

TUTORING NEWS: EPWORTH TUTORING PROGRAM

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EPWORTH TUTORING PROGRAM, FALL 2001

Students have been working hard this fall. Tutors help them with school homework and extra reading, writing, and arithmetic. Participating are:

38 5th-8th graders, 32 tutors (Mon. evening)
23 1st-4th graders, 17 tutors (Tues. afternoon)
" " " 21 tutors (Wed. afternoon)
11 HS students, 6 tutors (Wed. evening)
13 preschool and kindergartners, 5 tutors (Sat. morning)
19 1st-7th grade students not listed above (Sat. morning)
46 PS-7th graders from list above (Sat. morning)
105 8th gr. tutors from WJHS (Sat. morning)
7 adult tutors, 5 HS tutors. (Sat. morning)
104 children and youth (TOTAL)
81 adult and high school tutors (TOTAL)
105 junior high tutors (TOTAL)

COMPUTER LAB HUMMING

This year we continue to upgrade the students' computer skills. We gave each of the 5th-8th graders a 3 ½" diskette and are teaching them how to use the "A-drive." We have designed worksheets to develop students' computer and Internet skills.

Internet Some of the worksheets are on "Favorite Websites," "Dot What?" and "Setting Up an Email Address." With four computers on the Internet, nine 5th-8th graders are scheduled for the Internet each session. Besides doing the worksheets, students use the Internet for their class work--science projects and social studies reports. Our hope is to get a DSL line so that even more students can use the Internet.

Afternoon Tutoring This year a computer specialist, Linda Surgic, comes at 4:30 on Tues. and Wed. to help the first through fourth graders with math and spelling games on the computer. They all looked forward to it.

Laptops In October we received a gift of seven Sony laptop computers from Stevens Communications, Inc. We bought Windows 98 on Ebay and installed it and Word 97 on all the laptops. We are integrating the laptops into the computer lab.

Networking In December Pat Zukosky, former coordinator of the HS study group, finished networking all 13 computers in the computer lab. This will reduce the confusion about printing, so students can print from any computer. When we get a DSL line, all the computers will be able to access the Internet.

STUDENTS DO WELL

August (7th gr.) is very serious about his work this year. He wants to do well on the Iowa tests in order to go to Lane HS like his sister.

Diecell (7th gr.) is starting to concentrate. He asks for harder math and longer reading selections.

Jorge (6th gr.) is starting to work. He is doing the worksheets for the stories, and now we hope he will do more math.

Lilrita (4th) could hardly read at the beginning of last year. This year she was promoted to the gifted class and does all her work and keeps progressing.

1st-4th GRADERS' SCIENCE THEME: TREES

The 1st-4th graders are learning about trees in the afternoon science sessions. Joan Sheffield leads them in this study, and has been assisted by tutor Leona Lee, who is a professional floral arranger. Leona brings from her job extra flowers, which were going to be thrown away. The students have identified trees outside. They have examined buckeyes, figs, and lilies and dissected various seeds and flowers. Each student and tutor wrote a poem about trees and said their poem for the grade-group. The poems were gathered together and printed as a *Sunshine* magazine.

SATURDAY: PEER TUTORING WITH WJHS

Two Saturday mornings each month 75-100 8th graders from Wilmette Jr. High School come to help 50-60 ETP PS through 7th graders with language arts, math, computer skills, crafts, and conflict resolution. For some of the Chicago children, this is the only personal academic help they receive. It is very important for their education, and the parents appreciate it. The Chicago children love being with the teenagers!

This year we have added a "fitness" component to the morning. Jeannie Gans, a retired physical ed. teacher from New Trier HS, leads one age group each session in exercises, dance routines, or health talk.

The crafts project each week is planned and led by HS grads of the tutoring program: Portia Hemphill, Barbara and Cheire Taylor, Veronica Medina, and Felecia Pritchard. The children love the crafts time.

Besides tutoring, the 8th graders from Wilmette raised money from bakesales, etc. to give each family of the Saturday tutoring program a turkey: 38 turkeys. The

families appreciated the turkeys.

NEW LIGHT TO BRIGHTEN CHILDREN'S LIVES

For many years we have dreamed of getting better lighting in the 1st floor parlors of Epworth Church, one of the main study areas of the Tutoring Program. The light was so dim it strained the eyes; sound reverberated so much it was hard to hear clearly. We dreamed of better lighting and dampened sound to make the rooms more usable. Finally the dream became possible.

