

UCSD, SDSU, and USD to collaborate on after-school programs for K-12 kids in San Diego communities

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UCSD, SDSU, AND USD TO COLLABORATE ON AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS FOR K-12 KIDS IN SAN DIEGO COMMUNITIES

The University of California, San Diego, San Diego State University, and the University of San Diego have joined together to establish a collaborative, community-wide effort to provide innovative after-school activities for K-12 kids.

The new program, San Diego Links, is modeled on a highly successful after-school program that began at UCSD called the Fifth Dimension. The success of the program, which combines computer instruction and education with academic research and social interaction, led the University of California to fund a systemwide program modeled after Fifth Dimension called UC Links, which has resulted in 25 community- and university-based sites serving more than 700 K-12 students each quarter.

"San Diego Links will provide a life-sized model of how universities can work together with local communities to enrich the health and education of area children," said Michael Cole, a professor of communication and psychology at UCSD who established the Fifth Dimension nearly a decade ago and was the impetus for the SD Links program. "By joining together, the three major institutions of higher learning in San Diego can provide a badly needed service to the region's children, while greatly increasing the scope of their individual projects."

According to Cole, San Diego Links will provide K-12 youth with innovative and computer-based instruction and learning after school, while providing faculty members with a unique medium for research on how to enrich the health and education of San Diego children. Additionally, health care services will be provided at many of the sites by UCSD pediatricians, psychologists, nutritionists and other medical specialists. The San Diego Links sites will all use computer-based strategies to educate, entertain, and increase the language and literacy skills of the children. Each of the sites will also provide additional educational opportunities for undergraduate students from all three academic institutions to develop research skills and observe the computer and learning practices of the children, while providing them with positive role models. Collaborative efforts are also under way to provide distance learning (video conferencing) among students from all three campuses.

In addition to the three local after-school sites already established by UCSD in Solana Beach (La Clase Magica at St. Leo's Head Start Center and the Boys & Girls Club), and Cannel Valley (Torrey Pines Elementary), new sites scheduled to open this fall are at Rosa Parks Elementary School in City Heights administered by SDSU, and a Linda Vista site for pre-schoolers at the Karen Love Head Start Center administered by USD.

Kathleen Jones, associate dean of SDSU's College of Arts & Letters, Elsie Begler, director of the International Studies Education Project, and Ann Jones, professor of rhetoric and writing studies, are coordinating the

development of The Looking Glass Neighborhood at Rosa Parks Elementary School. The curriculum, which is closely tied to community studies of City Heights, is designed to promote civic awareness, cross cultural understanding, geographic concepts and skills, and global perspectives.

Steven Gelb, a professor of teacher and special education at USD' s School of Education and a specialist in pre-school age child development, is adapting the Fifth Dimension model for use with pre-schoolers at the new Linda Vista site. He also is working with UCSD's Division of Community Pediatrics to establish a parent-infant early education program for Linda Vista families.

The ultimate goal of San Diego Links is to develop a strong network of local and national partnerships that will generate the needed resources for the program to become self-sustaining and a permanent resource in the community. Attempts are under way to raise private funds and secure federal grant monies to provide continuing support for the program and enable it to expand beyond the initial sites.

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