



Somali American Parent Association

Spring 2014

Greetings!

This is our first quarterly newsletter of 2014 and our first newsletter in quarterly format. A lot of exciting things have been happening in our office and our community since the New Year and we are anxious to share them with you!

Program Updates

21st Century Community Learning Centers: On March 10, 2014, SAPA submitted an application for competitive federal funding from Cohort 6 of the 21st Century Community Learning Center through the Department of Education. Our goal is to expand the Out-of-School-Time services we offer in order to reach more East African students in the Twin Cities and encourage academic achievement and community engagement.

If you have questions about this process and what it means for our community, contact Program Director Brooke Barber at bbarber@mnsapa.org or 612-359-4949.

After-School Tutoring: What do you get when you match almost 70 primarily Somali students in grades K-8 with a team of twenty tutors? You get an average of **71% of tutors reporting moderate to significant gains across five core areas.**

In a recent survey, SAPA's skills-based tutoring staff reported huge gains made by their students since the beginning of the program in late October. Most tutors meet with their students twice a week for a total of two hours each week and in that amount of time:

Tutors have served 69 students, including:

- 28 students in grades K-3

- 65 students who speak Somali as their first language
- 4 students with identified special education needs
- Provided more than 1220 hours of tutoring

In addition:

91% of tutors saw their students make moderate to significant gains in literacy

82% of tutors saw their students make moderate to significant gains in math

82% of tutors saw their students make moderate to significant gains in academic confidence

There are five and a half weeks left in our after-school tutoring program. **We salute the tutors and students who have been working so hard; we're so impressed by all the progress you've made!**

Summer Programming: After a year of research and development, SAPA is very excited to launch a pilot program this summer, the **SAPA Above and Beyond Summer Institute**. The Summer Institute is a six-week day program aimed at Somali and East African high school students attending Title I schools and who qualify for free or reduced lunch. The program, which is funded in part by a grant from AmeriCorps through the Minnesota Literacy Council, will emphasize the college application process, helping students understand the logistics and strategies of applying to and getting admitted to college. Students in the program will produce a College Prep Portfolio full of resources and sample documents to help them in their college application process. Combined with ACT prep and lessons in financial literacy that focus on paying for college, the Summer Institute seeks to empower East

African high school students to set and achieve meaningful goals regarding their own education.

Official dates are still to be determined, but they will be posted on our website (www.mnsapa.org), so check back often.

For questions about the program or about how you can get involved, contact Jocelyn Pickreign, Youth and Community Involvement Specialist at jpickreign@mnsapa.org.

Mediation: SAPA successfully led a mediation process between Somali parents and the Shakopee school district, fostering mutual understanding and cooperation and a renewed commitment towards a respectful, mutually beneficial working relationship. SAPA is currently engaged in ongoing mediation with the Cedar Riverside Community School. For more information on these or other mediation projects, community members can check out our website: www.mnsapa.org or contact Executive Director Mohamed Mohamed at momoh@mnsapa.org.

Financial News

In January, SAPA received a grant from the **Best Buy Foundation** to support our OST programming. Thank you Best Buy!

In March, SAPA also received a grant from the **Otto Bremer Foundation** to support our summer program pilot. Thank you Otto Bremer Foundation!

Coming Soon: An online system for donations is currently under construction. This system will allow you to support SAPA at your convenience, in whatever amount is right for you, via our website. Thank you for your generous investment in our community!

Ways to Get Involved

AmeriCorps VISTA Position: SAPA is currently recruiting a VISTA for the 2014-2014 term of service. The Organizational Capacity and Youth Program Quality Coordinator VISTA (whew!) will take the lead on improving and facilitating a sustainable summer program for East African teenagers. The VISTA will also have the opportunity to participate in volunteer recruitment and support, curriculum design, and evaluation and quality improvement projects. Qualified candidates will have a bachelor's degree in youth development, education, social work, international studies,

management or related field and will be self-started with outstanding organizational and inter-personal skills.

AmeriCorps VISTA members serve full time at a non-profit in an effort to build capacity to fight poverty at a community level. Members must be at least 18 years of age and a U.S. citizen or permanent resident. Members receive a stipend and several benefits. For more information, see our listing on the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits Job Board:

<http://www.minnesotanonprofits.org/job-details?id=78251>

Staff and Volunteers Needed for Summer Program!

As we move into April, SAPA will begin looking for staff and volunteers for our new summer program! Qualified candidates will be self-starters with backgrounds in youth development, mentoring, college prep and related fields. Duties may include presenting a college prep curriculum, adapting curriculum as necessary, facilitating small group discussions, chaperoning field trips, and tutoring students in preparation for the ACT. This is a position of approximately 20 hours per week for six weeks during the summer. Official job postings and calls for applicants will be available soon on our website and on the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits Job Board.

Advisory Council: Do you have thoughts about community needs and the best way to address them? Do you want to have a say in the administration of our 21st CCLC program? We are looking for invested community members to join an Advisory Council to help guide the management of our out of school time programming. Please contact Mr. Mohamed Mohamud, Executive Director, at momoh@mnsapa.org if you are interested.

Want to Know More?

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, about anything you see here, or if you would like to unsubscribe from our mailing list, please contact Jocelyn Pickreign (jpickreign@mnsapa.org).

Thank you so much for your continuing support!

