



# GEARUP NEWSLETTER



American Samoa Community College

April, 2011

Issue 7

## GEARUP AM. SAMOA AND BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF AM. SAMOA TO PRESENT AT THE NATIONAL GEARUP CONFERENCE

The National Council for Community Educational Partnerships (NCCPEP) selects the GEAR UP American Samoa and Boys and Girls Clubs of American Samoa (BGCAS) partnership as a featured presentation at the July 2011 national conference, San Francisco, California. During a time of fiscal crisis and a national effort to prioritize quality education, college completion and global competitiveness toward overall economic development, American Samoa has demonstrated a model that will better prepare youth for the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce.

Lessons learned from five years of GUAS implementation in public and private schools have proven the need to expand the reach of GUAS services beyond its cohort of 850 students from the western district. The establishment of the BGCAS with a focus on mentoring, tutoring, educational technology and a blend of life skills training and enriching activities provide a unique opportunity for collaboration and sustainability in the community.

BGCAS is establishing a club facility as the hub for programs and services currently being delivered at school sites. The facility will feature state of the art technology, providing access for youth and their families and the surrounding community. BGCAS will feature a "community school" that will offer courses for GED or adult basic education during day and evening hours to accommodate working and non-traditional students. BGCAS has long term plans to establish extension 'club units' in hard to reach villages that are at the furthest eastern and western sides of the island including Manu'a.

The collaborative partnership between ASCC GUAS and the BGCAS avoids duplication of effort, maximizes on lessons learned and the experiences of the GUAS program and enables program growth and expansion through a community network under the auspices of the BGCAS. This partnership will improve access to educational opportunities for all members of the community, specifically at-risk, disadvantaged youth and their families through a sustainable, community-based infrastructure.



L-R: Matatula Principal Sima Malele, ASDOA Director Leftti Aitu'alagi Faleali'i Pese, First Lady Mary Ann Tulafono, BGCAS/GUAS Director Tupua Roy Fua at the BGCAS Farm Project at Matatula Elementary School



First Lady Mary Ann Tulafono BGCAS Board Chairperson with BGCAS/GUAS Director Tupua Roy Fua and staff.

### RTI Math Intervention Project: Session #2

Renowned U.S. Essayist & Poet Ralph Waldo Emerson once said "Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm", and we are perpetually grateful that our instructors are well-equipped with a lot of enthusiasm. With an extensive amount of expertise and enthusiasm, our GUAS RTI instructors take pleasure in sharing their knowledge and experiences with our GUAS students.

Currently, an average of 32 students attends the RTI sessions on a regular basis, with about 9 students per class. Although the provisional number of students expected to be served in the program is 75, the average number, 32, is deemed a more preferable number by our instructors, mainly because it highlights the one-to-one service that is proven to be most effective in dissecting math concepts. However, the numbers kept climbing after the first two weeks, and as of April 11, the enrollment climbed to 53. Our instructors are in high spirits seeing the numbers grow, indicating that the students' are eager to learn.

Two of our instructors, Mrs. Beena Unnithan and Mr. Fa'afeu Naseri, have been a great asset to the RTI program since October's session #1. The students find their methods and strategies effective in that their measurable progress is noticeable. Our newest instructors, whom we are very appreciative for their work, are incredibly excited about the program. With their experience in teaching and credentials that speak for themselves, Ms. Jordanna Maga from Tafuna High School and Mr. Matthew Thiel from Fa'asao-Marist High School are both excellent additions to the GUAS RTI program.

- Anthony Felise

### GEAR UP Newsletter

#### Special points of interest:

- GUAS & BGCAS Presents at NCCPEP
- RTI Math Intervention #2
- GUAS College Placement Exam
- After School Pre-SAT Program
- 425 Free SAT Test Waivers
- Spring Semester College Night
- GEEEEEAR UP Rally
- WHY Data?

#### Food for Thought

"Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds you plant."

Robert Louis Stevenson

## GUAS College Placement Exam

This spring semester GUAS prepared a College Placement Exam that is being administered to all eight cohort High School students. The two part exam covers an English section that includes, reading, writing and comprehension; and the Math section that deals with advance math concepts. The Exams was developed by researching universities and colleges across the nation taking examples and different designs that are comparable to many of the west coast colleges and universities. The goal is to prepare students for college and to provide them the knowledge and experience of what they can and will expect when they reach that day of entering college.

