



SUCCEED2GETHER
BUILDING OUR FUTURE, ONE CHILD AT A TIME

Mailing address: P.O. Box 1355, Montclair, NJ 07042
Physical Address: 11 Pine Street, Montclair, NJ 07042
973-746-0553

info@succeed2gether.org
succeed2gether.org

Getting Better Every Year

Dear Friends and Supporters

As we approach the holidays, I want to thank all of you--our generous financial supporters, the families we serve, our volunteers, and S2G's dedicated office staff and teachers for making our programs such a resounding success!

Because of your commitment, we have seen a dramatic increase in the demand and popularity of our programs. This summer, we were able to grow our four-week, all day program from 60 students in 2015 to 80 in 2016. For the first time, we included programming for rising first and second graders and expanded the program from four days to a full five per week. As in past years, our students not only had fun, they also demonstrated substantial academic improvement. Based on our before and after tests, we are proud to say our students increased their language arts and math scores by an average of

31% and 16%, respectively, during the four-week program.

Our fall programs also saw record enrollment levels in 2016. With the tripling of demand for S2G's one-on-one after-school tutoring program, we were concerned about recruiting sufficient tutors. Luckily, not only did most of our tutors return, but also a record number of new tutors volunteered this fall. Word is definitely getting out about the effectiveness of Succeed2gether's programs!

I want to add a special thank you to Succeed2gether's extremely capable



and resourceful staff. S2G's remarkable growth was made possible due to their willingness to work overtime to get the job done. In addition to our returning staff members--Candy Cooper, Michelle Antonucci, Jamila Shivers, Myrna Marcarian and Alan Myers, we also want to welcome our new Program Director, Jackie Mroz, who is helping Candy out in the library and also directing our fundraising efforts and workshops. We are thrilled to have her as part of Succeed2gether's family.

By Marcia Marley
President & Executive Director

Watching the Magic Happen

I first heard about Succeed2gether through my son, Lucas, a junior at Montclair High. Every Tuesday afternoon, he and a few of his friends walked from the high school to the Montclair Public Library to meet with a younger student who needed help in math or reading. I liked that my son and his friends had decided to spend their precious after-school time tutoring children. But soon I understood what was going on, and it was magic. The boys bonded with their students. They became good friends. And it turned out that the younger kids were really learning: their math and reading skills were improving. After the program was over, Lucas told me how rewarding and powerful his volunteering had been. He was deeply moved by his experience. That alone -- having my son learn how fulfilling helping others could be -- was worth its weight in gold to my husband and me.



was looking to hire a new program director, I jumped at the chance. I come from a journalism background, having worked as a writer, reporter and editor for the Bergen Record, New Jersey Monthly and The New York Times. I also taught journalism at Rutgers University and Montclair State. I was looking to do something different, and I loved the idea of working in my hometown.

Now I'm thrilled to be working here. I see that what has happened for Lucas and his friends can be multiplied by many factors to describe the overall program. Besides offering free, one-on-one after-school tutoring to children from families in need in Montclair and the surrounding towns, Succeed2gether gives them backpacks full of food, thanks to Toni's Kitchen. It holds after school and weekend enrichment classes, in chess, violin, computer coding and math and reading. You should

hear a room full of elementary school children perform on the violin after only six classes.

My son was so taken by his tutoring experience during the school year that he decided to volunteer for Succeed2gether's summer program as well. Since it began six years ago, it has grown from 16 children to nearly 80. I was able to observe the delight of the young children as they learned how to knit, practice yoga, and dance hip hop. They were also able to brush up on their reading and math skills, which is so important for children during the summer months. My son had planned on volunteering for only 1 week for the summer program, but ended up staying for a month. His enthusiasm spread to his friends, who volunteered as well. I'm sure they'll all be back next summer, too. And I'll be here, watching the magic happen, again.

By Jacqueline Mroz
Program Director

When I learned that Succeed2gether

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The Power of One-on-One Tutoring

Last year at this time, I didn't know much about running a tutoring program. "Not brain surgery," I was told, "just many moving parts." Indeed it was a challenge just rolling out the resource cart on the third floor of the Montclair library without having everything fall off. It took awhile to match the names of our students with their faces, find more tutors, and order up more supplies.

Every last leaf had fallen, it seemed, by the time I was able to lift my head and look around.

What did I see? Well, Kyoshi was learning to read. Kristie was starting to understand the Pythagorean theorem. Jordan was settling down and paying closer attention. Passion, who had been failing math, was turning into an A student. And Mikhi was fearlessly plowing through long words he didn't understand until he did. He remembered plot points from week to week that his tutor — that was me — had forgotten.

I noticed something else: people were having fun. Too much fun? I worried. Maybe they should be miserable. Still, overall, I knew something exciting was happening, yet whatever it was might not reveal itself so obviously.

