about six weeks and has more testing to uncover the cause of her health problems. The students have been really understanding as we attempt to continue providing the same quality of programming they had gotten comfortable with under Sara. Cecelia, our Program Director has really done an awesome job of coordinating the activities for the remaining weeks of this series.



The need for Dreams to find folks to continue to offer the training demonstrates the caring and compassionate community of people who believe in helping women gain the skills and confidence they need to succeed. The volunteers know that these classes will enable the women to improve the quality of their lives and that of their families. Talented people have stepped up to offer workshops in home repair, safe use of power tools and building small items.

One of the content areas we have consistently offered is exposure to the Ready To Work programs offered through Heartland Community College. Staff share with the women the myriad of opportunities through education at HCC that are available to them, the employment areas that the courses will prepare them for, as well as the steps to applying for financial aid. Three of the students in a previous series have enrolled in HCC and one more will enter in the spring term. Three of the women in the current class have applied to HCC to continue their training after graduation from Dreams. We value our relationship with HCC staff and the way in which they inspire our students and help them feel confident enough to believe they can enroll at a community college. We will again be offering Forklift Training on the HCC campus in late October.

Dreams Are Possible was recognized at the That's What She Said event in September and will receive 20% of the ticket sales. Mary's Pence from Minnesota has awarded us a second-year grant and the Illinois Prairie Community Foundation continues to be our fiscal agent, which makes our lives so much easier.

We are also considering how we can grow the program and offer classes during daytime hours for women who are unable to attend in the evening.

Going forward, we look to wrap up this series of classes with a graduation celebration on October 11 at Second Presbyterian Church in Bloomington. Thirteen women will be recognized that day as we are combining two classes for graduation. Each of these 13 women have made amazing steps toward building a more secure, financially stable and fulfilling future.

We want to thank each of you for the part you have played in these life transformations. We could not do this work without your support.

Mary Campbell - Director

SPOTLIGHT ON...

Marilyn Brown

Dreams Are Possible prides itself on the successes of its graduates, and there is no better example than Marilyn Brown. As a member of the first DAP class, Marilyn has gone on to find a job in a field she desires, and is able to support her family in the process.

A Champaign, IL native, Marilyn took the hard way to get here. The single mother of three said she has been to prison three times and has been homeless.

“I was working odds and ends jobs to make ends meet to provide for my children,” Marilyn explained. She said she enrolled in DAP because she was looking for opportunities to grow in her professional/career life. Marilyn is currently the Business Apprentice at the YWCA’s Labyrinth Made Goods.

Marilyn went into more detail regarding Dreams....

What would you say is the best thing about DAP? The mission. Their dedication to helping women succeed.

What is the worst thing? That this program is not worldwide!

What personal enrichment have you obtained by being a DAP student? Confidence and empowerment.

Was DAP helpful in your gaining better employment? Absolutely! I am now working in a career field position versus a typical 9 to 5.

What do you wish you could have done while a DAP student? I have no regrets. I took advantage of everything that was offered.

What things would you like to see changed? I would love to see DAP expand to more counties so that more women can be exposed to it.

Do you think DAP was worthwhile? Hands down, without a doubt! I looked forward to going and got so much out of each session.

Where do you see yourself in five years? Ten years? I see myself thriving in my career field. I see myself happy going to work every day, doing something I enjoy. Helping others how I can, becoming a better person.

Would you recommend that women become DAP students? Yes, I would. I never really had big dreams. Going through DAP, I began to dream about a day where I would work in a field where I could make a livable income to provide for my children and I. A field that I enjoy, a field that supports a great cause. I am living my dream!





GRADUATION'S COMING!

Thirteen DAP students will take part in a graduation ceremony from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. on October 11 at Second Presbyterian Church in Bloomington.

Help us celebrate our graduates by volunteering to make the ceremony special. We need help with tasks before, during and after the ceremony such as food donations, set-up, check-in and clean-up. Please contact Cecelia by text at 815-388-7089 or email at dreamspossible2@gmail.com if you can help.

WANT TO VOLUNTEER?

Wondering about what to do with all that time on your hands? Come on over to the DAP building at 1311 W. Olive in Bloomington!

We could really use some help with yard work, taking the weeds out of the patio, sprucing up the flower beds and planting fall flowers in the pots out front. It would also be great to have someone come in once a month to vacuum and clean the bathroom.

Are you a member of a social group that might be interested helping? Or, just feel like going solo? If so, please email Mary Campbell at mecampb@ilstu.edu. Thank you!

DAP OUTREACH

Dreams Are Possible sent out a few of its volunteers to recruit potential students at a couple of community events in July and August.

Between the Cultural Fest at Miller Park and the West Bloomington Neighborhood Block Party, eight women signed up as interested in learning more about the DAP program.



Mary Campbell chats with a prospective student at the West Bloomington Neighborhood Block Party on August 6th.

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

This video from last spring explains the thought behind Dreams Are Possible, and reaction from a DAP graduate.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mpJ3FFDfSk8>



IT DOESN'T GROW ON TREES

Dreams Are Possible would grind to a halt were it not for the generosity of people like you. The funding DAP receives from its loving donors is critical as it strives to help women learn what they need to know to attain good-paying jobs to support their families.

Donating to DAP is easy. Just choose the way that works best for you:

1. Send a **check** to the Illinois Prairie Community Foundation, 915 E. Washington, Bloomington, IL 61701. Be sure to write "Dreams Are Possible" on the memo line.
2. **PayPal** or **credit card** via: https://www.paypal.com/donate/?cmd=_s-xclick&hosted_button_id=M288B8YD8Q7FS

The link will allow you to donate either through PayPal or a credit card.

AS LONG AS WE'RE MENTIONING DONATING....

When class is in session, it's nice for the students to have something to munch on (like granola bars or candy). Can you help provide some yummys?

In addition, we are in real need of paper products (think paper towels, toilet paper, etc.) and laundry/dish soap to give to the women.

If you are able to offer something along those lines, please email Mary Campbell at mecampb@ilstu.edu.

Thank you for your continued generosity!

THANKYOU