Amy Bouschart, who tutors LilRita Mangrum (4th gr.), is a consultant for Beauti-Control Products, which has a non-profit foundation WHO (Women Helping Others). Every year at the national convention of Beauti-Control consultants, WHO gives awards to organizations where the consultants volunteer. Amy wrote WHO about her work with LilRita, and in August Amy received 2nd prize at the national convention!

The Tutoring Program in conjunction with the Epworth Trustees decided to (1) keep the wrought-iron chandeliers but have an electrician "pull new wire" to increase the wattage in the bulbs; (2) add fluorescent fixtures in each room, which would be operated by separate switches from the older lights, (3) paint the ceiling "beams" cream to reflect more light, and (4) put tectum sound tiles in between the ceiling "beams" to dampen the sound.

Electricians and carpenters were hired, but we were responsible for painting two ceilings with two coats of paint—with only three full days to paint. Helping were 4 students, 10 tutors and 6 friends (including Amy, her boyfriend, and an associate), and a homeless man who is part of the Epworth congregation. It was a huge job of teamwork, and everything was done on target.

People had fun painting! Tutor Gigi Head was so at home on the ladder she danced on it. Holly Hedlund, Amy's associate, hadn't done house painting before, but after a short while she was stretching and swooping high on a ladder like an artist at work. Tutor (seminarian) Joe Ortega was a mad roller in energetically rolling the ceiling. Student Jonathan Brady had never painted before, but he was at home on the ladder and did all the brushwork on an entire ceiling. The hero was Charles Liddell who did 2/3 of the rolling on the ceilings of both rooms for both coats of paint. (Rolling on the ceiling takes a lot of arm strength.)

The result is even better than we expected. The rooms have a lot of light, the sound is dampened, and the cream ceiling combined with the lights in the

chandeliers give the rooms a warm cheery look. Tutors and students love the "new" rooms. Thank you Amy, the WHO Foundation, and painters for "new light to brighten children's lives."

QUE TE CUESTA?

In November we had a wonderful Parents' Night for families of the 5th-8th graders. 102 people--students, parents, friends, relatives, tutors--came for a potluck supper and program.. Tutors and parents got to talk; students got to talk with tutors in a different setting; everyone got to eat!

After supper Rev. Felipe Martinez talked about how he had grown up in Mexico and come to the US as a high school student at age 14, not knowing any English. He kept intending to go back to Mexico but he wanted to get more education. Now he is married and is a Presbyterian pastor in St. Anne, IL.

Rev. Martinez said as a boy his mother always said, "Que te cuesta"(What would it set you back) when it came to doing chores or work. Que te cuesta, if you were to hang up your coat? Que te cuesta, if you were to put the dishes away? Que te cuesta, if you were to study a little more? Que te cuesta? The Latino students knew what he was talking about, and the other students understood, too. The night was a celebration of family, children, education and caring.

A while later we asked Salvador (6th gr.) to take a package home for his brother. He didn't want to and said he wouldn't. We said, "Que te cuesta?" and he picked up the package and took it home.

FIRST INTERN

This year we have our first intern for the Tutoring program. Nona Martin is from the Bahamas and is working on a Master's degree at Loyola University Chicago in Public History (museums, libraries, research for media). She helps with tutoring on Monday evenings and Wednesday afternoons. She designed worksheets for our new books and for upgrading students' computer skills. She helped plan conflict resolution sessions. She telephoned parents to invite them to Parents' Nights and to ask them their children's sizes for the Christmas gifts. She typed and designed the layout for the *Sunshine* magazine on "Poems about Trees," written by the 1st -4th graders and tutors. She helped recruit tutors downtown and at Loyola University. We are fortunate to have Nona.

CROP WALKATHON Sun., Oct. 21, was a beautiful day for the CROP Walkathon, which followed a 10 km route around UIC Circle Campus. Epworth

won the golden shoe award (third time) for the most walkers from a small church; 25 people went--20 students, 2 parents, 2 tutors, and another adult from Epworth Church. We raised \$1,458 to alleviate world hunger, the most money we've ever raised.

EPWORTH GIRL SCOUTS GO ON TRIPS

Over 50 second grade through high school girls from the Tutoring Program and the neighborhood participate in three Epworth scout troops, under the leadership of Eva Schwinge and Gigi Head (who also coordinate the Tutoring PS). Eva and Gigi take each group of Girl Scouts on two trips each year. During the summer the 4th-6th graders went horseback riding, and the 7th-HS girls went to a Native American Girl Scout Council (Columbus Day weekend). The girls enjoy scouting.

