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Clyde Goodlet Leslie Park Public School Volunteer Math Tutor

What Do Basketball and Math Have in Common at Leslie Park Public School?

Written by Lee-Ann Scott Director, Volunteer Programs Ottawa Network for Education

The Ottawa Network for Education's (ONFE) Ottawa Volunteers in Education Program (OVIE) screens over 900 community members annually to become volunteers in schools. Volunteers assist students needing support or are the much-needed extra pair of hands in today's diverse classrooms. Clyde Goodlet is one of 1,300 community volunteers currently assisting in 145 Ottawa Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) schools in Ottawa.



Clyde has been a volunteer math tutor since he retired from the Bank of Canada as an economist, in 2007. He applied to volunteer and was immediately screened, trained and matched as a JUMP math tutor for Leslie Park Public School because the need for volunteer math tutor was (and still is) so great. JUMP Math¹ is a program that breaks down the steps into small manageable chunks that students master one at a time to build confidence and success in math. Clyde started volunteering weekly to support individual students one-on-one in math and now volunteers 3 days a week to support several students.

¹JUMP Math is a numeracy program. JUMP Math is dedicated to enhancing the potential in children by encouraging an understanding and a love of math in students and educators. JUMP Math replaces the self-fulfilling myth that some people are born with mathematical ability while others do not have the ability to succeed with assumptions that all children can be led to think mathematically. - See more at: <http://jumpmath.org/jump/en/#sthash.WgQ1iZxw.dpuf>

Matt Laale, educator at Leslie Park, appreciates Clyde's support. Mr. Laale teaches a grade 4-5 split classroom but in reality the students are at 6 or 7 different levels of math proficiency. Several students are newcomers to Canada or Canadian children who are returning from living abroad and come from schools where the math curriculum was quite different. Some students have never had the opportunity to attend formal education. Volunteers help educators fill gaps in student learning and the sincere one-on-one support from caring adults is the key to student success. Clyde supports pairs of students matched by their abilities and personalities and reinforces what Mr. Laale is teaching.

Volunteering in the community and supporting children and youth is part of Clyde's family values. His mother was a teacher and his father volunteered as a cub leader. In high school Clyde and another student coached the girls' basketball team. Clyde coached both of his sons in house league basketball and went on to become a certified basketball and baseball coach level 1 & 2 with the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP). He ended up coaching his younger son at competitive club level and at his high school basketball team at McCrae Secondary School and remained coaching for an additional 7-8 years after his son graduated. For fifteen years, he and one other volunteer organized a house league basketball programme for 450 boys every Saturday! He has also coached baseball teams and his daughter's soccer teams as well as serving on the soccer club executive for several years. For eighteen years, Clyde volunteered as a Beaver, Cub, Scout, and Venturing Leader moving up the ranks twice with his two sons. "I like working with older kids as they are very interesting. Kids talk and share their thoughts with you during activities. These conversations about life's problems are very important to the children. It's important that a neutral caring adult is there to listen to their problems."²



OVIE's year-end volunteer survey results indicate that the majority of students getting support in math are girls and Clyde confirms this phenomenon. "Girls are not afraid to ask for help. Even though both boys and girls may equally lack self-confidence in math—it's the girls who will ask for help. I saw this in sports too, during my years of coaching.

²Volunteers have the duty of care to share disclosures of abuse with Children's Aid and school staff.

Boys will cover up any weaknesses by doing what they *can* do and avoiding what they *can't* do. Boys won't ask for help; they don't want to look weak. Girls will ask all sorts of questions and ask for help. Girls come to the task thinking they *can't* do it while boys think they (boys) can do anything! They deal with learning in very different ways."

Volunteering is a family tradition passed down through the generations. From a volunteering family herself, Clyde's wife Gwenne was the Director of Volunteers at the Royal Ottawa Hospital for several years. During the bus strike Clyde helped out by driving patients to their appointments at the hospital. Gwenne was a volunteer guide leader for many years and their now adult daughter has also been a guide leader for 15 years. Clyde says volunteering satisfies his need to teach others. "You need to be committed, interested and passionate about what you are teaching. Kids can tell if you are sincere. I love math; that is why I got into economics."



Clyde uses a combination of math games, tricks, tips and old-fashioned flash cards. "Kids ask for the flash cards! They love to see their progress as their memory improves over the year."

They also play "Flip the Box" an old sailors' gambling game that teaches probability, adding and other skills.

Clyde purchased his own "times table maker" game and students love to test their skills. Maria and Evelyn, two students Clyde was tutoring during our interview enthused, "I like that Clyde makes learning math fun. It's fun! He makes math easy. He teaches us math tricks." They proudly proceeded to show me a math phenomenon with the nine times table—very impressive and beyond my capabilities. "At the beginning of the year I moved here from Bangladesh, I didn't even know what multiplication or division was! I didn't know it existed. It was a really hard time for me but Clyde helped me out. Now I know how to multiply *and* divide!" Maria, who wants to be fashion designer and Evelyn, who wants to open her own flower shop, both understand they need math skills to achieve their career goals.

Clyde shared his favourite anecdote about one of his students, "When I first started tutoring, I was working with a young lady in grade 4. We worked on the JUMP fractions unit from October until February, and by the end of that time her self-confidence had improved considerably along with her ability to handle fractions and all of the skills that entails. I would see her in the hall at her school after that and ask how things

were going. Towards the end of that year I asked if she was doing fractions yet in class. She told me that they had just finished that unit and that one day her teacher had posed a fraction problem that was so hard that even the smartest boy in the class could not figure out the answer. And then with the biggest smile you can imagine she told me that she was able to figure it out and show the smartest boy how to solve the problem. That smile will probably keep me volunteering in the program for another ten years or so!”

Clyde ends the interview by offering this advice, “I love helping people learn. Volunteering gives me the capacity to be a teacher. Tutoring math is similar to coaching basketball. You have to breakdown the complex skills into smaller components and put them together slowly, building confidence in each step. At the beginning students were turned off math because they weren’t experiencing success. But with a bit of self-confidence away they go!”

Teacher Matt Laale adds, “Clyde and the other volunteers have been a huge help with building the numeracy and problem solving skills of these kids as well as helping them overcome anxiety and self-esteem issues around math. The confidence they have with math by the end of the year typically bleeds into other subjects as well. The only wish that I have is that if you have anyone who would want to run a choir we would be very interested!”

Through the Ottawa Volunteers in Education Program, more than 1,882 community members are volunteering over 232,224 hours in 195 local schools to support over 60,475 students annually. To volunteer or to learn more about these and other Ottawa Network for Education programs please visit www.onfe-rope.ca