



NORTHSTAR BALTIMORE - SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH in School Year 2017-2018

Helping Baltimore Kids Rise!

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Martin Pollak Project
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NORTHSTAR BALTIMORE LAUNCHED!

NB works to improve the academic achievement, self-esteem and social competence of elementary/middle school students in Baltimore's low-income neighborhoods by providing caring adult relationships to help students achieve their potential.

- Student is matched with a volunteer tutor/mentor, with the goal of establishing a long-term one-on-one relationship.
- Sessions focusing on school classroom assignments, typically 90 minutes, are either after or before school at neighborhood schools or early evening at the Martin Pollak Project (MPP) offices in Highlandtown.
- After the student/tutor pairs work together for a few weeks, monthly mentoring activities begin.
- NB served 30 students in Southeast Baltimore each week in school year 2017-18.

“Students work one-on-one with a member of the community forging strong relationships and strengthening academics. There is an urgent need for this sort of programming and Northstar Baltimore meets that need with great effectiveness.” *Classroom Teacher, Baltimore City Schools*

About the Martin Pollak Project

The Martin Pollak Project (MPP), sponsor of NB, has been recruiting and training foster parents and matching them with kids since 1980, mostly in Baltimore. MPP also provides an apartment-based program for youth aged 16 to 21 to help them become self-sufficient.

For seven years, MPP provided an organizational home to Project Northstar, a tutoring/mentoring program in DC. While MPP directed the program, we also noticed the success and effectiveness of the Project Northstar approach for school kids. The decision to try to replicate its positive results in Baltimore led directly to the launch of Northstar Baltimore and demonstrates our commitment to help strengthen families and to achieve better results for children in our community.

“The students were eager to attend the sessions and I was able to notice growth in their reading skills as a result of the tutoring they were receiving. The one on one help that NB offers the students is invaluable.”

NB Volunteer tutor/mentor

The NB Model, based on DC’s Project Northstar

The NB model, with weekly 90-minute tutoring sessions plus social and mentoring activities, has been used successfully for 20 years by Project Northstar in Washington, DC, which currently serves over 150 students each week.

Project Northstar student participants had outstanding improvements in academic achievement and school satisfaction during the last year school, including:

- 85 % of incoming students increased their math or reading scores by at least one letter grade.
- 75% of all incoming students increased their PARCC scores (a standardized test also used in Maryland) an average of 10% in math and/or reading.

How NB Works

- ***Recruit volunteers, guide them through the clearance process, and train them as tutors and mentors.*** After orientation and training sessions, our MPP staff of experienced social workers is available to provide advice and assistance along with outside staff with specialized training in mentoring, so students can receive the most benefit and the volunteers can feel effective in their roles.
- ***Match volunteers with elementary/middle school students in low income neighborhoods with under-resourced schools in Baltimore.*** Community school coordinators work with teachers to identify students to participate and obtain parent/guardian permission to participate. Families are involved in the process throughout and are invited to observe the sessions; many have attended the NB group activities.
- ***Schedule tutoring sessions at schools and at MPP headquarters each week for the volunteer/student pairs from October to June.***
- ***Add monthly mentoring/social activities (picnics, field trips, etc.) to encourage relationships that go beyond completing school work.***

“It was great to see family members stay throughout a tutoring session, ask about how they could support their child at home, and participate in a mentoring activity alongside the community volunteer who tutors their child.” *SouthEast Community Development Corporation School Coordinator*



Some First Year NB Results

- “At least three NB students were at risk of failing the grade, and at the end of the school year came to my office beaming about the fact that they had passed.” *Classroom Teacher*
- “The students were eager to attend the sessions and I was able to notice growth in their reading skills as a result of the tutoring they were receiving. The one on one help that Northstar offers the students is invaluable.” *Volunteer tutor/mentor*
- “Student N is now reading simple sentences fluently and confidently. He is the envy of his peers who ask me regularly if they can have tutors as well. But most importantly, N has found joy in learning!” *ESOL teacher*

SUPPORT NORTHSTAR BALTIMORE!

- **Volunteer as a tutor/mentor**

The number of students we can serve is only limited by the number of volunteers we can recruit - there are lots of Baltimore kids that would like to participate in NB! And our volunteers are the first to tell you that they get as much as they give in this relationship. Start by filling out the online application at <http://www.mppi.org/volunteer-application/>.

- **More ways to help**

If your schedule does not permit an ongoing weekly commitment, here are some ideas -- please add to the list!

- Join in outreach efforts - staffing a table at a festival or making a presentation at a meeting.
- Help with research on identifying organizations, events, meetings and contacts to aid in outreach efforts.
- Help with the collection of data on tracking attendance at sessions, pre and post surveys and weekly feedback forms, and tasks such as assistance with the volunteer clearance process and planning training sessions for volunteers.

Financial Support for NB

NB is a free program for Baltimore students. However, it costs about \$1,000 to support a volunteer/student pair each school year -- the cost of background checks and fingerprinting for the volunteers, school supplies and snacks for the sessions, field trip transportation and food, communication to volunteers, etc. Last year's expenses were covered by individual contributions and proceeds from several fundraisers. Obviously, growing NB requires more resources!

Consider an ongoing monthly contribution to support a volunteer/student pair -- set up a monthly contribution of \$50 or an amount that suits your budget through PayPal at <http://www.mppi.org/Project-northstar-tutoring/>. Alternatively, here are some ideas -- please add to the list!

- Make a one-time contribution - particularly important with a new school year.
- Suggest ideas for fundraisers and help in their planning and execution.
- Share your support for NB with your network of friends and family - the more people know about NB and its success, the more potential volunteers and donations we can attract.

**For questions about NB, contact
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