**Prompt: What is the importance of dreams in *Of Mice and Men*? What role do they play in**

**people’s lives? How do people use dreams, and how to various characters’ dreams affect them?**

Before the Lincoln Memorial Martin Luther King Jr. announced, “I have a dream,” and through his hard work and tireless efforts, through his sharing of his dream with millions of Americans, through his hope and determination, the Civil Rights Act was signed by Lyndon Johnson and equality among all people was a step closer to being realized.  King exemplified a major theme by one of America’s greatest writers, John Steinbeck.  One of the major themes of John Steinbeck’s novel *Of Mice and Men* is that having a dream breeds hope, friendship, and determination, enabling one to strive onward in life with a sense of importance.  Three major examples show this idea.  The first example is Candy’s loss of his dog and his joining George and Lennie’s dream of owning land.  A second example is Crook’s memory of his father’s chicken ranch.  A third significant example is George and Lennie’s dream of having their own place.  These three examples display the theme that having high aspirations breed hope, friendship, and determination, enabling one to strive onward with a sense of self-worth or importance. **Thesis**

Candy’s loss of his dog and his joining George and Lennie’s dream of owning land displays how a shared dream can breed hope and friendship.  **Claim #1** After the death of Candy’s dog, Candy experiences a deep sense of loss.  He is empty.  When Candy overhears George and Lennie talking about owning a piece of land, Candy’s emptiness begins to fill with the dream George and Lennie share.  Candy tells George, “Tell you what-. . .Spose I went in with you guys.  Tha’s three hundred an’ fifty bucks I put in” **Evidence #1** (p.33).  George’s reserved reaction prompts Candy to bare his soul to George when he tells George that he would ‘make a will an’ leave [his] share to [Lennie and George]” (p.34).  George and Lennie allow Candy to share their dream, and this quickly breeds hope, as we find out a little later when Candy is constantly “figurin’ and figurin’” because of his excitement about the “ranch.” **Evidence Explanation** But even more importantly, Candy develops a friendship with George and Lennie which is evidenced later in the story when Candy confides in George, “I ought to of shot that dog myself. . .I shouldn’t ought to of let no stranger shoot my dog” **Evidence #2** (p.39).  Candy confides in George about his inner feelings regarding his dog, showing the beginnings of a friendship. **Evidence Explanation** Candy’s actions convey the concept that dreams breed hope and friendship. **Connection to thesis**

A third significant example that having a dream breeds hope, friendship, and determination is George’s and Lennie’s dream of having their own place.  For George the idea of owning his own place would allow him to keep Lennie from getting into trouble.  But more importantly, this dream makes George strive toward a goal.  George’s dream is not even close to becoming a reality until Candy offers to contribute three hundred and fifty dollars to the cause.  At that point George, with “eyes full of wonder,” says, “I bet we could swing her” (p.42), and suddenly the dream has become a little more solidified, a definite possibility.  George, Lennie, and Candy realize that this dream may come true “[r]ight squack in one month” (p.44).  George resolves to save every cent possible to pay off the little ranch.  With the knowledge that their dream can be realized, Lennie, Candy, and especially George not only bond as good friends and develop an optimism about their future, but they develop a determination which will enable them to improve their situation in their present lives.  This determination is evidenced when George says, “We’ll do her. . .We’ll fix up that little old place an’ we’ll go live there” (p.45).  George’s and Lennie’s dream of having their own place breeds hope, friendship, and especially a strong determination to make that dream a reality.  This ultimately enables George, Lennie, and Candy to strive onward in life with a sense of self-worth and importance.