

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Dr. Mingqing Xiao Wins ‘Neighborly’ Award for Great Commitment to Furthering Pre-College Math Education in Southern Illinois

Carbondale, IL – Dr. Mingqing Xiao is a distinguished full professor in the School of Mathematical and Statistical Sciences at Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC). In addition to his work for two decades as a math professor at SIUC, he is dedicated to enhancing pre-college students’ knowledge of math. For the past eight years, Dr. Xiao has run the Saturday math enhancement class, weekly math sessions for pre-college students. [WSIU Public Broadcasting](#), a service of Southern Illinois University Carbondale, is pleased to announce Dr. Mingqing Xiao as a recipient of the ‘Neighborly’ award in the educator category.

“The Neighborly award is a great honor for myself and my team. I have a lot of support from parents, colleagues, and people who live in Carbondale. Professor Lingguo Bu, who specializes in math education, Professor Tao Huang from the architecture school, Professor Sharon Huang from the School of Computing, and Yi Liu, who is a Ph.D. candidate in college education, help me organize and teach the classes,” said awardee Dr. Xiao.

Dr. Xiao was a research assistant professor at the University of California, Davis in the math department. He came to SIUC for a tenure-track position and was promoted to associate professor in 2003 and full professor in 2007. The Saturday math enhancement class was established in conjunction with Saturday Chinese language and learning classes for community children. The sessions are divided into four levels of instruction. A diverse group of students from around Southern Illinois attends these sessions, which enhances the instruction they receive every day in school. He has also served as the coach for the Unity Point School MATHCOUNTS team since 2015.

Dr. Xiao is the organizer and higher-level teacher, but he also arranges for other instructors to teach other levels and handles the general administration of the program. Students complete a homework packet in advance each week. The teachers correct and return the homework to them the following week. He has been doing this on a voluntary basis the entire time. The only costs for the students are to defray any expenses for copying.

Expressing his views on being neighborly and what it means to him, Dr. Xiao said, “It means to help each other like we are a big family. We don’t want anyone to fall behind, which is why we do our best to help our neighbors. They help us in different ways every day, too. While teaching college students, I’m always thinking of other ways I can use my teaching skills to help the community. I give back to the community because we do get a lot of help from our neighbors and our community. This is what motivates me. I feel math is my specialty, and I can help local students when they need it. We really love Southern Illinois. We love our neighbors, and we’re always thinking about what we can do for them.”

The goal of the Saturday math class is not to teach school math curriculum but to inspire students and cultivate an interest and love for math in them. Dr. Xiao tries to incorporate fun in the learning process. He would like more local youth to participate in their program.

“Compared to big cities, we have very limited resources available to local kids except for those attending regular school. Many years ago, this made me think about what I could do for local students, young students in particular. Southern Illinois kids are very intelligent. If we give them the opportunity to learn more, they can be very successful at school and in their career. We encourage parents to bring their kids to attend our class, so we can help the whole neighborhood in terms of learning math,” said Dr. Xiao.

“Ming has volunteered his time for thousands of hours over the past eight years—organizing the Saturday math enhancement class, teaching it every week, and correcting the weekly homework. The students who have gone through Saturday math have won numerous awards in regional, state and national math competitions. Many have attended the Illinois Math and Science Academy, and many have attended prestigious colleges and universities, such as Harvard, Stanford, Yale, Columbia and the University of Chicago. Ming’s selfless efforts to help pre-college students in his community every Saturday demonstrate what a great neighbor he is. He is interested in the well-being of all his students and his friends and family. This also applies to his college students to whom he is available for help above and beyond his regular office hours,” said nominator Edward Benyas. He and Dr. Xiao are colleagues at SIUC and have been good friends since 2004 when their daughters attended daycare at the Child Development Lab.

About One Region All Neighbors

Inspired by the life and legacy of Fred Rogers and in honor of his vision, WSIU’s One Region, All Neighbors initiative encourages community members to nominate those who are making positive contributions through acts of kindness, compassion and service. Winners are chosen from nominations submitted by the public in five categories—individual, youth, educator, community group, and business. WSIU recognizes these winners on its television and radio stations, website and social media.

Nominate Your Neighbors

WSIU encourages the public to participate in the One Region, All Neighbors campaign by nominating neighbors online at <http://www.wsiu.org/neighbor> and sharing on social media using #WeAreAllNeighbors.

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