

# St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center ends 2012 with high marks

The secret is getting out. One of Detroit's leading nonprofit education programs -- St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center -- saw double-digit enrollment increases in both its adult and children's classes in 2012. Participants, volunteers and staff members call the growth part of the community's renewed commitment to learning.

"The Education Experience at St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center has been one of the city's best kept secrets, but hopefully no more," said Diane Renaud, Executive Director/CEO, at the Center. "The Center is dedicated to helping our community through education and literacy skills. We are honored to collaborate with some exceptional partners to provide free adult education at four campuses and after-school and summer programs for first through third graders at our main campus, with the view that is helping to make our city better."

In November 2012, the St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center launched a new partnership with the Skillman Branch of the Detroit Public Library, bringing to four the number of sites offering free, individualized GED tutoring for adults 18 years and older.

In addition to the new campus, 2012 saw growth

throughout St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher's Education Experience:

- The enrollment at The Education Experience was up 86 percent year-over-year in 2012, for an average enrollment of 300 students. More than 250 adult GED students and 40 children participated in the program.

- Volunteer enrollment was up one-third over 2011. More than 5,300 tutor hours were donated in 2012.

- GED graduation-rates doubled. This increase was evenly spread among the four campuses.

- GED first-time pass rates for St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher students increased to 90 percent for all five segments of the test. The area average for students not enrolled in the GED course is 25 percent.

- 100 percent of graduating adults were provided with resources for either higher education tuition assistance or vocational training. Many of the graduates were given training on interviewing and job application skills, such as resume building.

- Children participating in the after-school Education Experience demonstrated a one full-grade improvement in abilities within a six month period (summer program and

either a winter/spring or fall semester combined).

The average dropout rate for Detroit Public Schools is between 8,000 and 10,000 students annually. It is estimated that more than 200,000 adults in Detroit have neither a diploma nor GED, making employment opportunities scarce.

"The work being done by our volunteers and the students themselves is nothing short of transformative," said Renaud. "Many of our GED students are going on to community college, university, vocational school or finding work immediately. They are changing their lives."

Renaud says that by assisting adults in completing their education and thus improving their family's financial stability, the value of education is better understood and taught to the next generation.

"We have to fight the generational resistance to education," Renaud said. "People can no longer survive being functionally illiterate. Those types of job no longer exist. Our aim is to assist the City of Detroit in its revitalization efforts, by making its residents fully employable."

For more information, call (313) 535-9200 or visit <http://www.svsfcenter.org/>

## St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher: GED Tutoring Locations

*Main Campus, N.W. Detroit:* Corner of Grand River & Burt Road  
20900 Grand River Ave., Detroit, 48219  
Orientation: Tuesdays 10:00 a.m. & 2:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

*East Side Campus:* N.S.O. Harper-Gratiot Service Center  
9641 Harper Ave., Detroit, 48213  
Orientation: Mondays 9:00 a.m.

*Central Campus:* Oakman & Linwood at Focus: HOPE  
1200 Oakman Boulevard, CAT Building, Detroit, 48238  
Orientation: Wednesdays 10:00 a.m. & 2:00 p.m.

*Downtown Campus:* The Skillman Branch, The Detroit Public Library  
121 Gratiot, at Woodward & Grand River  
Orientation: Mondays 1:30 p.m.