CHANGING THE GAME

Husky Sport staff member, Alex Ortega, discusses with the students in Mrs. Rojas 2nd/3rd bilingual class at Wish School the book of the day (*Blizzard*)

READ & RAISE 2012: Changing the Game One Book at a Time

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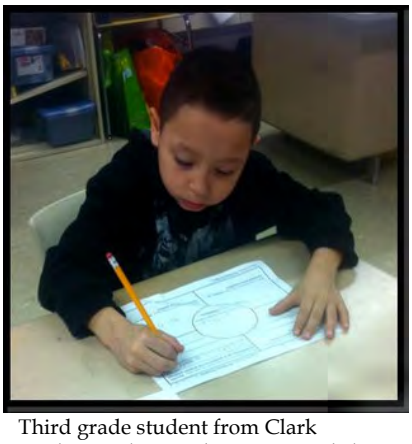
Read & Raise in Perspective by Erinn Arbelaez



Third grade student from Clark working in his Read & Raise worksheet.

Over the past three months students at Clark, Wish, and MLK Elementary and Middle Schools have completed over 35,000 reading response worksheets for the Husky Sport Read & Raise program. Every week Husky Sport staff members visit each class in their school for about half an hour to read with students, help them to fill out Read & Raise response worksheets and encourage them to keep reading and complete more response worksheets. This is my first year coordinating Read & Raise and it has been amazing to see the relationship between the Husky Sport staff members assigned to each school and the schools grow over time.

Students at Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School, enjoying a day outside with Husky Sport staff member Evan Timme and volunteers after completing a goal of books and worksheets set by Evan and their teacher.

Now when I visit the schools or talk with the Husky Sport Read & Raise point people they're helping students to plant flowers at the school, planning out skits with a class for the school talent show coming up, or working with the students to write letters to a friend serving in the military. They still do everything that Read & Raise entails but they have become a part of the school outside of Read & Raise as well.

Nicole Squadrito – left – (R&R staff at Wish) and Erinn Arbelaez – right – (R&R coordinator)

Besides the strong relationships that have been built, the students are also receiving incentives that emphasize the importance of physical activity and healthy eating choices. Top reading classes and students get extra recess time outside with Husky Sport staff, UConn and Capital Prep High School student volunteers and healthy snacks. These incentives and the competition between the classes to win the incentives, also makes reading more 'cool' for the students. In the beginning of the year there were some students who told me that they wouldn't do any Read & Raise worksheets because they hate reading, they absolutely refused. Now I've talked to some of those same students who are now so invested in completing the most books and worksheets because they want their class to win. Teachers have told us about students who even bring worksheets out to recess with them to do. Through the teacher's and Husky Sport point people's hard work getting the students invested in the program, the competition aspect of Read & Raise makes it cool and socially acceptable for the students to be reading in the schools. Personally, seeing the students so excited about reading has been the best part of Read & Raise.

-Erinn Arbelaez, Read & Raise Coordinator.

READ & RAISE: Top Readers

1st grade Ms Ellison class at Wish enjoying their time with Husky Sport staff Nicole Squadrito and volunteers as part of their extra gym time reward as a top reading class.

One of the times students look forward to the most during the Read & Raise season is the awards, recognition and incentives for the top readers and top classes throughout the three participating schools.

Top readers at JC Clark, Fred D. Wish and Martin Luther King schools during the 2012 Read & Raise season were awarded hockey game tickets for the Connecticut Whales at the XL Center, movie days and healthy snacks, *Nike* headbands among others.

However, the students' favorite continues to be the extra gym and outdoor activity time with the Husky Sport folks. This season top readers from each class and top classes in different grade levels enjoyed games, exercises and overall fun physical activities outside and in the school gymnasiums, which included extreme ball, capture the flag, handball, lessons on team work importance of physical activities among others.

Top readers in the K-3rd grades classes enjoying their physical activity time for the fourth week incentive of the Read & Raise season.

Top readers in the 4th-6th grades classes getting ready to play capture the flag as part of the fifth week incentive of the Read & Raise season.

EXTENDED DAY
Enrichment and Adventures

ENRICHMENT: MATH, LITERACY & SCIENCE

The children worked in small groups with Husky Sport staff on CMT enrichment Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Math and literacy are important preparation for the CMTs and for doing well in middle and high school. Selected 4th and 5th grade students had a unique opportunity to participate in the specialized **Mentoring Mathematical Minds (M^3) program**! UConn Math specialist, Kelly Kearney engaged her group in fun activities that sparked their minds into gear. The curriculum offered ways to engage different learning styles. Students competed in competitive math-related games that encouraged the students to think critically about numbers.

Thursdays are special too. Effie Gavrilis and Gina Lecco, UConn science education students, join Clark kids for hands-on experiments. One of their many fun activities included learning about the **skeletal system** by writing letters to their bones and making skeletal tents. They also dissected **owl pellets**, which are slightly larger than a stone but less than 2 inches long. The pellets contain the bones from animals that each owl ate. The children uncovered vertebrae, skulls, jaws and beaks of smaller birds and mice!

