



The George B. Thomas, Sr. Learning Academy, Inc.

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★★★ Press Release ★★★

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SATURDAY SCHOOL OPENS FOR ITS 23RD YEAR!

Making this year the best academic experience for 4,000 students!

Academic support, small class size, certified teachers, affordable for families in Montgomery County. These words describe The George B. Thomas Sr. Learning Academy (GBTLA), a nonprofit organization that operates in 12 high schools from October 3, 2009 to May 1, 2010. Over 2,000 students have already registered for the program. The GBTLA expects that enrollment will reach 4,000 students this year. For \$30, students can attend 22 Saturday morning classes from 8:30 – 11:30 designed to provide extra attention and support. The 12 centers are located at the following Montgomery County high schools: Montgomery Blair, Albert Einstein, Gaithersburg, John F. Kennedy, Magruder, Northwest, Paint Branch, Rockville, Sherwood, Springbrook, Watkins Mill, and Wheaton.

Facts about The GBTLA:

- Montgomery County students in grades 1 through 12 can attend. Register any Saturday morning (enrollment is ongoing throughout the year) at one of the 12 high schools. (Check the calendar <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/gbtlea/documents/Calendar.pdf>)
- Ratio of student to teacher/volunteer tutors 1: 7.
- Instruction is aligned to MCPS curriculum, state tests, and high school graduation tests. Online tutoring for college entrance exams is available at some sites.
- The program fee is \$30 per student for the year thanks to support from Montgomery County government, in-kind contributions from Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), the Federal government, businesses, corporations, United Way, and Montgomery County Community Foundation.
- Annual evaluations consistently show student improvement in academic performance.
- Parents and students endorse the program.

The GBTLA, founded by retired MCPS Administrator Dr. George B. Thomas, Sr. and the Mu Nu Chapter of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, was awarded the 2007 Excellence in Minority Achievement Award by the Maryland State Department of Education and has received accolades from Dr. Jerry D. Weast, Montgomery County Superintendent of Schools. "The Saturday School Program provides an extraordinary environment for developing academic skills, self-esteem, and family involvement in the education process," said Weast. "The strength of the program is best illustrated in the sheer number of students and volunteer tutors who choose to spend their Saturday mornings taking advantage of what the Saturday School has to offer."

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The GBTLA is the largest mentoring and academic enhancement program in the metropolitan area serving nearly 3,700 students last year. Dr. Thomas, GBTLA's President and Founder, received the 2008 Washingtonian of the Year award for his work in creating this organization. Check the GBTLA Web site at www.gbtlearningacademy.org. For questions or information call 301.320.6545.

The George B. Thomas, Sr. Learning Academy, Inc. is a non-profit organization whose mission is to close the minority achievement gap by accelerating Montgomery County student mastery of academics, specifically reading, language arts, and mathematics. Its goal is for every student to perform at grade-level proficiency or above. Established in 1986 by members of the Mu Nu Chapter of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity as the Olney Saturday School, the first site began with 21 students and 19 volunteer tutors.

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