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Math Students Become Teachers

University Park, IL, March 14, 2008 - Students and parents at Woodgate Elementary School in Matteson recently enjoyed a special family night. They did not park themselves in front of the television or a video game. They participated in a math night at school.

Children and their parents solved problems, manipulated math tools, and learned new concepts together in small groups. Each group was led by a student from the Governors State Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education program.

"This family math night was our way to give back to the community," explained Associate Professor of Educational Technology at Governors State University, Dr. John Meyer. "Good teachers don't just walk out of a university classroom and into an elementary school classroom. They need to observe and practice. Our students have been learning from the teachers at Woodgate and we wanted to give something back to the community."

"I liked the idea of getting families together to share in their children's education," said Amanda Zornow of Crete, a junior at GSU. "Being there and seeing the math games in action gave me helpful tips on how to help students understand and appreciate mathematics."

Senior Julie Younker of South Chicago Heights enjoyed the whole experience. "It was great to see parents and students excited about math."

According to senior Jill Urbon of Chicago, "Math night showed me what hands-on activities can do to boost understanding of math concepts."

Dr. Meyer was pleased to see both the elementary school children and their parents learning from his university students. "Teaching and learning math is enjoyable. There are things that a teacher can do with math in the classroom that are both educational and fun. Sometimes, educators get caught up in all the testing and the fun, learning activities go out the window. We wanted to show that learning and fun go together."