

East Pen Pal Program Grant Reflection

Summary of Project: In school years that are not impacted by the ongoing pandemic, our club facilitates communication between eighth grade middle schoolers and undergraduates via weekly emails. Every fall, we have hosted a pen-pal day when the scholars get to meet their pen pals and visit campus. Like all other events, we were unable to do the in person visit day in 2020. Instead, in an effort to help alleviate the stressors put on the eighth grade scholars and their families during virtual learning, we wanted to send them something that could make their learning experience easier. After much brainstorming and reflection on our organization's values, we decided to send each scholar gift cards that could provide some support during the end of their school year. Our three partner teachers received these gift cards in mid-May. Afterwards, each scholar was given their respective card as well as a handwritten goodbye letter from their undergraduate pen pal. We hope that the gift cards were successful in reducing their stress and helped enhance their learning experience.

Project Statistics:

Number of Undergraduates: 36

Number of Scholars: 47

Number of gift cards given out: 47

Partner Teachers: 3

Participating School: East Lower School

Future Direction:

We hope as more people are vaccinated that we will be able to host a somewhat normal Fall Pen Pal day in the coming semester. Additionally, we will be communicating with the Students' Association Government to obtain more regular funding for our organization. This way, we will be able to depend on that source of funding rather than having to apply for a grant such as this.