A total of 181 college students are participating in the talent donation mentoring program of the Seodaemun-gu Office as mentors. Lee Ji-hyeon (21), a junior at the Department of Political Science & International Studies of Yonsei University, and Park Jeong-won (22), a junior at the Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering of Seoul National University, are participating in the project as teachers. Park Min-seok who is a senior at the School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering of Yonsei University is working part-time and teaching students as a mentor.

‘I would feel truly rewarded if our students become mentors later on and teach other students,’ said Lee Ji-hyeon who is a mentor.

Since August 2012, the Study Room has been operated by Seodaemun-gu Office and Teach For Korea based on a mentoring agreement.

Seodaemun-gu Office has launched a mentoring project for high school students from low-income families in cooperation with Teach For Korea. It provided meeting rooms and lecture rooms of the main building for students and recruited high school students from low-income families who wished to take lessons through this mentoring program.

Teachers teach classes from Mondays to Fridays, for about four hours, teaching one subject a day. Students gather at 6:30 pm. Before the class starts, teachers check student attendance and students take an English vocabulary quiz. Students take two classes a day from 7.00 pm that last 90 minutes each. On Monday, students take the Korean Language subject for the first class and English for the second class. On weekdays, Students study Korean Language, English, and Mathematics until 10:30 pm. On weekends, students are allowed self-study time until 10.00 pm and 1:1 mentoring is provided.

191 high school students from low-income families in Seodaemun-gu are taking classes here. They are children of beneficiaries of national basic livelihood or of the second-lowest income bracket recommended by high schools and community service centers of Seodaemun-gu.

Not only do college students teach Korean Language, Mathematics, and English, but they also serve as mentors in character guidance and art education.

Park Mi-hi (assumed name), a senior in high school, said, “I did not have basic math skills. Since I learned mathematics here, my grades have greatly improved.”

Park Jeong-won, a teacher of the mentoring program, remarked that “Some students are in need
of affection and have a tendency to depend on us. We are trying to give them the confidence they need through conversation.”

Yoon Mi-seon (assumed name), a junior in high school who wants to major in Chinese language, said, “I want to improve my math grade to the level above 90 points with the help of teachers. After I enter college, I would like to teach students as mentors like my teachers.”

Seodaemun-gu Office is conducting a variety of mentoring programs (Seodaemun-Yonsei Dream-Start Mentoring, College Student Volunteer & Mentoring, Teach For Korea Mentoring (Study Room), Chong Kun Dang Kochon Foundation Mentoring, etc). A total of 84 college students and 116 high school students are participating in the programs.

The head of Seodaemun-gu Office Mun Seok-jin said, “If teenagers cannot study for financial reasons, it means they should give up their dreams. I want them to receive educational opportunities so they can challenge themselves to the fullest.”