A record number of over 160 people attended on November 12, 2007 The 4th Annual Power to DREAM Achievers Award Banquet at the Marriott Southern Hills Hotel. The theme for the evening was a quote by Henry David Thoreau, “Go Confidently in the Directions of Your Dreams”.

The DREAM Institute is a volunteer non-profit organization that is dedicated to enriching and increasing the success of the higher educational experience of students with disabilities through a three-fold approach, which includes: academic and professional mentorship; academic assistance and scholastic awards. Currently the Institute has 15 scholars who attend Universities and these students aspire to achieve their educational goals with a college degree. The proceeds from the night’s event funds annual scholarships to students with learning and physical disabilities to obtain their higher education degree.

The evening began with a warm welcoming by Jerry and Deniese Dillon who are DREAM Institute Advisory Board Members. Jerry led the crowd in singing “God Bless America” as it was Veterans Day. Dream Institute scholar Ryan Berrigan, a sophomore at the University of Central Oklahoma spoke from his heart on what the institute has helped him accomplish. Berrigan than introduced those in attendance, Kristy Long and Rodney B. Pratz, the Co-Founders of the Institute.

The DREAM Institute Trustee of Excellence Award was given to The University of Oklahoma –Tulsa Schusterman Center. President Gerald Clancy accepted on OU-Tulsa’s behalf. The Institute and OU Tulsa share a rich history. When the Institute was formed it was looking for a central base of operations and chose to located the Institute’s offices at OU-Tulsa. Many of the OU-Tulsa faculty and staff are involved in the Institute.

The 2007 DREAM Institute scholars were presented with star medallions and also a donated book by Jim Stovall named “Today’s the Day”. The 2007 scholars are: Scott Edwards from Jenks Oklahoma and attends Tulsa Community College, Megan Malone from Oklahoma City, OK and attends Oklahoma State University and Jonathan Hester from Sapulpa, OK who attends Northeastern State University.

This year the Institute presented an inaugural award named The Pioneer of DREAMS Award. It was presented to Samson. Stacy Schusterman CEO of Samson accepted the award on the company’s behalf. “The Pioneer of Dreams Award” is awarded to an organization or individuals who have exemplified leadership in the community by making the dreams of dreamers come true through philanthropic endeavors, service, and entrepreneurship. “Samson was built on the dreams and aspirations of philanthropy by Charles and Lynn Schusterman and Samson has become an asset to the Tulsa community, the nation and the world”, said Long and Pratz. Samson
and the DREAM Institute have forged a bond that has been present since the inception of The DREAM Institute. In accepting the Award, Stacy Schusterman said “The Schustermans and Samson are very pleased to partner with the DREAM Institute because we believe so strongly in the importance of education for all so that each of us can maximize our skills and contributions in the world, leading richer and fuller lives.” The unique award is a bronze sculpture titled: “Lending a helping hand to fulfill dreams” that is of a hand that signifies the later generation and a butterfly on the tips of the fingers with the butterfly symbolizing the birth, life, and flight of the next generation by the later generation.

DREAM Institute Scholar Brett Cunningham, of Oklahoma City and a sophomore at Oklahoma City Community College introduced the 2007 Power to DREAM Achiever Award to Rick DeRennaux. Rick is the Director of Tech Now, the Oklahoma High School High Tech Program. He was one of three finalists in the ABC’s Reality Show “American Inventor”. Rick’s invention custom build racers are a design and fabrication of custom vehicles through the use of computers and patented tools. Rick could not hold back the tears as he told his experience of helping the dreams of kids with learning and physical challenges come true. Rick was presented a bronze statue of the Institute’s logo, a child reaching for the stars.

The night’s keynote address was by businesswoman and inspirational speaker Dr. Helen Inbody. Dr. Inbody was introduced in part by Emily Reavis, her granddaughter and DREAM Institute Scholar who is a junior at The University of Central Oklahoma. Dr. Inbody gave a heartfelt and inspirational message that we should never forget to dream and that along our lives we accomplish our dreams one step at a time and to remember our true north – our values and heritage.