The students also learned about the **muscular system**. Did you know that muscles hold up all the bones in the body? To learn about how the muscles work together, the children tested their endurance by participating in various exercises like wall sits, hand presses and arm-raises to identify which muscles were hard at work.

Students are currently studying the **cardiovascular system**. They checked their pulse to see how fast their hearts were beating when they were sitting, after doing jumping jacks and while dancing. We'll be making homemade **stethoscopes**, so the kids can listen on their own!

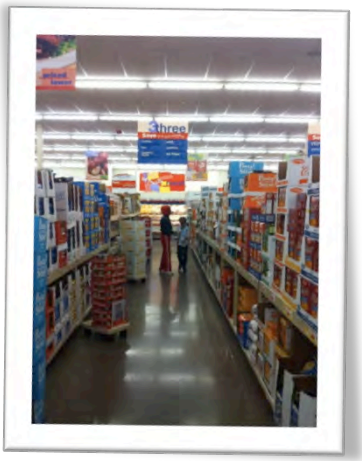
ADVENTURES: GUESTS AND TRIPS

Tuesdays and Thursdays after their enrichment sections, students walk with Husky Sport staff and volunteers to the Parker Memorial center for games, swimming and physical activities. Wednesday, however are the adventurous days, a guest speaker comes to Clark to do an activity or we travel on a field trip. Here are some of our adventures so far…

On February 2nd, the students created 'seed balls'. Derek Santiago led this activity which combined clay, soil, and seeds = **Portable gardening**! Every kid took home a bag of their 'seed balls' to throw outdoors and grow wild flowers.

On February 8th, a team of dental and pharmacy students from **UConn's Urban Service Track** (UST) program visited and spoke with the students about the medical careers they are pursuing. The kids learned more about these career opportunities and were encouraged to work towards them as they get older. UST students also led the kids in fun lessons aimed at learning more about dental hygiene and a healthy diet.

On February 15th, the Clark students learned how to read nutrition labels from various foods. They learned to identify foods that have less than 5% fat but more than 20% of 'good-for-you-nutrients' like iron, fiber, and vitamin A. This prepared them for their field trip to **C-Town**. On February 22nd, they put their knowledge to the test when they explored the grocery store on a **scavenger hunt**! The students had to check the nutrition labels and find a healthy snack.



In their latest adventure on April 4th, the students in the Extended Day program went on a field trip to the Uconn Health Center in Farmington, CT to visit the Urban Service Track students. Once there, they had a nutritious snack and broke up into four groups to rotate through different stations. Clark students got to see the difference between a smoker's lung and a non-smoker's lung by looking at real lungs up close. UST also gave a lesson on healthy hearts and had the kids make origami hearts to take home. They played a nutrition game using realistic food props to be placed on a large food pyramid. Finally, they had an oral health demonstration that showed proper brushing habits and hygiene. The kids were engaged the whole time, learned healthy life skills, and had lots of interesting questions throughout.

TWO GOALS - ONE CAMPAIGN
Raise 2012

As part of our ongoing efforts to build right relationships between the UConn and Hartford North End's communities engaging the youth in the community every day of the week, financial support is of the upmost importance. The 2012 Husky Sport campaign has two particular goals in mind: Coaches and Transportation. We hope that you can help us obtain this goal and empower yourself and others around you by providing a gift of support.

Here are our two goals, ***Coaching One-Thousand*** & ***Driving One-Hundred***:

Husky Sport, in partnership with *Up2Us* and *AmeriCorps*, has established a pipeline for community engagement within the City of Hartford and University of Connecticut communities for '*Coach Across America*' (CAA) interns.

- Six 'Coach Across America' interns' salary and educational stipend
- 1,800 hours of community engagement (300 for each intern) as leaders of Husky Sport programming within the Hartford community

Provides Husky Sport staff, students, and volunteers transportation to facilitate the building of positive relationships between the University of Connecticut and Hartford communities. Your contribution will support:

- 10 van trips made per week x 40 weeks = 400 van trips
- 526 miles driven a week x 40 weeks = 21,040 miles

We at Husky Sport highly appreciate your gifts of support to enable us to continue our efforts with the youth and families in the north end of Hartford and UConn. You can make your donations via our website at *www.huskysport.uconn.edu* and clicking on the donate tab, if you have more questions, comments or concerns you can reach us at *uconnhuskysport@gmail.com* or Dr. Jennifer Bruening at 860.486.5139.

HIGHLIGHTS

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR GRADUATING STAFF:

Melanie Jackson

Hometown: New York, NY

Graduating with: Bachelor of Science in Nutritional Sciences, Minor in Spanish

Husky Sport Major Roles: Nutrition Coordinator, develop and teach nutrition based lessons and activities along with providing healthy snacks.

