

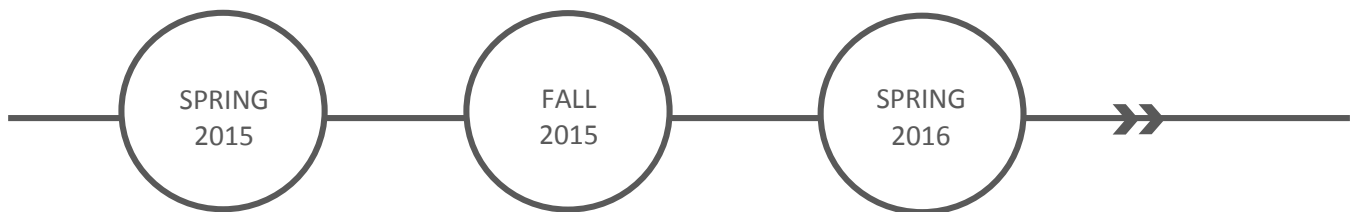


**TO HAVE THE GREATEST IMPACT,
WE WORK WHERE THERE IS THE GREATEST NEED.**

PROGRAM EVALUATION: PILOT 5&6 TUTORING AND BURSARY PROJECT
MAY 2016

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: WHAT WE DID

A pilot tutoring and bursary program was established in September 2015 following a needs assessment conducted in the spring of 2015. This assessment was done with input from school principals, community partners, and Share the Warmth members.



PROJECT TIMELINE

- Needs assessment
- Schools identify students
- Families were contacted
- Program launch at two different sites, working with children identified in spring
- Program Monitoring
 - Students and tutors set learning goals and adjusted them in January
 - Weekly updates completed by tutors and compiled into term reports that are shared with parents
 - Parent meetings
 - Report cards collected
 - Surveys conducted in March-April

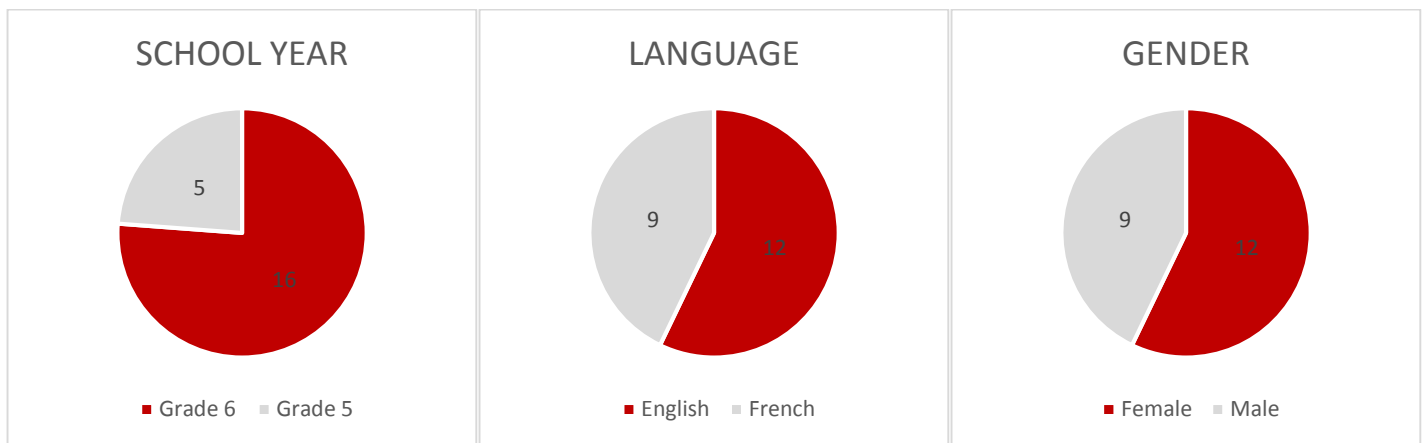
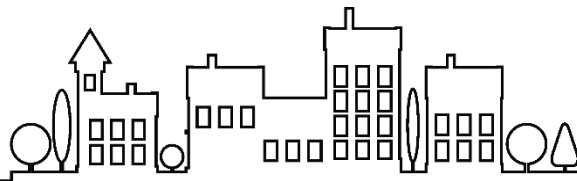
The program provides support to elementary school children in the Point St. Charles neighbourhood of Montreal in response to data that shows that in 2014 51% of youth in the area did not have a high school diploma¹. Teachers likewise report that they can predict those children