As the evening came to an end a video was shown titled “A Day in the Life of” that depicts all 15 DREAM Institute scholars in their daily lives at their Universities. They too are achieving their dreams everyday.


Power to DREAM Gold Achiever’s were: The Tom and Julie Kivisto Family Foundation, Williams Companies, Inc., The University of Oklahoma-Tulsa Schusterman Center, Ability Magazine, Charles Duren, Kristy Long and Rodney B. Pratz.

Power to DREAM Silver Achiever Award Sponsors were: Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma, Charles Sublett, AEP/PSO.

Power To DREAM Bronze Achiever Award Sponsor were : David and Molly Boren, Emily and Phil Wood, Adam Leavitt, Alan Weyland, Bishop Kelley High School, and Oklahoma State University-Tulsa Campus.

The institute had a reception and silent auction prior to the dinner and awards. Silent Auction donors were: Jim Stovall, Tulsa Ballet, Tulsa Opera, Oklahoma Aquarium, Oklahoma State University, University of Oklahoma, University of Tulsa Athletic Department, Ron and Linda Donelson, Clifton Taulbert, Claire Gentry, Mary Lou Retton, AEP/PSO, Darren and Betsy Keller, Patti Long, Kristy Long and Rodney B. Pratz.

Some of those in attendance were: Stacy Schusterman, Jack and Maxine Zarrow, Gail Richards, Norma Brewster, Emily and Phil Wood, Stacey and Tom McKeon, David L. Perkins, Lindsay and Kate Perkins, Roger Johnson, Linda Barry, Carolyn and Ed Dubie, Karen Baskerville, Lindsey Bowen, Laura Chalus, Dr. Hope
Harder, Dr. Gerald Clancy, LaDeana and Danny Bolton, Charles Duren, Lindsey and Matthew Brewster, Yolanda Williams, Mr. and Mrs. Adam Leavitt, State Representative Mark Liotta, State Representative Jeanine McDaniel, Billye and Jeff Beach, Marolyn Sauls, Dr. Helen Inbody, Paula Reavis, Dr. and Mrs. Hoops, Dennis Meador, Kathy Seibold, Darrell Mayfield, Kay Ellis, Nate Waters, Randy Macon, Susan and Lynn Fesperman, Kathy Edwards, Swama Waters, Karen Castle, Elizabeth King, Bobby Gray, Claudella Farrow, Terry Gaskill, Melissa Mason, Kathy Seibold, Joe and Marsha Kennedy, Kathy Daily, Priscilla Flannagan, Sherri and Rick DeRennaux, Christian DeRennaux, Janet Furr, Barbara Kurey, Shelia Burba, and Harold Swink.

DREAM Institute scholars attending were: Kelsey Graham of Oklahoma State University, Emily Reavis of The University of Central Oklahoma, Tom Hoopes of The University of Oklahoma, Ryan Berrigan of The University of Central Oklahoma, Brett Cunningham of Oklahoma City Community College, Antonia Baskerville of Tulsa Community College, Molly Winkler of The University of Oklahoma, Andy Dearborn of The University of Oklahoma.

Volunteers for the evening were from Tulsa Community College staff and students. Photography for the evening was done by Rod Mayes of Expression Photography.

The DREAM Institute was founded by Kristy Long and Rodney Bryan Pratz to help students overcome their disabilities to fulfill their purpose by enriching and increasing the success of the higher educational experience of students with disabilities through academic and professional mentorship, academic assistance, and scholastic awards. The Cofounder's inspiration for the Institute comes from battling and overcoming their own disabilities. They both lead successful careers today; Long in Politics and Education and Pratz in business.

For more information please visit the Institute’s website, www.dreaminstitute.org or phone 918-588-3600 or e-mail at dream@dreaminstitute.org

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