



## Homework Club Sunset Gardens Outcome Report

### Term 1 and 2, 2010-2011 School Year

#### Background

This year marks the first year of the Homework Club at Sunset Gardens. The club began in September 2010 in the Sunset Gardens Community Room located on 951 SE 13<sup>th</sup> Ave. Hillsboro, Oregon. The club runs Tuesday and Thursday from 3:15-5:00 PM excluding holidays and other school breaks, and is available to all resident youth from Sunset Gardens, enrolled in grades 1-6. The students come from Lincoln Street Elementary, Witch Hazel Elementary, and W.L. Henry Elementary schools.

During the 2010-2011 school year, the club has been staffed by Program Coordinator Elena Barreto, and part-time staff member Debi Myers. The Sunset Gardens Homework Club depended greatly on outstanding volunteers like Carrie Miller. During this term the Sunset Gardens Homework Club also had three volunteers come as part of a PCC Service Learning Project for their Spanish class taught by Stephanie Yorba Zink: Marjorie Schmalz, Kelly Hyde, and Melissa Yotter-Brown. The PCC students completed the optional project by working at least 10 hours at the Sunset Gardens Homework Club, and giving a presentation about their experience at the Homework Club at the end of their term. Zink will continue to give her Spanish students the option to volunteer with Bienestar to fulfill project requirements in the coming scholastic year. The volunteers at Sunset Gardens worked notably hard to make the program a success. We had 18 at the end of the second term for the 2010-2011 school year. Snacks were provided for the students every session through our partnership with the Oregon Food Bank during the first term. We began giving the students healthy snacks, such as cheese and crackers, peanut butter sandwiches, and carrot sticks, as we await approval for the Child and Adult Care Food Program through the USDA to provide these healthy snacks for the remainder of the year.



We focused on ensuring the children complete their weekly school work assignments. At the Sunset Gardens Homework Club it was a rule that the students must bring their backpacks and homework. We were successful in making sure the children completed their school work at Homework Club. With consistent volunteers we were able to provide the students with more individualized attention with homework and reading as well as building relationships with them. Bienestar staff members and volunteers circulated the room, assisting children who had questions and checking their work

for accuracy. This allowed the volunteers to build relationships with more of the students rather than a select few each week. All staff and volunteers worked hard to make sure

kids were able to comprehend what they were being asked to do. At Sunset Gardens the use of flash cards for math and reading, and manipulatives in a group setting was very beneficial to the students. The group setting and repetition of these learning activities helped the children to strengthen their basic math skills as well as increase their confidence among their peers. The students showed improvement in small addition and subtraction; it helped many students to memorize their multiplication tables, and helped the first graders learn to read.

If the students did not have homework they worked on the worksheets that we provided. During term one and two, worksheets were geared toward reviewing the materials the students had learned during the year. Each student had a folder where they could put their worksheets at the end of homework time if they were unfinished so they could continue working the next time they did not have homework.



Students arrived at 3:15 and washed their hands before sitting down and eating their snack for 15 minutes. During this time we would announce "Achiever of the Week," the student who was the most cooperative, and did all his or her homework and reading the previous week, among other announcements. At 3:30 students started working on their homework. After 30 minutes of homework time, there was 30 minutes of reading time. During reading time the students could read one of the books they brought from school or a book provided by Bienestar.

Thanks to Catlin Gabel School's donation of hundreds of books to our library, the students can take a book home if they see one they become interested in during reading time to help bolster their motivation to read. Students could read independently, with a partner, or with an adult. The volunteers and staff each sat with one or more students reading aloud or listening and coaching a student to further develop their reading skills.

The last half hour is free time for the students and they were able to play an array of educational games that were provided. The students were also given the opportunity to make beaded bracelets with materials donated by Carrie Miller. Each month Debi Myers would provide different craft opportunities depending on the holiday that month. The students looked forward to making these crafts such as skeletons, turkey hats, bracelets and frames for Christmas, and Valentine hearts.



