

Vietnamese Friendship Association

Education Assistance for Student Empowerment (EASE) After School Youth Tutoring Program 2007-2008

Program Report and Evaluation



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Summary: VFA's After-School Youth Program, titled Educational Assistance for Student Empowerment (EASE), continued to grow and expand programming and enrollment. Starting on October 9, 2007 and running through June 12, 2008) the program provided more than 275 direct service hours and served a total of 123 students, 73 of whom attended regularly, ranging from once a week to 4 days a week. 79% of students who responded to a voluntary survey qualify as low-income based on school lunch status, and most resided in the Southeast area of Seattle. This year the program comprised three main groups: current students of the Secondary Bilingual Orientation Center (SBOC), residents of Seattle Housing Authority and returning students who live in or near the New Holly neighborhood.

This year the quality of our program was measured in several different ways. Our most effective method of program measurement is to look at the outcomes we presented to grantors. Using method, we can demonstrate that our program helped students improve in core academic subjects and pass on to the next grade level. We can also demonstrate that our program helped students increase their commitment to learning, improved their family situation and helped them become more aware of cultural dynamics. The survey method used to measure these softer outcomes, however, is still being developed. Right now survey return rate is under 50%.

Next year, the program will remain at New Holly Learning Center, and will continue to improve and expand. Plans for next year include better intake, evaluation, and record keeping systems. Tutors will be better qualified and more regularly trained, especially on communication with teachers and parents. Our parent advocate will continue to work with families of our students, and students who need extra support will be referred to our mentoring program.

I. Program Design:

The program was a combination of three components: homework assistance, academic skills building and WASL prep, and teambuilding and recreational activities. It was held at New Holly Learning Center from Tuesday to Thursday 3pm to 5pm, from October 9th to June 12th. Due to student demands, beginning in November, the program expanded to include Monday afternoons, bringing the total days to four per week.

Homework and school project assistance:

Qualified, trained, and background-checked college-level tutors and volunteers worked with our students on specific problems from their assigned homework or individual/group projects. Some tutors worked with groups of students on general problems that they all had, while other tutors specialized in one-on-one assistance. We also had many high school aged students help with the younger students as well as peer tutoring.

Skills Building and WASL prep: Students worked



VFA's Parent Advocate lends a hand with an SBOC student who is studying math in a foreign language.

in smaller groups to study English (speaking, reading and writing), WASL prep or math concepts. Students had material available that was selected based off of their performance on assessments.

Leadership and Recreation. In collaboration with Campfire USA, we piloted leadership sessions where students learned more about themselves and developed teamwork skills and self-confidence through hands-on activities, Weather permitting, students went outside for team sports, games and activities. Team sports such as soccer, football, basketball, kickball and Frisbee focus our students on working together in a fun way, while games based off of memory and trust build leadership and cooperation in students as well as being a fun way of exerting positive energy. Some of the team games and activities also put real-world emphasis on math and science skills learned in the classroom.



Students got to try on the clothes of the medical profession as part of an ice-breaker game at the beginning of the program.

Students also were introduced to a variety of resources for health, education and cultural development. Students attended acting workshops held by Jet City Improv, gardening and cooking classes taught by Cultivating Youth, health seminars by the Hepatitis B Taskforce as well as Harborview Hospital. Students also participated in community activities like the New Holly Idol Singing Contest hosted by Seattle Public Library's New Holly Branch.

In addition to the tutoring program at New Holly Learning Center, we also held Saturday

sessions in common space at New Holly for students who wanted extra help on the weekends. We sent tutors to Mercer Middle School, Van Asselt Elementary School and the SBOC to provide services to students who might not be able to make it to our program at New Holly, as well as to develop relationships with the schools and recruit high-school age volunteers.

Training: For our coordinators and tutors we tapped into a multitude of community resources. Coordinators participated in Schools Out Washington's Pathway to Excellence program, which provided training, networking and resource sharing with community partners around the state as well as six hours of individual coaching per month. We continued our participation with the Seattle Tutoring Coalition which provided academically-focused trainings to community tutors. Our tutors also attended trainings hosted by Seattle Public Schools on Everyday Math and The Source.

II. Demographic of Clients Served:

Recruitment of participants in our program was made possible by the collaboration between the VFA, Seattle Public Schools' Secondary Bilingual Orientation Center, and Seattle Housing Authority's New Holly office. Over the course of nine months the program served a total of 123 unduplicated students, 73 of whom attended regularly. Of

the students who reported data, either through enrollment documentation or surveys, we found the following:

- Economic Status: 79% were low-income, as measured by whether or not they received free or reduced lunch at school
- Sex: 45% male and 55% female
- Age: Ranged from 5 to 19; most students were about 9 to 16.
- School attended: 26% (19) of the students attended the Secondary Bilingual Orientation center, 20% (15) attended Van Asselt Elementary School, 16% (12) of the students attended Hamilton Middle School, 11% (8) attended Mercer Middle School, 5% (4) attended Roosevelt High School with the remaining 22% attending Wing Luke Elementary, Washington Middle School, Chief Sealth High School or not reporting.
- Geographic Region: 98118 (31 students; 42%), 98108 (23 students; 31%), 98144 (3 students; 4%), 98175 (2 students; 2.5%), and one student from 98106. The remaining students did not report their ZIP codes.

