

FACES IN THE CROWD

Graduate student helping teens prosper in school

■ **ADD hasn't kept Evan Weinberger from netting goals**

By **KIM HUGHES**
CHRONICLE CORRESPONDENT

WHILE 23-year-old Evan Weinberger was busy doing what most college students do in preparation for a new school year, he was also helping middle and high school students do exactly the same thing.

"He's going to help me get organized and ready," Maurice Nottin, a 14-year-old Bellaire resident, said before he entered the ninth grade Aug. 17 at Emery/Weiner School, 9825 Stella Link. "I will be ready to walk in and do well starting from the first day of school."

Weinberger said he enjoys working with middle- and high-school students.

"If I knew then what I know now, what a difference that might have made," he said.

Weinberger, a Remington Park resident, said he had to work extra hard through school. Diagnosed with attention deficit disorder as a young boy, Weinberger had a hard time focusing, forming good study habits and developing organizational skills.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health Web site at www.nimh.nih.gov, ADD and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder are characterized by inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity. They are most often diagnosed when a child starts school.

"But I was fortunate to have a loving, patient mother (Jeanne Weinberger), who could be a stay-home mom and mentor me, and a live-in 'shrink' because my father (Bob Weinberger) is a clinical psychologist who is ADD himself," Weinberger said. "I was able to build the skills I needed."

"And the key to my successes was accepting my weaknesses and embracing them, as well as

■ **Age: 23**

■ **Occupation:** Founder of Staying Ahead of the Game, a coaching/tutoring company that helps middle and high school students stay focused and learn proper study techniques

■ **Community connection:** Remington Park resident

■ **Fast fact:** He was diagnosed with attention deficit disorder as a young boy.

■ **Quick quote:** "Find what you're good at and excel at it. The things you aren't good at, work at it to keep your head above water."

For more information, visit www.stayingaheadofthegame.com, call 713-306-6832 or send an e-mail to info@stayingaheadofthegame.com.

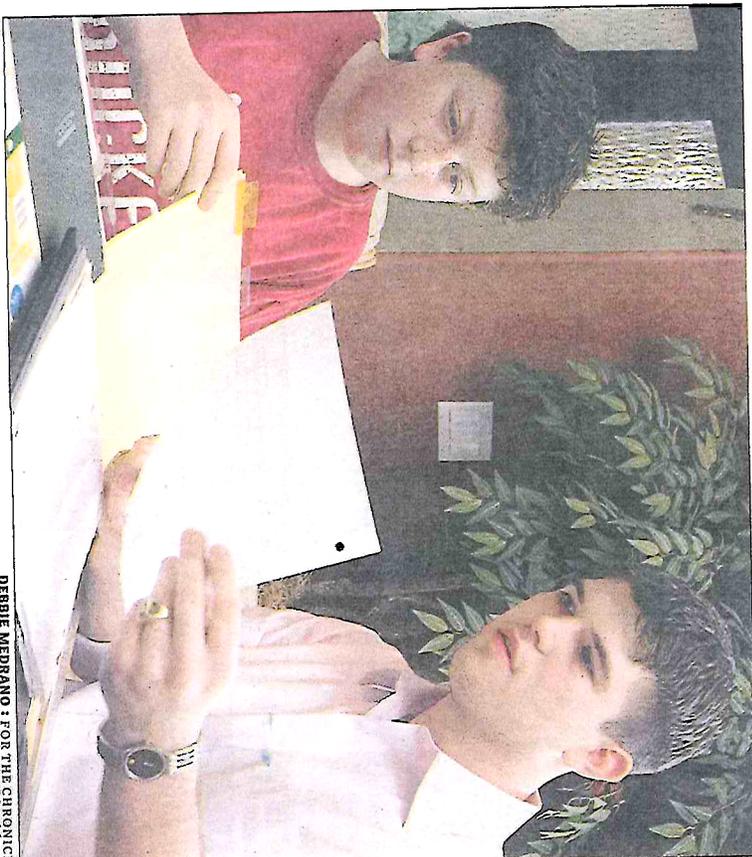
my strengths. I realized I may never be as good as Billy in reading and comprehension, but I will always be better than Billy at science and memorizing and test taking."

After studying biology at Rhodes College in Memphis, Tenn., Weinberger was planning to take pre-med courses. But a few classes in psychology changed his mind.

Now he believes he has found his calling.

He recently began a doctorate program in psychology at the University of Houston. And about 10 months ago, Weinberger decided to combine his personal experiences, his interest in psychology and his knowledge of biology by starting the company Staying Ahead of the Game.

"I call myself an organization and anti-procrastination coach," Weinberger said. "I typically work with middle-school and high-school students. The profile of the student



STAYING AHEAD: Staying Ahead of the Game founder Evan Weinberger, right, helped Maurice Nottin, 14, prepare to enter the ninth grade at Emery/Weiner School before classes started on Aug. 17. Weinberger, meanwhile, recently began a doctorate program in psychology at the University of Houston.

I work with is very good at daily tasks but when it's time for an exam they don't have the study skills.

"Or they may do well on exams, but when it comes to daily work, they forget to write it down and so they don't do it and get a zero. Or a 90 becomes a 60 because it was turned in late."

"The kids who do their work and do it well, but when they go to their backpack to pull it out, it's not there."

Weinberger works with pupils two or three times a week on getting organized, learning life skills, how to be proactive with teachers and creating a homework system. He even takes his students on

a trip to an office supply store so they can learn what "tools they need for their toolbox."

More importantly, Weinberger said he hires coaches who are in their early 20s or late 30s to foster more of a mentor/friend relationship, rather than a parent/child or teacher/student relationship.

Bellaire resident Melissa Perrel hired Weinberger to work with her 14-year-old son, Nathan, just before final exams last spring.

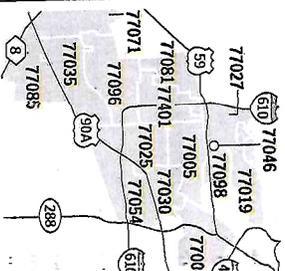
"I would see how engaged Nathan was with what Evan was saying and doing," Melissa Perrel said. "Evan would give him his marching orders and Nathan never questioned it."

Nathan Perrel admits he is quite disorganized, but working with Weinberger on tasks such as how to keep his backpack organized and how to study meant he did better than he expected on most of his finals.

"I thought he would just be some guy who would tell me how to study, which has never worked for me before," Nathan said. "But with Evan, even though you know he's higher up than you and he knows what he's talking about, he treats you on the same level he is."

If you have a suggestion for a "Faces in the Crowd" profile, contact Richard Brown at richard.brown@chron.com.

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