

DARE TO  
*Dream*

MAKING A LASTING IMPACT, ONE HOMELESS CHILD AT A TIME

By Alicia Wanek

It can be difficult for a homeless child to imagine their own future, especially when their current priorities are a place to sleep and food to eat. At Rainbow Days, the goal is for the over 600 children they serve in camps every summer to know they can reach higher and dream big. Tiffany Beaudine, Director of Development, says, “Our camps are helping to make kids’ dreams happen.”

Since it began in 1982, Rainbow Days has been working toward its mission “to help children and youth in adversity build coping skills and resilience to create positive futures.” To date they have served nearly 180,000 children in the Dallas area alone. In addition, 42,000 professionals across Dallas, the state of Texas and the nation have been trained to implement Rainbow Days’ nationally recognized Curriculum-Based Support Groups® or other accredited prevention programs with children in their own communities through the Trans4m Center.

Rainbow Days has year-round programs, trainings, support groups and special events for the families they serve, but two of the summer programs are especially impactful. At Camp Bravo! Performing Arts Camp, children residing in Dallas-area homeless and transitional living shelters learn about creative arts, theater and music programs. The arts provide a different means of self-expression. The highlight is always the stage performance for a live audience at the end of camp. Zoe, age 7, said, “My favorite thing about Camp Bravo was dancing

on stage and singing with Eddie. It was so much fun!”

A second program, Kids’ University, allows participants to attend different interactive classes during the week, including engineering, computer science, geology, math, nutrition and more. The kids explore different career opportunities while being exposed to a collegiate environment on the University of Texas at Dallas campus. Additionally, each day participants meet with a mentor and peers to discuss the importance of topics like staying in school, making healthy decisions and staying drug-free. The end of the session culminates with a large graduation ceremony with a commencement

speaker and diplomas. That experience can be life changing. One participant, 8-year-old Devin said, “At KU I got my first diploma, but I want to be a criminal defense lawyer, so I will need to get at least seven more certificates to do that. At least I already got one though!” Erika, age 11, reported, “My mom was crying at the ceremony because she was so proud of me for graduating from Kids’ University and receiving my first diploma.”

Rainbow Days knows the importance of allowing these children to take a break from shelter life and to just enjoy being a “normal” kid. The lessons they’re learning are all part of the summer fun. When a nine-year-old like Kimora says, “At Rainbow Days, I have learned to have confidence and to follow my dreams,” you know the future for the children they’re serving is much brighter.

**“Our camps are helping to make kids’ dreams happen.”**

- Tiffany Beaudine,  
Director of Development, Rainbow Days



To help make a difference, see Page 25 for Pot of Gold Luncheon details or go to [www.rainbowdays.org](http://www.rainbowdays.org)

