

Study Buddy Library Program (SBLP)

My name is Raina Kasera. I am currently a junior in high school. In the Spring of 2016, I approached the West Windsor branch of the Mercer County Libraries about the idea of starting a study buddy program at the branch. The Study Buddy Library Program (SBLP) strives to foster a community of students that can learn and grow together. Students in grades K-8 are paired with eligible high school students who can help them in an academic area or even with skills like cultivating good study habits, all in a safe and friendly environment. The program is free of cost, and high school students receive volunteer hours for their work. All sessions are one-on-one (scheduled according to students' availabilities), providing students with the best opportunity to learn. The library also benefits from increased visibility and regular visitor traffic. The program is owned and run by the library.

The program at West Windsor has been successfully running for the past year and a half. There are currently 30+ students in the program. Melissa Nemitz, the Youth Services Librarian at the branch who oversees the program, says she is constantly receiving new applications for both tutors and tutees. The program has received positive feedback from parents and students, alike.

My role in all of this is to help you, as a library, setup and organize this program. I will assist you in hosting information and training sessions, provide you with the necessary materials to get you started, help you evaluate tutor applications, pair tutors and tutees, and create a scheduling system that works for you.

Once the initial set-up work is complete, the only regular commitments from the library are to provide the space, pair up new tutors and tutees, and make sure all sessions are occurring in a timely fashion. At West Windsor, Ms. Nemitz's experience has been very positive and the program has been running smoothly.

I believe that SBLP will be an invaluable service to libraries in New Jersey, which is why I am reaching out to you. If you are interested in learning more about this program and how you can start it at your library, please contact me at sblpnj@gmail.com. Looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,
Raina Kasera