

Volunteer tutors helping students excel

An Aurora-based tutoring service is leveling the playing field in terms of giving students a helping hand.

Jonathan Rim, a Grade 12 student at St. Andrew's College in Aurora, launched Aequitas Tutoring last year.

The non-profit tutoring organization provides free online educational services to young students.

Rim explained that willing high school students volunteer their time to tutor elementary/middle school students for free, in exchange for volunteer/community service hours.

In the past year, the organization has completed more than 500 free tutoring sessions for children across Canada (five Provinces) and distributed 500 volunteer hours. They currently have more than 100 tutors and students enrolled in our program.

Rim explained that when he was in Grade 8, he moved to a new independent school where life was drastically different from his old public school.

“One of the things that stood out to me was how many more opportunities there were. However, they were obviously only for people enrolled at my school, and that's when I realized how many other people there are that do not have access to the same benefits. I decided to start this initiative to level the playing field and give everyone the chance to get educational support if they need it.”

The program currently offers support in six classes: Math, English, Science, French, Geography, and Music.

There are several things that separate Aequitas (Latin for equality and equity) from other programs. Firstly and most notably, all of their tutors are volunteers and consequently, they are able to provide all of their services free of charge. Furthermore, all of their tutoring sessions are done online and there are so many tutors with different schedules available.

“That means students can also do these tutoring sessions from the comfort of their own homes whenever they want,” Rim said.

Finally, parents can choose what the tutors work on with their children.

Rim is a firm believer that education is “one of the most important aspects of a person's life. The material they learn in school will continue to serve them throughout their lives and future careers.”

Unfortunately, many elementary students may need reinforcement or extra practice with the material covered in school. Public schools generally have larger class sizes and move at a quick pace in order to cover all the material in the curriculum.

“As a result, I think it is extremely important to give students who need it a ‘lift,’ so that they can perform better in school and gain a stronger understanding of what they learn.”

Lim pointed out the three most common subjects that students need help with (in descending order) are Math, French, and English. It is likely because these are the all core subjects in the Canadian curriculum and many students who seek our services are in French Immersion or are students who are new to the country.

Since they're online, the services are not limited to a specific geographic. They have students and tutors from other provinces, however, currently the majority of our students are from the Greater Toronto Area.

This concept is a win-win scenario for all students. Not only does it further education, it's a great example of community.

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By Mark Pavilons