Soldan High School: "Receives Grant"
Jerome Bollato, AVID Tutor

I submitted a proposal for a grant to the DonorsChoose organization in November 2010. I requested a class set of new dictionaries and high quality poster board. The total value of these goods was approximately $800. We received the grant in January 2011.

I've included the text of the proposal that was posted on the website:

**Challenge Facing Our Students**
Can't think of the right word to express yourself? We need new dictionaries to help build our communication skills. We use the ones we have almost every day, but they are over 20 years old, in poor condition and too few in number. The poster-board is needed for engaging, collaborative projects and presentations.

**“Tell Us More about Your Students”**
Our students are a hard working, energetic group of diverse learners in Missouri who hope to attend college.

**Inspire Potential Donors**
The school year is progressing well, but we are struggling to accomplish our goals. The students need new dictionaries and poster-board for the daily vocabulary-building and critical thinking skill activities we teach. The addition of enough dictionaries and poster board would provide the students with the tools they need to succeed.

"Graduating with Honors"
Soldan 2011 graduates Salutatorian Mariza Fleming and Valedictorian Ajasha Long were both former AVID students. Upon earning scholarships, Mariza will be attending Evangel University, and Ajasha will be attending Alcorn University in the fall.
Roosevelt High School: "AVID Rough Riders Are On The Move"
Jason Ware, AVID Tutor

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) is exactly how the Rough Riders at Roosevelt High School are moving forward. “We Are College Bound” is the mission of the AVID students, and they are assertively progressing in that direction. The focus of the students all year has been narrowed to four points of interest: college preparation, community service, EOC/ACT preparation, and of course, W-I-C-R (writing, inquiry, collaboration, and reading).

For AVID students, college preparation commences at the time they walk through the doors of Roosevelt High School and does not cease until they have their diplomas in hand and have entered the higher education institution of their choice. Preparing for college entails maintaining a satisfactory grade point average, taking not only the standard courses but also AP and/or honors courses, researching and visiting a variety of universities, completing admission forms, financial aid applications, and the list goes on and on. The Rough Riders are on top of it all! The AVID grade point average (GPA) requirement sits at a 2.0, but Roosevelt students have set their standards a bit higher, averaging an overall GPA of 2.5. Students have talked with their counselors to alter their course load to include as many AP and/or honors classes as they can handle. Several college candidates have already stepped out and onto different colleges for a peek at the campus life. They attended Washington University’s Future Engineers Weekend Program, as well as Southern Illinois University at Carbondale’s Day Tour. With the guidance of the AVID teacher, Ms. Natasha Payne, and the tutors, Sarah Cato, Angel Hudson, and me, the students are tirelessly working to organize their portfolios, to enhance their resumes, and to complete applications for colleges and for scholarships.

College being the goal, academics serve as a main point of concentration, yet much more is involved in crossing the threshold of an institution. Extra-curricular activities play a big part in it, too. Whether they choose to accomplish them independently or as a team, the minimum goal for each student is 10 hours per school year. Some organize such community service events as Operation Brightside Blitz or Earth Day Recycling Extravaganza and find that these activities have been not only opportunities for selfless giving but also have been gratifying to the students. Travon Frazier, a freshman, reflects on his experience: “I had fun, more than I’ve had in awhile.” Shante McCombs states, “I will definitely complete a project like this again.” Sharmila Biswa commented, “While working with friends and teachers with this project, I experienced a lot and I enjoyed working.”

Keeping the momentum of doing more than expected, the AVID students have also been preparing diligently for the End of Course
L'Ouverture Middle School: "Be The Change"

Sgt. Dan Weber, AVID Tutor

St. Louis City Public Schools have gone through many ups and downs over the years, and some have argued that real change will never happen in this school district. One first year AVID student, 7th grader Briana Acres, is making change a reality at L'Ouverture Middle School, a downtown St. Louis City Public School, by including the phrase “Be the Change” with her signature. The idea for writing “Be the Change” came from her principal, Mrs. Nuyes. In fact, the slogan has been L’Ouverture Middle School’s slogan for the past three years. All students are encouraged to write the slogan above their names when turning in an assignment.

