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Vedic Math Academy

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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Vedic Math Set to Boost Student Achievement

Detroit, Ohio: Eighth graders in the US have been placed in an unenviable fifteenth place in the highly influential and respected study 2003 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS: <http://timss.bc.edu>). Conducted every four years, TIMSS indicates that while it is not surprising that the Far Eastern countries (Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, and Japan) lead the pack, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Russia, and the Slovak Republic are ahead of the United States. Confirming this sad state of affairs the 2006 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA: <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pisa/>), another important complementary study reveals that US fifteen year olds dropped by 2% points to a rank of 32 among 57 countries with countries such as Azerbaijan, Russia, Czech Republic, UK and Canada ahead of the US.

How long can US, the richest country and the current world technology leader, be expected to stay competitive with sub-standard mathematics education? To this seemingly intractable problem, Vedic Math Academy (VMA) of Cleveland, Ohio offers a solution – an imported one at that. From India, the land that invented *Zero* and *Infinity* (and much in between), VMA brings Vedic Mathematics teaching to US children.

Prof. Sree N. Sreenath, Director of VMA, and architect of the VMA syllabus, explains that Vedic Math is an easy to learn, simple to use, quick mental computation method that is suitable for all ages. “In a globalized, competitive world, a difference of twenty points in SAT could mean a world of difference – a difference between admission to an Ivy league school and tens of thousands of dollars in scholarship money,” opines Prof. Sreenath. Over three hundred children have taken the after-school curriculum Prof. Sreenath has developed with a goal of providing students with foundational skills for success in SAT, ACT, state-level proficiency tests and higher-level math. When not doing Vedic Math, Prof. Sreenath with 25 years teaching experience, is a faculty member at the Electrical Engineering and Computer Science Department and also the Director of Complex Systems Biology Center at Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, a leading research university.

Teaming up with Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (<http://www.hssus.org>), VMA has opened two centers in Detroit Metro Area, one in Bharatiya Temple, Troy, Michigan and another in Canton, Michigan. Currently, twenty-five

students ages 6-16 are enrolled in a four-semester out-of-school math enrichment program, and have successfully completed their first semester Freshman class during Fall 2007. “The organizational ability of HSS was imperative for the success of this program,” continued Prof. Sreenath.

“It’s fast, its easy, its fun to do,” says Jay a 3rd grade student. The parent of a six year old in the class, Mr. Balaji, said, “My daughter significantly improved [in math].” Jatin, a 10th grader who will be taking his SAT soon recommends Vedic Math to his peers and comments that “[Vedic Math] increases speed plus, the methods are easy to learn.” Achyuth, a 4th grader was very enthusiastic about Vedic Math “I taught the fast Vertically and Crosswise method to my math teacher and to all my classmates,” referring to the fast mental multiplication method. “Now all my classmates use [the method] and check their answers using Digit Sum [another Vedic Math technique]. I love Vedic Math.”

Mr. Srini Sastry, an instructor trained and certified by VMA at the Canton, MI Center said “When we wanted to provide out-of-school math enrichment to our children in the Detroit area, we approached Prof. Sreenath.” Despite a full time career as a software specialist, Mr. Sastry conducted once a weekend one-hour classes in Canton, MI, during Fall 2007 (September 1st week-December 2nd week). Mr. Sastry has a M.S. in software engineering from University of Nebraska, Lincoln and has over 15 years industry experience. Periodic tests are spread throughout the 16-week semester culminating in a final exam. Successful students are given a certificate at the end of each semester and a graduation certificate at the end of the four-semester course from VMA.

