



July 21, 2008

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION PROFILE

Read to Succeed!

Program Overview: *Read to Succeed!* is a summer community program in cooperation with the Milpitas Library and sponsored by Vision Literacy. High school volunteers tutor children entering first through seventh grades. These participants are split up into groups based on age and reading level, with smaller groups (2-3 members) for younger students and larger groups (4-6 members) for older students. Some participants receive one-on-one tutoring, which is disbursed based on need. Tutors do various projects with their groups. These include writing assignments, tests, vocabulary, arts and crafts, Reader's Theatre, discussions, and more. Most importantly, the tutors read with the children and help them with comprehension. Books chosen are usually classics like *The Witches*, *The Giver*, *Wayside School*, *Holes*, *The Westing Game*, *Animal Farm*, and other assorted novels. Younger students read picture books. The Milpitas Library specially chooses the books to read. *Read to Succeed!* is the brainchild of Jamie Yao. As a sophomore in 2006, she launched the program with 25 tutors and 40 students. In 2007 and 2008 they had 50 tutors and 70 students.

Materials: Just one library card per family and a thirst for knowledge! Participants themselves will check out the books that they read. Each group reads the same book together.

Special Projects: Their team of tutors makes learning fun! They plan special *Read to Succeed!* reading skills and form a relationship with them, so it is important for the students to come to the sessions on a regular basis.

***Read to Succeed!* is not a drop-in program.** Tutors strive to work with the students to build their reading skills and form a relationship with them, so it is important for the students to come to the sessions on a regular basis.

For more program information Email: ReadToSucceed@gmail.com

Q&A with Jamie Yao, Founder of *Read to Succeed!*

Jamie Yao
Read to Succeed!, Founder
2008 Graduate of Milpitas High School

How did you come up with *Read to Succeed!*? In 2005, the idea of for the program actually stemmed from different sources of motivation. As a member of Milpitas High School's Book Club, I was interested in helping to perpetuate our mission of improving literacy in the community. Milpitas is a community full of

immigrant families; I thought it was all the more important to help children learn how to read because of the fact that many children may not be able to get that extra help at home. This realization came to me through a story I read in *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, in which a boy helped his own grandfather, who did not have access to reading when he was younger, learn how to read.

How did you get other High School students involved? As I was coming up with the idea for the program, I became more excited about how I could get other High School students helping younger kids. A lot of High School students want to engage in community service that is fulfilling. I make presentations to the Honors English classes to get volunteers. We now have over 50 Milpitas High School students tutoring the kids. In fact, this summer we started a volunteer application process because we had had an excess of high school students interested in volunteering.

How did you connect with the Milpitas Library? In 2006, I talked with Melanie McInerney, the Adult Librarian, who introduced me to Linda Arbaugh, Community Librarian. The Milpitas Library decided to host our program. Both Melanie and Karen Armendariz, the Children's Program Librarian have been very involved with the program since its inception.

How has Vision Literacy helped Read to Succeed!? We were excited when Linda Arbaugh, the Milpitas Community Librarian, introduced us to Vision Literacy. To partner with Vision Literacy felt like a great thing to do. Vision Literacy is now our program sponsor, and provided us with literacy training so we could be better tutors for our students. Anh Nguyen, the other co-coordinator, told me that Vision Literacy's training was very instrumental in helping our tutors improve their skills and showing them different ways to tutor. Vision Literacy also helped us by giving us ideas on how to work with the different literacy needs of our students.

What successes have happened with your program? It's great to have an idea, to carry it out and make it happen. All the kids are reading. The parents have seen their kid's progress and have thanked us for this. One of our goals is to make the program personal, so we take time to match students up with the right tutor.

How does your program tutor? We tutor in small groups and one-on-one depending on the students' reading levels.

What did you learn from creating this program? Starting this program has been a great experience for me. I have learned several things: how to coordinate a program; how to be a liaison between the Library, Vision Literacy, tutors, parents, and students; lots of organizational skills; and how to be a leader.

How has starting this program helped you? It's helped me to learn how to manage a program. It's a lot of work to manage my time and it's improved my communication skills.

What have you learned from this experience? I've learned that I can do things if I put my mind to it. Anyone can do this too. We can all fill a gap in someone's life.

How have you been inspired during the past three years leading this program? The tutors have inspired me, they will go the extra mile. We have very motivated and devoted tutors, some have gone way beyond their commitment – they prepare for tutoring sessions by making tests, assignments, and vocabulary lists.

What do you think about the students enrolled in your program? The students are cute! They put in a lot of hard work during the summer improving their reading and writing skills. I admire that in these kids. I think that many of these children not only learn from their tutors, but also look up to them as role models.

Now that you are heading to college, what is your future role with the program? I plan to continue to be involved with the program, to keep the vision of the program going and to use my experience,

knowledge and skills to help the next coordinator, Anh Nguyen, who will be a senior at Milpitas High School.

What do you think about *Read to Succeed!*?

Linda Arbaugh, Milpitas Community Librarian: “I am very happy to help with *Read to Succeed!*, and I'm proud of Jamie and her crew for what they have accomplished. While it is not the mission of the library to tutor children in reading, I am very pleased that we can assist by providing a venue for this program. Children who read well generally do better in all of their subjects than those who do not. Jamie and her team of volunteers are making a huge difference in the lives of the children they are helping.”

Marina Dols, Vision Literacy Associate Manager – North County: “I'm very impressed with the hard work that the volunteers do to make the program possible. Students and volunteers are on time to do the job. The program runs smoothly at the Milpitas Library. The commitment by the volunteers, parents and children is great.”

Brenda Trosin, Vision Literacy Associate Manager - Operations: “It was a pleasure to facilitate the training for the *Read to Succeed!* program, and I was inspired to see the tutors actively engaged in the concepts, materials, and activities. I am impressed that this project was created and implemented by local youth with a genuine love for reading and helping others.”