III. Partnerships:

- Vietnamese Friendship Association— Design, implementation, and evaluation of program
- Gates Foundation, City of Seattle Human Services Department, City of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, United Way of King County provided funding for the Family Empowerment Program, one component of which is the after-school program.
- South Seattle Community College, New Holly Learning Center—Facilities, including classrooms and computer lab.
- Seattle Housing Authority – Recruitment assistance, space donation for large gatherings,
- Seattle Public Schools—Technical assistance in implementation of Refugee Impact Grant and school partnerships
 - ▶ Secondary Bilingual Orientation Center— Recruitment of students, partner for Folklife Festival.
 - ▶ Mercer Middle School – Recruitment assistance and tutoring at Mercer Middle School.
 - ▶ Van Asselt Elementary School – Recruitment of students and partner in cultural events.
 - ▶ Chief Sealth High School – Recruitment of students and volunteers.



Tutor and Vietnamese language instructor Lai helps students understand a traditional Vietnamese New Years game while a doctor from Harborview Hospital looks on.

- Schools' Out Washington - Implementation of Refugee Impact Grant, program structure training (coaching) and tutor trainings.
- Campfire USA – Leadership Curriculum and donation of snacks, as well as leadership curriculum training for coordinators and tutors.
- University of Washington's Teacher Education Program – Students teachers from UW's Masters program were assigned to our classrooms twice a week to help with the younger students.



Staff from Cultivating youth and the UW's Masters in Teaching Program help students prepare healthy food.

- Harborview Hospital – Teen health seminar and health resource fair.
- Within Reach Washington – Hepatitis B workshop.
- National Asian Pacific Center on Aging (NAPCA)—Two workers to serve as chaperones and classroom assistants
- Jet City Improv – Workshops for students

- Cultivating Youth – Weekly gardening, cooking and health lessons.
- Grocery Outlet – Donation of weekly snack foods, drinks and sports equipment.

IV. Accomplishments:

- Attendance: Our program's total enrollment more than doubled, from 32 regularly attending students in 2006-2007 to 73, and the number of students who attended at least once more than doubled from 60 to 123.
- 70% of students completed the program. Completion of the program means either above 30% attendance for the year or weekly attendance through the end of the program.
- Students from both levels attended VFA's leadership program once a week, developing assets for communication and self-confidence.
- Direct Service Hours: The program provided over 275 hours of direct service, including Monday and Saturday sessions.
- Volunteer hours: We received over 330 work hours donated by NAPCA, and over 150 volunteer hours from parents, community members, and college student volunteers. We also received more than 150 volunteer hours from high school students with peer tutoring.
- We consistently had a ratio of 1 staff (including volunteers) for every 5 students, sometimes 1 staff for every 3 students.

- 43 out of 73 students reported an increase in a core academic subject for the semester and 61 out of 73 students reported passing on to the next grade. We suspect the numbers are actually higher, but due to the imperfect data collection method we cannot be certain.
- Our students from SBOC performed a traditional dance choreographed and taught by VFA at Seattle Center's Folklife Festival.
- Through our partnership with Schools Out Washington and Van Asselt Elementary's Tiny Tots Community Learning Center we created a series of Vietnamese cultural events covering topics ranging from Vietnamese history, geography and regional differences to language lessons and academic subjects taught in Vietnamese. Each of the six events was attended by more than 60 students of many different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds.

V. Problems Encountered

- Students did not adapt well to a program that was structured like a classroom after having spent most of their day at school, so we redirected our program to seem different from a typical classroom, including academic games and activities.
- Keeping students attending consistently was difficult due to the changing extra-curricular activities offered by students' schools.
- This year we had difficulty keeping older students enrolled without their younger siblings being involved. Due to this, we had to open up a second room for programming for the younger siblings.
- Students tended to socialize based on how long they have been in the US, which was not good for recent arrivals, as they tended to speak their native language and not practice speaking English. This issue was addressed with team building activities and games that relied upon simple comprehension and art skills.
- We continued to have difficulty recruiting and retaining volunteers to come as far south as our program
- Our evaluation method is still being honed, as students do not respond well to surveys
- While we allowed students of any background to enroll in our program, most non-Vietnamese students felt that the program was tailored too specifically to the linguistic needs of the English language learning Vietnamese population.



Tutor Kim-Thao helps students from the SBOC

VI. Program Evaluation:

We started the year with students taking an on-line reading test, which was used primarily as a tool to assess students' strengths and weaknesses in reading comprehension, and to develop resources for students based off of their results. We also conducted two surveys of our students' classroom teachers during the program. We

finished the program with a voluntary evaluation survey. However, our most reliable and impartial tool of assessment was access to student grades on-line.