Mr. Venkatesh Haranahalli (“Mr. HP” as he is popularly known among his students), teaches at the Troy Bharatiya Temple VMA Center, and works for Cummins Inc., as a Control Systems Engineer. Mr. HP has a Masters of Engineering from Oakland University, and has 12 years of industry experience. In spite of his busy schedule, he conducts his ‘highly interactive’ classes during one day of the weekend and is all praise for the VMA method. “In each class we start by teaching a Vedic Math sutra through an example; this the students really love. The students practice the technique in class using specially designed VMA booklets

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under the Instructor's supervision." Prof. Sreenath calls this "bringing learning back to the classroom." Students then take the booklets home for more practice, improving accuracy and speed. One feature that Mr. HP likes with the VMA syllabus is that students do not get confused with the math they are taught at school. Considering that all the parents want their children to continue for the second course in Spring 2007, Mr. HP believes that Vedic Math is a hit in Detroit. Mr. Sivaram, a Mechanical Engineer, ably assists Mr. HP.

"Creativity in mathematics pedagogy is oversold", observes Prof. Sreenath "there is a definite place for rote learning which is often ignored." Parents see real value in their children learning multiplication tables - mandatory in the VMA approach. Such mental computation deters children from turning to calculators, which would inadvertently slow them down in competitive time-limited tests like the SAT/ACT. Despite math being a logical left-brained enterprise, Vedic Math uniquely promotes active development of the decision-making formative right brain as well. VMA syllabus covers the whole span of modern mathematics - from arithmetic to algebra to geometry.

"It is very fulfilling to see young children take to Vedic Math like fish to water" quips Mr. HP. "I am glad that we made the call to Prof. Sreenath. A month after he gave an interactive workshop to potential parents and children we were up and running," said Mr. Sastry. VMA considers social responsibility as an essential part of learning, and donated \$50 for each child that was enrolled in the Detroit Centers to the Nele "Home for the Homeless Children" project in Bangalore, India (see <http://www.hinduseva.org/nele.htm>). "It is important that every Indian-American child in the US appreciates our culture and feels connected to a needy child back in India," said Prof. Sreenath.

At the commendation ceremony on December 14, 2007 marking the end of the first successful semester at the Bharatiya Temple, Troy, MI, students were presented with a course completion certificate (see Photo 1). To



Photo 1: Students from Vedic Math Academy, Troy Center at the Bharatiya Temple, Troy, MI, holding the first Vedic

commemorate the successful beginning of the Joint VMA-HSS project, students were presented with a cinchpack with a VMA logo on it (Photo 2). "The backpack is great, I can take it to school, swimming class, and also to Vedic Math classes to hold my worksheet portfolio box," says a student. At the end of the first semester Mrs. Lakhani, a parent, reflects that "[Vedic Math] stimulates interest in maths by simplifying difficult calculations" and appreciates the "positive peer influence." Another parent likes the discipline the approach instills through the 15 minutes a day specially designed VMA worksheets, and praises that "[the] techniques improve math reasoning," and is happy about the "exposure and awareness of Indian tradition/culture," the children get.

VMA plans to expand throughout North America using a center-based "franchising" business model. VMA delivery formats accommodate different learning styles and requirements through summer workshops and custom tailored courses for different niches. Preparation classes for the mathematics portion of the SAT and ACT exams using a Vedic Math approach are being offered in Summer 2008. A web-based format for continuing education students is being offered in the Spring 2008 semester through the Hindu University of America (<http://ivhf.org>).

"Due to popular demand from parents in Detroit, we are currently enrolling fresh students for a new program. Classes are starting January 25, 2008," said Mr. HP. Interested parents should contact Mr. HP at vedicmath@sbcglobal.net or via telephone at (248) 649-2197.

For information on establishing a Vedic Math center or organizing a seminar in your city contact Ms. Jamuna Mysore, Coordinator, Vedic Math Academy through <http://www.vedicmath.com>, vedicmath@hotmail.com or at 440-318-9660.

Math course certificate during the commendation ceremony on December 14, 2007. Mr. Srinu Sastry, VMA Instructor, (second from left - top row), followed by Mr. "HP" Venkatesh Haranahalli (VMA Instructor), and Prof. Sree N. Sreenath, Director, Vedic Math Academy. Ms. Jamuna Mysore, Coordinator, VMA, is at the far right side.



Photo 2: A cinchpack was distributed to all students who successfully completed the first course in Vedic Math to commemorate the successful beginning of the Joint Vedic Math Academy-Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh project.