

Vietnamese Friendship Association

Senior Educational Assistance for Student Empowerment (Sr. EASE) After School Youth Tutoring Program 2009-2010

Program Report and Evaluation



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Summary: VFA's After-School Youth Program for students in grades 6th through 12th, titled Senior Educational Assistance for Student Empowerment (Sr. EASE), continued to grow and expand its programming and enrollment. Starting on October 13, 2009 and running through June 10, 2010 the program provided more than 280 direct service hours and served a total of 98 students. 60 of those students attended regularly, ranging from twice a month to 3 days a week. 41 of registered students qualified as low-income based on school lunch status, and most resided in the Southeast (98118) area of Seattle. This year the program comprised three main groups: current and former students of the Secondary Bilingual Orientation Center (SBOC), residents of Seattle Housing Authority and returning students who lived in or regularly accessed the New Holly neighborhood.



The quality of our program was measured in several different ways. Our most effective method of program measurement continued to be looking at the outcomes we had projected. Using this method, we could demonstrate that our program had helped students improve in core academic subjects and pass on to the next grade level. We were able to access this information through consent of Seattle Public School's grade tracking resource, known as *The Source*. We also worked with a consultant from Social Venture Partners (SVP) to develop our student assessment techniques and produced a survey that measures a variety of student attitudes, including pride for their home culture and a strong commitment to learning.

Additionally, the program incorporated student input in its programming. We asked students on either a daily or weekly basis what they wanted to do in the program, aside from receiving homework assistance. This was conducted in several different formats, whether it was through group votes or small conversations, and it proved to be successful in making the programming more relevant to student needs and interests.

Next year, the program will remain at New Holly Learning Center, and will continue to improve and expand. Plans for next year include more structured programming, increased evaluation, increased consistent student attendance, and increased opportunity for student leadership. Our parent advocate will continue to work with families of our students. We also plan on procuring a long-term, bilingual EASE coordinator who will increase the program's sustainability. The coordinator will focus even more on improving collaboration with our other VFA and community programs, having more consistent communication with teachers and parents, and recruiting more highly qualified, reliable, long term volunteer and paid tutors for a more consistent tutor base.

I. Program Design

The program was a combination of a few components: homework assistance, academic skills enrichment, leadership, recreational activities, college planning, health education and field trips. It was held again at New Holly Learning Center on Tuesdays through Thursdays, from 3:30pm to 5:30pm, October 13th to June 10th.

Homework 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.

Academic Skills Enrichment: Students were involved in large and small group activities and games that helped them to practice and improve their English skills in such areas as listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Leadership: Students were given numerous opportunities to discover their own voices, express their opinions and create new friendships with their peers. Besides participating in routine surveys regarding program quality, students played a variety of interactive, educational games that promoted confidence-building.



Recreation: Weather permitting, students went outside for team sports, games and activities. Team sports such as soccer, football, basketball, and kickball provided students with more opportunity to learn how to work together and make friends.

College Planning: EASE Programming was often centered around college, providing games and presentations on what college life is like and exploring career paths.

Health: Students also experienced a series of presentations by Harborview Hospital. Topics included exercise, healthy eating, and relaxation techniques.

Field Trips: The EASE Program was able to expand its classroom setting to include field trips around Seattle and beyond. Students were able to go bowling, hiking, visiting Seattle University's campus, and touring University of Washington's Henry Art Gallery.

Staff Development: We continued our participation with both the Seattle Tutoring Coalition's and All City Tutor's trainings, which provide academically-focused trainings for our program coordinator and staff.



