

PRESS RELEASE

Camden youth head to New Mexico for spring break trip

UrbanPromise's AfterSchool Program takes 11 kids on a trip they will never forget

Camden, NJ, April 3-8, 2010: When Juan Moralos first heard about the plans for the proposed spring break trip to New Mexico, he was less than enthusiastic. New Mexico was a faraway place whose name just sounded boring. But his attitude changed when he saw the video documenting the previous year's trip.

"I've never done a zipline!" he exclaimed to his AfterSchool Director and leader of the trip, Garrett Poper. "I'll never get to try this unless I get to go to New Mexico!"

The zipline is one of the several exciting activities that the seventh and eighth graders will encounter on their week-long trip to Fort Lone Tree in Capitan, New Mexico. Horseback riding, hiking, and traveling to the famous White Sands each represent new experiences that the students would never find in their home city of Camden, New Jersey.

The trip is part of the UrbanPromise AfterSchool Program initiative to introduce students of Camden to new ideas and opportunities. Spring Break 2010 marks Poper's second year venturing to New Mexico with a group of students. Two of the students from Spring Break 2009 return with him. One, Taheem Davis, was not technically eligible for the trip due to his graduation from the North Camden After-School program. But Davis was so eager to return that he decided he would raise his own money for 2010.

“When we were in New Mexico, all the kids kept talking about how they wanted to move there,” Poper said. “The second they returned to Camden, they were ready to go back!” Davis made this happen, by himself collecting over \$400 for his own plane ticket.

Before learning about New Mexico, Moralos was acting up. The trip motivated him to improve his behavior and effort in the AfterSchool Program. “He needed to step it up,” Poper recounted. “But he was so excited for it that he really did manage to clean up his act.”

The incentive for improved behavior is only one of the benefits that the trip inspires. Poper considers the most important part of the trip to be introducing the students to a new, enlightened perspective, which he calls “Blowing there Mind!” Many of them have never experienced life outside of Camden. Some have never seen horses, deserts, or cactuses. Last year, Poper saw this especially when they visited White Sands, which are mesmerizing stretches of bright, almost snow-like sand. The students spent an entire day exploring the area, hiking, flipping, and sliding across its slopes.

To support the trip, Poper has led the group in a series of fundraising events. Poper admits that it has been difficult to generate enough money for the students, but he remains confident in its ultimate success.

To learn more about the work UrbanPromise is doing in Camden, New Jersey visit www.urbanpromiseusa.org

About UrbanPromise

UrbanPromise has one clear mission, to build a city of promise, one child at a time. By equipping Camden’s children and young adults with the skills necessary for academic achievement and moreover, life management, UrbanPromise has grown from a tiny summer camp program to a multifaceted institution with a reputation of solidarity and success. Among their many programs are private schools for grades k-12, AfterSchool programs, summer camps, and various other recreational and educational programs, each targeting different parts of the lives of Camden’s youth.

Available for comments or to set up interviews:

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