

Avoid summer 'brain drain' with ScholarSkills classes

BY CAMILLE SPERRAZZA

When you rest, you rust.

Keep your children's academic skills sharp this summer at the ScholarSkills Learning Center.

There, Reverend Brian Vieira and his professional staff of fellow educators, focus on innovative methods and strong classroom discipline to teach small groups of children.

The summer session runs from July 7 to Aug. 25, Mondays through Fridays, 1 to 6 pm. Registration is ongoing.

Rev. Vieira says that the "summer brain drain" is disastrous for students.

"The average student loses at least three months of education in math and reading over the summer," he says. Kids should have fun, but make time to learn, too.

When the summer ends, the center continues the education by offering after-school tutoring and test preparation for students from kindergarten through high school.

What makes ScholarSkills unique is that children receive personalized attention.



Reverend Brian Vieira helps a student with schoolwork.

Photo by Jordan Rathkopf

"We identify weaknesses," explains the Reverend. "We then go back to the foundation and repair these weak areas."

Furthermore, the center builds confidence and provides motivation.

"We make excellence exciting," he says. "Students get the attention they need."

All students have individual curriculums, specifically designed for them. As learning progresses, children receive

certificates and other motivational incentives for excellence and effort.

Students are prepared for all New York City standardized tests as well as specialized high school tests, including the ACT, PSAT, and SAT.

Math, reading, and writing skills are emphasized. Both the summer session and the after-school program provides parents with "a safe, progressive environment for home-

work help," says the Reverend. "Children are not roaming the streets."

Instead, they are being offered the chance to accelerate.

It is not only the students who receive help. ScholarSkills provides family-oriented learning via guidance counseling. Rev. Vieira, a former New York City educator, knows firsthand how frustrating the complex public school system can be. That's why he helps parents walk through the steps, offering assistance with questions such as: What school is best for my child? How can the system help my child? What tests will my child need to pass this school year?

"We are the problem-solvers and counselors who help navigate the system," he says.

When one talks to Rev. Vieira, one can't help but catch his passion for learning.

"Our concern for children comes out of our devotion for God's glory," he explains. "It's very important to us."

Rev. Vieira is from the West Indies, where disciplined learning is emphasized. He

brings this sense of discipline to his center where, "You can hear a pin drop," he says. Parents appreciate it.

ScholarSkills earns high grades from parents for improving their children's academics. They also "thank us all the time for being in the neighborhood," says the Reverend. "We are centrally located, between Flatbush and Utica avenues, making it a hop, skip, and a jump for kids who live near Kings Plaza, Eastern Parkway, Marine Park, or Mill Basin to get to the center after school." Many kids walk home.

Parents are kept informed of their children's progress with weekly progress reports. They are also free "to call day or night," to ask questions, and will speak to live person, not an answering machine.

"We go that extra mile," says Rev. Vieira.

ScholarSkills [4709 Avenue N between E. 48th Street and Schenectady Avenue in Mill Basin, (718) 258-4647, www.ScholarSkills.com]. Open Mondays through Fridays, 9 am-7 pm. Call any day, any time.