

Teacher's Brainchild Improves Students' Minds

Posted on: Wednesday, 22 February 2006, 09:00 CST

By Rowena Coetsee, Contra Costa Times, Walnut Creek, Calif.

Feb. 22--Language arts teacher Karl Meyer engages some of the approximately two dozen young people who have been swinging by Pittsburg's community center after school to get a better handle on the three R's.

Youths with short attention spans, athletes trying to maintain their grades so they can stay on the team, youngsters who made it to 10th grade without learning their junior high school lessons -- they all come to STS Academy to bone up on the basics.

Since October, the nonprofit organization has been offering individual tutoring and homework help as well as classes in math, English and language arts for sixth- through 11th-graders after school.

Sessions are 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays and cost \$25 a week, although the academy will not turn away any student unable to pay.

The academy is the brainchild of Delon Craft, a third-year math teacher at Central Junior High School who was dismayed by the number of students who were failing math and doing poorly on tests in other subjects.

"They missed the boat early on," said Craft's father, Jim, who serves as the executive director of STS -- short for "Success through Self" -- Academy.

The pair drummed up enough donations from local businesses and individuals to lease space at the community center, where Craft and three other Pittsburg Unified teachers, along with half a dozen aides, are helping to demystify decimals and teach reading and writing to nearly 30 young people.

Wednesdays include a one-hour session for juniors and seniors preparing to take the high school exit exam they must pass to graduate.

Parents can check on their child's progress by logging onto the academy's password-protected Web site, where teachers at the student's regular school also can record grades.

The academy will hold an open house at 3 p.m. Thursday as part of a belated celebration acknowledging the opening of the city's first community center in June.

The community center is at 2020 Railroad Ave., Pittsburg.

For more information, call 925-252-9199 or go to www.stsacademy.org

