

Sector Miami Get “A” for Academic Achievement

Story by PA1 Jennifer Johnson, District Seven Public Affairs

Members of Coast Guard Sector Miami were awarded the 2007 Partnership in Education Collaborative award March 17 for their outstanding partnership program with students from Miami Edison Senior High School in Miami.



Twenty-six volunteers from units located within the Greater Miami area dedicated more than 800 hours to mentoring and tutoring 26 students from Miami-Edison Senior High. Miami-Edison, located in the Little Haiti section Miami, was one of the lowest ranking academic schools in the state until 2007 when they received their first passing Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) score in five years. (USCG photo)

Twenty-six Coast Guard members from units in Miami including Sector Miami, the Integrated Support Command, Naval Engineering Support Unit, Electronics Support Detachment and District Seven volunteered more than 875 hours of comprehensive mentoring, counseling, career development programs and team building exercises with students from Miami Edison’s junior class enrolled in the GEAR UP Edison program.

GEAR UP, Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Program, is a national initiative designed to better prepare middle and high school students for college through academic preparation programs.

“After being approached by someone already mentoring I decided that this was not just something to volunteer for, but my duty,” said Petty Officer 1st Class Edward Rivera, a yeoman at Sector Miami. “I realized that the teens who were 20-plus-years younger were not that much different than me. They faced the same challenges I did as a teen.”

Miami Edison, located in the Little Haiti section of Miami, received five years of consecutive failing grades on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) and was in danger of being closed. Only one other school in the state scored as low as Miami Edison until school administrators changed to a career-preparation based curriculum.

In the fall of 2004, Sector Miami began partnering with Miami Edison’s GEAR UP Edison program. For the mentors and for GEAR UP Edison administrators, their mutual goal was to increase the number of low-income students prepared to enter and succeed in post-secondary education.

With more Coast Guard mentors in the 2006-2007 school year than before, the devoted volunteers assisted in the student’s record achievements that included gains in math and reading

scores, increased interest in college education, and a significant improvement in the student's participation in advanced placement courses.

Mentors aligned with the schools new career-based curriculum and established career development programs and team building exercises that allowed students to experience the Coast Guard's many missions. That same year, the Florida Department of Education awarded Miami Edison with its first FCAT passing grade designation in six years.



“The Coast Guard's GEAR UP program partnership with Miami Edison Senior High School is a true ‘win-win’ situation,” said

Capt. Karl Schultz, commander Coast Guard Sector Miami. “The involvement of Coast Guardsmen and Miami Edison students alike find the program richly rewarding and of mutual benefit.”

Lt. Nicole Burgess and Lt. Channing Burgess sit outside the Coast Guard Integrated Support Command Miami galley and mentor students from Miami-Edison Senior High. Both volunteers were members who received the Coast Guard's 2007 Partnership in Education Collaborative award for excellence. (USCG photo)

USCG