In October Ms. Eva was honored by the Illinois Crossroad Council with a lifetime achievement award for her many years of engaging minority girls in Evanston and Chicago in scouting. Thank you, Eva!

501 (c) 3, NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATION

The Epworth Tutoring Program has become part of the newly-formed not-for-profit corporation "Epworth Community Programs," along with the Edgewater Warming Center housing homeless men in Epworth's gym. We have the EIN number and are awaiting a little paperwork. The 501 (c) 3 status means that donations to the Tutoring Program through the non-sectarian Epworth Community Programs will be tax exempt. We hope this will allow foundations to share in our work.

CHICAGO COMMUNITY TRUST

For the second year, the Springboard Foundation, a donor fund of the Chicago Community Trust, has given an award to the Epworth Tutoring Program, to be used for the director's salary, an intern, photocopying and heat. We are grateful for their partnership in working with the youth of Uptown/Edgewater and their confidence in our work.

YOUTH CHOIR TRIP 22 members of the Epworth Youth Choir with 11 drivers and chaperons went to Bethany Terrace in Morton Grove to sing for "Little Christmas." The children sang well and behaved well. Barbara Taylor, an Epworth piano student, played "Away in a Manger." The residents and their families appreciated the children. Bethany Terrace gave each child a gift certificate to McDonalds, cookies and punch, and a two-dollar bill. The children felt good about bringing joy to the residents.

HOLIDAY LETTERS TO NURSING HOME
64 students of the Tutoring Program wrote a letter

and/or made a holiday card for a resident of the nearby Methodist Home. This was more students than ever before and the first letter some of the students had ever written.. Students were assigned names and wrote or typed letters as well as making cards.

CAT TAIL

I am Miss Bev, Epworth tutor for 5 years. I also volunteer at Tree House Cat Shelter, loving, hugging and kissing older, sick cats. These lovely creatures are very pleased to be loved and give equal love in return.

One day, a very independent cat named Panda, who is known for hating other cats, came over and with his paw hit a very sick tiny cat I was working with on the head. Panda then stalked away.

Recalling Ms. Beth's lessons with children on controlling emotions and dealing with conflicts, I followed Panda into another room where she was lounging on the couch like a king. Shaking my finger at him, I said, "Bad, bad Panda. Ms. Beth will come up here and give you conflict resolution lessons."

In response to this, Panda opened his mouth, clearly showing me all his extremely sharp teeth, and again stole away, carelessly. But at least he did look me in the eye, and as Ms. Beth said, that is the key to solving conflicts!!!

With a meow to you, dear folks,
Ms. Bev Shneider

BILLY JONES CHAVEZ

Late at night on the 4th of July, Billy Chavez, age 16, was shot in the back a block from his home. Billy's older brothers Jason and Nelson had been in the Tutoring Program for several years before they moved to Albany Park. Their mother, Hortensia, was active as a tutoring parent and on the Local School Council at Goudy School. Billy was too young for the tutoring program when they lived in Uptown.

Over 200 young people were at the funeral home for Billy's funeral, all dressed in their good clothes, all silent, not saying a word. They stood or sat silently, and filed silently by the casket. Someone said that all the young people were numb, thinking it might be them. One girl started wailing as she passed the casket, and she couldn't stop.

People were there who had known the family before from the Uptown neighborhood. People from Albany Park were there, friends of friends, mostly teenagers.

One boy asked his mother at home afterwards, "Will a mother feel sorry about her son being killed even if he was bad?" His mother replied, "She would be very, very sad."

The shooting was reportedly gang related. The week after the funeral there were three shootings in retaliation; no one else was killed.

It will be a long time before Hortensia and her family find healing. We wish them peace.

HOLIDAY GIFTS FOR TUTORING STUDENTS

Many people shared in giving gifts to 150 children of the Tutoring Program this year. We divided the names among four churches: Glenview United Methodist Church, Kingswood United Methodist Church in Buffalo Grove, Grace United Methodist Church, and Trinity Church of the North Shore. People from these churches selected names, bought gifts, and wrapped them beautifully. Rick Senne (chair of the video department at Northeastern University) and Beth Palmer delivered the packages to the children's homes so they could be part of the families' Christmas celebrations.