I asked Briana why she writes such a bold statement above her name and she said “I started writing it on my paper and good things started to happen in my life.” The good things include: improved grades in her classes, more respect from her teachers, and fewer problems with her mother. Briana said she always knew the difference between right and wrong but in the past would sometimes make bad decisions. She now only makes right decisions as she stated, “doing the right thing makes life easier.” Briana wants to carry her newfound beliefs into a nearby St. Louis Public high school and then to a local college. She also wants to remain in the AVID program throughout high school. AVID, a national program designed to help middle school and high school students prepare for college has become a positive influence for Briana: “AVID really prepares me for college career. The tutors and Mrs. Vierling helped me understand what it takes to be successful.”

It is this new understanding for change, life, and success that has Briana walking a little taller these days and is fast tracking her life above her peers. Briana Acres, is “the Change” by giving hope to the St. Louis City Public Schools and to high school students.

Roosevelt High School: "AVID Rough Riders Are On The Move" Cont'd (By Jason Ware)

Assessment (EOC) and the ACT college entrance exam. The juniors have attended ACT coaching at Roosevelt on-line, and with instructors at Saint Louis University. The freshmen and sophomores, along with the juniors, have participated in after-school tutoring sessions, in class weekly ACT/SAT vocabulary words and definition quizzes, and effective study habits to give them an advantage to achieve proficiency on both the EOC and ACT exams. Knowing the importance of AVID’s W-I-C-R curriculum, they have really focused on improving their writing skills and enhancing their critical thinking abilities with various collaboration activities such as Socratic Seminars.

The Rough Riders at Roosevelt High School stop at nothing to accomplish their goals, from the campus visits at Washington University to performing community service throughout the school year, all while maintaining a grade point average of at least 2.5. They are focused on their goal of attending college and clear on what it takes to get there. They venture through the labyrinth of life searching to reveal their latent talents. While some of their classmates seem to be lethargic at achieving their goals, the attitudes of AVID students are laudatory.
**Gateway High School: "Reflections"**

*Angela Edwards, AVID Tutor*

This year has been pleasant working with Ms. Amy Elliot’s AVID class. I enjoy this class very much; students seem excited to work with me. During our tutorials, students bring up terrific questions pertinent to their school work and stay engaged in their learning process. Importantly, students take time to prepare for tutorial questions ahead of AVID tutorial session. I would like to commend Ms. Elliot for her efforts and positive attitude towards helping her AVID students achieve their best learning potential. Overall, Gateway AVID students’ desire to work hard and to participate will help solidify their transition into college education.

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**Vashon High School: "AVID Visits Wash-U"**

*Sarah Sparks, AVID Tutor*

After a year of hard work and preparation for the future, the freshman, sophomore, and junior AVID classes at Vashon High School received a taste of college life during a visit to Washington University in St. Louis. Upon arrival, the AVID students were greeted by Wash-U student ambassadors who provided an impressive campus tour. Vashon students had the opportunity to see classrooms, including the largest lecture hall. The tour showcased a plethora of resources: the student center and dining halls, student-operated businesses, places to relax on campus, and information about becoming involved with student activities. The highlight of the tour was a visit to an actual freshman residence hall where students got the chance to walk inside a room and witness the benefit of living in a community. Throughout the experience, the Wash-U ambassadors were available to answer many questions posed by AVID students regarding majors, living away from home, and making friends in college. Students had the opportunity to share their interests and learn about prospects for developing those interests at Wash-U. Following the tour, several students expressed the sentiment, “college is going to be great!” The Vashon AVID students were accompanied on this college visit by teachers Anna Gardner-Andrews and Shamonda Owens and tutors Sarah Cato, Sarah Sparks, and William Wallace.

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**Soldan High School: "Culinary Arts"**

*Sedric Kemple, AVID Student*

Staff members from L’Ecole Culinaire came to see our AVID class early in the year. Since Soldan is an international school, the chef and sous chefs brought Russian and French cookies for the class to taste. It was an experience that touched me deeply because I want to be a chef and eventually own a restaurant. The chefs talked about the different courses, tests, and other requirements before becoming a certified chef. L’Ecole is an institution that I always looked at attending for culinary training. This presentation fueled my interest to attend a culinary school.
Cleveland Naval Jr. Academy: "Special Visitors"
Sarah Pisciotta, AVID Student

I believe that AVID has changed the path that many of my classmates and I have chosen. During AVID, we had doctors from Cardinal Glennon Children's Medical Center visit each month to talk about teenage medical issues. We talked about driving under the influence and the prohibitive state laws. Another visit addressed sexually transmitted diseases and caring for physical and sexual health. In addition, one of the physicians discussed asthma and other breathing ailments. We found out that each student in the class either knew someone with asthma or suffered from asthma at some point in their lives.

