



A Strong HEART

SouthPark Life, October 2013

In 2010, a group of South Park neighbors recognized a need, saw an opportunity and took action. Three years later, HEART Tutoring (Helping Ensure Academic Results through Tutoring) is building a staff and expanding its impact across the city.

“There’s got to be a better way!” Words we have all said. With a long history of public school volunteering, Foxcroft neighbors Minna Elliott and Catherine Fischer observed that volunteer management created an extra burden for teachers’ already full workload and wondered if their time was truly moving students forward. The pair imagined working autonomously and having greater impact, but how?

A venture was born

Simultaneously, Social Venture Partners (SVP – an organization engaged in venture philanthropy) was conducting research to identify gaps in community services. When the need for effective volunteer programming in schools emerged as a focus, Minna and Catherine (already SVP members) jumped on board. Soon, they found themselves, along with SVP Executive Director Susan Daniel (also a South Park neighbor) at the table with CMS Math and Literacy Specialists investigating what might be feasible. CMS Specialists suggested a hands-on math curriculum they believed could be highly impactful in one-on-one tutoring. The curriculum included assessments for identifying gaps in foundational knowledge that prevent students from progressing with their class.

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With seed funding from SVP, Minna, Catherine and a steering committee of SVP members began reorganizing the curriculum into a “tutor-friendly” format,

creating tutoring supplies, assessments, trainings, and visioning how to manage the newly created program in three Title 1 schools. Year One - the growth results and feedback were undeniably positive. Years Two and Three, with additional funding from the Belk Foundation, HEART expanded to more schools, earning rave reviews from principals, teachers and volunteers, alike.

A fun and effective hour per week

In 2013-14, HEART Tutoring hopes to support 150 volunteers at Billingsville Elementary and Winterfield Elementary, where HEART is expanding to serve more students and grade levels. To learn more or tutor, see the organization's Facebook page or email volunteer@hearttutoring.org.

HEART Tutoring is a testament to the power of volunteers. If you have been frustrated by past attempts to make a difference as a volunteer, HEART Tutoring is for you.

