

## **Breakaway 2000: A Day in DC:**

### **Saturday, August 19, 2000**

It's 5:30 am on a Saturday morning in High Point, North Carolina. The sun hasn't risen but 80 children are wide awake. The 10 dedicated adults with them are trying to keep things calm as they prepare to board two buses bound for Washington DC. The passengers on these buses are on their way to enjoy a day of fun, friendship and learning. They are going to participate in a day created just for them.

#### **Let's Learn Something!**

On August 19<sup>th</sup> 100 children (NC and DC participants) came together for Breakaway 2000: A Day in DC. The day began at the Natural History Museum, the backdrop for the educational activities of the day. After attending an IMAX theatre production, the children enjoyed bag lunches and juice boxes on the lawn of the Mall. Next, they headed back into the museum for an interactive educational "tour": a scavenger hunt. Each group of 10 children were given prepared questions requiring them to go throughout the museum reading and looking for the answers. Each group was rewarded based on the number of correct answers and the finishing time.

#### **Take Me Out to the Ball Game!**

Approximately 5 hours after their "Day in DC" began, the children boarded their buses and vans for RFK stadium where they would watch a professional soccer game. But before settling down, the kids had some playing of their own to do. Once at RFK, they put on their soccer uniforms and headed for the auxiliary fields for some friendly team scrimmages. After working up an appetite the kids and their chaperones made their way to the Screaming Eagles (the DC United Supporters Club) tailgate where they were treated to hotdogs, chips, watermelon and juices. Done eating, socializing, and playing with Talon (the DC United mascot), the kids lined up for the youth parade. As they circled the field inside RFK stadium dressed in foundation t-shirts and black Adidas caps, the children waived to approximately 15,000 soccer fans. After finishing their "lap", it was now time to take their seats to witness what for many of them was a first: a professional soccer match.

#### **Strike A Pose!**

With the match over and DC United walking away victorious, the children met outside the stadium for their last activity before heading home: a photo and autograph session with Eddie Pope. After many camera clicks and 100 fulfilled autograph requests, the children said good-bye to Eddie and The Screaming Eagles and boarded the buses and vans for home (some a few minutes away in DC and others 6 hours away in NC).

#### **The Day is Done!**

It is now 11:30 pm "thank-you"s and "you're welcome"s have been exchanged; unforgettable smiles have been forever captured on film; hearts have been touched; and positive impressions have been made. The day is complete 24 hours after it started on the steps of the Natural History museum. What a great "break away" from the average Saturday afternoon many of these children experience.

To all of those involved in making this day possible, THANK YOU! JOB WELLDONE!