It is essential for students to be prepared as they enter college, too often students don't realize the importance of their efforts in taking the placement exam and they do poorly. Their placement score can either place them in remedial courses, or into accepted transferable college courses. It is for that reason GUAS has created the opportunity for students to better prepared themselves for college. Another very important way of preparing for college entry is for students to do their best on the SAT exam that is offered three times a year for students. If a student's SAT score is high enough they will not need to take the College Placement Exam, (Yahoo) so it is important to be prepared by taking the SAT and the practice College Placement Exam during your junior and senior year of High School. The practice exam will help students acquire the techniques, strategies and knowledge of what is to be expected no matter what college or university they may attend.

The GUAS Instructors administered the GUAS Placement Exam to 5 of the 8 cohort High School students, so during April and May the instructors will administer the test to the remaining 3 large ASDOE High Schools. After the exams are graded all the exams test results will be given back to the students as they work with our Instructors and High School Teacher Tutors on subject/content areas that they need help on.

-Avasina Sagapolutele



GUAS students on a task with an RTI

GUAS SAT Instructors (l-r): Wei-Lie Taase, Sina Sagapolutele and Drew Ross

## English SAT After-School Sessions

Benjamin Franklin said, "By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail." To help our students prepare for the SAT test – GEAR UP English Instructors offered after-school help with Essay writing as well as Grammar and Vocabulary review. Two sessions started February 7 to March 10, 2011, Monday through Thursday from 3:30 to 4:30 pm. A total of 50 students from Leone High School, Nuuli VocTech High School, Samoana High School, Manumalo Baptist High School, Kanana Fou High School, and Tafuna High School completed the 5-week sessions.

Students who were in the Essay Writing Class worked with instructor Mr. Drew Ross. Mr. Ross is originally from Canada. However, he is working as a World Teach volunteer with ASDOE and is currently a full-time English Instructor at Leone High School.

Students who were in the Vocabulary and Grammar review worked with Mrs. Wei-Lie Tunoa-Taase and Ms. Avasina Sagapolutele. Ms. Sagapolutele was recently hired by the GEAR UP Office as an English instructor. Avasina is a graduate of UH-Manoa, she holds a Bachelor's degree in English. The combination of Wei-Lie's 20 year of teaching experience and Avasina a recent graduate from UH as well as her youthfulness creates a dynamic approach in preparing our students to post secondary education. Students spent the first 3 weeks in either Essay Writing Class or Vocabulary and Grammar review class, they then switched classes during week 4 and week 5 so that all 50 student received both sessions.

-Wei Lie Tunoa-Taase

## 425 SAT Test Fee Waivers for GUAS Students

While High School grades are a very useful indicator of how students will perform in college, there is great variation in grading standards and course rigor within and across High Schools. More than 80 years ago the College Board created the first standardized college entrance test to help colleges and universities identify students who could succeed at their institutions and to connect students with educational opportunities beyond High School.

Today, the SAT is the benchmark standardized assessment of their critical reading, mathematical reasoning, and writing skills students have developed over time and of which they need to be successful in college. Each year, more than two million students take the SAT. Nearly every college in America uses the test as a common and objective scale for evaluating a student's college readiness.

Educators trust the SAT as a useful part of the college application process because the SAT is:

- \*The most researched standardized admissions test
- \*The standard in reliability and validity
- \*An internationally recognized, accurate measure of college readiness and scholarship potential

College entrance for some students can be a problem due to test fees as one of the barriers. "Fee waivers" are intended to help the students pay for the SAT and/ or SAT Subject Tests." (collegeboard.com)

The GEAR UP Program under the umbrella of the American Samoa Community College was elected on November 01, 2010 as a member of the College Board. As a member, we were afforded FREE resources and materials to prepare our GEAR UP students to sit the SAT. The GEAR UP Program received 425 SAT fee waivers of which the priority was given to all GEAR UP students and later extended to the Senior classes within the 8 GEAR UP cohort schools in order to sit the SAT. Students rushed to make use of the waivers to sit the March and upcoming May test dates. In addition, 400 SAT subject packets; 500 SAT packets and 300 domestic registration packets were requested and received to assist with our students preparations.

In preparation for the May 2011 SAT test, GUAS offered SAT Preparatory courses administered at the ASCC Campus. **The GEAR UP Program has assigned 378 SAT Fee Waivers to both Junior and Senior students within its 8 cohort schools, and has shared 47 waivers to 2 non-cohort school, Faga'itua and Manu'a High Schools.**

On behalf of the GEAR UP Program, we wish all the students taking the May SAT Test the best of luck on your tests.

-Juliet FC Pen

## ASCC GEAR UP College Night

March 31, GUAS conducted the 4th College Night Event to 103 students, parents and teachers. Director Tupua welcomed everyone and introduced the three very special guest speakers for the evening. Ms. Lele Ah Mu Chairperson to the ASCC Nursing Department, Dr. Stacey Wiles, MD Pediatrician to the LBJ Pediatric Ward and SFC Kit Moliga ASCC ROTC Program.

