

Nominations Open for the 2013 Disney Dreamers Academy with Steve Harvey and Essence Magazine

Disney Dreamers Academy Celebrates its Sixth Year of Igniting Lives, Dreams and Passions

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. (September 12, 2012) – Plans are underway for the 2013 Disney Dreamers Academy with Steve Harvey and Essence Magazine. U.S. high school students ages 13-19 can apply to attend this innovative outside-the-classroom educational and mentoring program. Applications must be submitted on www.disneysdreamersacademy.com by October 31, 2012.

Entering the search for its sixth “class,” Disney Dreamers Academy continues to hold true to its mission to inspire and fuel the dreams of teens, help them discover a world of possibilities and help them prepare for the future. Each year, 100 students – selected from thousands of applicants -participate in hands-on, full-immersion workshops related to a bevy of career paths ranging from animation to zoology. Each participant learns important skills such as communication techniques and networking strategies.

It all takes place in a magical setting: The Walt Disney World theme parks. Both on stage and behind the scenes, the parks become vibrant ‘classrooms’ leading to career discoveries, the pursuit of dreams and fun memories to cherish for a lifetime.

Motivational speakers and celebrities share their stories and provide insight on how to achieve success and “DREAM BIG.” Dreamers have the opportunity to cultivate relationships with other students from across the nation while they gain first-hand knowledge from Disney experts and world-renowned entrepreneurs and executives.

“Over the past five years, we have helped 500 Dreamers unlock their potential and get started on their journeys in life,” said Disney Dreamers Academy Executive Champion Tracey D. Powell. “The sixth Disney Dreamers Academy marks another year of continued motivation, education and success. Steve Harvey and Essence Communications share in our vision of enriching lives. Everyone leaves this program inspired to live their best life.”

Participants and a parent or guardian will receive an all-expense-paid trip to Walt Disney World Resort in Lake Buena Vista, Fla., where they will engage in life-changing sessions and enjoy Disney’s magical theme parks. The 2013 Disney Dreamers Academy will take place March 7-10.

Steve Harvey, syndicated radio and television personality, along with Essence Magazine and Walt Disney World Resort will host the selected Dreamers during their four-day power packed career and educational exploration. Harvey, speaking on the program, says, “Disney Dreamers Academy gives hope and inspiration and exposes youth to a world of possibilities. The sixth year of this program will prove to be the best yet. We are excited about another opportunity to transform lives and give students an inside look at what their future can hold.”

Launched in 2007 by Disney Parks, Disney Dreamers Academy has evolved into a year-round initiative with its informational Facebook and Twitter social media platforms; an interactive website; presence at community outreach partner events like the Essence Music Festival, the National Association of Black Journalists Convention, the Bud Billiken Parade, and the addition of the Disney Dreamers Academy Speakers Resource Group, which consists of various Dreamers Academy event speakers and presenters who serve as program ambassadors. This year,

Dreamers also had the chance to win internships, allowing them the chance to test skills learned at Disney Dreamers Academy.

Essence Communications President Michelle Ebanks added, "We are excited about the sixth Disney Dreamers Academy. This program transcends the normal classroom setting, taking learning to the next level. This year we plan to go above and beyond to encourage Dreamers. Our valued partnership with Disney Parks and Steve Harvey serves as a firm commitment to the community and leaders of tomorrow."

This December, a distinguished panel of leaders from the communications, education and entertainment industries will judge all of the nomination submissions. Winners will be announced in early 2013.

For more information visit www.disneysdreamersacademy.com, www.facebook.com/disneysdreamersacademy or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/dreamersacademy.

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About Walt Disney World Resort / The Walt Disney Co.:

Walt Disney World Resort is a contiguous 40-square-mile, world-class entertainment and recreation center located at Lake Buena Vista, Fla., 20 miles southwest of Orlando. The Walt Disney Co. has a rich legacy of creativity and exceptional storytelling that brings families together in unique and memorable ways. Creative excellence is coupled with a strong commitment to community service and diversity. The Walt Disney Co. is dedicated to making a positive impact in communities around the world, with a primary focus on brightening the lives of children.

About Steve Harvey:

Steve Harvey began doing stand-up comedy in the mid-1980s, which eventually led to a long stint as host of "It's Showtime at the Apollo." His success as a stand-up comedian led to multiple TV sitcoms, including "Me and The Boys", "The Steve Harvey Show" and "Steve Harvey's Big Time Challenge." His first book, "Act Like A Lady, Think Like A Man," quickly became a bestseller in 2009. Harvey has appeared on "The Oprah Show," "Nightline," "Good Morning America" and "The Ellen DeGeneres Show." Currently, Harvey hosts the nationally syndicated "Steve Harvey Morning Show" which airs in over 60 markets and has over 7 million listeners. He is host of "Steve Harvey" a new nationally syndicated daytime talk show.

About Essence Communications Inc.:

Essence Communications Inc. (ECI) is the number one media and communications company dedicated to African-American women. With a multi-platform presence in publishing, live events, and online, the Essence brand is "Where Black Women Come First". The company's flagship publication, ESSENCE magazine, is the preeminent lifestyle magazine for African-American women, generating brand extensions such as the Essence Music Festival, ESSENCE Black Women in Hollywood, Window on Our Women (WOW I & II) and Smart Beauty I, II & III consumer insights, the Essence Book Club, Essence.com, and ventures in digital media (mobile, television and VOD).

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