



Happy Happenings in GEAR UP Community

February, 2012
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The National Scripps Spelling Bee competition—first time in Pohnpei!

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Today, February 6, produces 2 Pohnpei state champions of the first National Spelling Bee competition held on Pohnpei island—GEAR UP student Mitchell Marino from Saladak school and Lonie Nicholas from Kolonia school. 10 winners of the GEAR UP school Spelling Bee competitions fought hard to win the Pohnpei state level competition today. Marla Samuel won Awak school Spelling Bee competition; Denzel O.G. Ligohr and Maryfe Quiambao won the Nett's; Mitchell Marino and Salyanna Santos won the Saladak's; Courtney Simina and Jaime Ann Noket won the Sekere's, Rochelle K. Chunn and Lonie Nicholas won the Kolonia's, and Sharon Dekampo won the Ohmine's.

The 2 champions of the Pohnpei state level competition will represent Pohnpei state in the regional National Spelling Bee competition held in Guam on March 3, 2012. United airlines donated airfare tickets for one student champion, chaperons (parent or teacher-learner) and the GEAR UP Education Specialist. The Chinese embassy in Pohnpei will support the other champion by providing an

airline ticket and a stipend to participate in the regional competition in Guam. GEAR UP program funded by the US Department of Education will support GEAR UP participants with stipends for food and accommodation. GEAR UP wishes to thank the sponsors for allowing this unique opportunity for Pohnpeian students to experience the real National Spelling Bee competition. The program wishes to express its great appreciation to the Rotary Club of Pohnpei that first brought the idea of having the National Spelling Bee competition in Pohnpei and shared the enrollment fee expenses. In addition, GEAR UP says thank you to the fol-

lowing local businesses for their donations and support — Ace Office Supplies, MicroPC, Palm Terrace, Nihco, and Ray and Dors—for providing gifts for student incentives. Last but definitely not least GEAR UP would like to say big thank you to the Pohnpei State Department of Education (PDOE) for hosting and greatly supporting the National Spelling Bee in Pohnpei and all volunteers from PDOE, Rotary Club of Pohnpei, International Organization for Migration, US Department of Agriculture, FSM Development Bank, and other volunteers.



School champions just before the Pohnpei State Spelling Bee competition, February 6, 2012



The GEAR UP champion - Mitchell Marino and his mother Kariynn Marino

Australian funded “Middle School Science Fair Program and Expo”



GEAR UP application for the “Middle School Science Fair Program and Expo” has been successful! The Australian embassy in Pohnpei will fund this project under its Direct Aid Program. In this program, almost 400 students from Awak, Kolonia, Nett, Oh-

mine, Saladak, and Sekere elementary schools will be doing research in specific science topics during the 3rd and 4th quarters. The project will culminate with a science fair expo where the winning classrooms will present their findings to the public.

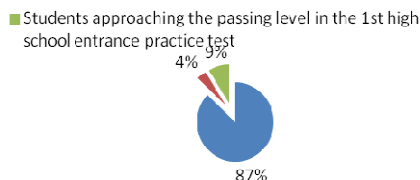
The students have been grouped into 24 groups and right now identifying their science research topics! You will hear more about the project very soon! Thank you Australian embassy for sharing the vision of our happily educated kids!

Results of the 2nd High School Entrance Practice Test Greatly Improved

At least 5 times more students passed the high school entrance post-test conducted in December compared to the pre-test conducted in September. More importantly, almost 3 times more students are approaching the passing level of the high school entrance test. As you can see from the blue part of the pie chart, the percentage of students who are non-passing or non-approaching the passing level has radically decreased. From the third graph you can see that the average English performance level increased by 10% and math by 21% just in 3 months time. "Getting closer to the blue line" marks a great progress and good chances that the GEAR UP students will succeed in enrolling into high school. However, GEAR UP students and staff need to continue working hard.

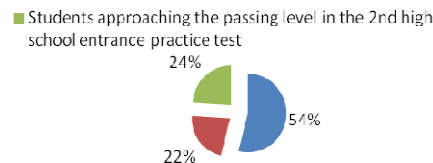
1st high school entrance practice test results

- Students not passing and not approaching the passing level during the 1st high school practice test
- Students passing 1st high school entrance practice test
- Students approaching the passing level in the 1st high school entrance practice test



2nd high school entrance practice test results

- Students not passing and not approaching the passing level during the 2nd high school practice test
- Students passing 2nd high school entrance practice test
- Students approaching the passing level in the 2nd high school entrance practice test



GEAR UP students participate in the US College Fair

60 GEAR UP students had an opportunity to participate in the US College Fair organized by the COM-FSM on November 23, 2011. For the first time but definitely not last, GEAR UP students had a chance to explore degree options in the USA by asking the representatives of 25 US colleges questions of inquiry. After the fair, the partici-

pants shared what they had learned with their student-friends. GEAR UP students were excited about the participation. The event was a great opportunity to promote student awareness on the higher education options. GEAR UP wishes to thank EducationUSA's—Lore Nena and Mike Ioanis for organizing this event.

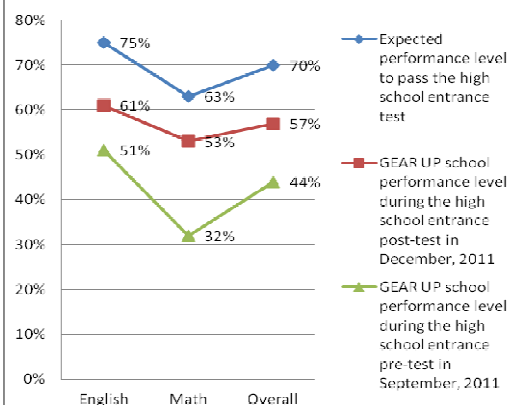
"Getting closer to the blue line" marks a great progress and good chances that GEAR UP students will succeed in enrolling into the high school!" - says

Nora



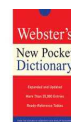
GEAR UP students at the US College Fair

1st and 2nd high school entrance practice test results



The Rotarians donate once more!

The Rotary Club of Pohnpei donated dictionaries to all GEAR UP students! GEAR UP students and staff say many thanks to the Rotarians! :)



GEAR UP teachers appreciated!

Awards:

In January, GEAR UP organized a teacher training where the 3rd quarter curriculum was introduced. The training also allowed GEAR UP to express its great appreciation to the site coordinators and teachers who are doing a superb job in preparing GEAR UP kids for high school and beyond.

Most outstanding new teacher—Chestwood Nelper, Ohmine

Teacher of outstanding in-kind contribution—Walfred Alfred, Saladak

Teacher of the semester—Beaumina Soswe, Awak; Al-trickson Likor, Nett; Lane Ohli, Ohmine; Joseph Amor, Saladak; Phillip Albert, Sekere; Henry Norman, Kolonia.

Most proactive teacher—Leslie Robert, Nett

Most supportive of GEAR UP—Deacon Henry Donre

Most outstanding site coordinator—Jimmy Gallen

Most outstanding use of GEAR UP resources—Merlinda Donre

GEAR UP partner meeting

In December, GEAR UP organized its partner meeting in order to strengthen the partnerships and to discuss how to improve student attendance, academic performance, and overall how to advance the program. Following the meeting, attendance tracking sheets introduced to the schools to improve student attendance; English and math recovery programs implemented; Pohnpei cinema donated movie tickets which are given to the students with perfect attendance every two weeks. Thanks Pohnpei Cinema!