

# **PENCIL Foundation Math Partners Annual Report 2006-07**

## **Overview**

Now in its seventh year, Math Partners provides trained community volunteers who help boost math achievement for struggling fifth- and sixth-graders in Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools. Working with students whose math scores fall below the national norm, volunteers engage them in hands-on activities designed to increase skills and concept mastery, foster enjoyment of math, and demonstrate its relevance to everyday life.

PENCIL Foundation recruits, trains and places volunteers in middle schools throughout the district. Volunteers meet weekly with groups of up to four students for a minimum of 8 weeks. In 2006, PENCIL Foundation created a new curriculum for the program that focuses on some of the essential skills and competencies that students need to master in order to pass the annual state-mandated TCAP tests in response to needs identified by Metro Public Schools.



## Outcomes:

- During the 2006-07 school year, 108 Math Partner volunteers assisted 423 struggling middle school students. This was a programmatic growth rate of 67% of the students served from the previous school year.
- ThinkLink tests indicate that students in the program are making academic progress. For example, results from one of the targeted middle schools with a 91% poverty rate indicate that *all* of the students who participated in Math Partners met or exceed their math academic goals for the year.<sup>1</sup>
- 91% of the Math Partner volunteers surveyed reported that the program improved students' abilities to do math; 100% of the teachers/school coordinators reported improvement.
- 94% of the volunteers reported the development of successful, effective mentoring relationships through Math Partners while 100% of the teachers/school coordinators observed the positive impact of the program on their students.
- Math Partner volunteers assisted students enrolled in AVID (Advancement via Individual Determination), a nationally recognized program that provides academic support and college access for underserved student populations. "You can not believe the difference it makes to have tutors in the classroom," reported one AVID instructor.
- PENCIL Foundation collaborated with service-learning and volunteer programs at Meharry Medical School and Vanderbilt, Belmont, and Tennessee State Universities that brought college students into schools
- As a new step in inter-agency collaboration, the Program Director presented a math-tutoring workshop specifically for Big Brothers, Big Sisters mentors who wanted to learn how to be more effective in helping their children academically.
- In collaboration with the Bethlehem Community Family Resource Center, special attention was focused on bringing additional resources and volunteers to address the needs of students in this at-risk inner-city community. 80% of the schools served through Math Partners are designated Title I schools because of their high percentage of low-income students.

## Program Funding

PENCIL's Math Partners Program is funded in part by: AT&T, The Dell Foundation, The Oprah Winfrey Foundation, First Tennessee Foundation, Wal-Mart Foundation, Publix Super Markets Charities, Robert Orr-SYSCO, Nashville Gas Company, and United Way of Metropolitan Nashville.

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<sup>1</sup> The goal is that each student will achieve a 100 point gain between pre- and post-tests in math. The students who took pre and post-tests for ThinkLink at Bass Middle School had scores of 98-113.