II. Demographics of Clients Served

Recruitment of participants in our program was made possible by the collaboration between 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 98 students, 60 of whom attended regularly (ranging roughly from twice a month to 3 days a week). Of the 59 students who reported data through enrollment documentation we found the following:

- Economic Status: 68% were low-income, as measured by whether or not they received free or reduced lunch.
- Sex: The ratio of male students to female students was 50/50.
- Age: Ranged from 12- 20; most students were about 16.
- School attended: 34% (20) of the students attended the Secondary Bilingual Orientation center, 17% (10) attended Cleveland High School, 8.5% (5) of the students attended Roosevelt High School and 7% (4) attended Garfield High School. The remaining 33.5% of students attended Ballard High School, Ingraham High School, McClure Middle School, Mercer Middle School, South Lake High School, Washington Middle School, and West Seattle High School.
- Geographic Region: 98118 (30 students; 51%), 98108 (10 students; 17%), 98144 (4 students; 7%), and four students from 98126, 98104, 98178, and 98194. Six students did not report their area 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; and Solid Ground's MLK VISTA Program.
- South Seattle Community College—Space donation of classrooms at the New Holly Learning Center; and curriculum support from the Student Outreach, Admissions, and Recruitment Departments.

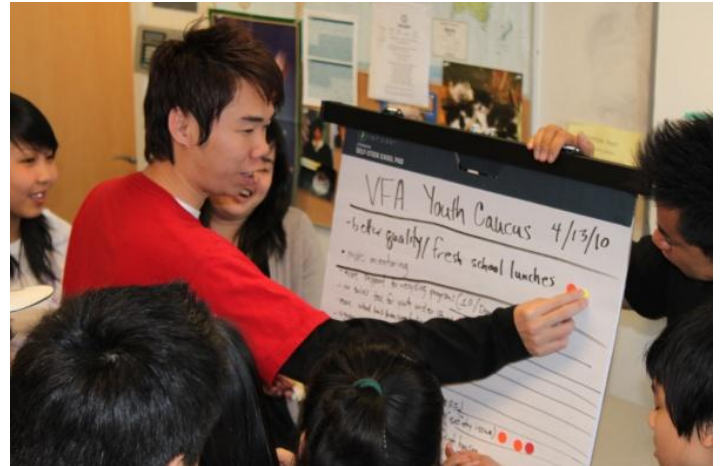
- Seattle Housing Authority – Recruitment assistance and space donation for large gatherings.
- Seattle Public Schools—School partnerships, particularly at Secondary Bilingual Orientation Center, which was instrumental in helping with recruitment of students.
- Washington Trails Association—Partnership for introducing students to hiking and the outdoors.
- Harborview Hospital – Health workshops for students.
- Atlantic Street Center, Horn of Africa Services, Youth Tutoring Program, Seattle Public Library, East African Community Services,—Partnerships for multicultural activities.
- International Capoeira Angola Foundation of Seattle—Brazilian Martial Art workshop for students.
- University of Washington Henry Art Gallery—Partnership for field trip and youth leadership.
- Campfire USA—Partnership for curriculum and volunteer support.
- Schools' Out Washington – Program structure training and a youth caucus.
- YMCA—Program structure and planning assistance.



IV. Accomplishments

- **Attendance:** Our program's total enrollment consisted of 59 registered students. On average, we had 16 students attending daily.
- **Direct Service Hours:** The program provided 180 hours of direct service during regular program hours and 60 hours additionally in field trips.

- **Volunteer hours:** We received over 120 volunteer hours from parents, community members and college student volunteers.
- **Tet Celebration:** Held at the New Holly Gathering Hall, we celebrated the new year with games, food, with 200 students, parents, volunteers and community members. It was our biggest Tet event yet!
- **Curriculum and Activities:** Our curriculum included opportunities for exploring leadership development, civic engagement, healthy living, basics on planning for college and multiculturalism. Highlights included a visit from the International Capoeira Angola Foundation of Seattle, where students learned how to perform Brazilian martial arts; and a youth caucus led by School's Out Washington to discuss what students would like to see differently in their community. Additionally, students were polled weekly for program input.
- **Camping Trip:** Staff, board members and 16 students participated in our 3rd annual camping trip.
- **Field Trips:** For the first time ever, EASE provided students with the opportunity to visit Seattle University, take a hiking trip to Tiger Mountain near Issaquah, WA and participate in a student-led tour at University of Washington's Henry Art Gallery.



