

## AAUW 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY AWARD - STEM AT SUMMIT PARK

AAUW Rockland studied STEM projects around the country as well as STEM programs and models available through AAUW. According to the research in "Under the Microscope", programs connected to the school curriculum and meeting on a regular basis, beginning at an early age, have the potential for the maximum effect, hence the choice of Summit Park Elementary School, grades K-3. Students needing assistance were identified by performance on the East Ramapo Math Unit Assessment administered in September. Tutors serviced 41% of the third grade.

To initiate and enrich math units, the branch chose "Let's Read Math", (LRM). Tutors participated in a 4 hour workshop with Dr. Claire Passentino, a one hour meeting with the school district math coordinator, who provided unit pacing calendars and periodic briefings with the assistant principal. Classroom teachers were available in person and by e-mail. Tutors were charged with focusing on the performance of girls with praise, extra help and strategies, thus addressing AAUW's mission. The project address branch goals :

- increased visibility
- sharing the mission through relevant programming

Tutors were solicited from AAUW (6), Rockland Retired Teachers' Center (3), and Delta Kappa Gamma (2). A collaboration with RSVP, (Retired Senior Volunteer Program), provided tutors with:

- door-to-door transportation, if needed
- mileage reimbursement
- volunteer credit to RSVP
- volunteers' awards luncheon
- solicitation to a wider pool of possible tutors

A stipend of \$15 per tutor for extra materials was made available for 2008-2009. 2009-2010 through the LRM grant.

East Ramapo is the lowest performing district in the Rockland County school system. Individual help showed individual improvement on the preliminary February assessment. The community benefited because

- the Masons were inspired by AAUW's initial proposal
- the tutors carried a different message about the school's image

The project resulted in four new members, including the principal and assistant principal. Lessons learned for next year:

- tutor twice per week
- add reading program beginning with 2<sup>nd</sup> grade twice per week

STEM - "LET'S READ MATH" TRAINING

Training for volunteers to the AAUW Rockland County Branch Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) Project "Let's Read Math" will be held Friday, September 19, 10:00 a.m. at Summit Park Elementary School, 925 Route 45, New City, NY 10956. Kim Hewlett, Principal. Dr. Claire Passantino, developer of "Let's Read Math" and project facilitator, Graham Boose, will conduct the training. We are looking for 6 additional volunteers. So far, volunteers have come from AAUW, The Retired Teachers' Center of Rockland and the Statewide Senior Action Council. A math background is not essential. We are looking for people who want to share a love for math to third graders. If you are interested in participating in this program, please contact Dorothie Flieger 634-2063

STEM - "LET'S READ MATH" AT SUMMIT PARK

The Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Initiative (STEM) at Summit Park Elementary School was launched on Friday, September 19, 2008. Ten potential tutors were trained by "Let's Read Math" developer, Dr. Claire Passantino and grant implementer, Graham Boose, who drove from Bucks County, PA for the workshop. The branch received a grant of \$300 for materials from AAUW through the replication grant administered by Graham Boose. Dr. Passantino adapted the program to meet the specific skills required in the curriculum map for the East Ramapo Central School District.

STEM AT SUMMIT PARK

The STEM Project at Summit Park began formally on Wednesday, October 22. The tutors met the teachers and the students. It was love at first sight. More tutors are needed. We work in groups of 5 - 7 students. There are other small groups in the classroom at the same time so everybody gets individual attention. The experience is so rewarding. Come share the magic. Contact Joyce Brown 352-3275

AAUW WASHINGTON UPDATE: AAUW to launch major STEM study with funding from National Science Foundation.

AAUW has won a two-year, \$249,000 grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to launch a major study of the causes and dynamics behind the low participation of women and girls in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields. This is AAUW's fourth grant from NSF. Set for a 2010 release, the study has the potential to garner public support for policies to even out the disparities in the higher-paying, male-dominated STEM fields, in which women are woefully represented.

STEM AT SUMMIT PARK continues. Tutors were so needed for the two weeks before Thanksgiving due to the school calendar. The students asked each week, where we were. How wonderful to be missed. We continue to need more tutors. It's time for some of our volunteers, who are snowbirds, to fly South. Some of the classes require the tutors to have a long list of possible substitutes. We, therefore, continue to solicit tutors.

Some new things have happened with STEM. We have been declared a worksite with RSVP. Tutors work 4-5 hours along with other perks. We are very happy to have made this connection. Working with the students is a reward. The students are unbelievably well behaved and anxious to work. Wednesdays are a pleasure. Call Ros 372-4110 or Joyce 352-3275 if you or someone you know would be interested.

