

• Arts  
Thursday,  
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## 826 Seattle develops next generation's authors: Creative writing majors take note

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By Ben Schock

One wouldn't think, when walking past a space travel supply store, that hidden inside was a nationally renown and highly respected writing tutor facility for grade-school students of all ages. 826 Seattle is a chapter of 826 National, an organization founded by author Dave Eggers to help children expand on their literary creativity.

"Each chapter has their different theme outside," says Teri Hein, executive director for Seattle's chapter. "One chapter is pirate supplies, another has superhero gear."

This sort of external model gives the centers a sort of "secret club" atmosphere — more welcoming and inviting.

Teri Hein first began the nonprofit center in 2004 and collaborated with 826 National to become an official chapter for Seattle in 2005. For two years the fulltime employees (four to be exact) and numerous volunteers have dedicated their time, energy and support to helping grade school kids develop their writing and creative skills in a friendly and open environment.

826 Seattle caters to a wide range of children from many different backgrounds. Some are first and second generation immigrants who, although English may be their first language, speak another language at home, so the tutoring center is a place where they can gain that extra help. Although many of the students who attend are racial minorities and from low-income families, 826 Seattle also services middle- and higher-class individuals.

Though originally started as a center for helping children with their writing and creativity skills, 826 Seattle now tutors students with math and language arts, in addition to essay and creative writing classes.

Every week, Monday through Thursday, these services are available to any student who comes in seeking help. 826 Seattle also integrates its services into the local schools.

Every Tuesday and Thursday, teachers from local public school districts bring their students on field trips to the center. Students work together to create short stories with their mix of ideas and each one creates his or her own unique conclusion.

Writing workshops are another program provided by 826 Seattle. Students work together with tutors to develop their writing skills and learn techniques specific to fictional and short story writing, as well as more complex essay writing for college applications



ETHAN WELTY

Pedro, a drop-in fourth grade student, plays the strategy game Dots with tutors Eden and Melissa Anne Povey at 826 Seattle last Thursday night. The nonprofit writing center in Phinney Ridge also offers free tutoring help in math, science and computing, depending on the particular needs of the children.

emotions through their writing. Two anthologies have been published through community donations.

Despite the fact that 826 has many volunteers, more are always welcome and needed — especially college students. 826 Seattle provides internships for students who are interested in teaching or childcare as well as art and design students who are interested in graphics and advertising.

826 Seattle also organizes and sponsors its own fundraisers. An upcoming event, People Talking and Singing, will occur on Thursday, November 8, at the Seattle Town Hall and will show many musicians and celebrities donating their time to help raise money for the center.

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