

Emily Westergaard

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Areas of Expertise: Fundraising, nonprofit management, collective impact program development

Emily Westergaard is the Executive Director of the Des Moines I Have a Dream Foundation, which works to ensure more kids graduate from high school and pursue education after high school. As the chief professional officer of the organization, Emily has led the development of an innovative new model for program delivery called the Dreamer Academy. Launched in 2014, the Dreamer Academy is the first of its kind in the nation to partner with public schools and create long-term, sustainable, and proactive support for students in under-served neighborhoods, and to pair that support with comprehensive financial capacity building and college savings accounts.

Emily has over 15 years of experience fundraising and managing programs within community organizations and higher education institutions. She earned her Masters in Public Administration from Drake University in 2009, and her Bachelor's in International Development from Grinnell College in 2002, and spent her first few years after college as the Research and Information Technology Associate at the Desert Research Foundation in southern Africa. Emily is a volunteer with United Way and Grinnell College, and was an inaugural member of the Young Innovators in Social Justice Prize selection Committee.



Educational Background

- Masters in Public Administration, Drake University, 2009
- B.A., International Development. Grinnell College, 2002

Professional Experience

- Des Moines "I Have a Dream" Foundation Executive Director (2010- present)
- Drake University, Major Gift Officer (2008-2010)
- World Food Prize Foundation, Director of Development (2004-2008)
- Desert Research Foundation of Namibia Research and IT Associate (2002-2003)

Community Involvement & Awards

- 2015 & 2016 Campaign Cabinet co-chair, United Way of Central Iowa
- Active Member in: Lead Like a Lady, Women's Consortium, and Ferscipe
- Class of 2015, Forty Under 40 Honoree
- Greater Des Moines Leadership Institute, 2012
- Young Innovators in Social Justice Prize selection committee (2011-2014)
- 2012 YP of the Year Finalist, Juice Magazine