¹ Centraide Montréal. *Analyse territoriale 2014 – Arrondissement le Sud-Ouest*. Accessed online: http://www.centraide-mtl.org/fr/documents/5065/upload/documents/Portrait-Arrondissement-Sud-Ouest-2014_7.pdf/

who are most likely to drop-out of high school as early as grade three or four. After years of working with children in the area, our experience shows that children often graduate elementary school with grade three reading and language levels. According to a report published by the *Institut de la statistique du Québec*, and confirmed by area school principals, children’s grades typically drop by 10% during the transition from elementary to high school², which leads to discouragement and the possibility of eventually dropping out. Taken together with the added challenges of an extremely underprivileged area, which include poor access to sufficient, healthy and nutritious food and lack of opportunities, these are damning statistics for children who are growing up in the Point.

The objective of the program therefore is to ensure students successfully navigate this important life transition equipped with the social and study skills required to succeed in high school.

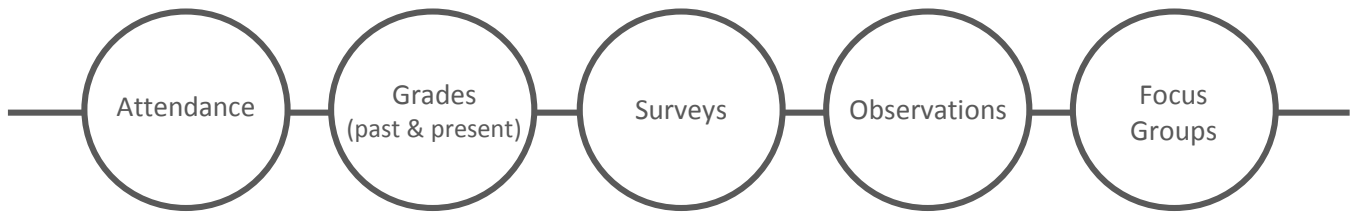
WHO PARTICIPATED: 21 CHILDREN



In the pilot year, we targeted students entering grade 6 with an academic average of 74% or less. Schools identified such students and Share the Warmth contacted their families to invite them to join the project. Although we had planned to pilot the project with grade 6 students only, the project was expanded to include children in grade five whose families asked to join. Each student was required to attend two tutoring sessions per week and would receive a bursary at the end of the year of up to \$200 based on each student’s attendance during the year.

² Institut de la statistique du Québec. Elementary School Students at Risk of Dropping Out of High School: Characteristics at 12 Years of Age and Predictors at 7 Years of Age. 2013. Accessed online: http://www.stat.gouv.qc.ca/statistiques/education/frequentation-scolaire/daccrochage_an.pdf

HOW WE MEASURED IMPACT: EVALUATION TOOLS



These tools were used with teachers, tutors, parents and students.

HOW WE MEASURED IMPACT: EVALUATION PROCESS

The pilot project's impact was measured both qualitatively through interaction with youth, and surveys from tutors, parents, teachers and students, and quantitatively by tracking students' grades while in the program.

Results of the evaluation show that the pilot tutoring and bursary program contributes to students' academic skill development, ability to complete homework, and self-confidence. There are also indications that the program has contributed to an increased enjoyment of learning, which is associated with the pursuit of post-secondary education and lower drop-out rates.³

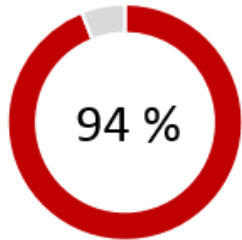
After only seven months of programming and two report cards, it is still too soon to tell to what extent the program has impacted participants' academic performance with any degree of certainty. However, preliminary results show an increase in grades compared to previous results, including a 5% improvement in math and a 4% improvement in core language courses.

