



GEAR UP NEWSLETTER



GEAR UP for College

NOV. 2009, Issue 3

September 18, GEAR UP Day Proclamation

The GEAR UP American Samoa (GUAS), a partnership program with the American Samoa Community College (ASCC) joined in the nationwide celebration of the First Annual National GEAR UP Day Friday, September 18th. This day commemorated 10 years of success for the transformative Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP), a college access program created during the Clinton Administration. Since its inception in 1999, GEAR UP has improved educational outcomes for millions of low-income students across the United States.

GEAR UP provides intensive before/after-school tutoring, as well as special events and summer camps, to cohorts of qualifying high school students who come from low income families. GEAR UP specifically seeks to serve individuals who might be the first in their family ever to attend college. "The program proceeds from the idea that promising students from low income families can find greater opportunities open to them if they have access to state of the art tutoring methods and technologies," said GUAS Director Tupua Roy Fua. "Increasing these students' chances at these opportunities through academic achievement will ultimately help bridge the gap between the low and high income members of society".

To celebrate its success, GUAS hosted a Partners Award Luncheon at the Tradewinds Hotel, which included recognizing its selected GUAS Teacher of the Year 2008-2009. For the first ever American Samoa recipient of this prestigious award, the GUAS staff selected Ms. Valasi Yam Yuen, the GUAS Leone High School Counselor, Teacher and Tutor. "Her role in Leone has been tremendous. Valasi has demonstrated true commitment to her students and the GUAS program," said Tupua.



Teacher of the Year, Valasi Lam Yuen

GUAS also received one of the Territory's highest forms of recognition when Governor Togiola Tulafono issued an official proclamation declaring Friday, September 18th as GEAR UP Day 2009. "We are proud to have received Governor Togiola Tulafono's proclamation recognizing the hard work of the GEAR UP American Samoa Program," said Tupua. "We will frame this proclamation and display it prominently so that our GEAR UP community recognizes and appreciates the commitment made to preparing our students for college." **Jim Kneubuhl, ASCC PIO**



ASCC President Dr. Seth Galea'i

November 2009

Special points of interest:

- National GEAR UP Day
- Tsunami September 29, 2009
- PPP Donates \$20,000. for Students
- GUAS Raises the spirits with a Sports Day Activities
- GUAS Professional Development Sessions
- Student Relief Kits
- Blue Sky, Always There.....

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Reverend Hollister

Tsunami Hits the Samoan Islands Sept. 29.

At 6:52 a.m. Tuesday, Sept. 29, 2009, American Samoa time, an earthquake measured at 8.0 on the Richter Scale struck with an epicenter located 195 km southwest of the Samoa coast, at a depth of 18 km. The tremor generated a trough three-meter tsunami, measured from crest to hip, reported Dr. McCreery, the director of the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center in Ewa Beach, Hawaii. The extensive damage and loss of life to some village's has been widely reported. The tsunami caused damage to the island's fresh water system, and water is limited in the affected areas. The Satala power plant was down for almost a month, making it difficult for residents and business to restore their livelihood.



Leone Village Guest House



Pago Pago Community Center



Pago Pago Community Center



Leone Village

GUAS/ITT TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM

GUAS PARTNERS

AUTODESK AFTER SCHOOL TECH TRAINING

ALGEBRA AFTER SCHOOL TECH TRAINING

ITT Computer Lab

October 2009, GUAS re-opened its After-School technology sessions for students who have high interest in Algebra and pre-engineering courses. The sessions are hosted by the ASCC Institute for Trades & Technology Computer Labs from 3 to 4:00 p.m. and are designed to accommodate a limited number of 50 students.

During the *Math Trek* session, students enjoy the company and support of the GUAS Math tutors in solving Algebra and Geometry problems. Through the use of the Math Trek software, students integrate learning strategies to solve math problems. The Algebra/Math Trek Session utilizes technology with the integration of small group sessions to help teach Math. "It's exciting learning Math in a college atmosphere." says a math student.

A Big Fa'afetai to ASCC Institute of Trades and Technology (ITT) for their support in providing Computer Lab A & B for the GUAS After School Technology training.

The *Autodesk* session introduces students to pre-engineer designing technology skills. With Autodesk Inventor Professional 2009, the students find it fascinating to create an object utilizing high tech computer designed software, and to see a product ready for construction. Some continuing GUAS students have taken up the challenge of designing a fautasi as their main project of the year. **Lupe Tapuai, GUAS**

Blue Sky Communications

A Big Fa'afetai to Blue Sky Communications for their tsunami donation and their \$50.00 monthly advertising discount. Again, Always There....



GEAR UP Tsunami Relief Effort

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS TO

Fa'afetai Pima Prevention Partnership, Tucson, Arizona, Mr. Harry Kressler Executive Director/ Superintendent and Program Evaluator for your generous contribution of \$20,000.00 to help ASCC/GUAS in our tsunami relief effort to help our school age students.

