

## MTA's Ottis Hendricks Helps Disadvantaged Kids Excel

By JENNIFER YEH

(Nov. 22, 2002) Teacher, single father and 22-year MTA veteran, West Hollywood Division 7 Transit Operations Supervisor Ottis Hendricks finds his passion in mentoring underprivileged children.



TOS Ottis Hendricks

Hendricks is a part-time tutor for Sylvan Learning Systems, a program for students who need extra educational attention. Right now, Sylvan Learning Systems is under contract with Los Angeles Unified School District to work with inner city students.

Each afternoon as Hendricks' shift at MTA ends, he heads over to Roosevelt High School in East Los Angeles to start his tutoring session.

"Some kids don't have the same opportunities as other kids might have," says Hendricks. "Some of these kids come from gang-infested neighborhoods, disadvantaged homes, single parents, or parents who are too busy to tutor their kids."

"Most of those from the inner city go through school without ever getting a solid grasp of reading," he says.

In the last year, Hendricks also started tutoring fourth graders at a local elementary school.

### Most rewarding of all

"Watching these young children who couldn't read at all work their way to understanding and putting together words and sentences is the most rewarding of all," says Hendricks. "Those kids love me, even their parents sometimes sit in my class and watch their kids."

Hendricks' drive for teaching is remarkable. Working fulltime, while raising an 11-year-old son – a straight A student – can be more than a handful, but for Hendricks doing what he loves is quite easy.

"The hardest part is getting established," he says. "But once you develop your lesson plans and materials it's all very simple."

In addition to all he does, when evening rolls around, Hendricks also uses his home computer to teach an online communication class for adults at University of Phoenix Online.

"Many of my students are people of high managerial positions, as well as professionals who just want to move up or simply want to improve on their communication skills in relations to their jobs," he says.

Hendricks holds a master of arts degree in communication management from Pepperdine University and a bachelor of arts degree in urban planning.

Before coming to MTA, he held positions as a part-time teacher and as an Inglewood police officer.

Currently, Hendricks is an assistant minister at Redeemer Baptist Church in Los Angeles where he also teaches adult Bible classes.

Hendricks has done it all and has no plans to stop anytime soon.

"I'm going to get a doctorate in education starting next January," he says, "and when I retire I want to teach as a professor at a University."

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)