

After-School

A Model Curriculum

West Jupiter Community Center
West Jupiter, Fla.
(561) 745-0950
www.kindprogram.org

The Approach: The West Jupiter Community Center's after-school program is based on the Champs program model of Palm Beach County, which is used at 38 after-school sites around the county. It focuses on academic enrichment, based on curricula from Foundations Inc. that blends math and reading content into experiential, hands-on activities. It also focuses on enhancing performance on Florida's Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) and provides for a certified head teacher to be on site daily.

The overall Champs program is managed by a local nonprofit, Kids In New Directions, which is part of the Children's Services Council.

The program in West Jupiter provides an hour and a half of tutoring Monday through Thursday, says site Director Edna Runner. In addition to the on-site certified teacher, the Champs model requires several volunteer teachers. The tutoring involves one-on-one help from teachers and volunteer tutors, who are often high school students, as well as group work with students who are in the same class at school.

Runner says her staff communicates with teachers through students' agendas – notebooks they carry with them in which they, their teachers and the after-school staff write assignments and exchange notes.

Runner says her staff works to motivate students by rewarding them with field trips, or allowing them to earn fake money with which they

can purchase donated gifts for family members during the holidays.

History and Organization: The West Jupiter Community Center's after-school program started in the back of a church in 1986.

"There was no place for the kids to go after school, and many did not have parents who could help them with homework," Runner says.



Honoring Native American culture was part of the lessons at West Jupiter, for which this fourth-grader created and wore a headdress.

The idea was to support at-risk kids in particular, many of whom were being raised by grandparents, single parents or parents who didn't have the educational background to help their children academically.

Runner has been with the program since 1997, and has seen the emphasis on academics after school increase significantly with the establishment of FCAT.

Youth Served: About 90 youth, ages 6 to 18, from six schools. The community center targets low-income students who are on free and reduced-price lunch programs. "Kids are sometimes referred by schools," Runner says. "They also hear about the program from other kids."

Staff: The 10 employees include teachers, counselors and, in the summer, college students. The program also uses volunteer teachers and tutors, and high schoolers who help as part of their community service projects.

Champs pays the salaries of the certified teachers, while the West Jupiter Community Group, which runs the community center, pays salaries of other staff, including tutors. Some retired teachers help as volunteers.

"Most of the sites cannot afford to hire a certified teacher to coach and model best teaching practices for their after-school staff," notes Champs Program Manager Heather Alfonso.

Funding: The annual budget is about \$400,000. Runner says all funding comes from local sources, including the Children's Service Council, the Palm Beach County Housing and Community Development Authority, and the Jupiter Children's Foundation.

Indicators of Success: No funding sources require program evaluations, Runner says. She says teachers track and report the impacts of the program on students. She says Jupiter Middle School teachers note that youth in the program come to class better prepared than other students.

Networking and Resources

Cabrini Connection and Tutor/Mentor Connection
Chicago, Ill.
(312) 492-9614
www.tutormentorconnection.org

The Approach: Cabrini Connection is not a typical after-school program; it doesn't even always happen right after school. Youth from middle school to high school go to the organization's headquarters in the Cabrini Green area of Chicago on Wednesday or Thursday evenings to meet with their adult mentors – volunteers whose main task is to help youths graduate from high school, get jobs and set off on stable careers.

Cabrini Connection President Dan Bassill says the program offers



Homework help from a volunteer tutor/coach.

mentoring first and tutoring second. "If we don't affect student aspiration, it's not like the kids will be motivated at school," he says.

"We don't pretend to be teachers. We help kids as help is needed."

That being said, the Cabrini Connection is part

of a larger program known as the Tutor/Mentor Connection: a massive database, clearinghouse and informational website devoted to linking would-be tutors and after-school providers with programs; helping parents, students and teachers find programs; and offering access to training and resources for professionals in after-school tutoring and mentoring.

History and Organization: Cabrini Connection started in 1965 as a volunteer program for employees of the Montgomery Ward department store headquarters in northern Chicago. Those employees offered after-school tutoring and mentoring to children at nearby schools. Bassill was a Montgomery Ward employee and eventually became head of the volunteer program.

In 1992, Cabrini Connection and Tutor/Mentor Connection were established as nonprofits. Cabrini continues to offer one-on-one tutoring and mentoring after school and in the evenings, while the connection networks with after-school service providers throughout the Chicago area. It links youth workers with one another as well as linking parents, youths and teachers with after-school programs.

Youth Served: Cabrini Connection provides tutoring/mentoring support to about 75 kids, from seventh through 12th grades, in poor neighborhoods of northern Chicago. Many kids ask to join, while others are referred by school staff.

Bassill says it's difficult to calculate how many youth benefit from the Tutor/Mentor Connection, but notes that 250 organizations are listed in the connection's database.

Staff: Cabrini Connection and the Tutor/Mentor Connection are served by the same staff: three full-time employees and two part-timers. The adult mentors/tutors are all volunteers. Bassill notes how important it is to maintain staff from year to year to cement relationships with volunteers and kids.

Funding: The annual budget is \$170,000. Bassill says funding is uncertain from year to year. A current city grant covers 25 percent of the budget, while the rest comes from corporate and individual donors, including Kraft Foods and a bank, HSBC.

Indicators of Success: Bassill has avoided the test-score emphasis on tutoring, but says that has eliminated some funding opportunities. As for measuring success, he says that 85 percent of the youth served by Cabrini Connection in any given year return the next year. "Kids and volunteers both vote with their feet," he says.

The Tutor/Mentor Connection has been growing. The organization's first conference drew 70 participants; today, its conferences draw more than 500. The connection's website database of after-school programs continues to grow, with more than 500 after-school tutoring and mentoring programs listed. The connection reports that the website receives 4,000 unique visitors per month.