We also had admissions personnel as well as campus life support team that offer support to African American males, struggling females, and all prospective students from St. Louis Community College at Forest Park. We received so much information that we know more than other 9th grade students about the admission process for colleges. I enjoy AVID because it has helped me realize that the ultimate goal is what we’ll pursue after graduating from high school: attending college!

Carr Lane Middle School: "AVID Superstar"
Chadene Gillespie, Avid Tutor

Harold Russell is our AVID Superstar. He is an eighth grade student from Carr Lane VPA Middle School. At first glance, Harold does not appear to stand out from his classmates; however, he has a quiet determination that makes him different from the rest. Harold caught my attention when AVID teacher Julia Kaiser recommended that Harold see me for help writing a letter regarding difficulties that he was having with his piano class. Harold felt that this class was bringing down his grade point average (GPA) and that he should drop it. Harold was unsure why he signed up for a piano class because he is not interested in playing the piano. Instead he wishes he had signed up for a gym class because his main area of interest is sports.

Harold comes from a family that excels in sports, but unfortunately neither of his parents made it to the level of playing professionally. Harold plans to carry this torch, and he knows that, in addition to perfecting his athletic skills, keeping his GPA high is a key to being accepted to college and gaining scholarships. Harold enjoys being in the AVID program because when he comes across difficulties in reading (his least favorite subject), he is able to ask questions and receive help without feeling embarrassed. Harold states that he enjoys the AVID program as well as having Ms. Kaiser as his teacher. When asked why he believes he was chosen as an AVID superstar, Harold advised that he respects Ms. Kaiser and pays attention while she is speaking.
Langston Middle School: "Aspirations of an AVID Student"
Jacqueline Dyer, AVID tutor

Two of the AVID classes at Langston Middle School are taught by Mrs. Keplar. There are 50 students in her 6th and 8th grade classes. One of those 8th graders is Ryan Young, a young man gracious to all he meets—classmates and adults alike. His favorite AVID activities are the projects, the field trips, and the tutorials. He will attend Clyde Miller Career Academy in September 2011. His occupational goal is to become a lawyer and a physician in general practice. His public service goals are to improve his neighborhood and to help young kids improve their academic skills. His favorite sports include soccer, baseball, and track. His volunteer service with the American Kidney Fund involves collecting donated toys. In addition, Ryan tutors young children at church. He plans to attend University of Kentucky. In the future, he plans to get married, to have a great family and to own horses and a ranch in Kentucky. “I am just a country boy,” he said, “Missouri’s loss—Kentucky’s gain!”

Carnahan High School: "AVID Goes Digital"
Candice Deboise, AVID Teacher

Carnahan High School of the Future has definitely been living up to its name. The AVID class at CHS with elective teacher Ms. DeBoise, has partnered with an AVID class from New Jersey via Skype technology! They have recently discussed an article that students from both classes were given to read for homework as they prepared for a Socratic Seminar. Each class formed a semi-circle in front of the web cams to give the illusion of the complete circle. An outer circle, a hot-seat, and a facilitator were also evident during the seminar. The students displayed their knowledge of higher-order thinking skills and upper-level questioning. The classes are preparing more shared lessons via Skype.

Carnahan High School: "Kevyana"
Tarak Patel, AVID Tutor

Kevyana, a 10th grade AVID student from Carnahan High School, shared some of her favorite hobbies that included dancing, singing, and going out. She desires to pursue a career in the medical field, for which she has been preparing by taking AP biology and AP chemistry courses in her high school. As an AVID student, Kevyana is able to exercise her organizational and critical thinking skills and enjoys collaborating with fellow students to get the most out of tutorial sessions. In her own words, Kevyana stated, “AVID has helped me become more active and engaged in my classwork. It has also helped me to prepare for the ACT and rigorous college curriculum.”