Saturday PACT is a tutorial assistance program that seeks to enhance the academic achievement of elementary, middle and high school students in the Pittsburgh area. Students are tutored in reading, math, science, computers and the languages. They also receive help with researching and writing papers via the computer. Tutees are recommended by school principals or school counselors and are selected based on their willingness to participate. Saturday PACT is held on Duquesne University’s campus, and is staffed by Duquesne University students as tutors and aided by University staff.

The Saturday PACT Program and Credits

What is PACT?
Project for Academic Coaching Through Tutoring (PACT) began in 1990 as a community outreach and service learning project of Duquesne University’s Michael P. Weber Learning Skills Center. Organized to provide after-school and Saturday morning tutoring for children residing in the Hill District community, the project was expanded in 1997 when an infusion of federal funds allowed the inclusion of in-school and after-school tutoring throughout Pittsburgh and surrounding communities.

Duquesne students serve as PACT tutors and are noted for their commitment to helping the children who have come to them for learning support. They serve for course credit, as volunteers and as college work-study recipients.

Who do I contact for more information?
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Kayla Berkey
Guest Editor
Matthew Crumine, another PACT tutor, has worked with the same group of students at the Wellesley Center’s after school program for the past three years. As a senior political science and history major, Matthew has observed the difference in the students as they return to the program every year, saying, “Each year they come back seeming more intelligent and more prepared.” He feels that tutoring takes him out of his element in a positive way, giving him insight into the lives of high school students and providing him with experiences he never would have found otherwise.

Matthew’s tutoring technique is to ensure that he provides the students with clear responsibilities to accomplish in their studies and to encourage them to want to do their schoolwork. Realizing that the students come to tutoring after they have spent the day at school, Matthew makes sure that he creates an understanding and fun environment where students can enjoy themselves while they learn techniques for academic improvement.

Matthew also spends his Saturday mornings working one-on-one with a tutee at the Duquesne University campus. In this setting, he gets to know individual students well, which enables him to emphasize their strengths and focus on areas where they can improve. After his fourth year working with the PACT program, Matthew plans to graduate from Duquesne University with tentative plans to continue his education in law school.

He feels that his involvement in the PACT program provided him with the tools he needed for improvement. He explains, “My parents, Ms. Bush [PACT Program Coordinator], and my tutors helped me to succeed in school.” His younger brother, John, is a sixth grader at Propel Charter School in Homestead, and for him, the tutoring program creates a fun learning atmosphere with positive role models where he finds helpful assistance with schoolwork. He wrote an article about his experience with PACT:

“My Vicki Bush, M.S. Ed., is an excellent coordinator, and the tutors are positive people.”

Kelli Brickner realizes that one of the most important parts of the tutoring process is to connect with the students by building relationships with them and continuously encouraging them to remain positive. She explains, “They get frustrated and say ‘I can’t do it,’ so you have to push them and really encourage them.” She also accomplishes this by rewarding the students when they do well and giving them breaks between studies so they can maintain their focus.

One part of the tutoring experience Kelli enjoys is bringing tutees to Duquesne’s campus to get them excited about the idea of attending college in the future. When Kelli graduates from Duquesne, she hopes her experiences with PACT will prepare her for future hopes to teach overseas.