STEM STEAMS AHEAD AT SUMMIT PARK

The STEM Initiative moves forward. A special Thanks to the wonderful volunteers who come faithfully every week: Ann Brennan, Adeena Dresnik, Debbie Frank, Rita Garner, Elaine Getz, Sandi Gordon, Margaret James and Ann Mulligan and to Rosalind Maxwell who manages the communications and the administration of the project. Thanks also to Joan Williams who answered the call to cover the snowbird tutors in January and March. Nine tutors work with the 3<sup>rd</sup> graders at Summit Park Elementary School. It is truly a labor of love. We are now in the stretch of hard work that leads up to the math assessment in March. We continue to solicit help. The smaller the groups, the more individual attention can be given. Join us if you can. Contact Ros 371-4110. Stay tuned.

# Tutors reaching Summit Park students

## Masons, women's group help youths with math, reading

Ran H. Weiner  
The Journal News

**RAMAPO** — Every Wednesday, Summit Park Elementary School opens its doors to nearly two dozen men and women who have asked to help the young students there with their math and reading skills.

For Principal Kim Hewlett, the new mentoring programs between the 463-student kindergarten-through third-grade school and area Masons and members of the American Association of University Women is almost as heartwarming as seeing the adults and youngsters share a book or an arithmetic game. For her, creating a link between adults and schools is the best thing that can happen to any child.

"You know the old African adage: It takes a village to raise a child? It takes a village to educate a child, extended family, students, teachers, staff, parents and community," she said.

Last summer, members of the two professional groups asked Hewlett for permission to help children at the beginning of their educational careers. Summit Park is a Title I school; it receives federal funds because it has a high number — more than 50 percent — of students receiving free or reduced-price lunch, an indication of poverty. Ninety percent of the students are nonwhite.

Members of AAUW — many of them retired educators — asked



**Vivien Disalvo/The Journal News**  
Jerry Sylvester, worshipful master of the Tappan Zee Lodge 79 of the Masons, reads to 7-year-old James Theran at Summit Park Elementary School in New City on Wednesday. The Masons meet with students weekly to help work on reading skills.

to come in and help struggling youngsters with their math. Although the math tutoring is open to all students, AAUW is especially interested in helping young girls strengthen their math and science skills, said Joyce Brown, one of nearly a dozen AAUW members who visit Summit Park on Wednesdays.

Masons wanted to help young boys with their reading skills. "We're obligated to give back to the community," said Jerry Sylvester, worshipful master of Tappan Zee Lodge 79 in Spring Valley. "We chose this school so we could mentor the young men. We're just like them and we went

**"We're obligated to give back to the community."**

Jerry Sylvester, worshipful master of Tappan Zee Lodge 79 in Spring Valley

had youngsters turn up on their own to share books with the adults.

Eryk Goldsmith, 7, said he enjoys the Wednesday lunches with his mentor, Hugh Burns.

"When you read, it helps you learn the words," the youngster said. "When you go to second grade, you can learn to read whatever book you want."

Classmate Roddy Vixanar, 6, said learning to read was a good idea "so you can be smarter."

Burns said he was delighted to volunteer at Summit Park specifically.

"My grandchildren are here. When the idea was made, I saw the need," he said. "Eryk is fun to work with."

At 1 p.m., members of AAUW walk in to set up tutoring groups with about 40 children. While those youngsters work with their mentors, the rest of the school takes an additional hour for math instruction with their own teachers.

The math focus is designed for students who need help with basic math concepts they didn't com-

pletely understand before the class moved on to other concepts, Hewlett said.

"What AAUW does is come to and work with children in a very small group to help teach them strategies to apply in learning how to complete the math problems," she said. Because of state testing schedules and state curriculum timetables, "We didn't have the opportunity to go back and reteach a skill the child does not understand. Now we have this."

Reasons for the AAUW members to come mentor at Summit Park varied, from wanting to give back to wanting to show youngsters that math is needed in every day life and that numbers are nothing to be afraid of. Several had worked with older children and felt they needed to shore up weak math skills early, before bad habits or confusion derailed youngsters as they advanced.

"We already know that if a child is successful in one area, they bring it in to other areas," said AAUW member Rita Garner, whose background is in psychology instead of teaching. "It's a joy when that light goes on."

Reach Randi Weiner  
at rweiner@journal.com  
or 845-578-2488.