

Math for Parents (MAPPS) at Sunnyside

Sunnyside Unified School District in Tucson, AZ, partnered with The University of Arizona Department of Mathematics during the implementation of MAPPS funded by a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant from 1999-2003. During the four years of the grant, parents became active partners in their children's math education by attending Math for Parents Workshops, Math for Parents Mini-Courses, and Leadership training.

From 2000 to 2001, the scores of Sunnyside students on the math sub-test of AIMS showed promising gains. The percentage of third-grade students who met or exceeded the standard increased from 36 in 2000 to 48 in 2001. In 2001 Sunnyside School District was a recipient the *Golden Bell Award* during the Arizona School Boards Association State Conference for their participation in the MAPPS project and its effect on student achievement.

During the 2002-2003 school year **503** District parents and **655** of their school-age children attended workshops as participants with a total of **2309** parent hours spent in all of the MAPPS activities. The demographics of Sunnyside School District are 88% Hispanic, 5% White, 2% Black, 5% Native American and 1% Asian.

Unfolding is a scene from one of the Math for Parents Mini-Courses taught at Sunnyside.

It's a Tuesday evening in March. Parents assemble on the lawn in front of the high school. Everybody is relaxed. You can hear the friendly banter of Spanish and English as the parents solve a problem.

They have gathered to do mathematics—as they have done every Tuesday evening for the last several weeks. Tonight's task is to figure out the relationship between the radius and circumference of a circle. The parents are creating their own monster-sized circles. There's a lot of motion. A parent holds one end of a rope and turns in place. Another holds the other end taut while walking in a circle. She counts out loud the steps she takes until she returns to the position where she started.

The path she walks determines the circle and the final number counted measures its circumference. She hands the rope to a third person who holds it tight while she walks from one end to the other counting her steps as she goes. The final number measures the radius of the monster circle. A fourth parent records the pair of numbers—to be examined later along with other similarly created pairs.

Other parents watch and wait their turns to create and measure their own circles. In the background you hear the sounds of traffic. Occasionally, a teenager's car honks to draw the parents' attention away from their task. There's a chuckle in response. But nobody pays much mind. This is serious business. And it's fun.