

Christmas 2002

This was the third year of the Epworth Summer Music Institute. 55 children from the neighborhood came to Epworth two days a week all summer to take hour piano lessons. We had two recitals and took three trips to play songs for people on the piano/keyboard. It was a joyous time. Here is what one adult observed: "I was in front of Epworth and all of a sudden I saw all these children *running* to go to their piano lessons. The evening was hot and sticky, and these children were *running* from all directions to take piano lessons! I couldn't get over it." Our star was Monique (age 12). She spent most of every afternoon practicing on the piano or keyboard or helping other students. At the beginning of the summer she said, "I can't believe I'm playing 'When the Saints Go Marching In'!" By the end of the summer I gave her a difficult arrangement of "The Greatest Love of All." She worked on it for 5 days and played it beautifully for the final recital.

Adan H. is 9 yrs. old (4th grade). When he was in 2nd grade, his first year in our program, I taught him to read, in English and Spanish, in a few sessions. Last year he worked with another tutor and kept progressing. This year he has become wild. He won't obey his tutor; he doesn't want to work. He especially doesn't want to do math. Sometimes Adan comes early on Saturdays and helps me with last-minute set-ups. He turns on all the computers, helps with name-tags, whatever is necessary. When I asked him to have his mother fill out an information sheet concerning a possible Christmas gift, he said, "My mother can't read, English or Spanish." A few weeks ago I decided I would work with him on multiplication, regardless of the chaos that might be going on with the other students. Holding Adan's concentration on multiplication was like holding a wild snake (which, thankfully, I've never done). I showed him a few tricks I knew (2×3 is the same as 3×2 !), so maybe he learned something. I'm hoping that developing skills will help motivate the students. Adan's story is not finished yet. I'm rooting for him.

"Sheila" has hardly missed a day of tutoring since 1st grade. Now she is in 5th grade, 10 yrs. old. She has always been hard to handle; she wants to do things her way. One day when she was in 2nd grade, she and her friends in the Community Youth Choir gave me a really tough time. I felt I got eaten by the barracudas. When Sheila was in 3rd grade, I started to see the leadership potential in her. I could envision her as a school principal or a CEO. People I mentioned this to wondered, because she was still tough to handle. At the beginning of 4th grade, she was promoted to the "gifted" class at the local school, the upper half of the class pool. She was ready for the challenge and began to work hard. Now in 5th grade, she is actually cooperative! I hope to have more good news of her in future years.

The Nichols sisters, 12 and 13 years, are in the Tutoring Program, Choir and Girl Scouts. On a sheet put in the church for prayers one of them wrote, "NICHOLS - STOP BUSH'S WAR!!!!"

Blessings to you, yours, and all the world's citizens.

Peace,

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