

## Resident Services

# Resident Services – Sowing Seeds of Success

**A**HC's Resident Services program began with a small seed of an idea – children at loose ends needed something to do. In 1993, a part-time volunteer coordinator started

build children's self-confidence and self-esteem when they're in elementary school so they can make good choices when they're in high school." The strategy is working.

This year, nearly all of AHC's high school seniors are planning to attend college after graduation. Here are some of AHC's successful seniors:

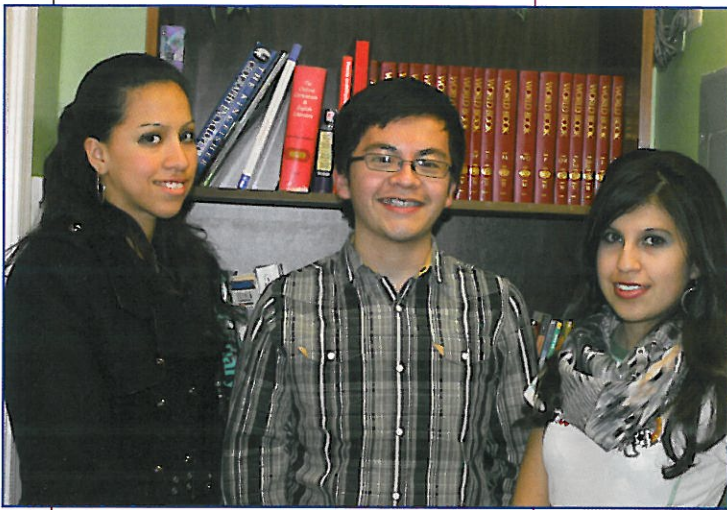
**Binita Pant** moved to Arlington from Nepal in 2004. Since then she has jumped from High Intensity Language Training (HILT) classes for non-English speakers to Advanced Placement classes.

Taking AP Biology has inspired her to major in biology and explore medicine as a career. Binita, a senior at Washington-Lee High School, says AHC has helped her navigate the college application process. "My parents don't know a lot about American colleges, that's why we're lucky to have AHC helping us out," she says. Binita finds time out of her busy schedule to help in AHC's after-school program and also to tutor students in the HILT program.

**Denise Castro**, a senior at Wakefield High School, fell in love with photography after taking a class in school and hopes to go into the visual communications field. Her work was recently featured as a "Gold Key" winner in Arlington's

Scholastic Art Show. Denise has lived in Arlington her whole life; her family is originally from Mexico. "My mom is really proud of me," says Denise. "She pushes me to go to the tutoring program and says it makes a difference in my school work."

**Henry Morales** has grown up in AHC's programs, and hopes to become a teacher himself one day. He has applied to several universities, and is currently teaching art to elementary students for his senior project. Henry, a senior at Wakefield High School, has worked hard over the years and good grades haven't always come easily. "In 10th grade my grades weren't so good," he says. "But tutoring strengthened my grades and helped me learn I can achieve and be successful." Henry attributes some of his success to his tutor of four years, Stephanie Harris. "It's been fun watching him grow up and I'm excited to see him go to college," says Harris. "It means all the hours we've shared have helped him achieve success."



*Graduating seniors Denise Castro, Henry Morales and Maria Esparza participate in teen tutoring at Virginia Gardens.*

providing some basic activities for youngsters at Woodbury Park. Almost two decades later, the program has blossomed to full-time staff at six community centers in Arlington and three in Baltimore. Over the years, AHC's Resident Services has grown into much more than just a haven for youngsters; it has become a supportive educational program that nurtures children from elementary through high school, along with opportunities for parents and senior citizens.

"Because we're located right in the community where residents live, we have a long-term relationship with the whole family," explains AHC Director of Resident Services, Jennifer Endo. "Our hope is to help



*Binita Pant and Arati Sharma, successful high school seniors in the Gates of Ballston community.*

**Arati Sharma** is leaning toward International Relations or Economics for her college major. She moved to Arlington almost two years ago from Nepal. AHC's program has helped her meet the challenge of learning a new school system. "They help us manage our time and set up deadlines," says Arati. "Without them

we would not have made it." Arati, a senior at Washington-Lee, also works with AHC students and tutors in the HILT program. "If we see them improve, it's like our success, too."

**Maria Esparza** has been accepted into two colleges and hopes to study business or finance. Her dream is to run her own clothing business either here or in Mexico where her family is from. Maria, a senior at Wakefield High School, has participated in AHC's Teen Tutoring for five years. "The tutoring program has helped me a lot," says Maria. "I worked with a math tutor and my scores went up so much. I was failing and my grade went up to a B."



*Reading tutor Patty Sanner has helped students' increase their reading levels, both fluency and comprehension, a full grade level.*

## Elementary Students Reading Levels Jump a Full Year

**A**HC's Resident Services program believes building literacy is key to students' scholastic success. Thanks to generous grants from the Freddie Mac Foundation, Arlington Community Foundation and the employees of Northrop Grumman, AHC is now able to hire part-time, qualified reading tutors to provide extra attention to struggling students.

The program is paying off. Eighteen of the students who received tutors' help improved a whole year's reading level by mid-year.

Tutors work with students for 20 to 30 minutes each week. Although it doesn't sound like much, the individual attention is priceless. "The ability to be one on one with the students allows us to

take reading to a very personal level," says tutor Patty Sanner. "We can target specific skills, strengthen them and then move on to the next set of skills."

Sanner and fellow tutor Rosemary Harrington work hard to make the sessions fun, bringing games and books that children can enjoy and then take home.

"We give them the confidence to ask questions and feel more comfortable," explains Sanner. "They can see their successes more quickly and realize that when they make an effort it does pay off."

To build and maintain these gains, AHC works closely with the children's schools and also offers summer camp programs to reduce learning loss while school is not in session.



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