

VeteranTutors recognized by Colin and Alma Powell's America's Promise Alliance for Helping Keep Kids in School

Austin, Texas (January 25, 2008) VeteranTutors, a Texas non-profit that provides vocational rehabilitation and job training to veterans and then engages those veterans to teach technological, scientific, engineering and math skills to at risk students, has been recognized by America's Promise Alliance for its program success at Webb Middle School in Austin, Texas.

Founded by Gen. Colin Powell, America's Promise Alliance is the nation's largest multi-sector collaborative dedicated to the well-being of children and youth. The Alliance assumes a collaborative approach which reflects research that shows children need to experience Five Promises in their lives, which are caring adults, safe places, a healthy start, an effective education and opportunities to serve.

VeteranTutors' was recognized for the success of its programs in keeping at risk students in the St. John's Community Schools from dropping out. They employ veterans as tutors in an intense, project-based short-term curriculum for their Dropout Intervention and Recovery Initiative, which has proven to be highly successful in assisting Austin area schools working to reduce their student dropout rates.

In spring 2007 VeteranTutors conducted a dropout intervention program with an experimental group of high truancy students from Webb Middle School. Students selected for the program averaged 38 unexcused absences per school year. VeteranTutors' program achieved a 70% success rate in overall school attendance, with fewer than 3 days of unexcused absences on average, while 50% of the class achieved perfect attendance.

In their robotics engineering program, participating Webb students not only improved attendance rates; six students went on to compete in the TCEA 2008 State Robotics Championships with their project, a first for the inner city school.

"The school dropout rate is a serious problem throughout the nation, and particularly in Texas," said Richard Ehrlich, Executive Director, VeteranTutors. "Statistics compiled by Educational Testing Service shows that nearly a third of all public high school students – and nearly half of all blacks, Hispanics and Native Americans – fail to graduate from public high school with their class. And the problem in Texas is even more serious."

According to statistics released by San Antonio-based Intercultural Development Research Association, more than half the students in Texas' largest cities drop out. In addition, a 2004 study conducted by the Alliance for Excellent Education projected that dropouts would cost the United States more than \$325 billion in lost wages, taxes and productivity over their lifetimes. Communities in Schools, which revealed that 89 percent of Texas prison inmates did not complete high school, made another socio-economic downside painfully clear in their study of Texas dropout rates.

"We have too many students from economically disadvantaged families dropping out of school before they graduate," continued Ehrlich. "And, we have too many military personnel who are discharged with disability that do not obtain civilian employment commensurate with their skills and training. Our programs are designed to reclaim both these invaluable segments of our society."

The VeteranTutors school programs are partially funded through the City of Austin's Grant for Technology Opportunities Program (GTOP), and have been awarded additional funding through 2008 in recognition of their success.

About VeteranTutors

VeteranTutors, a non-profit corporation registered in the State of Texas, provides services to two distinct populations: disabled veterans and students at risk of dropping out of school.

Disabled veterans receive vocational rehabilitation and job training at no cost to the veteran. Further, VeteranTutors offers these veterans paid jobs providing technical training and instruction to at risk middle and high school students, and job placement assistance to obtain well-paying jobs in the digital economy. Veteran Tutors' programs benefit returning veterans, their families, and the organizations, agencies and foundations that have an interest in assisting disabled veterans.

VeteranTutors provides school programs in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) to at risk students. They have developed, and employ, a unique intensive, short-term, project-based curriculum which achieves a success rate of over 95% among a challenging demographic: economically disadvantaged and minority youth at risk of dropping out of school. Veteran Tutors' program curriculum is of interest to parents of at risk students, and to school board members, principals and superintendents of school systems seeking to reduce dropout rates.

VeteranTutors provides usable, marketable technical skills to veterans, as well as enabling at risk students to recover credits, graduate, and enter college or pursue technical careers. It is the intent of VeteranTutors to cut in half the number of unemployed disabled veterans, as well as cut in half the number of students dropping out of school. Further, their intent is to double the number of college enrollments by those former at risk students.

For more information, visit: HYPERLINK "http://www.veterantutors.org"
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