V. Problems Encountered

- Keeping students attending consistently proved to be difficult due to the changing extra-curricular activities offered by students' schools.
- 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 creative skills.
- We continued to have difficulty recruiting bilingual staff members who had compatible schedules with the hours of the program. We found it even more difficult recruiting and retaining volunteers due to scheduling and transportation conflicts.
- Our evaluation method is still being honed, as students do not respond well to written surveys. Additionally, we administered surveys in both English and Vietnamese so that

students could better comprehend the purpose of the survey and meaning of the statements they were assessing.

- 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.
- Collecting registration forms was quite challenging. This became especially problematic for monitoring the academic successes and challenges of our students. Although this had improved in terms of quality because of our access to Seattle Public Schools' Source system, we were unable to perform routine progress updates for all students attending the program.
- Finding appropriate programming for all students continued to be a challenge. Polling students individually and in small groups proved to be successful in finding out what topics and activities students wanted.

VI. Program Evaluation



We conducted two written surveys for students, which allowed us the opportunity to evaluate positive changes in their attitudes regarding their community, education, friends and family, and their home culture(s). We also conducted several focus groups for students to offer suggestions for EASE programming. We finished the program with a survey of program tutors and coordinator, in addition to students' classroom teachers, which provided additional information on their growth throughout the year. Our most reliable and impartial tool of assessment, however, was access to student grades online using "Source".

Student 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. We also received grade reports from SBOC (the Secondary Bilingual Orientation Center, where many of our students attended). This access helped procure data such as:

- Daily homework assignments due or missing
- Current grades in each class
- Attendance and other truancy information that can affect academic performance.

Through monitoring students' grades and attendance, we found the following:

- 33 students showed an increase of at least one grade in a core academic subject. This is a lower outcome than we expected because only a portion of our students handed in their permission forms.
- Over 14 of students attending SBOC were able to graduate and transfer to a general matriculation school, meaning that were prepared enough to continue their education in English.



- In June, 77% (10) of our SBOC students were reported to have a B or better in Math and 100% (13) averaged A's and B's in Literature.
- 37% of registered students (17) showed an improvement or stayed the same for their school attendance, with most of them improving.
- One of our students missed as many as 257 classes in the first semester of the school year, either for excusable or unexcusable reasons, and lowered his missed classes down to 30 after he started attending EASE in the second semester.

Student Attitudinal Assessment:

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 some successes and some areas that are in need of improvement.

We conducted an initial student survey back in January of 2010 and followed up with a post survey conducted the last week of the program in June of 2010. Although we were unable to survey the same exact set of students for both surveys, we still found positive outcomes. Here is a sample of the data we collected from 28 students for the End of the Year Survey:

Regarding school:

- 96% (27 students) of students said that it is important to do well in school.

- 61% (17 students) said that they enjoy sharing ideas in classes.
- 90% (25 students) of students said that they get excited about learning new things.
- 96% (27 students) said that they see connections between what they learn in school and their life.

Regarding cultural identities(s):

- 96% (27 students) of students said that they are proud to be Vietnamese.
- 96% (27 students) said that they would like to learn more about their Vietnamese or home culture(s).
- 93% (26 students) said that they want to continue speaking Vietnamese or other languages spoken at home besides English.
- 90% (25 students) of students said that they understand what is the same and different about Vietnamese/their home culture and American cultures.



Regarding families and parents:

- 75% (21 students) said that they talk with their parents about how they are doing in school.
- 61% (17 students) of students said that they talk with their parents about how things are going in their life.
- 79% (22 students) of students said that if they had a problem, they feel that their own parents would help them.
- 75% (21 students) said that they like to spend their free time with their parents and family members.

Teacher Assessments:

In our first year of attempting to reach out to more than seven schools and gather input from over 15 teachers to make EASE a more supportive program for students, we discovered the following:

- Although it's rather difficult to get in contact with teachers, many teachers were responsive to our request for student evaluations to measure EASE's impact.
- Many teachers were also willing to meet in person and to even visit the program.

- We also found that teachers were able to recommend other students who could use some extra tutoring/support.

