

Boys & Girls Clubs, Mustard Seed get tutoring grants

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Youth Development Specialist Leonard Serrano helps Deysha Murray, 7, and Alexis Lane, 7, right, with their homework during the Project Learn tutoring hour at the Boys and Girls Club of Redlands, on Monday, December 14, 2009. The free program for members, which offers tutoring to children 6-18, will be receiving a \$50,000 grant from the Verizon Foundation. (photo by Eric Tom)

Boys & Girls Clubs, Mustard Seed given Verizon grants

REDLANDS - The Boys & Girls Clubs of Redlands and Mustard Seed Tutorial Center received tutoring grants from the Verizon Foundation.

The Boys & Girls Clubs received \$50,000 for Project learn, a tutoring and homework program for students ages 6 to 18.

Mustard Seed received \$24,500 for tutor training and evaluation.

Boys & Girls Clubs CEO P.T. McEwen said the Verizon grant will impact 400 youth a day at the nonprofit's five locations. Project Learn is the umbrella term for the Boys & Girls Clubs' educational program.

"Seventy-five percent of our kids are low income so there's not really a support structure with parents all the time

and I think that's become an issue for homework help and it definitely helps in this day and age with education budgets being cut," McEwen said.

McEwen said although the economy has hit funding, there has been an increase in volunteers.

Mustard Seed director Eric Stoddard said the grant will be used for more tutor training and evaluation "so we know the training is working."

The tutoring center has between 50 to 60 volunteer tutors and 80 students a week, he said.

"The training of these volunteers is critical," he said. "Mainly what we're here for is kids who are more than a year behind, so the tutors do quite a bit of teaching."

In October, Mustard Seed received a \$200,000 grant from Bank of America. The grant will be used to expand the center's services.

The Verizon Foundation is the charitable arm of Verizon Communications and supports literacy and education.