The children were excited to receive the gifts. Six-year old Rodrigo jumped around when the presents came. One mother gave Beth Palmer a huge hug, she was so happy to receive the gifts for her children and grandchildren. Another mother said later she was really grateful for the new clothes her children received; she couldn't afford to get them new clothes this year because the hotel where she works calls her only two days a week. Everyone is grateful for the presents.

GIFTS FOR STUDENTS AT GOUDY SCHOOL

Many people and organizations brought gifts to the Tutoring Program to be given to Goudy School, which our students attend. On the last day of school before vacation, the principal, Patrick Durkin, went to each class, beginning with the preschool, and gave each child a gift, passing them out as far as they would go. Here are the gifts and where they came from:

Enid Young, who lives in Iowa but grew up in WWII London, sent boxes and boxes of reconditioned stuffed animals, which children and parents of the Tutoring Program wrapped to give to Goudy. The 4th grade class from Emanuel Congregation Synagogue sent wrapped books with felt bookmarks which they had made. A Brownie troop from Deerfield sent treasure boxes filled with special things for girls, which they gave to the Epworth Brownie troop and girls at Goudy School. Parents of the Brownie troop sent many other wrapped gifts. The AAUW (American Association of University Women) of Glenview gave many, many books for young children. The women of Edison Park United Methodist Church gave school supplies. Grace UMC of Naperville chose names of

three entire classes of students (89) and gave them presents. Not to forget the older students, the staff of UL (Underwriters Laboratories), raised money to give all the HS students and 8th graders of the Tutoring Program a \$15 gift certificate for a CD. And not to forget the 65 men of Epworth's Warming Shelter, a Walmart's store in Indiana, through a connection with Stephanie Gross's parents, donated their seconds of men's pants, shirts, and underwear, enough for each man to have a full set, along with coats for 14 men. Think of the generosity in creating a merry Christmas for all these people!

AN OUTING

Tina Burns helps 7th graders Crystal, Gelisa, and now also Brittany, with their homework Monday evenings. One day after they had finished their homework they started talking about their families. One girl mentioned her 16-year old sister's baby, and they began discussing whether a 16-year old should have a baby. One girl didn't think so, another thought it was OK. They spoke about all their brothers and sisters, including those on their father's side who didn't live with them. They said all the African American's they knew came from large families. Then Tina, African American, said, "I don't come from a large family." They began to ask her if she grew up on welfare and about her family. She told them she had a car and a house, and that she worked hard for everything she had. She decided to invite them to her house for the experience. This is what she wrote:

"We had a really good time. I went to pick Crystal and Gelisa up at Crystal's first; when I got there, Crystal said she could not go because she was babysitting and her grandmother wasn't home yet and that Gelisa spent the night at another friend's house and wasn't there yet. So I called Brittany's mom and she told me that Crystal and Brittany had gotten into a fight Thursday and she was really upset and depressed about it and probably wouldn't want to go, so I called back. I went home, and had a message from Crystal telling me I could pick them up at Gelisa's. So I went back to get them, and they asked if Brittany was coming. I said I was going to call her and they didn't mention anything about the fight, so neither did I. I called Brittany back and she wanted to go. Everything was fine when we got her and there was no mention of the fight.

"From Brittany's we stopped and got a movie, then went back to my house and had lunch. They were so funny; they wanted to see EVERYTHING!!! They asked me how I bought everything and assumed I was rich because I am a model and all models are rich. I told them I wished I was rich, but I wasn't; that I have

always worked a part-time job until I went back to school; that nothing was given to me and that if you work hard for the things you want, you can get them. I also showed them the things I bought on lay-a-way; which they thought was really funny. They were very respectful of my things and were on their best behavior. It really turned out to be a lot of fun and I am glad it worked out."
--Tina Burns, tutor

GOOD NEWS FROM THE EPWORTH TUTORING PROGRAM December 2001

This is the 17th year the Epworth Tutoring Program has been helping children of Chicago's Uptown/Edgewater neighborhoods with school skills, etc. There is a lot of good news this year--much of it about little boys.

"Break forth, O beauteous heavenly light, and usher in the morning."

Last summer we had a wonderful time with the Epworth Summer Music Institute. Around 45 kids came to Epworth for two free one-hour piano lessons every week for nine weeks. We had a grant to buy a few keyboards, tutors with piano background helped teach, and we put an ad in the newspaper for other volunteer piano teachers. Besides the lessons, the students played in two recitals at Epworth and went to play at two nursing homes and the Kiwanis Club, as well as attending a free jazz concert in downtown Chicago.