A special thank you to four of our local Partners who contributed hundreds of tee-shirts, writing booklets, pens, and student bags: American Samoa National Olympic Committee, Blue Sky Communications, SchoolWeb Asia Pacific School Supplies and Ta'ita'i Tama Prevent Underage Drinking Initiative.



With funds donated by Pima Prevention Partnership and supplies provided by our local GUAS Partners, GUAS was able to provide backpack school supplies for students who suffered the loss of their homes. GUAS also visited Matatula Elementary, Alataua/Taputapu Elementary and Masefau Elementary to supply tee-shirts and sports equipment, igloos and tents.



Matatula Elementary School

Masefau Elementary School

Alataua/Taputapu Elementary School

After GUAS sent a solicitation letter to all its Partners, Pima Prevention Partnership (PPP) immediately responded by pledging a \$20,000 cash donation to support GUAS efforts to provide direct assistance to affected children. “PPP is our external research evaluator for GEAR UP, and a non-profit organization that has worked with ASG for six years,” explained Tupua. “Their Executive Director Mr. Harry W. Kressler recognized without delay the urgency of our situation and arranged for PPP Board of Trustee’s to contribute towards helping the students who had lost their homes.” GUAS also received generous support from local partners including the American Samoa National Olympics Committee (ASNOC), Blue Sky Communications, Ta’ita’i Tama Prevent Underage Drinking, and SchoolWeb Asia Pacific. GUAS has visited Matatula Elementary School and Masefao Elementary in the East and Alataua/Taputapu Elementary Schools in the West thus far. GUAS staff visited the elementary schools to raise the students’ spirits by providing a tent, hundreds of tee shirts, coolers, igloos, and a variety of sports equipment such as footballs, basketballs, volley balls, soccer balls, a volleyball net, tennis kits, and ice cream as a special treat. GUAS visited Alataua Elementary School, which has temporarily been combined with Taputapu Elementary School while the latter undergoes reconstruction.

GUAS distributed supplies to approximately 700 elementary school age students and was accompanied by staff members from ASNOC who helped organize sporting games with the students. “With our relief supplies now in hand, we will visit the affected high schools, where our intent is to motivate our students, to lift their spirits, and to help them feel securely back on track with the most basic instructional supplies for the semester,” said Tupua. “We cannot afford to have our students fall short on their academic goals as a result of this disaster. We are grateful for the swift and charitable response from our agency partners, especially the Pima Prevention Partnership. Although they are based in Tucson, Arizona, they have truly dedicated themselves to the people of American Samoa.”

Wrap Around Services at THS

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GEAR UP FOR COLLEGE

On November 23, a crowd of 80 people filled the Music Room at the home of the Warriors, Tafuna High School (THS). Attendees comprised GUAS parents, students, teachers, and four GUAS Program staff members. The THS GUAS Site Manager/ Vice Principal Beauty Tuiasosopo welcomed everyone in attendance, including the THS GUAS Site

Coordinator Mrs. Seira Moors. A special presentation from the GUAS staff conveyed significant information pertaining to student academic progress. Between presentations from GUAS, a fun raffle activity awarded parents and students free turkeys, Blue Sky phone cards, and a number of McDonald gift certificates. Refreshment were provide by THS and GUAS.



Professional Development Teacher Training

GUAS instructors have started an outreach program to provide training to cohort teachers with strategies to prepare sophomores for the transition to post-secondary education and training. The training started in October and will continue throughout the 2009-2010 school year. During the Fall Semester, GUAS conducted 23 training sessions for a total of 40 teachers at all eight GUAS cohort high schools. These teachers provide GUAS morning and afternoon sessions for an estimated 350 attending sophomores.

The focus of the training has been on implementing a timeline of activities that sophomores need to master in order to be prepared for college. Students start the process with a **Graduation Countdown Portfolio** and will complete online and classroom assignments to help them explore their own strengths in order to make decisions about possible career and major choices after graduation.

Additional training has been on strategies to strengthen homework

GUAS is expanding its Pre-SAT services to cohort schools by providing not only the online services at the ASCC campus after school, but also an outreach service. Pre-SAT online and outreach services are slated to start January and will continue until April, 2010. Pre-SAT online sessions will be held at the GUAS office for an estimated 25 students from Monday through Wednesday each week. The outreach services will be scheduled based on the availability of teachers and students at the each of the cohort schools.

The online sessions focus on improving test taking skills, while the outreach program provides students with training in expanding their vocabulary and practice in building critical thinking skills.



Faasao Marist High School Staff



Leone High School Staff

and in-class learning. An emphasis has been on providing teachers with techniques to improve student reading and study skills. At this point, the training has been very successful. An English teacher from Tafuna High School commented on the training, "Great presentation! It will aid English teachers with strategies and ideas to make read-

ing fun for students and allow students to get more out of it." Two instructors from Tafuna also commented that it would be helpful to share information with students' parents, as they are vital in supporting GEAR UP and their high school teachers. **Ruta T. Mahuka, GUAS Instructor.**