A word of caution about academic results:

Although these preliminary results are encouraging, and compare positively with where students were this time last year, there are several challenges to evaluating students based on grades alone at such an early stage. First, student grades are measured differently between schools. Each school board uses different measurement tools and a different grading structure (our participants are from two schools, one each from EMSB and CSDM boards). Also, some students follow IEPs (Individualized Educational Plan) and their marks reflect their assigned grade level, and not their academic grade level. For these reasons, we are cautiously optimistic about the early signs of improvement in academic results. *Example: a student in a grade 6 class may have 75% in English, but cannot read; this is because their IEP has them identified as a grade 1 reader, in which case, their grade reflects their level in grade 1.* Furthermore, grades from term 1 to term 2 may differ greatly due to one poor exam.

³ Statistics Canada. Participation, Graduation and Dropout rates. 2008. Accessed online: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/81-595-m/2008070/6000003-eng.htm>

Despite these challenges and the short period of observation, results of the evaluation show that the program provides needed emotional and academic support, and that the program creates a positive learning environment for youth.



Feel safe in the program

*“That I would get the kind of help I want for my high school. I would make my family proud by going further.”
– A student in grade 6, Charles Lemoyne*

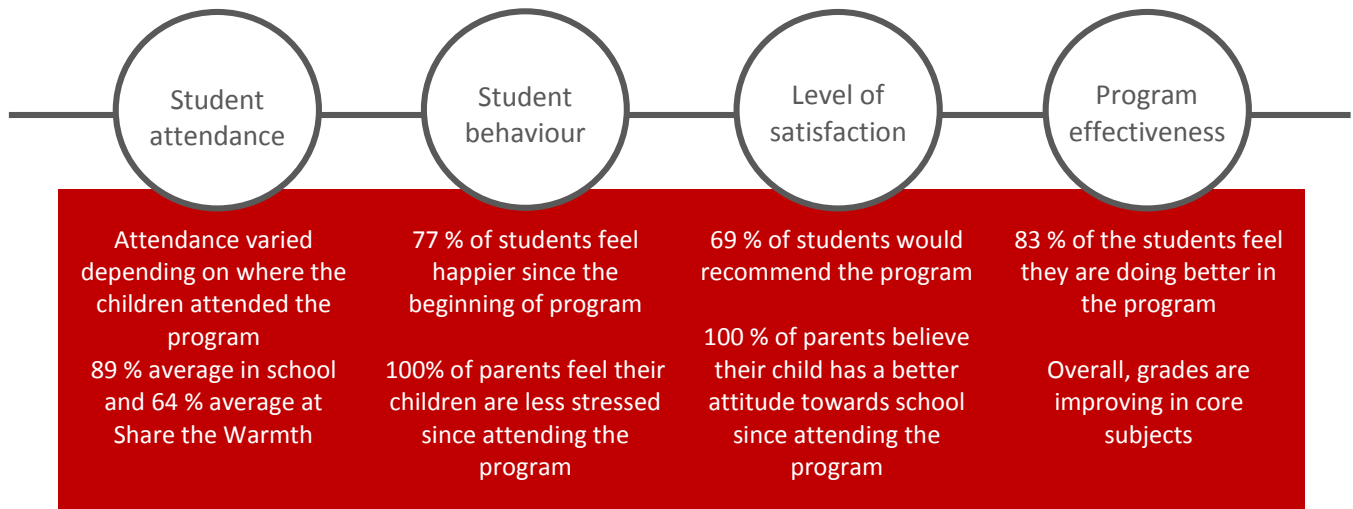
*«La façon comment ils [les tuteurs] prennent au sérieux leur travail et comment ils nous aident.»
– A student in grade 6, Charles Lemoyne*

“I like best that people are nice.” – A student in grade 5, St. Gabriel

“I get my homework done.” – A student in grade 6, St. Gabriel

WHAT WE MEASURED: OUTCOMES

The tools were used to measure the following outcomes: attendance; observations and surveys allowed us to measure student behavior; while parent surveys and focus groups allowed us to measure satisfaction with Share the Warmth’s program.



