



Somali American Parent Association

Summer 2014

School's Out!

...But that doesn't mean our programs stop! SAPA wrapped up another successful year of academic programming in June and our summer learning programs are well under way. We also have some great new developments in the works and some exciting changes coming your way.

Program Updates

SAPA Assists with Autism Project: In June, SAPA worked with the University of Minnesota's Institute on Community Integration to conduct research into autism knowledge and awareness within the Somali community. This research will inform further projects at the Institute on Community Integration to increase awareness of autism and provide educational programs and other services related to parenting autistic children in the East African community.

21st Century Community Learning Centers: SAPA's 21st Century CLCs finished programming for the school year at the end of May. SAPA's site staff worked closely with teachers and administrators at Lincoln International High School and Metro Schools to offer homework help, math classes, language classes, and –NEW this year—a debate club! We'd like to extend special thanks to SAPA staff member Dominic Dursa for his innovative work teaching program participants the fundamentals of debate, rhetoric, and critical thinking. Kudos too to our participants, who had several successful debates. Well done!

SAPA partnered with the schools to serve close to 80 students during the school year, and we are pleased to announce that program participants improved an average of XX on their state standardized test scores.

SAPA's 21st Century program will begin its third year in October 2014.

Congratulations to the new cohort of organizations with federally-funded 21st Century Community Learning Centers! As SAPA enters our third year of 21st Century programming, we are super excited to see so many new learning centers throughout the state of Minnesota. We look forward to collaborating with you and your communities!

After-School Tutoring: SAPA's tutoring in partnership with Minneapolis Public Schools through RAMPP—the Reading And Math Partners Program—finished for the 2013-2014 school year on April 30, 2014, marking the end of the most successful year for our students in the three years we have been partnering with MPS.



Two students show off certificates of achievement at SAPA's first annual tutoring open house on May 15, 2014.

SAPA's model provides individualized, culturally responsive skills-based tutoring to students who are struggling in reading and math. Of the students we serve, 92% are English Language Learners of East African

descent. A few are students whose families are brand new to the country. The extra two hours a week of one-on-one attention can make a huge difference for these students in everything from language acquisition to understanding class work to increasing academic confidence and lowering feelings of school-related stress.

From October 2013 through April of this year, 20 SAPA tutors provided a combined 2270 hours of individualized and culturally responsive skills-based tutoring to 65 learners, averaging 35 hours of service per student. This is a huge increase from last year.

SAPA's tutors had an incredible impact on our participants this year. Students who received tutoring in reading demonstrated an average improvement of 80.4% on grade-level assessments and students who received tutoring in math demonstrated an average improvement of 54.3% on grade-level assessments.

Of course, the majority of students are one or more years below grade level and the results here are even more impressive: Based on an analysis of students' mastery of the goals laid out in their individualized learning plans, 33 students demonstrated 75% mastery or higher of their literacy goals and 39 students demonstrated 75% mastery or higher of their math goals. In reading and math 17 students and 27 students respectively achieved 100% mastery of the goals in their ILP. Congratulations to our amazing students! You did great work and we're so proud of you! We'd also like to extend a huge thank you to our tutors for their dedication and creativity in providing services to our students. You have all made a tangible impact on our community.



2A student poses with her tutor at SAPA's tutoring open house.

Unfortunately, the district did not select RAMPP for continued funding. SAPA is still dedicated to providing tutoring services to students in the public schools and we are working on identifying alternate sources of funding.

If you would like more information on the results of our program, have questions about our process, or are interested in SAPA's future tutoring programs, please e-mail Brooke Barber at bbarber@mnsapa.org.

Financial News

In June, SAPA received a grant from the **James Thorpe Foundation** to support our OST programming. Thank you James Thorpe!

In May, SAPA also received a grant from the **Minnesota Department of Human Services** to conduct a community needs assessment within the Somali community to inform the creation of a training program for medical professionals on how best to communicate with the Somali community about mental health. Thank you DHS!

SAPA, in partnership with African Immigrants Community Services (AICS), has applied for a grant from the Office of Refugee Resettlement- Ethnic Community Self-help Program to support increased parent engagement and training programs.

Announcements

AmeriCorps VISTA: At the end of July, SAPA will say goodbye to Jocelyn Pickreign, our current AmeriCorps VISTA service member. VISTA is a three-year grant program through the Corporation for National and Community Service that connects individuals passionate about community service to community organizations, where they complete a capacity building project. Jocelyn started serving with SAPA on August 3, 2013, and her service will officially end August 2 of this year. During her time at SAPA, Jocelyn worked on a number of projects to strengthen SAPA's organizational capacity, including building tools and systems for a tutoring program, writing college prep curriculum, improving SAPA's media communications strategy, and creating a system of staff and volunteer training and support. We wish her the best of luck in her future endeavors!

On August 4, 2014, Kathryn Culhane will join SAPA as the 2014-2015 VISTA. Kathryn comes to us as a recent graduate from the University of Minnesota. As the third and final VISTA at SAPA, Kathryn will focus on sustainability—embedding all the new knowledge

acquired during the past three years firmly in the organization. Welcome, Kathryn! We're so excited to have you!

Seeking Afterschool Site Staff for 21st Century Community Learning Centers: Our 21st Century community Learning Centers will open for a third year starting October 2014. While fall and the first day of school seem like a long way off, SAPA's fall hiring season is just around the corner. We will be looking for individuals with substantial education and/or youth development experience (teaching license a plus, but not required) willing to work with multicultural youth in a flexible, high-energy environment. Keep an eye 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!

