

Homework Central

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Homework Central CONNECTIONS

fostering academic success through tutoring & family support

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Volunteering Can Extend Your Life!

by Holly Miner

While searching for something new to post on our Homework Central Facebook page, I found an interesting article on livescience.com. Wait...you didn't know Homework Central has a Facebook page? WE DO. Details in a minute.

Assistant Research Professor Sara Konrath and her colleagues at the University of Michigan studied statistics from a longitudinal study that looked at volunteerism. Some participant motivations were oriented toward helping others while others felt that volunteering made them feel better about themselves. Researchers then compared participant responses with physical health information. The findings showed that those who volunteered for more altruistic reasons had lower mortality rates than people who did not volunteer. The take away: Volunteering may be a good for your health!

You can read the entire article at <http://www.livescience.com/15978-volunteers-live-longer.html>

Now, about our Facebook page, you can find us at www.facebook.com/pages/Homework-Central-San-Mateo/268754963158192 You may also access this page from our website at www.smhwc.org

We are always looking for volunteers who want to make a difference in the life of an elementary school student. Become a Homework Central tutor or help us in some other way. We've got plenty to do and we can use your help! We make the process simple; we provide plenty of support and our students and their families are grateful. Please contact Holly Miner, Volunteer Coordinator at volunteer@smhwc.org for more information.

New Board Member

We welcome William Swackhamer as our newest member of the Homework Central Board of Directors. Bill is a Certified Public Accountant who has practiced in the Bay Area for over 25 years.

Bill has expertise in finance, accounting, and business operations. He is a community activist having previously serving as a founding director of the San Mateo Public Library Foundation, a board member of the San Mateo Chamber of Commerce, and a member and past chairman of the City of San Mateo's Investment Advisory Committee. In addition, Bill has been active in Boy Scouts and has coached youth baseball, softball, and soccer.

Bill was drawn to Homework Central's core mission of providing homework support, skills development, and mentorship to vulnerable elementary school students in the San Mateo-Foster City School District.

Welcome, Bill!

Homework Central Student in Middle School

by Matt Feuer

Meet Alicia (not her real name), a former Homework Central student. Alicia attended our program during the third, fourth, and fifth grades. She was behind in basic reading, writing, and English comprehension, and she needed help getting organized to do school assignments. Alicia was referred to us by her English Second Language teacher. We hoped that with focused tutoring and mentoring, Alicia's English skills would improve and she would develop effective study habits. Jill Carlson, Site Coordinator at our Unitarian Universalist site remembers Alicia as being, "shy and quiet, but with an eagerness to learn."

Alicia's mom, a Spanish speaker from Colombia, and dad, a bilingual speaker from Mexico, want their children to succeed in school. They believe education will drive future success as adults. With active support from mom and dad, Alicia regularly attended Homework Central and her family came to our evening programs, which focus on family support and educational enrichment in math and science.

As Alicia's English skills improved, so did her grades and self-confidence. What emerged was a child who became determined to excel—particularly in math and science. This determination was highlighted when, in fifth grade, Alicia won first place at the science fair in her elementary school.

Alicia has since left Homework Central, graduated from elementary school, and completed her first year at a public middle school. Recently, Alicia received a scholarship to attend a daily after school and weekend enrichment program at a highly respected independent, coeducational, college preparatory school. Her parents hope that another scholarship will enable Alicia to attend this school full time. Alicia is aiming for the moon.



Unitarian Universalists Site Update

by Jill Carlson

Our students continue to work eagerly with their tutors on homework assignments, reading improvement, and skills development. Many students bring their own books or borrow books to take home from our ever expanding library. We strive to instill a love of reading.

Families of students from our Park and UUSM sites hosted a spooky Halloween party in appreciation of the Homework Central program. Entire families were invited; from grandparents to babes in arms. There were lots of costumes and delicious food.

Net Impact

by Matt Feuer

Net Impact Berkeley and Homework Central are working on a special collaboration. Net Impact Berkeley is a student-run, non-profit organization that provides professional consulting services to for-profits, non-profits, and social enterprises.

