

10A Tuesday, November 21, 2023



Education

"We think, mistakenly, that success is the result of the time we put in at work, instead of the quality of time we put in."

— Arianna Huffington, journalist

Geneva community partnerships bolster academic preparedness and confidence

Finger Lakes Times

GENEVA — In response to what proponents say are challenges laid bare by state testing results, a trio of community partners have joined forces to support academic preparedness and build confidence of North Street third-, fourth- and fifth-graders.

The collaborative effort recognizes the critical need to address the learning loss experienced by young students during the pandemic, and represents a commitment to nurturing the educational well-being of local students.

The community partnership consists of Geneva 2030, the Geneva City School District, and the Boys and Girls Club. Building on the 30 years of Hobart & William Smith Tutor Corps, a federally supported initiative that pairs college tutors with local young learners, and noting an availability of HWS tutors and elementary schoolers on Saturdays, the program arose through an alignment of grant funding supporting tutoring and shared commitment to the "cradle to career" success of Geneva's children.

"In alignment with our school district priorities, safe positive learning environments, academic achievement and equity and inclusion, we are coming together with three of our com-

munity partners, Geneva 2030, Hobart and William Smith Colleges and the Geneva Community Center, to focus on best practices to close learning gaps in literacy and math," said GCSD School Improvement Coordinator Dr. Karen Fahy. "Research shows that targeted tutoring is an effective tool to increase academic achievement. Tutoring is most effective when conducted by tutors who are well trained and supervised, and we believe we have collaboratively created a model for success. By committing to a common goal, we are stronger together."

Geneva 2030 Director Heather Mills oversees the facilitation of the Saturday sessions in partnership with Cassidy Fisk, English as a New Language teacher at Geneva High, and Molly Hanna, Family and Consumer Sciences teacher at Geneva Middle School and former special education teacher. They aim to provide support to the tutors and elementary students by offering a range of weekly hands-on educational learning activities with occasional field trips.

The connection between schools and families is a vital component to the program's success, and enrollment forms outlined what success would look like at the end of the semester. Community volunteers from the



Provided

North Street Elementary students work with a Hobart & William Smith tutor at a recent Saturday Academy. The academy is part of a partnership with the city school district, the Boys and Girls Club and Geneva 2030. The program has improved some students' reading ability and has encouraged them to work harder in academic settings.

Geneva 2030 STEAM Action Team will help facilitate sessions while HWS tutors are on winter break to help ensure continuity of programming.

This community-driven effort represents an inspiring example of the power of collaboration, and parents are taking notice, organizers said.

One parent mentioned at pickup, "I have seen an improvement with my son's reading skills which

is exciting. He is excited to go when I take him, and he seems really happy when I pick him up."

Together, these organizations are demonstrating a shared commitment to ensuring that children have access to additional supports that will help them thrive academically.

The effort also extends to food sent home with participants.

"It is clear that success

in school requires many types of effort," said Chris Lavin, executive director of the Boys & Girls Club of Geneva. "I am glad partnerships like this can offer outlets for special efforts — virtually every day of Geneva's week and now Saturdays too."

Geneva 2030 is a collective impact initiative working with resources from the entire Geneva community, including

nonprofit organizations, businesses, and individuals, to support the education of Geneva's children from cradle to career. Since its founding in 2011, Hobart and William Smith have served as its anchor institution.

To learn more about Geneva 2030 and its commitment to the Geneva youth, reach out to geneva2030@hws.edu.