Academic Performance: Students who enrolled were asked to have their parents sign a waiver that allowed VFA to access their Seattle Public Schools “Source” webpage. This access helped procure data such as:

- 95% of the 45 students for whom we had grade monitoring access showed an increase in a core academic subject over the semester
- 83% of our students reported passing on to the next grade level, with an additional 12% not reporting or lacking sufficient data.

Assets Development: VFA’s after-school program focuses not only on academic progress, but also the development of motivation for school, social competencies, and other assets that are positively linked to students’ success. Since many of our students recently arrived to the US, it was important for them to make friends and feel connected to their community. This year the surveys show a drop from previous years, which can be attributed to a number of factors:

- Increased scope and size of the program may have made some students feel like they got less attention than previous years
- The response rate for the survey was only 30%, skewing results.
- Slightly different survey formatting from previous years may have confused students.



Executive Director Vu Le helps a student understand what he is reading.

These disadvantages notwithstanding, we are still proud to report the following:

- 58% said the program made them want to try harder in school.
- 68% of responding participants agree that their math skills improved because of this program.
- 70% agreed that the program has increased their self-esteem or self-confidence.
- 67% agreed they learned how to make better decisions because of this program.
- 62% feel more prepared for school because of this program
- 59% agreed that this program helped them stay out of trouble.

Some of the lower numbers also deserve explanation:

- Only 33% of students responded that the program helped them become aware of community service. Some of this is due to a lack of support from the coordinator and some to a refocus: the community service side of the program this year focused on service learning for high school students, who did not fill out this survey.
- Only 38% of students responded that this program helped develop communication with parents. While we would like that number to be higher, it will take more time and resources than we had estimated to

develop these assets, due to cultural dynamics that do not focus on family communications.

There are also areas that are simply shortcomings of the program:

- Improving our focus on reading and writing for students, as 24% and 38% respectively expressed dissatisfaction with the program’s focus on these topics. We will find innovative ways to increase these numbers for the next academic year.
- Only 48% of students responded that “because of this program, I have a better understanding of Vietnamese culture”. We recognize our struggle with getting students involved with Vietnamese culture outside of the New Years events and have plans to include them more. Also, this survey does not include the students who attended the six cultural events at Van Asselt Elementary.
- Only 27% of survey respondents said they learned more applying to college. We did not spend so much time on college applications, since not many students were of the age where this might take priority. We will focus more on this area.

Below you may find the complete aggregate results.

Survey Statement	Agree or Strongly Agree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	Total
I am more likely to get my homework done because of this program	45%	36%	18%	100%
I learned many new skills in this program	59%	27%	14%	100%
My math skills improved because of this program	68%	27%	5%	100%
My reading skills improved because of this program	38%	38%	24%	100%
My writing skills improved because of this program	29%	33%	38%	100%
I know more about applying to college because of this program	27%	45%	27%	100%
I know more about goal settings because of this program	37%	37%	26%	100%
This program helped me develop leadership skills	43%	43%	14%	100%
Because of this program, I am comfortable working in groups/teams	52%	33%	14%	100%
This program has increase my self esteem or self confidence	70%	25%	5%	100%
This program helped me think more about my future	62%	33%	5%	100%
This program helped me make friends	57%	29%	14%	100%
This program helped me stay out of trouble	59%	32%	9%	100%
This program made me want to learn more about new things	59%	32%	9%	100%
This program made me want to try harder in school	57%	33%	10%	100%
I feel more prepared for school because of this program	62%	19%	19%	100%
I had fun in this program	73%	23%	5%	100%
I would recommend this program to my friends	59%	32%	9%	100%
Because of this program, I have a better understanding of Vietnamese culture	48%	33%	19%	100%
Because of this program, I have a better understanding of people from other cultures	55%	20%	25%	100%
Because of this program, I have more respect for people of other cultures	57%	24%	19%	100%
Because of this program, my parents/family are more involved with school	38%	48%	14%	100%
Because of this program, I can communicate better with my parents/family	52%	24%	24%	100%
I learned how to make better decisions because of this program	67%	24%	10%	100%

I know how to better solve problems/conflicts because of this program	43%	43%	14%	100%
I am more involved with community service because of this program	33%	43%	24%	100%
I really like the teachers and staff in the program	57%	38%	5%	100%
I feel safe when I am in the program	52%	29%	19%	100%
The program is well-organized	67%	19%	14%	100%
There are clear rules about what I can and cannot do	57%	29%	14%	100%
The activities in the program are too easy for me	67%	29%	5%	100%
The activities in the program are too hard for me	29%	5%	67%	100%

VII. Next Steps

Each year the after-school program grows in quality and the number of students served. This year's program was more organized than last year's and had any more workshops and collaborations with experienced organizations. Next year's program will continue this trend. For the 2008-2009 program plans are already in motion for:

- A more complete and standardized intake process, with more thorough assessments to establish baseline for program evaluation.
- Tutor trainings that are directly linked to student progress.
- Have bilingual materials available to students and parents to empower parents to work with their children outside of the classroom.
- Researching and implementing specialized programming to target students changing needs.
- Continuing and expanding collaboration between other programs at VFA, particularly the Parent Advocacy Program and the new Mentoring Program.

