

Appleseed This Week

Appleseed Centers Strive to Make DREAM Act a Reality

April 3, 2008 - As part of a grant from the **Blavatnik Charitable Foundation** received in November, the national office of Appleseed and Appleseed Centers continue to advocate for passage of the **DREAM Act**, federal legislation that would provide legal status to undocumented high school students who attend college or serve in the U.S. armed forces.

The legislation, also known as the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act, would grant conditional legal status to some 65,000 students a year who arrived in the United States before age 16, have been in the country for five continuous years, graduated from a U.S. high school and have no criminal record.

"Advocacy for the passage of the DREAM Act strikes at the core of Appleseed's mission of ensuring that opportunities and justice are available to all," said **Eric Gutiérrez**, Appleseed's immigration policy director. "This collaborative project, under the umbrella of the Appleseed Immigration Policy Program, is a shining example of how we leverage pro bono partnerships to correct social injustices, in this case, within the immigrant community."

The Appleseed Centers participating in this project are located in three states and have approached this issue in various ways:

- **Nebraska Appleseed** has targeted people in a statewide network to call their senators before the DREAM Act vote in October. In conjunction with funding from a local foundation, Nebraska Appleseed also publicized the in-state tuition option to students, parents, teachers and service providers through a number of trainings. Additionally, they distributed 5,500 in-state tuition brochures and nearly 100 posters. The brochures and posters, in both English and Spanish, have been shared with Appleseed Centers in other states that have passed in-state tuition legislation.
- **Chicago Appleseed** is conducting research to identify and describe the situation in Illinois, where in-state tuition is available to some undocumented immigrant youth, and to identify opportunities to address continued challenges. Chicago Appleseed will compile data to present to national and state elected officials. The Center has met with a number of higher education institutions and will lead a session with the University of Illinois Extension at the Educating Latinos for the Future of America conference next month.
- **Washington Appleseed** has collaborated with the **Latino/a Education Achievement Project (LEAP)**, formed 10 years ago to "improve academic achievement of Latino/a students in Washington state." Washington Appleseed and LEAP are collecting resolutions in support of the DREAM Act from state education groups, school boards, community colleges boards of trustees and university boards of regents. The goal is to illustrate to members of the U.S. Congress the broad support for the DREAM Act from mainstream America, with the belief that garnering support for the DREAM Act should be the primary initial focus of a broader immigration reform agenda.

For more information on Appleseed, visit www.appleseednetwork.org. To support the work of Appleseed, donate [here](#).

Appleseed, a non-partisan and non-profit organization, is a network of public interest law Centers working to identify and address injustices in their communities. Appleseed works to build a just society through education, legal advocacy, community activism and policy expertise, addressing root causes and producing practical solutions. As one of the nation's largest legal pro bono networks, Appleseed Centers work both independently and collectively, bringing their own experiences to create local solutions that are nationally relevant. We connect the top private practice lawyers, corporate counsel, law schools, civic leaders, and other professionals to tackle problems locally, at their root cause.