Members of the U.C. Berkeley Net Impact team are doing a semester-long project designed to help Homework Central increase, support, and retain our great volunteers. The Berkeley team is building a sustainable volunteer model for tutors while exploring how to expand our Angels Program for non-tutor volunteers. We are also working together to explore ways to increase our use of social media so that we may better inform the public about the progress of our students and our program. We are very excited to see where this collaboration takes Homework Central!

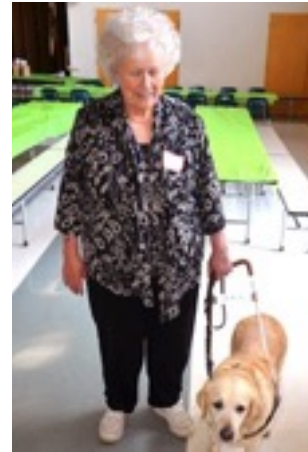
What I Like about Homework Central

by Judy Hemmer

I'm Judy Hemmer and I have been a member of the Board of Directors since Homework Central was founded in 1998. It has a unique place in my heart as its focus is on the very families and children that I taught for so many years. I was a teacher and social worker for the San Mateo City Schools in the North Central Area.

In my years with children and their parents, I have noticed many special qualities. Our families come from a variety of cultural backgrounds. They are close-knit, caring, willing to help in any way possible, and definitely want the best for their children.

The children are eager to learn and fit in with their new country. Sometimes they are shy and timid and need a friend to show them the way. But, like most young children, they want to please adults and "do better." In a nutshell, this is why I believe so strongly in Homework Central and the special bond between tutors and students.



Martin Luther King, Jr. Site Update

by Charles Douglas

It was with great anticipation that I opened my 15th year as Site Coordinator of the Martin Luther King homework site. Our students attend Baywood Elementary School and Horrall-LEAD Elementary School. We have 20 students who are eager, curious and have high energy! We are looking forward to using our new Chromebook notebooks as tools to assist our students with higher learning possibilities. Samaritan House graciously provides healthy snacks to our students each day. I am assisted by three San Mateo High School Student Interns who are both committed and have as much energy as our students. We have a wonderful group of volunteer tutors who assist our students each day. I don't know who has more fun! We are looking for more adult and student volunteers who would like to make a difference in the educational development of elementary school students.

New Site Coordinator

We are excited to introduce Molly Wagner, our new Site Coordinator at the San Mateo Park School site. Molly is bright, creative, and dedicated. She has extensive experience with after school programs and is fully bilingual. During her university years, Molly worked in Guatemala and Mexico and has great sensitivity to the culture of many of our students.

Taking a position with Homework Central is like returning home for Molly. She was a volunteer tutor for Homework Central from 2003-2007—which first ignited her passion for education. Molly says she is drawn to the program because of the Homework Central mission: helping students succeed through tutoring and parent support. She strongly believes in the involvement of the community in building a successful program and loves seeing students' progress and blossom as learners. Additionally, she hopes parents will see how important their role is in assisting their children.

Molly has already begun developing a close relationship with Christie Miller, principal at San Mateo Park School, and has terrific paid interns and volunteers who are dedicated to the Park site. She would love to have you come visit her site. Just send her an email at mwagner@smhwc.org and she can make arrangements.



Special Thanks

by Jill Carlson

As we begin our 15th year of support from the Unitarian Universalists of San Mateo, I'm continually surprised by the variety of help offered. On the first day of our new term, two non-English speaking mothers brought their third grade sons to begin our program. A congregation member that had lived in Turkey over 40 years ago helped to translate and share words of encouragements with these parents. We have high school and college student interns who are bilingual in English and Spanish, but I was unprepared for Turkish! Another congregation member, Dick Davis, organizes our "brain food" through snack volunteers so that our students receive renewed energy after their regular school day ends and Homework Central begins. I am also grateful to have wonderful tutors from the congregation and their continued financial support is heartfelt and generous.

THANK YOU UUSM.

More news and our calendar is available at: www.smhwc.org