

By Brian Benson/Daily News Staff

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Family Promise Metrowest event in Natick inspires kids to capture their dreams

NATICK – Damari dreams about one day ending wars.

“Everyone should just get along and be friends and be peaceful,” he said.

Closer to home, he hopes to help his mother, whom he said works so hard to support him.

Damari was one of about 10 children who photojournalist Linda Solomon challenged Saturday to capture their hopes and dreams through photos.

Solomon brought her Pictures of Hope program to Family Promise Metrowest, an organization that helps homeless families with shelter and other services as they seek permanent housing. Solomon taught the children, whose families receive services from Family Promise organizations in Beverly and Natick, how to take photos and let them experiment with her camera.

She told them she never goes anywhere without a camera.

“You can see photography is really fun,” Solomon told the children. “There’s always something special you want to capture forever.”

She then challenged them to write down their hopes and dreams. The children came up with an array of ambitions, from getting good grades and going to college to helping homeless people and becoming a doctor.

Solomon surprised each child with his or her own digital camera that was donated by Walgreens. The children then went around Natick Center to capture images.

The photos will be used to make greeting cards that will be sold to support Family Promise’s work.

Solomon said the event shows the children that their dreams matter.

“It’s very empowering,” she said. “The pictures of hope touch the soul of a child and they put a smile in the heart and on the face of a child who lives right here at Family Promise Metrowest.”

Sue Crossley, executive director of Family Promise Metrowest, said it’s wonderful to get the children thinking about their dreams – something that may be left out amid the challenges they face.

Solomon said she came to Natick after people such as Belmont’s Liz Daskalakis reached out to her after learning about the program.

Daskalakis, 16, who was one of several mentors who encouraged the children and took them around Natick Center to take photos, said art is a powerful way for people to express themselves. She said she hoped to help inspire the children to think about their hopes and dreams.

Mentor Jeanette Szretter said these children are often thinking only about daily things such as meals.

“To be able to think big picture is a huge gift,” said Szretter, who lives in Natick.

For more information, visit www.familypromisemetrowest.org and www.lindasolomonphotography.com.

Brian Benson can be reached at 508-626-3964 or bbenson@wickedlocal.com. Follow him on Twitter @bbensonmwdn.



Detroit photographer Linda Solomon helps Devonte (right) while laughing with Damari (left) during her "Pictures of Hope" photography lesson to kids from Family Promise of Metrowest, Saturday morning at the Common Street Community Church in Natick. Daily News Staff Photo/ Marshall Wolff