Everyone listened to the career opportunities and challenges that we are facing with the shortage of Nurses and Health professionals here on island as well as across the globe. Ms. Ah Mu described the Nursing course program that is offered at ASCC as well as discussing financial assistance that is available for American Samoan students. Our next guest speaker Dr. Wiles presented a personal approach by describing the academic rigor and personal drive one must have in entering medical school. Dr. Wiles emphasized the intrinsic rewards of helping babies and young people. The reward of helping young children is all worth the academic challenge of medical school.

SFC Moliga capitalized on the nursing and medical school presentations by stating that the ROTC can pay for your nursing or medical school if you enlist into the ROTC program. Hooyaa! A clear challenge and a recruiting message, SFC Moliga left the GUAS crowd of students all excited and ready to sign up.... HOOYAA!!





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# GEAR UP Rally

The GEAR UP Staff visited four cohort high schools throughout the months of March and April with a mission to motivate students and teachers to participate in the GEAR UP After-School programs to include the RTI Math Intervention and Pre-SAT Training sessions.

The GEAR UP Pep Talks encouraged and motivated students to concentrate on their studies. GUAS Jason Hollister and music group Double H performed two rap songs, Math Instructor Anthony Felise teamed up with Systems Manager Lupe Tapua'i to provide a motivational presentation at Nuuli VocTech, Leone, Tafuna and Samoana High School motivating students as well as challenging them with the responsibility of making the right choices. GEAR UP's goal is to help students see the significance of education and the rewards it provides throughout life..... so bring it on

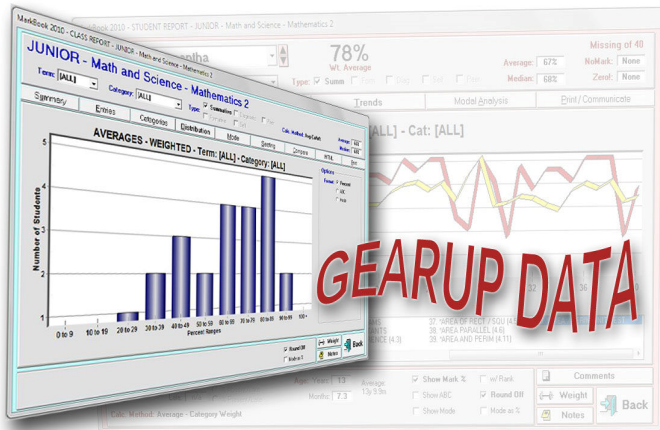
**GEAR UP!!!!!!**



The GEARUP team performing at LHS.



The GEARUP team performing at SHS.



### Why Data?

GEARUP is a federal funded program awarded through the US Department of Education. Its challenge is to build working evidence from applied program activities and strategies which impact educational reform in our schools, students, teachers and parents. GEARUP works with a cohort group of students and teachers in 8 High Schools (861 students). By providing training sessions for teachers and students we strive in stimulating positive growth in our students academic achievements. Student grades and attendance (data) help to determine the success of the GEARUP program. As we work with Principals, teachers, coordinators and ASDOE Chancery Data Systems in collecting student data we look at our activities such as homework sessions, technology assistive learning programs, and a classroom management system that impacts changes in our

students English and Math test results.

From student's performance to program implementation data collected will be used to enhance grade level teaching and learning by providing effective teaching strategies and engaging activities for our students. It is with this goal that drives GUAS to implement and collect all required data possible. Arthur Conan Doyle, a Scottish author once said: **"It is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data."** So before all else, data is fundamental to GUAS and its operation, progress and success.

### How is GUAS getting its data?

GUAS collects student data from teachers that are employed part-time as GUAS homework session teachers-tutors. GUAS also collects the grades and attendance records from the Math and English Teachers who are currently teaching our cohort High School students. All the data is collected bi-monthly and given to the GUAS Data Systems Manager and Data Specialist. The Data Specialist then inputs all the data into the GUAS Database for analysis and uploads the student grades to the GUAS website access portal. All the Data is sent to our Program Evaluator "Pima Prevention Partnership (PPP)" for extensive research analysis evaluation.

### What is the progress? Any accomplishments so far?

GUAS has experienced a tremendous improvement in collecting information. As we progress each year the Site Coordinators and tutors are more enthusiastic about their work in submitting the data to our office. GUAS has introduced an electronic classroom management system called "MarkBook". The students' performance reports are made accessible online to the GUAS website <www.gearup.as>. MarkBook provides an easy and secured access of student's performance reports for both parents and students to view. Students can attain his/her user name and password to access the website portals by contacting Mr. Lupe Tapuai at the GUAS Office.

-Lupe Tapuai