



Making A Difference In The Dominican Republic



The Dominican Republic Sports & Education Academy (DRSEA) will present a special screening of “El Play,” a documentary on Dominican baseball, on June 21, 2011 at 7 p.m. at the 809 Lounge, 112 Dyckman St., New York, NY.

The screening, followed by a panel discussion and VIP reception, is part of a fundraiser for the DRSEA, whose mission is to educate young and gifted student athletes in the Dominican Republic, help develop their baseball skills, and give them the tools to success in life on and off the field. Through a rigorous educational component, the DRSEA will prepare young boys to have the opportunity for scholarships at U.S. colleges and universities.

Co-hosting the event is the Juan Pablo Duarte Foundation, which focuses its energy on the educational needs of the Dominican community – the largest, and one of the poorest, immigrant groups in New York City.

“El Play” is produced, directed and written by Pablo A. Medina, an assistant professor at the Parsons New School for Design in New York City. The film’s main character is Jairo Candelario, a young aspiring baseball player from the town of San Pedro de Macoris, a small city in the Dominican Republic famous for producing some of the best players in the majors, including New York Yankees second baseman Robinson Canó. The film follows Jairo’s dream of signing a professional contract, and includes conversations with his family, and interviews with professional scouts, coaches and a baseball historian.

The DRSEA’s goal is to build a state-of-the-art sports and education complex in the Dominican Republic. Currently, there are about 3,500 young Dominicans in baseball camps throughout the country. **Ninety-eight percent will fail to have professional baseball careers.** Half of Minor League Baseball is Latino, the bulk of them Dominicans. Most are uneducated or undereducated, without even a high school diploma in a country where there is a strong need for a skilled and educated workforce. Most drop out of school after the 5th grade! The Academy will not guarantee anyone a professional career, but will hopefully put them in a position where **OPTIONS** are available. In the event that a graduate is unable to secure a career as a professional athlete, the Academy and/or a college education will permit them to pursue other careers, many of which could have explicit impact on the future of the Dominican Republic as a whole. For more information, please visit www.drsea.org.

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