

Inaugural Disney Dreamers Academy Virtual Program Series Culminates with Festive Commencement Celebration

Class of 2020's 100 teens are first to experience virtual career workshops and other sessions designed to help them dream BIG. Program concludes with a thrilling production

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. (Dec. 14, 2020) – A stirring production, tributes from beloved celebrities and powerful musical performances marked the December 12 commencement ceremony for the first Disney Dreamers Academy Virtual Program Series. 100 teens from across the country were feted and celebrated for completing the 12-week, one-of-a-kind-program of live and on-demand video sessions designed to help them jump-start their life goals and pursue their dreams.

Inspired by the Disney Dreamers Academy program that has taken place at Walt Disney World Resort in Florida annually since 2008, the virtual program was available free to the 2020 class to continue educating and inspiring students during the pandemic. The inaugural virtual event kicked off September 26, 2020, launching the series of 12 weekends filled with engaging presentations by Disney leaders, other business professionals and celebrities.

For commencement, Disney Dreamers and their parents/guardians were treated to a stirring production, complete with special performances by and tributes from beloved celebrities such as Anthony Anderson from *ABC's black-ish*, actress Yvette Nicole Brown and Arica Himmel of *ABC's mixed-ish*. Anderson, Brown and Himmel also joined Disney Signature Experiences Vice President and Disney Dreamers Academy Executive Champion Tracey D. Powell, as event co-hosts.

To add to the excitement, Disney Dreamers were awarded career shadowing externships. A first for Disney Dreamers, each student will be paired with a professional from his or her field of interest for a spring 2021 mentoring experience. Mentors will bring knowledge and expertise from Walt Disney Imagineering, The Walt Disney Studios, ABC, Pixar, Essence Magazine, National Geographic and other organizations.

"We took great pride in presenting the Disney Dreamers Academy Virtual Program Series," said Disney Dreamers Academy Executive Champion Tracey D. Powell. "The virtual platform gave us a chance to amplify the Disney Dreamers Academy theme, 'Be100,' which encourages teens to be positive, to be 'all in' and to make a difference."

Even after the celebration, the virtual motivation continued. Students got an extra dose of inspiration and career advice from Disney Dreamers Academy alumni via video conference, while parents connected with

Disney Dreamers Academy speakers and program advocates for a motivational session of their own.

“We could not be more impressed with this year’s class and the curiosity, positive outlook and perseverance it’s shown the last 12 weeks,” said Powell. “This was a unique opportunity for us to touch the lives of these 100 students, and we know they are destined for great things.”

Disney Dreamers Academy traditionally brings together 100 students from across the United States for an all-expenses-paid trip to Walt Disney World where they participate in an immersive, transformational four-day learning experience. The program is part of Walt Disney World Resort’s commitment to helping the next generation of young people by inspiring them at a critical time in their development. The virtual series was launched after the March 12-15, 2020, event at Walt Disney World Resort ended early due to the pandemic.

For more information, visit DisneyDreamersAcademy.com. Regular updates about Disney Dreamers Academy are also available on social media at Facebook.com/DisneyDreamersAcademy, Twitter.com/DreamersAcademy and Instagram.com/disneydreamersacademy.

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