Emmanuel Omokaro

Hometown: Danbury, CT

Graduating with: Master of Arts in Sport Management

Husky Sport Major Roles: Transportation Coordinator, Clinics Coordinator, Teen Thought College Coordinator, and Classroom Instructor (EKIN 1160).

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT - GREISHKA, 5TH GRADE:

Greishka, age 11, has been an enthusiastic member of the Extended Day program. Over the past five years she's been in three different schools in Hartford and Puerto Rico. She is now a proud Clark student and Ms. DeFilio's fifth grade class. She enjoys learning and the supportive environment in which she can take on new challenges at Husky Sport, with In-School, Read & Raise and Extended Day. When it comes to subjects she "likes them all." But if pressed, she blows the bangs out of her eyes and comments, "Well, I guess Math is my favorite. We just do fun stuff."

Greishka performed remarkably well last year on her CMTs as a fourth grader and so when she joined Extended Day as a fifth grader, she was selected to also participate in the selective M3 program for other top scorers, "I'm the highest out of the entire fifth grade," she says proudly.

She comes to the Mentoring Mathematical Minds each day with a ready to learn attitude. She invented an impressive hieroglyphic number system like the Egyptians but with her own symbols and drawings. "She has been one of the most engaged students," says Kelly Kearny, PhD candidate at UConn who tutors the M3 program. There is no doubt Greishka is an all around leader. During the M3 Celebration where she shared some of the activities she discovered in M3 with her peers, she guided a group of 3rd graders through a fun math game where they gambled on which numbers to keep and which numbers to discard to try to make the biggest number. She then took it up a level and had them adding and subtracting while they were giggling in friendly competition. Little did they know that Greishka was taking them through exercises to preparing them to be top scorers on their CMTs.

Programs

Clark In-School

· Weekly 45-minute classes emphasize importance of literacy, nutrition, physical activity, & life skills.

· 15 classes K-6, close to 300 students participating each week.

· Sample lessons taught this fall: Responsibility, Respect, Personal Hygiene, Conflict Resolution, Bullying & Privacy, and food pyramid.

Neag School Teacher Education Interns

· UConn education students earning their masters degrees.

· Specializing in small group additional instruction for 7th & 8th grade students.

· Assisting with test preparation and administrate curriculum and instructions.

Clark Extended Day

Students are pick-up from their classrooms prior the end of the school day for an extended-day educational enrichment portion.

Tuesdays & Thursdays

· Tutoring section at Clark and then participating children are taken to Parker Memorial Recreation Center.

· Activities include: nutrition lessons and tastings, swimming, sport/games and homework help.

Wednesdays

· Tutoring sections for extended day just as Tuesdays and Thursdays. Followed by guest speakers activities or field trips.

Teens Through College

· High school students from various schools attend this weekend program, which meets at the Salvation Army North End Corps site on Nelson Street.

· The program focuses on college information, SAT prep, college application along with a family style dinner served at the end with a nutritional lesson.

· Additionally this spring, Capital Prep students took a class for UConn credit in which they will learn more about Hartford, as well as national trends in urban education and health.

· Catholic Worker House

Husky Sport participates twice a week at programs geared towards physical activities and academics at the *Green House* across the street from Clark School.

Mondays

· Participants have play-time fallowed by homework help provided by UConn students and volunteers.

Saturdays

· Husky Sport students engage in physical activities and crafts with the participant students from pre-k to high school during this program from 10:00am to 1:00 pm, nutritional family-style lunch is provided.

Read & Raise

· Literacy initiative held during the spring semester. Husky Sport staff and volunteers spend 5-10 hours per week during Read & Raise to promote literacy in the Clark, MLK and Wish elementary schools.

· The program aims to assist in increasing students' reading and writing skills, personal interest in reading, and building positive relationships between UConn and Hartford students.

· In four years students have read and done more than 167,000 books and worksheets.

COMMUNITY CELEBRATION: HOSTED BY HUSKY SPORT

Husky Sport hosted a Community Celebration Brunch & Awards -style recognition event and Field Day for Hartford Public Schools students of the Read & Raise initiative at the University of Connecticut on Monday, April 23 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The Brunch & Awards ceremony was held at Rome Commons Ballroom (10 a.m. - 12 p.m.) and the Field Day event was held at the Gampel Pavilion. During a four-month period, about 1,200 students from the three schools read more than 43,300 books. In the four years since the initiative was launched, Hartford students have read more than 167,000 books; and in two years, the reading scores of third graders increased 14 percent, partly due to activities such as this. The top two reading classes at each school, the top student from each class in grades 2 through 6, and the top five middle school readers from each school were invited to attend.

The Community Celebration was a terrific success! Thanks to the many devoted supporters.
Visit our website to view more highlights from the experiences of the 350 people gathered at the University of Connecticut on April 23rd.

Get Active! WWW.HUSKYSPORT.UCONN.EDU Change the Game!

CHANGING THE GAME

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