



Achievable Dream ACADEMIES

INSPIRING HOPE THROUGH EDUCATION

As we move into a new year, I know we are all ready to look ahead to what 2021 holds, both personally and professionally. As January began, we were eager to turn the page, and grateful for a fresh start. Although challenging in many ways, 2020 brought us together as a community and as a Dream family. Our relationships with supporters like you have been enriched and we remain incredibly grateful for your unwavering support during times of uncertainty.

The time around the holidays and the celebration of a new year affords many of us an opportunity to look back and reflect, which is incredibly important. We cannot move forward if we never stop to reflect on lessons learned in the past. We cannot grow if we do not take time to nourish the many seeds planted through the everyday moments.

As a team, we have spent valuable time looking back. Mourning losses, celebrating victories, and wondering how on earth we actually managed to make it through this year. Looking back, we see how far we've come, and we should be encouraged.

But now, friends, it is time to look forward.

What will this year hold? I can't answer that, but I can tell you what I'm most looking forward to, what I hope this year holds, and what to expect from An Achievable Dream in 2021.

In 2021, here is what we'll keep doing:

- **Innovating in an ever-changing education landscape** to meet the needs of our students and their families – no matter where they are or what they need.
- **Maintaining a 100% on-time graduation rate** at our full K-12 program in Newport News.
- **Expanding on our core value of systemic impact** through specific actions of the Dreamers for Change Task Force, the mission of which is to be a non-partisan group led by Dreamers (An Achievable Dream students, alumni and staff) and community partners who are helping to build awareness, create solutions, and bring equity to communities through justice reforms, community outreach, and social and moral education.
- **Operating at all five of our AAD campuses:**
 - o An Achievable Dream Academy – Newport News (grades K-5)
 - o An Achievable Dream Middle and High School – Newport News (grades 6-12)
 - o Seatack Elementary An Achievable Dream Academy (grades K-5)
 - o An Achievable Dream Middle School Program at Lynnhaven Middle School (grades 6-8)

- An Achievable Dream Certified Academy at Highland Springs Elementary (grades K-5)
- **Providing all the key elements of the SAME – Social, Academic, and Moral Education – framework to our students, including:**
 - Field trips – virtual and in-person as safety measures allow.
 - Uniforms – yes, even during virtual learning, our students get extra points for showing up in uniform!
 - Clubs, extracurriculars and other experiential opportunities.
 - Extended academic day and year.
 - Social rotation curriculum including etiquette, mindfulness and meditation, ethics and conflict resolution, workforce communication and self-presentation, and career and workforce training.
 - Relationships – our relationships with students and families are key to our success! We are not a school – we are a family.
- **Securing new funding through grants and donations** to ensure long-term sustainability.
- **Distributing food, hygiene and school supplies for families.** Beginning with the initial onset of COVID, providing these vital resources and supplies to our students and families will continue as long as needed.
- **Emphasizing professional development and support for our teachers and school staff.** We all know teachers are superheroes and at the heartbeat of our schools! We will continue to provide supplemental supplies, resources, and access to training and technology to ensure our teachers have what they need to reach students in virtual, in-person, or hybrid education.
- **Bringing unique services to our alumni,** including connecting company employers with AAD alumni via our career portal, Dream2Career, providing mental health resources and tools for virtual learning for our college students, and continuing to provide financial support and scholarships.

We also know 2021 will bring some new and exciting growth opportunities for us, and we will move forward in many ways including:

- **Expanding our programs on our campuses that are still growing** to move one grade level closer to full K-12 implementation at those locations.
- **Offering a customizable education solution** to other schools and districts, Achieve SAME Pro, which incorporates all of the key elements of success from the nearly 30 years An Achievable Dream Academies have been in operation, making it accessible to any school.
- **Leadership training and development for our executive leadership team.** Investing in our leaders is more important than ever; we are dedicating additional time and resources this year to developing and training our team.
- **Hosting virtual tours.** While we are unable to give guided school tours of our facilities in-person, we're thrilled to be able to provide an interactive and engaging virtual tour experience. Guided virtual tours are also available with me or a member of our leadership team!
- **Exciting and high-quality virtual and hybrid events.** Our team is committed to innovating to bring our supporters the best possible experience, whether in-person, virtual, or hybrid, with our two signature events, the Tennis Ball (benefitting Newport News programs) and A Night to Dream (benefitting Virginia Beach programs), ensuring these events raise the funds necessary to continue to fund our programs.
- **Hosting our first Alumni Day (for all alumni)** during the 2020-2021 school year, giving AAD alumni a chance to network and reconnect.

- **A legacy giving society** designed to inspire hope for future generations, for those who wish to make a planned or legacy gift as part of their estate and financial planning. This society will impact An Achievable Dream students for generations to come.

Last year was a challenge, but it was also filled with moments of great joy. 2021 has already shown us that it will bring its own challenges as well as moments of hope and joy. No matter what comes our way, our team is committed to maintaining a balance of looking back and looking forward; of processing pain and difficult lessons, and never letting go of hope. As a leader, I commit to doing my best every day to lead An Achievable Dream “onward and upward.”

In spite of the many unknowns, I look forward to the year ahead with hope and confidence. We will need resilience. We will need courage. We will need our community – each other – more than we ever have before. And we know that our community is with us.

The Dreams, and the Dreamers, don’t stop, and neither will we.

I welcome you to walk alongside us as we head into this year, and I look forward to experiencing it all with my team and with each of you, side by side.

I am yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kellie Kula". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "K" and a long, sweeping underline.