PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Background

IMANI (Improving Montclair Achievement Network Initiative) was established by the Montclair Board of Education in 1999 to help close the minority achievement gap, and to assist minority students to successfully enroll in college. At the high school level, IMANI provides SAT prep, weekly study groups, and summer academic support. Recognizing that academic success begins in the elementary grades, a “mini-IMANI” literature program was launched for children at Nishuane School and Hillside Schools in 2005 with a focus on achieving reading excellence. The Mini-IMANI program is now expanding to Edgemont, Northeast, Rand and Watchung schools in 2006-07.

Goals

Mini-IMANI encourages reading through literature circles – small groups of children that are very similar to “book clubs.” Literature circles allow children to develop their critical language skills by reading quality, age appropriate books in a social atmosphere with their peers.

The groups are organized and books selected based on grade level. Groups meet for one hour, twice per month at the Hillside School. During our off weeks, we will be reading assigned chapters from the current book at home. The group discussions aim to be child-driven, natural conversations about the books, so personal connections, digressions, and open-ended questions are welcome.

Most weeks, children will participate in a group activity with another reading circle. Activities will include speakers, author visits, art projects and interactive activities. Coaches (high school students from the MHS National Honor Society) will be available to assist with book reports or other school-related projects in a quiet corner of the cafeteria.

IMANI Circles Structure

The circles are comprised of approximately 8 children and a parent or teacher facilitator. Children will rotate roles for each session.

Wise Owl Facilitator: The Wise IMANI Owl is a parent volunteer or certified teacher, who acts as timekeeper and helps to keep the conversation on track. The Wise Owl encourages the children to act out portions of the story, to think up a new
ending, or other activities to explore the themes read. The Owl collects completed books at the end of the session, distributes the next book, and assigns roles for the upcoming session. **If a child is absent, the child or parent is responsible for retrieving a copy of the book from the designated IMANI shelf at the school library.**

**Summarizer:** The Summarizer's job is to prepare a brief summary (2-3 sentences) of the selected reading that conveys the key points of the story. If there are several ideas or events, you can use bullets to note them.

**Questioner:** The Questioner's job is to write down a few questions about the reading, to pose to her peers during the session. We encourage the use of open-ended questions that facilitate discussion: why did a character act the way he did? What did you wonder about while you were reading? What was going to happen next?

**Word Wizard:** The Word Wizard's job is to be on the lookout for new and intriguing words in the reading selection. The Word Wizard jots them down; writes the dictionary definition of the word; and uses it in a sentence. During the circle, they'll quiz their peers on the meaning of these new vocabulary words.

**Illustrator:** Good readers make pictures in their mind as they read. The illustrator draws some kind of picture related to the reading just completed. The child can draw a picture of something that happened in the book or something it reminded them of, or simply a picture that conveys an idea or a feeling.

**Questions about the Program? Interested in becoming a Wise Owl Facilitator?** Call JoAnn McCullough at (973) 509-2822 / CAC73@comcast.net.
MINI IMANI SIGN-UP FORM

Child’s Name: ________________________________

Address: __________________________________

Grade: _______ Teacher: ______________________

Parent/Guardian Name: ________________________

Phone: ___________ E-mail: ____________________

Mini IMANI groups will meet every other Sunday from 2:30-3:30 p.m., beginning Sunday, October 22nd at Hillside School. Please enter thru the cafeteria (west side of the school parking lot).

IMANI RUNS ON THE VOLUNTEER STEAM OF PARENTS! We need:

___ Parents, to help facilitate a book groups/circles

___ 2 chapter coordinators, to assign groups and help distribute books

___ Parents who are willing to carpool with neighbors

YES! I’m willing to volunteer! (Please check preferred role, above).

(Return this form via your child’s backpack in an envelope marked: “Office: Mini IMANI” or mail to: Imani College Advocacy Center
73 South Fullerton Avenue
Montclair, NJ 07042)
** HELPING CHILDREN
ACHIEVE EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS **

PROGRAPl KICK-OFF
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2006
HILLSIDE AUDITORIUM

IMANI (Improving Montclair Achievement Network Initiative) is a program established by the Montclair Board of Education in 1999 to help close the minority achievement gap, and to assist minority high school students to successfully enroll in college.

Recognizing that academic success begins in the elementary grades, two years ago, IMANI launched a reading program for children at Nishuane. IMANI-Nishuane was a success, and last year we expanded the program to Hillside. This year we are excited to expand Mini IMANI to four other elementary schools!

Register Your Child(ren) for Success!

During our program kick-off meeting, we'll:

♦ Have a children's activity while the parents are in the information session (a hip-hop dance workshop).
♦ Describe our program of "literature circles" -- a bi-weekly "book club" for kids -- geared to your child's reading level and interests.
♦ Have sign-up forms for your child(ren) to participate in this no-cost, parent-driven effort!

WE NEED PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Questions? Call JoAnn McCullough at 973-509-2822 or CAC73@comcast.net
Can't make the meeting? See sign-up form on reverse →