

Children in Public Housing Participate in New Math and Science Program

By Aaron Dickens

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It took a team of elementary school students several weeks to build this 6 foot long bridge.

"Not everyone gets to learn how to build stuff like this or learn about bridges. I think its really fun," said a 5th grader.

The students who live in the Todt Hill Houses are participating in a new afterschool program. They meet once a week for 90 minutes, tackling math and science projects.

The children measured and made all the components of the bridge, piece by piece.

"Me and my group are working on the towers," said a student.

"In this program it is very hands on," added a 5th grader.

The Salvadori Center runs the program. The non-profit is in its 40th year of teaching math and science to underprivileged students across the city.

"Everything we do is collaborative so kids work together. Its all project based so they use their hands to build their own experiments. They come up with creative solutions to tough problems," said Kenn Jones, Executive Director of the Salvadori Center.

Jones says the organization can offer courses at 4 NYCHA community centers on Staten Island because of a grant from the Pinkerton Foundation. The Manhattan-based charity says it gives money to community-based organizations that help youth grow to their full potential.

"These are kids that do not have access to funds and the centers don't have access to funds to pay for funds like this so we are very fortunate," Jones added.

Some of the children tell me there is not alot to do here at the Todt Hill Houses after school so they are happy this program is around.

"Usually there is not a lot of special privileges around this place. Its a good idea to have this here," said a student.

The program is sticking around for the new year. Another course is expected to start back up again in the spring.