

## **Collaborative Tutoring Programs: Duke Students as Tutors-Mentors**

*Background.* For the past decade one of the signature features of the partnership between Duke and the surrounding neighborhoods has been the involvement of Duke students as tutors of children in local schools and community centers. Each semester approximately 10% of Duke's undergraduate student body is actively involved as tutors, working primarily with low performing children who have been identified as being at risk of academic underperformance. With an estimated 600 students each semester serving as tutors, tutoring is the largest single service activity students choose to engage in. While serving as a tutor may not receive the media attention that higher profile forms of service often receive, tutoring is at the heart of the University and student life. The University in its strategic plan, *Making a Difference*, has recognized that civic along with intellectual engagement can lead to the development in students of certain habits of mind and heart. Among these are a passion for learning, an increased sensitivity to difference, a greater capacity for perspective-taking, and a deeper commitment to social justice. It is through their service as tutors that most students become civically engaged while at Duke. In many ways tutoring has helped create a campus cultural tipping point in which civic engagement is perceived as part of who we are and what we do at Duke.

*Organizational Support for Tutoring.* The major support for Duke's tutoring programs has for many years been provided by an amicable collaboration among the Community Service Center, the Office of Community Affairs, and the Program in Education. These three programs have teamed together to secure funding, to arrange logistical support, and to work closely with local schools and community partners to determine how tutors can most effectively foster the academic and personal development of children. Most Duke students who serve as tutors receive initial training and ongoing guidance through the supportive infrastructure that has been developed by these three programs.

*Goals of Duke's Tutoring Programs.* Since 1996 and the initiation of Duke's efforts to formally train and support undergraduates who serve as tutors, a guiding principle has been that schools and community partners should take the lead in identifying the goals of the program. Two goals have been strongly articulated by the schools: 1. raising the academic achievement of low performing children, particularly as measured by the North Carolina End of Grade tests; and 2. fostering a positive attitude among children towards school and learning. While all of Duke's tutoring programs share the common goal of raising student achievement, it is important to note that Duke's various tutoring programs often target different age groups and often differ in focus. Tutoring can potentially have significant impact, not only on children, but on Duke students as well. Reciprocity of learning is a central value of the Duke tutoring programs. Learning goals for Duke students include the intentional linking of their academic lives to their civic and social lives. As President Brodhead noted: "one of things most distinctive about Duke is its real world orientation—the yoking of knowledge, application, and service." Duke students should emerge from their service experiences more fully developed intellectually, ethically, and civically.

## School Based Duke tutors

### Fall 2007

School	America Reads/Counts Work study	America Reads/Counts Volunteer	PFS	PC	Total Tutors	Total Tutor hours
Carter	15	0	0	0	15	900 est
DSA	10	4	0	4	18	740 est
Forest View	18	3	16	7	44	1546 est
Lakewood	16	2	16	0	34	1286 est
Morehead	13	2	0	0	15	820 est
Powe	19	2	25	8	54	1679 est
Rogers-Herr	4	1	0	0	5	260 est
Watts	47	6	30	14, 10 (ESL)	107	3805 est
<b>Total</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>11,036 est</b>

### Spring 2008

School	America Reads/Counts Work study	America Reads/Counts Volunteer	PFS	PC	Total Tutors	Total Tutor hours
Carter	14	0	0	0	14	840 est
DSA	5	2	0	0	7	340 est
Forest View	18	2	13	2	35	1376 est
Lakewood	12	3	16	0	31	1096 est
Morehead	15	3	0	0	18	960 est
Powe	15	1	32	2	50	1526 est
Rogers-Herr	4	0	0	0	4	240 est
Watts	42	7	23	6, 5 (ESL)	83	3307.5 est
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>9,685.5 est</b>

**America Reads/Counts** volunteers generally tutor 2 hours per week  
**America Reads/Counts** work study students usually tutor 6 hours per week  
**PFS** (Partners for Success, service learning) students tutor 2 hours per week.  
**PC** (Project Child, freshman) students tutor 2 hours per week.

## Afterschool Based Duke & Durham Tutors

### Fall 2007

Site	Service Learning	Project Child	Volunteers	Total Tutors	Total Tutor hours
Carter	13	0	1	14	277
Crest St	16	2	2	20	331
Emily K	13	10	2	25	345
Exchange Club	0	3	0	3	60 est.
DSA	0	5	0	5	50 est.
Lyon Park	5	3	1	9	137
Partners for Youth	0	7	10	17	552.5 est
West End	14	5	2	21	395
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>2,147.5 est</b>

### Spring 2008

Site	Service Learning	Project Child	Volunteers	Total Tutors	Total Tutor hours
Carter	6	0	2	8	132
Crest St	16	1	2	19	405
Emily K	3	2	5	10	200 est.
Lyon Park	3	2	1	6	110
Northside	2	1	4	7	97
Partners for Youth	0	12	9	21	682.5 est
West End	12	6	3	21	336.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>1,963 est</b>

Service Learning students tutor 2 hours per week.

PC (Project Child, freshman) students tutor 2 hours per week.

Volunteers tutor 2 hours per week

*Assessing the Impact.* Much effort has been put forth to assess the impact of Duke tutoring programs. For example, Project HOPE has collected extensive data on children who been tutored in afterschool programs in community centers. Partners for Success has compared the End of Grade test scores of tutored children to the scores of a matched comparison group which did not participate in a Duke tutoring program. Efforts have also been made to assess the impact on Duke students by coding and analyzing pre and post essays written about the tutoring experience. This fall semester one group of Duke tutors is participating in an assessment that involves pre and post administrations of the Rest Defining Issues Test which is designed to assess moral development. The results of some of these assessments have been published in refereed journals (e.g., *Teacher Education Quarterly*, Summer 2004). Given all the factors influencing student achievement, it is difficult to isolate the impact of Duke's tutoring programs. Nonetheless, as the attached graph demonstrates achievement levels of children in local schools have risen since the inception of Duke's collaborative tutoring programs.

*Looking Ahead: Strategies for Improving Local Schools, Raising Student Achievement, and Creating a More Engaged Campus Culture.* While Duke's collaborative tutoring programs have contributed, at least in part, to the rising achievement levels of Durham school children and to the University's new sense of being a civically engaged campus, much work remains. Issues which need to be addressed include: transportation of Duke students to and from schools and community centers; more effective training of tutors, particularly in the area of English as a second language (the number of Spanish speaking children who participate in Duke's tutoring programs has increased exponentially over the past few years); assistance in developing more rigorous program evaluation and assessment metrics; thought needs to be given to involving the leadership of the Durham Public Schools in developing an overall strategic plan for using supplementary tutoring programs (at the current time, tutoring programs respond to the immediate needs of teachers and principals without any centralized strategic plan); and more work can be done to give public recognition to the depth of Duke student involvement as tutors and mentors. This significant aspect of Duke student life is in some ways an identifying feature of the Duke "brand" yet its potential remains largely untapped. As we move forward with *Making a Difference* we need to capitalize on these efforts.