



# OPENING DOORS

## CCSU program provides glimpse of college to city kids

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# A taste of college life

### CCSU program gives city kids a look at the educational opportunities in front of them

By Jason Vallee  
Herald Staff

NEW BRITAIN — For children in local neighborhoods, the goal of attending college can seem an impossible dream at times with the struggles they have to endure. Thanks to a program at Central Connecticut State University, however, that dream has become a reality for many youths.

Throughout the week, CCSU has been hosting its fifth annual "Central 'n City" program to offer local children ages 10 through 14 the opportunity to learn more about college majors such as math, science, technology, education and psychology while enjoying a variety of activities run in a camp atmosphere rather than the traditional classroom setting.

"About five years ago, I was working with Marjann Drury and we took the university's seniors out into the neighborhoods around the city," said Catherine Baratta, associate professor of social work at CCSU and program coordinator. "We discovered that the biggest desire in these neighborhoods was the kids

wanted to go to college but didn't feel they had the opportunity or that CCSU was for them."

The program, which is held right on the CCSU campus, also allows the children to experience a clean, graffiti-free setting that they may not have as much opportunity to see in some of the neighborhoods, Baratta added.

Throughout the week, the kids have participated in a variety of activities. They have learned about memory and problem solving with Professor James Conway, discovered what it's like to be a teacher with students from the Alpha Upsilon, Alpha national honors society, and even participated in yoga.

It's not all about education, either. Participants will have the opportunity to catch a Rock Cats game today and will be involved in a family-oriented field day on Friday, complete with an ice cream social and power point presentations the children put together from the week's activities.

The program began as a collaboration with New Britain Weed and Seed. Since that point, it has received support both physically and financially from the city's

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Amy Reed/The Herald  
Jashtina Flores, 9, solves a math problem by arranging squares on an overhead projector on Wednesday during the Central 'n City program at CCSU.

police department, Human Resource Agency, Family Resources Center, the United State's Attorney's Office, the Connecticut National Guard and TD Banknorth, who donated \$5,000 in 2006.

"This is truly a collaborative effort," Baratta said. "Everyone has been actively involved in the program and without all our partners, we would not be able to make this a possibility."

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