

Giving Back

P.O. Box 791339

Paia, HI 96779

808-573-3109

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Press Release: Brain Gym Intergenerational Mentoring Program Improves Reading and Decreases Problem Behaviors

An evaluation released this week reports that the Brain Gym Intergenerational Mentoring Program (IMP) has been empirically demonstrated to improve reading ability and decrease hyperactivity among a group of Maui school children who participated in the program during the 2001-2002 academic year. The evaluation was conducted by an independent researcher, Dr. Dana Weiner of Northwestern University in Chicago, Illinois.

The Brain Gym IMP involves pairing senior citizens trained in educational kinesiology with school children in need of special help with school work. The pairs work together on Brain Gym exercises during weekly sessions over the course of the school year.

Results were more robust among children who participated in the program for the entire school year (7 months).

The most notable findings were:

- 1 Significant increases in interpersonal strengths.
- 2 Significantly improvement in reading skills: an average of .85 grades and .66 years improvement during the period of participation.
- 3 Decreases in all problematic behaviors, and significant decreases in overall problem behaviors, symptoms of ADHD, and hyperactivity.
- 4 Improvements in overall and social self-esteem among female participants.

The Brain Gym IMP was implemented by Giving Back, a non-profit organization on Maui that aims to unite the strengths of senior citizens and children for improving each other's self-esteem, self-efficacy, and emotional well-being. The Brain Gym IMP was designed to improve school performance among children, improve well-being and cognitive functioning among senior citizens, and increase the self-sufficiency of the Maui community by enlisting senior citizens to mentor Maui school children.

For more information about the Brain Gym IMP, please visit the Giving Back website at:

www.givingbackmentoring.org