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Private tutor adds online component

BY JOHN GOLDEN

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A private tutor to college-bound students preparing for SAT exams has expanded her Chappaqua business with the recent launch of a national Web site for online tutoring.

A former English teacher at Scarsdale High School, Chappaqua's Greeley High School and the Bronx High School of Science, Laura Wilson for 10 years has provided on-site private tutoring to hundreds of students in Westchester County, accompanied by her guarantee of a 200-point improvement on overall SAT scores. With the launch of WilsonDailyPrep.com, she and her staff offer online tutoring to students whose families cannot afford the higher-priced test-prep classes of competitors and private lessons.

At Wilson Daily Prep, students pay \$139 for three months of online tutoring. They are e-mailed six SAT questions daily and designated coaches give immediate feedback online to students completing the quizzes. Wilson developed the daily program when she noticed that students who regularly practiced for the SAT scored consistently higher than those who "crammed" once a week.

Students who do not complete the quizzes are put on their coach's "slacker list" and given four days to respond. If they don't after six days, parents are e-mailed. After eight days, the parents are personally called, most by Wilson herself, whose method has earned her the nickname "The Mother Nudge."

Raising students' social conscience as well as their test scores, Wilson Daily Prep has partnered with the Heifer Foundation in an

effort to promote global awareness and economic sustainability. Students can go to the Web site and translate their correct answers into points that count toward the donation of a chicken, duck, goat or other livestock to persons in impoverished countries through the nonprofit Heifer Foundation.

The author of two SAT books used by several suburban school districts, Wilson said she was inspired to start her Web site by her early experience as a teacher in Chicago's inner-city schools. Bothered by disparity between those who can't afford personal tutoring and those whose parents can, she wanted to do something to help less economically fortunate students get as close to personal tutoring as possible without the high cost.

"I want to bring the 'nudge factor' into homes in Des Moines, Iowa or Brattleboro, Vt., where teens and their parents thought SAT preparation was out of their reach," she said.