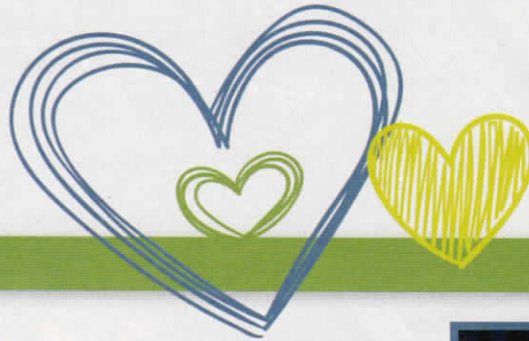


# TUTORING WITH HEART



BY MARTY MINCHIN

**H**undreds of CMS elementary school students are getting much-needed help in math thanks to dedicated community volunteers who meet with them weekly.

Heart Math Tutoring was founded in 2010 by Social Venture Partners Charlotte, working with Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools and Communities In Schools. The nonprofit organization matches volunteer tutors with struggling students, and together they work through the Heart Math Tutoring Curriculum over the course of a school year.

Amanda Saunders, a second-grade teacher at

Billingsville Leadership Academy, said that the Heart Math program works alongside her instruction to help her students be the best they can be.

"We do some of the same activities in math class, and it's great to hear the kids say, 'Oh, I practiced that last time with my tutor,'" Saunders said.

Heart Math Tutoring works with several hundred students in grades 1-5 at eight CMS schools: Billingsville Leadership Academy, Highland Renaissance Academy, Montclair Elementary, Sedgefield Elementary, Piney Grove Elementary, Westerly Hills Elementary, Winterfield Elementary and

Pinewood Elementary, which was added in October.

Tutors follow a self-managed curriculum that SVPC created with CMS especially for volunteers. In the first two years, 97 percent of students tutored met the program's growth targets, which CMS's math department had helped establish.

Emily Elliott, executive director of Heart Math Tutoring, said students can benefit significantly from one-on-one tutoring.

"In addition to providing academic support, tutors act as mentors, providing much-needed encouragement that can have a long-term positive impact on students' confidence and enthusiasm toward academics," she said.

Anyone can be a tutor – the job doesn't require special expertise in math.

"Being a Heart volunteer tutor is extremely rewarding, and the



relationship between the volunteer tutors and students is mutually meaningful," Elliott said.

Saunders said that several students from her classroom were in the program last year. One of her students, Jasmine, didn't have much motivation for math at the beginning of the year.

"I really feel like she's just blossomed as a student," Saunders said. "I saw her become more engaged."

"You can just see it in her face when she's doing math that she's starting to understand things and she's got some confidence."