The students loved playing the piano. 12-year old Alice practiced for 2-3 hours straight. 14-year old Barbara learned enough to accompany the Youth Choir. 10-year old Krystal taught 12-year old Crystal how to play a piece.

All spring seven-year old Red acted thoughtlessly and immature. His foster mother said he had regressed and "forgotten everything" at his last placement. At Red's first and second piano lessons in June, we thought he wouldn't be able to read notes or play the piano; his brain seemed not to be connected. At the third lesson Red played the piece he couldn't play at the second lesson, and he began progressing, little by little. In the fifth week, Red started playing a new piece, on his own. He was reading the notes! His brain was connected! At the end of July his foster mother remarked that Red couldn't read at school yet. Red chimed in, "I was reading in summer school!" Perhaps reading piano music helped Red learn how to read words. The piano lessons were a turning point for Red.

"O shepherds, shrink not with affright, but hear the angel's warning."

In September 2000 8-year old Chris could barely read. He could not do math. He could barely write. He got angry very easily. Twice he put on his coat and walked out of the tutoring session (only two other students have done that in 16 years). Frequently he hid under a table for most of the session, sometimes crawling from one table to another, always underneath. Occasionally, he would do his work under a table.

Homework was hard for him. Usually he had to copy five words four times each, write a sentence using each word, and do two sides of a page of math. At the beginning of the year, he stated every day that he did not have any homework. Gradually he began to do it, bit by bit.

During the year we helped him read our first three readers. "The Magic Hat" caught Chris' attention. He enjoyed reading it! He wanted to read instead of doing his homework. After he read "The Magic Hat" he could read his books from school. We had taught him to read!

In September of that year Chris' writing was hard and forced, as if he were just learning how to write. Two journals from the beginning of the year were filled only with tic-tac-toe games. In one he had written part of his name, but it was misspelled. In February he refused to write something for our *Sunshine* magazine. The next day he started telling his tutor about something that happened in class at school. The tutor said, "Why don't you write about that for *Sunshine*?" He took out his journal and wrote about the event: "A Zoo Class?" In March he started talking about leprechauns and wrote in his journal two pages (with pictures) about a leprechaun. One day he came to tutoring, took out his journal, and began writing. When he had finished writing, he said, "My uncle is in jail, and I'm writing about it." In May his tutor gave him a small notebook

which he could use as a journal over the summer, when he was living with his sister. Chris had come a long way during the year!

"This child, now weak in infancy, our confidence and joy shall be."

We were told Martin was 10 years old, but he looked 8. We were told he had been to school for one year where he lived before, but it seemed as though he had never held a book before in his life. His teacher at school was discouraged about him learning to read. We started teaching him to read in Spanish, his native language, since he didn't know any English. We had him read the same stories every day until he almost memorized them, and then he began new stories. We also began teaching him English words and how to read beginning English books. We worked with him on 1st grade arithmetic.

This was hard work. In September, he would work for ten minutes and then lie down on the floor and roll over like a little dog. By December he could almost read Spanish, was beginning to learn English, knew how to regroup in adding, and he would lie down on the floor and roll over only once or twice during the session. We all like Martin.

"The power of Satan breaking."

One day at tutoring 6-year old Tony threw things on the floor, swore at his tutor, and hit his tutor. He also was carrying matches in his book bag. We called Tony's mother to come to the tutoring center to talk with Tony and his tutor.

Tony's mother was shocked to hear what Tony was doing. She didn't want any of her children behaving that way. First we talked about the swearing, then we talked about throwing things on the floor, then we talked about Tony hitting his tutor. Tony's mother was hurt. She told him to apologize to his tutor, but he wouldn't. She begged him to apologize, but he just stood there. His mother told him what to say in Spanish, and we told him what to say in English to say he was sorry, but he refused to say anything. Then we talked about the matches, and then we waited for Tony to apologize. We waited and waited; his mother begged and begged. Finally in desperation his mother said, "Tony, Tony, do you remember what day this is? Mi cumpleaños (my birthday). You're doing this to me on my birthday?" And she started to cry. Tony started to sob, and he went to hug her. We all started to cry. Then Tony hugged his tutor and the rest of us. He told each of us he loved us. We told his mother that good things would come from this and that this would be a happy birthday after all.

"Our peace eternal making."

Beth Palmer