The issue of inconsistent attendance will inform changes to the program for next year.

IMPORTANT ELEMENTS

Food

Parents supported the project and felt that their children's needs were being met, both in terms of safety and in meeting program objectives.

Parents also considered access to food and nutrition a highly-valued component of the tutoring program. Students really enjoyed being active contributors in selecting healthy food, and one child even commented that they attend the program solely for the homemade cookies.

Some students do not have access to regular meals.⁴ Food anxiety is a real problem, especially when it comes to the social and academic development of any child.⁵

Stability

A strong theme that emerged was the importance of continuity of both paid and volunteer staff. This stability facilitates the development of trust and positive relationships.

Regular updates

Regular visits to schools to meet with both principals and teachers, and to observe children and their tutors, provided additional information about students throughout the school year and at key moments for the students. This allowed Share the Warmth staff to provide feedback to families about their children's progress.

Next steps: MOVING FORWARD

Share the Warmth's 5&6 tutoring and bursary program is uniquely positioned to positively influence students academically and socially, through its quality programming based on building trust with families and effective school partnerships. The findings of this first evaluation point to how beneficial the program is in meeting the educational and social needs of students, their families, and the community. Future evaluations will measure and demonstrate further impact of the program.

After interviewing students, parents, and staff, the findings of the evaluation indicate the need to continue the program for the next academic year.

⁴ Children's Health Watch. Too Hungry to Learn: Food insecurity and School Readiness. 2013. Accessed online: <http://www.childrenshealthwatch.org/publication/too-hungry-to-learn/> http://www.childrenshealthwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/toohungrytolearn_report.pdf

⁵ Sodexo Foundation. Impact of School Breakfast on Children's Health and Learning. 2008. Accessed online: http://www.sodexofoundation.org/hunger_us/Images/Impact%20of%20School%20Breakfast%20Study_tcm150-212606.pdf

Given the issue of inconsistent attendance, the program will be deployed in both schools next year. This change will result in increased program costs, as will deployment to all grade 5 and 6 students identified by schools as being at risk of future drop-out, however we believe the investment to be well worth it. We estimate these costs to be just over \$40,000 for deployment in local schools for approximately 50 children, representing an annual investment of \$800 per child per year.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

Share the Warmth needs your help to work with students to develop their basic studying skills, increase their knowledge, and transition to high school. Please invest in our tutoring and bursary program.



DONATE MONTHLY



DONATE ONCE

THE ROLE OF KNOWLEDGE IN LEARNING

The knowledge that young people acquire enables them to better understand the world in which they live. From a very early age, within their families and through contact with the media and with friends, they accumulate and learn to use an increasingly greater body of knowledge. The role of the school, beginning in kindergarten, should be to progressively broaden, deepen and structure this knowledge.

However, helping young people acquire knowledge raises the challenging question of how to make this knowledge useful and long-lasting, and thus evokes the notion of competency. For example, we can never really be certain that a grammar rule has been assimilated until it is used appropriately in a variety of texts and contexts that go beyond the confines of a repetitive, targeted exercise.

In this way, knowledge and competencies must mutually reinforce each other. On the one hand, knowledge becomes consolidated when it is used, and on the other hand, the exercise of competencies entails the acquisition of new knowledge. For example, the mastery of mathematical operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division) is consolidated through using them to solve increasingly complex problems that teach students to perform a series of operations in the correct order.

Gouvernement du Québec. (2016). Progression of Learning in Elementary School. Accessed online:
http://www1.mels.gouv.qc.ca/progressionprimaire/index_en.asp