

*It's Wednesday in an afterschool program held at a high-poverty school site in Washington, D.C. A roomful of middle school children, primarily African-American, both boys and girls, gather at round tables. For many of them, it's their favorite day of the week, because this afternoon they get to do math together.*

*The students are joined by a white teacher and an African-American mathematician who co-facilitate their Math Circle experience. The teacher and the mathematician collaborate together regularly, through classroom visits as well as a Math Teachers' Circle. Some of the students have the teacher in class, and most know the mathematician, too, because he is one of several mathematicians of color who visit their school to talk with them a few times a year.*

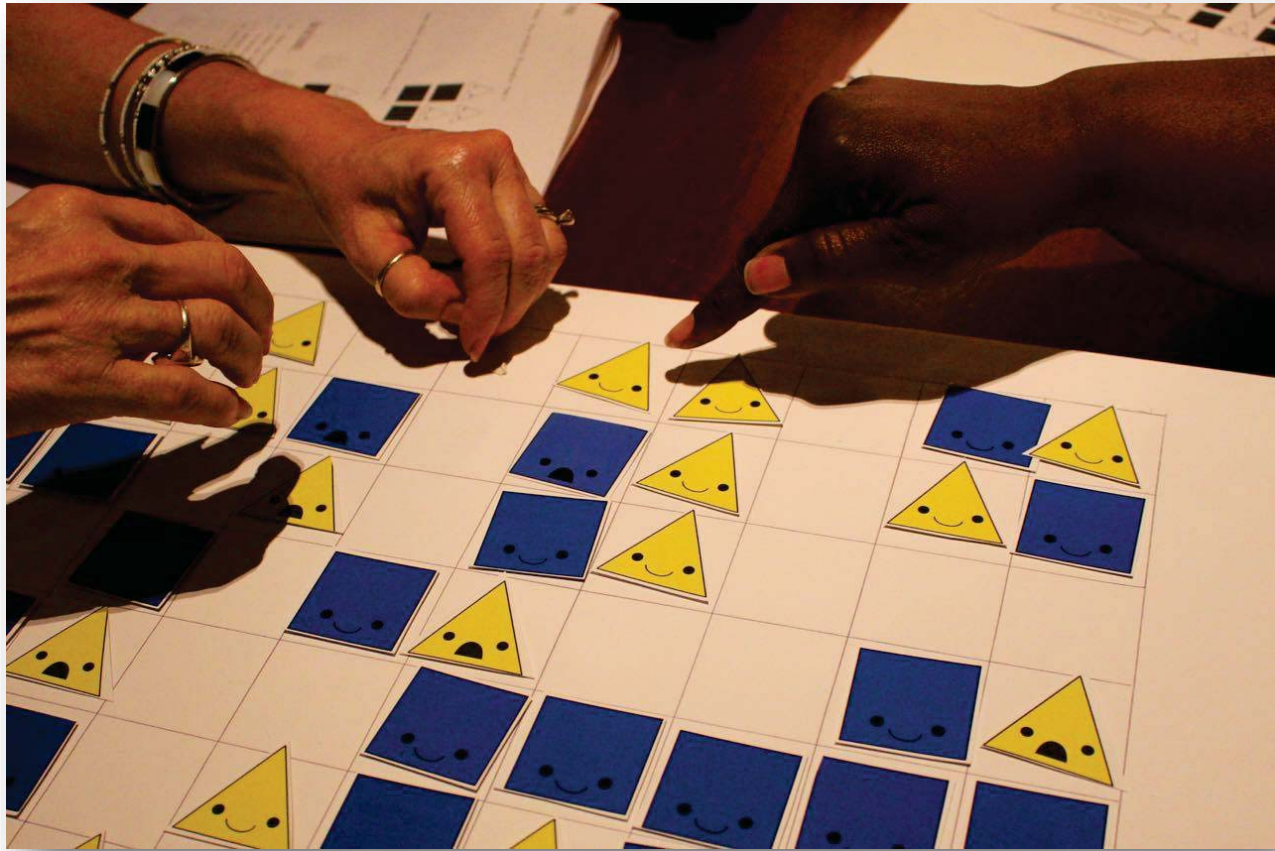
*Here in this room, doing math is noisy. The children share ideas and debate animatedly around their tables. The teacher and the mathematician circulate and ask questions, then after a while, they bring the group back together so the children can share their work. The children lead the discussion. They are not told what to say. They explain how they got what they did. They voice their own mathematical experience. They get to express a part of their intellect that they may have been denied elsewhere. They see through this experience, facilitated by people they know and trust, that they can do more than they ever thought. They grow to understand that the great human subject of mathematics is for them.*

*After the hour is up and it's time to play outdoors, some of the children still linger to talk with each other and the adults, and others chatter excitedly about the upcoming Julia Robinson Mathematics Festival where they can invite their families and friends to come see what math is all about.*

*“For too long we have relegated mathematics to the margins, outside of the public sphere, only as an academic subject. We, as mathematicians of all sorts, know better. Each of us has experienced this magnificent subject in personal ways that have transformed us into the people we are today. We must realize that our personal mathematical experience is NOT special. When a person is remade anew through experiencing literature, it is taken as commonplace; that is what literature can do. Too many people are convinced of the inability of mathematics to have the same universal and immense influence. They are mistaken.*

*“We believe in the transcendent power of mathematics to impact people from all walks of life. This is our challenge. We must give mathematics back to the people, to all people in every community.”*

*(Aris Winger)*



*“ I am regularly reminded of the value and power of many minds working together on the same problem.”*