Here are our aggregated teacher survey results from our End of Year Assessment regarding students who attend EASE regularly:

Survey Statement (Out of 10 students)	Excellent	Good	Moderate	Low
Comes to class prepared to learn	100%	-	-	-
Turns in homework on time	90%	10%	-	-
Shares work, ideas, opinions in the classroom setting	40%	50%	10%	-
Shows enthusiasm and commitment and/or positive attitude about school	90%	10%	-	-
Thinks before acting and demonstrates awareness of consequences (<i>i.e., choices and decisions about behaviors</i>)	90%	10%	-	-
Behaves well in class (<i>i.e., pays attention and is not disruptive</i>)	90%	10%	-	-
Interacts well with other students and youth	60%	30%	10%	-
Shows leadership in group projects and activities (<i>e.g., speaks for group, presents findings, manages the group</i>)	40%	40%	10%	

Teachers also provided commentary about student improvement in addition to the above assessment. The most notable comments that demonstrate EASE’s impact our students include the following:

- “[She] continues to improve on all aspects of language arts. Her speaking and writing abilities show in increased depth of understanding this past year.” – A Roosevelt High School Teacher



- “He was studious throughout the year and clearly improved his reading and writing skills in class.” –A Roosevelt High School Teacher
- “I see a greater competence in reading and writing. [Her] written work has shown a lot of improvement, she thinks deeply and expresses herself more completely in English...” –An Ingraham High School Teacher
- “He seems more confident. [EASE] has been helpful for making him more comfortable... I think he feels better when he goes to [EASE].” –An SBOC Instructional Assistant

Staff Assessments:

The EASE Coordinator, along with the tutors and volunteers, took part in observing student progress over the course of the program. Here are our aggregated staff survey results from our End of Year Assessment regarding students who attend EASE regularly:

Survey Statement (Out of 38 Students)	Excellent	Good	Moderate	Low
Shows willingness to participate in the program projects and activities	29%	50%	18%	3%
Shows willingness to look for additional educational activities when required work is completed	13%	37%	34%	16%
Shows enthusiasm and commitment and/or positive attitude about school	50%	34%	7%	9%
Interacts well with other students	45%	37%	18%	0%
Interacts well with adults	45%	45%	10%	0%
Demonstrates interest and pride in Vietnamese/home culture	42%	50%	8%	0%
Shows leadership in program projects and activities	18%	40%	32%	10%
Willingness to express themselves and initiate speaking in English rather than Vietnamese/native language	36%	16%	32%	16%

Similar to what teachers provided us, the EASE Staff commented on student improvement in addition to the above assessment. The most notable comments that demonstrate EASE's impact our students include the following:

- “She has begun opening up herself socially to other people besides her clique. She’s persisting with English [language] development.”
- “She has transformed into a confident, young adult. She now she offers to help to the staff, is more outgoing with her peers and participates in everything with even more enthusiasm.”
- “She has become more cooperative in class activities and show more enthusiasm during those activities.”

VII. Next Steps

Each year the after-school program grows. This year’s program continued to improve in programming quality, as well as collaborations with experienced organizations. Next year’s program will continue this trend. For the 2010-2011



Program, plans are already in motion; we hope to accomplish the following:

- Obtaining a bilingual and long-term Program Coordinator for the purpose of building stronger relationships with students and for consistency in program operation.
- Recruiting more bilingual tutors and volunteers with flexible schedules to reduce the ratio of staff to students.
- Conducting more assessments to students, teachers, parents and staff to ensure thorough data results.
- Discussing and sharing academic performance tracking more openly and frequently with the students.
- Developing a stronger, web-based database system to keep track of our students and parents' information.
- Offering better training opportunities to tutors for the purpose of leadership and career development.
- Increasing communication between the Program Coordinator, tutors, teachers, schools, parents and students to support students on their way to success.
- Providing bilingual educational materials to students and parents for the sake of promoting parents to work with their children outside of the classroom.
- Researching and implementing specialized programming to target students' changing needs.
- Developing a student steering committee and a protocol for incorporating student input and leadership.
- Continuing and expanding collaboration between other programs at VFA, particularly the Service Learning Program, Parent Advocacy Program and the Saturday morning program (for SBOC students).