A variety of motivational tools were implemented to create more of a community in the Homework Club and to encourage the students to be more respectful and kind to the staff, volunteers, and each other. As a group, students could receive up to 4 pom-poms a

day if everyone was respectful, cooperative, and did their work. Once the club received 30 pom-poms the students could vote on a party. So far the students have had a pajama/movie party, and an ice-cream/break-dance party. The students can also receive "Kindness Tickets" for helping someone without being asked, like pick up trash or a game, help someone with homework, say "please" and "thank you", or say something nice to someone. At the end of the month those who got a ticket get a prize.

We recently implemented a monthly newsletter for the parents of Homework Club. This is a way for the parents to have a better idea of what is going on in Homework Club, get reminders for upcoming events, and encouragement on how to continue to help their children outside of Homework Club.

We take a holistic approach to correcting and improving behavior and grades in the Homework Club. Since this was the first year of Homework Club at Sunset Gardens we invited all the parents for a brief meeting to review the rules of Homework Club and ask them to help us encourage their children to follow the rules. We set up meetings in the Community Room to meet individually with five parents discuss their child's behavior or concern for the child's grades. We encouraged the parents to make appointments with the teachers to talk about improving the child's grades, and offered to attend the parent/teacher meeting to translate. Three of the parents did contact their child's teacher to further discuss ways to help their child and one of the parents brought back information from the meeting so we could better help her child during Homework Club.

### **Attendance**

There were 20 students enrolled in our Sunset Gardens Homework Club at the end of the first term, and 18 at the end of the second term of the 2010-2011 school year. One of the students moved out of Bienestar apartments and the other joined an after-school program through his school. Attendance was consistent with an average of 18 students per day the first term and 15 the second term. During the second term four students would come to Homework Club after a tutoring program at their respective schools once or twice a week.

**Grades Outcome:** (see analysis on website for specific results)

The children submit their report cards at the conclusion of each term. We analyze them and check for improvement in individual subjects, overall GPA and homework grades. This term the collection of report cards was more difficult than the first term because report cards were sent home a few days before Spring Break, during which time Homework Club is not in session. We collected report cards from all 20 students who were enrolled in Homework Club for term one and 14 from term two. We used the previous term as the base to measure student performance. As mentioned, improvement is monitored in individual subjects. We use "net improvement" to determine this in our analysis. For example, if a student improved in 2 subjects but declined in 1, they would have a (+1) score under net improvement.

In Term 2 one student improved his homework grade and three lowered theirs. The group GPA increased this term from 2.02 to 2.10 with 6 students increasing their individual GPA, and 8 slightly decreasing. Five of the students not only improved their GPA's, but also had

positive net improvement in subjects. Although more of the students lowered their grades, many were not significant decreases and are due mostly to being evaluated in new subject areas, for which they were not evaluated the previous term. Also, many students showed no net improvement whether their GPA increased or decreased because new subject matters were evaluated.

In Term 1 six students improved their homework grade from the last term of the 2009-2010 school year. Two of the students lowered their homework grade from the previous term; however one of those students increased hers in term 2 while the other remained the same. Unfortunately, after comparing the students' GPA from term 1 to term 3 of the previous school year, 15 students' GPA went down, while 4 students' increased, with the group GPA decreasing from 2.26 to 1.97. We believe the main reason for this is due to summer learning loss. The students rarely practice reading or math during summer vacation leading to a loss of academic skills at the beginning of the following school year. However, by the end of the second term the group GPA increased from 2.02 to 2.10 and 6 students raised their individual GPAs.

The staff and volunteers worked together to improve the effectiveness of Homework Club. Every day volunteers and staff stayed after Homework Club to discuss and write notes about student progress and what improvements needed to be made. Since this is the first year of Homework Club at Sunset Gardens we did not see as vast an improvement in the second term as our other Homework Clubs. The children are still getting used to the rules and expectations of Homework Club and we continue to work diligently at improving the children's work habits and encouraging the students as well as the parents to make sure their child is doing their homework outside of Homework Club. Each person who worked at this Homework Club was very dedicated to seeing the program and the children involved succeed.



Students showing off their new  
Catlin Gabel books!

Respectfully,

Elena Barreto  
Program Coordinator