And then, as the year ended, we conducted a survey. I began to read the responses, both signed and anonymous, and it was as if an anvil had dropped on my head.

Here are a few comments:

Tutor: "Working one-on-one is special and great. Besides being fun, it magnifies and amplifies learning. Every child is unique and creative. The program allows these qualities to emerge in a comfortable, friendly and productive way."

Her student: "The first time I did not know my tutor and then I started to like her a lot. She's funny, and we laugh a lot. Nobody's cooler than my tutor and my mom and me."

Tutor: "This program exceeded my expectations after seeing how well-organized it is and how effective it can be. My student improved a lot in her reading comprehension and math skills and her math teacher noticed."

His student: "My tutor taught me a ton of stuff. My math teacher wrote on a quiz, 'Really proud of your growth in math in the last month.'"

Tutor: "Had I been expecting a very well-organized, caring program, my expectations would've been entirely

met. My student made a lot of progress. He's a lot more comfortable with negative numbers. When he doesn't know the answer he tends to lose focus. He's learning to slow down."

His student: "Tutoring was a great time for me. It was fun. I learned new things like how to play war and chess. My tutor helped me on my homework when I didn't understand it. It was wonderful."



Moreover, research supports the idea that we are doing something incredibly right. James Comer, a Yale psychiatrist who specializes in children and education, puts it this way: "No significant learning can occur without a significant relationship." And Rita Pierson, a longtime educator, said it plainly: "Kids don't learn from people they don't like."

In short, I came to more fully understand the educational power in Succeed2gether's one-on-one after-school tutoring. Tutors and students form caring relationships. These cut

across race, culture, age and socio-economics, which is awesome all by itself. A vibrant and truly diverse community takes shape. People get comfortable with one another, and students relax into learning.

They learn they can slow down, make mistakes, take a break, practice more or get organized. They are encouraged to ask questions in class, or to speak up when the work is too hard. This year, we will be customizing our work even more than before.

We regularly train our tutors, who comprise an impressive group. High schoolers have gone off to Brown, Wellesley, USC, Michigan, and Rutgers. Some are retired reading or math specialists. We have award-winning journalists, authors, agents, doctors, corporate leaders and artists.

With our astute volunteer army, I now see what our tutoring program does spectacularly well: we create dynamic relationships that magnify and amplify learning. These relationships are profound and transformative, and they lead to real and consequential learning. We are a tiny organization using the right ingredients to create big change for kids. Is there anything better than that?

By Candy Cooper
Program Administrator

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Check us out on ...



The Value of Human Connection

One of my favorite moments during our four-week summer program this year unfolded at the 4-H Community Garden on Miller Street. There, our students watered the kale, tomatoes and cucumbers, picked the ripe vegetables, and laid burlap sacks over the soil in preparation for planting.

I had many other favorite moments. In the morning, we greeted students and served them a breakfast of muffins and fruit. Here students talked with friends and volunteers, teachers and staff and eased into the day. It would be hard to overstate the value of these interactions, which became the basis for a host of positives.

We enrolled close to 80 students this year, and the increase meant we needed more space. We moved middle schoolers into a classroom at the Montclair Fire Department next door, which then al-



lowed us to add a class of younger students -- first- and second-graders -- to our program.

We tested students at the beginning and end of camp, and the results were excellent, showing a

roughly 31 % average improvement in language arts and a 16 % improvement in math. That is in part because we hired excellent teachers. In language arts, students learned to compare and contrast, summarize, and predict the plot of a story. Math teachers taught numbers concepts and algebraic thinking.

And we expanded our afternoon electives. New this summer were classes in journalism, knitting, quilting, violin, storytelling and tennis. In addition, we held on to the winning electives from previous years -- in chess, game design, coding, dance, arts and crafts, yoga, nutrition, environmental science, filmmaking, sculpture, and drums. Our longest-serving teacher, who has been with the program for five years, told us that this year's session was "the most successful summer camp we have had so far."

Lunch was a favorite time for me. With academic classes completed, I was able to join the students for lunch. We served healthy and wholesome food, everything from pizza to chicken with rice and beans, green salad, fruit and dessert. Students and volunteers loved the time to socialize. They talked excitedly about which enrichment class was

coming up next. The favorite, of course, was physical education.

And here again, I witnessed the value of human connection. The students formed relationships all around that helped open them up to trying new things. They viewed teachers and volunteers as role models. They made new friends with their peers. And parents in turn saw their children grow socially and emotionally.

In fact, afternoon dismissal may have been my absolute favorite time. That was when families communicated their wholehearted thanks to Succeed2gether. It affirmed for me that we are working toward our mission, of helping one child at a time, improving the lives of families in Montclair and Essex County.

By Jamila Shivers
Administrative Assistant