

TRAIL OF DREAMS

On January 1, 2010, we embarked on a 1,500-mile walk from our home in Miami, FL, to Washington, D.C to share our stories, so that everyday Americans understand what it's like for the millions of young immigrants like us, unable to fully participate in society. It's time that our country come together to fix a failed system that keeps millions in the shadows, with no pathway to a better life.

We demand that President Obama institute an executive action that will stop detentions and deportations of students for a period of two years, and halt removal proceedings for individuals with immediate family members who are U.S. citizens. We support the DREAM Act, an end to the separation of families, workers' rights, and a pathway to citizenship. On April 10th, inspired by our walk, five immigrant students left New York City to start their own 250-mile Trail of Dreams and to demand the passage of the DREAM Act.

Who We Are

We are four students from Florida – Felipe Matos, Gaby Pacheco, Carlos Roa, and Juan Rodriguez – who left Miami on January 1, 2010 to embark on a 1500-mile journey to our nation's capitol. We were brought to the United States by our families when we were young. This is the only country we have known as home. We have the same hopes and dreams as other young people, and have worked hard to excel in school and contribute to our communities. But because of our immigration status, we've spent our childhoods in fear and hiding, unable to achieve our full potential. We walk in order to share our stories and to call on our leaders to fix the system that forces people like us into the shadows, stripping us of the opportunity to participate meaningfully in society.

Inspired by our walk, on April 10th, five immigrant students left New York City to start their own 250-mile journey. read more about the NYC walkers

Our Stories

Felipe Matos, 24



Felipe is ranked one of the top 20 community college students in the United States. In addition to his educational excellence, Felipe also found time to serve his peers as student government president of Miami Dade College. Born to a single mother in the slums of Brazil, Felipe was sent at age 14 to the United States, where he first dreamed of becoming a teacher. But though he has the intelligence and drive, his immigration status has prevented him from achieving this dream. Felipe has been accepted by many top colleges, but he is barred from getting financial aid. He is currently studying economics in community college, but still hopes that one day he will be able to teach young people, because he believes education is the key to pulling people out of poverty.

TRAIL OF DREAMS WALKERS ARRIVE IN WASHINGTON, D.C. TO DELIVER MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT OBAMA

Arrival comes as country is outraged over Arizona's approval of racial profiling legislation

WHAT: Press conference with the Trail of DREAMs immigrant students, who arrive in Washington, DC after a 1,500-mile walk from Miami

WHEN: Wednesday April 28, 2010 at 09:15 AM

WHERE: White House, between East and West Executive Avenues on the South side of Pennsylvania Ave. NW. Followed by walk to the National Press Club.

WHO: Trail of DREAMs walkers Gaby Pacheco, Felipe Matos, Carlos Roa and Juan Rodriguez and allies from Florida Immigrant Coalition, Students Working for Equal Rights, Presente.org and other organizations.

Washington, DC – Four immigrant students who have been walking 1,500 miles from Miami to Washington, DC since Jan. 1 to call for solutions to the country's failed immigration system finally arrive in the nation's capital on Wednesday, April 28. Armed with more than 30,000 petition signatures they have gathered through their journey, the students are asking President Obama to issue an executive order that would immediately stop detentions and deportations of undocumented students like them. They will deliver a special message to Obama in front of the White House.

“Our dream is the opportunity to fully participate in and give back to the only country we know as home, and not live in constant fear that we will be sent away,” said Felipe Matos, an immigrant student part of the Trail of DREAMs. “We have been waiting for years to speak up about our situation as immigrant students. President Obama, we cannot wait any longer.”

Earlier in the week, Senators Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Richard Lugar (R-IN) sent an unprecedented letter to the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano, asking her to halt deportations of undocumented students.

“The leadership of Senators Lugar and Durbin truly empowers us as a youth movement,” expressed Carlos Roa, a 22 year old undocumented student also walking in the Trail of DREAMs. “We have continuously walked for four months from my hometown in Florida to DC to ask President Obama to stop deportations of youth like me. I want to thank Senators Lugar and Durbin for taking leadership to help us.”

Roa, who has lived as an undocumented person in the United States since the age of 2, and the other students from the Trail of DREAMs –

Gaby Pacheco, 25; Felipe Matos, 24; and Juan Rodriguez, 20, took off by foot in an inspiring 1500 mile journey from Miami on January 1, 2010. On their walk, they witnessed innocent immigrants who were the victims of hate crimes, members of the Ku Klux Klan rallying and vowing to “eradicate” Latinos, and children being separated from their parents during raids. These experiences led the students to ask President Obama for an executive order that would stop detentions and deportations of students and halt removal proceedings for individuals with immediate family members who are U.S. citizens until immigration legislation is passed.

The Trail of DREAMs walkers are leading the push for these fixes to our failed immigration system nationally, while states like Arizona are taking steps backwards with laws like SB 1070 that Gov. Jan Brewer signed on Friday.

“Congress has failed our communities with the lack of initiative to pass legislation that will keep families safe and ensure a bright and promising future for all youth raised in this country,” said Gaby Pacheco from the Trail of DREAMs. “In the meantime, the signing of SB 1070 into law in Arizona opens doors to more racial profiling. We are extremely concerned that hate groups such as the ‘minutemen’ and the KKK will gain legitimacy under this legislation.”

The Trail of DREAMs' statement on the signing of Arizona's SB 1070 can be found here: <http://www.trail2010.org/blog/2010/apr/24/official-statement-sb1070-arizona/>

After the White House press conference, the Trail of DREAMs will complete their journey by walking to the National Press Club along with fellow immigrant students and their allies.

“This youth movement is growing by the minute,” said Juan Rodriguez from the Trail of Dreams. “We are inspiring youth like us through the country to come out and speak out about their rights.”

For more information about the Trail of DREAMs, please visit www.trail2010.org