

After School Report 2012-2013

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The 2012-2013 After School program underwent numerous changes; similar to the changes made to the 2012 Summer Camp, literacy became the focus of the program. As with Summer, After School was restructured. The overall mission of Cities In Schools is to provide a safe, nurturing environment in which students receive one-on-one mentoring and participate in learning activities. Cities in Schools provides these services through active community collaborations which incorporate relationships between the local schools and the local businesses. Through a cooperation with Ardmore City Schools, and guidance from Mrs. Patty and Mrs. Watterson, Ardmore City Schools teachers and reading specialists, Cities In Schools implemented a reading and math program geared toward reviewing the previous school year's curriculum for the Summer 2012 program. These recommendations were implemented to the 2012-2013 After School program. In order to measure the success of the changes made to the 2012-2013 After School program, Cities in Schools reviewed the RIT scores for each enrolled student.

The 2012-2013 After School program was placed on a schedule to help create the safe nurturing environment that has come to be expected of Cities In Schools and which has been proven repeatedly to induce improved behavior among the students as they know what to expect and what is expected of them. The schedule included a set time to do homework with homework help provided, 15 minutes a day of AR reading, a daily snack and a rotation of literacy activities and play time. While all of this was underway, the AmeriCorps members of Cities In Schools continued to provide one-on-one mentoring and creating a bond with each student, enabling the members to develop a personal relationship with each child. These individual relationships

allowed the staff to monitor each student, detecting slight changes which could indicate problems at home or in school. Because of this, members were able to speak to the administrative staff, who in turn worked with the parents to help the children be successful.

It is the belief of Cities In Schools that every child deserves a chance to a bright future. Often, that chance is limited by resources. Current research indicates that the disparity in successful learning in education begins in pre-school and continues to grow until graduation (Cooper, H., et al. 1996, The effects of summer vacation on achievement test scores: A narrative and meta-analysis review.). Research also indicates that after school and summer programs offered to low income children greatly reduce this disparity, if not eliminating it completely. Together, with the community and local schools, Cities In Schools is actively fighting the fight against poverty with at risk youth, to provide them with the tools and resources for a better and brighter future.

With the data presented, the need for after school and summer programs is clear. Yet, Cities In Schools has the desire to see the progress of each child, thereby deeming the program a failure or a success. After careful data analysis, the 2012-2013 After School program can be deemed successful. The goal was for the RIT score of each student to show that the student tested within grade level in reading and math. The scores showed this, in fact every student tested well within their grade level. Cities In Schools will continue to build off of these successes, with the ultimate goal of continuing to offer the absolute best programs we can, while maintaining our focus on literacy.

In addition to working on improving math and reading scores, Cities In Schools also collaborated with several other nonprofits in order to offer classes designed to empower our youth. Through a partnership with The Community Children's Shelter, the students in fourth and fifth grade were offered a life skills class which covered topics from anger management to how to handle a bully and growing up successfully. Through a working collaboration with Systems of Care and The OSU Extension Office the girls in third, fourth, and fifth grade attended a bullying prevention class, which greatly helped to reduce the bullying incidents at the 2012-2013 After School program. The program focused on preventing bullying, not how to identify a bully, placing a negative topic in a positive light. And finally, through a partnership with Southeastern University, the students in first, second, fourth, and fifth grade received customized tutoring sessions. The sessions were designed around each student's strengths and weaknesses. These classes offered the students a way to not only improve their literacy skills, but to also improve their self-esteem and self-worth. These qualities do impact a student's success in the classroom.

Plans are already under way to make even further improvements to the 2013-2014 After School program. The 2013 Summer Program and 2013-2014 After School program will be measured in the same manner, through a comparison of RIT scores. It is the desire of Cities In Schools to remain in the forefront of the war on poverty through active collaborations with Ardmore City Schools and other non-profits. Cities In Schools will continue to learn about other after school and summer programs to remain on the forefront of these programs, and always provide the best possible program to the residents of Carter County.