

TUTORING NEWS: EPWORTH TUTORING PROGRAM

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PARENTS' NIGHT: Conflict Resolution

The night was cold, but 71 people came to celebrate children, families, education, and tutoring. Parents from 17 tutoring families came, along with 39 children.

After a meal of sloppy joes, potato chips, carrots, and many desserts, people gathered to see the children perform. The children sang two songs, and people said they were beautiful.

The children showed the parents what they were learning in conflict resolution. The children recited the tutoring rules in English, and two students recited them in Spanish. Then the children recited the Five Steps to Peace, the basis of our method of conflict resolution, and two other students recited the steps in Spanish.

The highlight of the evening was the children's role play skits demonstrating conflict resolution. There were seven skits in which 14 children participated. Two skits were in Spanish and five in English. Three tutors and four parents were mediators. The four parents (Norma Jones, Darla Robinson, Annette Steele, and Reyna Suarez) did an exceptionally good job in helping the children resolve the conflicts in the role plays. The entire audience, including the children, listened intently as the children, under the direction of the mediators, resolved the conflicts.

Afterwards one parent said, "Bonita!"

Another said, "It was a beautiful evening."

Sally Franz, a tutor, wrote about the evening, "I thoroughly enjoyed last night – what wonderful vibe permeated the evening, and the turnout was excellent. As for the two guys [her tutees Johnny and Patrick] -- well I derive stimulation from working with them and truly look forward to Tuesday afternoons."

FULL HOUSE SATURDAYS One Saturday in March, 75 neighborhood children came to work with 75 8th graders from Wilmette Jr High. Every corner was filled with kids working and learning and having a good time.

***** VOLUNTEER PIANO TUTORS NEEDED *****
to help children of the Tutoring Program with beginning piano lessons, Jun.-Aug., aft or eve.

CLASS ASSIGNMENT (by an eighth grader)

This is the longest piece this student has ever written. The story is an archetype among city youth.

[spelling edited] This story takes place in the Rockwell Projects in Chicago Illinois. The projects were filled with Blacks who lived in poverty. There were a lot of kids in the projects but this is the story of one who never gave up till he made it.

This was a young black boy living with his mom. His older brother got shot while walking to the store. His name was Wally. He got killed at the age of 15. Chris daddy split when his brother was 7 and he was 3. Chris was a very bad student in school. He got F's and D's in school. His best friend was name Darren. Darren was a trouble maker. As they got older Chris brought his grades up. Darren was the same old person, still bad. Darren joined a gang. Chris dropped Darren from being his friend.

Chris went to college at Chicago University. He was on the Deans list. Chris made something of his self. Chris became a doctor with a lot of money. He went back to the projects and found out that his best friend had died. That just shows even from the gutter you can still be somebody.

CLASS ASSIGNMENT (by an eighth grader)

[Typed] This is a story about a director of a tutoring program. Her name is Beth Palmer. I been in this program for 4 years now and went from bad to good. By the way my name is Lamont. When I was younger I used to run in the hallways and hide from my tutor. Now I am good, smart, healthy person. Ms. Beth taught me a lot of reading and math skills. Every year Ms. Beth gets a present for every student in the program. Beth is a pale skinned blonde haired woman and a very nice lady.

STORY TIME The 1st-4th graders on Tuesdays and Wednesdays are little rascals, but in March when Tutoring Assistant Clay Edwards read them *Blueberries for Sal*, one of his favorite stories as a child, they were totally engrossed and followed every nuance – high quality, educational time.

DROPPING BY

Mario Jernigan was in the tutoring program ten years ago when he was in 3rd and 4th grades, along with 3 brothers and his sister. Then his family moved farther away and wasn't able to come any more.

In January he happened to walk by Epworth Church. He saw the "Blue House" wasn't blue any more. As he walked he wondered if the tutoring program was still there. He walked to the end of the block and then turned around and knocked on the church door. The secretary said Beth Palmer would be coming in a short while, so he waited – for over an hour. This is what he said in his conversation with Beth Palmer.

I passed by, saw that the "Blue House" was now a different color, and all the memories came back. I wondered if Beth was there. I walked to the end of the block. Then I turned around, and rang the doorbell, and asked if Beth Palmer was still there.

The (Tutoring Program) was very influential in my life. When hard times came, I thought about the Tutoring Program. People who didn't even know me cared about me and wanted to help me be a better student. You all were so proud of us when we said our poems, when we did good work. You were just happy to see us when we came.

This place took me from the gutters of the North Side to where I am now. I'm so glad this place is still here.

I walk down the street from here to Bryn Mawr dressed like this, and people say I'm soft. But I don't care. I don't want to go back to the old ways (gang-banging). I was in the Department of Corrections and I didn't like being behind bars. I didn't like the celly and getting up at 7 just to have breakfast. When I got out I changed my ways.

FORMER TUTOR SICK GiGi Head, former tutor, Girl Scout assistant, and Youth Choir assistant, is very sick. We hope she gets better soon.

Mon. Tutor Accepted into Harvard Law School Allison Spencer, theater major at Depaul, from KY, was accepted into Harvard Law School.

GIRL SCOUTS VISIT CAVES IN WISCONSIN

Twelve Epworth Girl Scouts and five Evanston Girl Scouts went with Eva Schwinge to visit caves in Wisconsin. They learned a lot and enjoyed the trip.

Tutoring Benefits Not just for the kids By Mark Materna

Mark Materna began tutoring in September 2002. He works with a 12-year old boy and a 13-year old girl.

We all know about the benefits tutoring can bring to the lives of children, but I never realized the impact it would have on my own life.

But wait...I'm getting ahead of myself.

For years I had thought about giving something back to my community. Oh sure, I donated funds and goods and attended charity events, but those are easy, those require little if any thought other than the size of your bankroll. I wanted to do more, give more. But I was scared. What did I have to offer? I wasn't the greatest student myself. I wasn't the most behaved child either. So, what could I bring to a kid?

When I met Beth who was recruiting for students, she seemed fulfilled in her joy of helping these kids: to whatever degree. I sensed this fulfillment and decided to go to an introductory meeting.

Not what I expected! That was my first impression. I don't know what it was I did expect, but this wasn't it. But I felt something. I felt that sense of fulfillment again. Not only from Beth but the other tutors. Could I get that sense?

So, here it is over six months later. Do I have that sense of fulfillment?

Absolutely!

Tutoring for me is not just about making sure the kids do their homework. It's about having them know why they should do their homework. It's about helping them see beyond tomorrow. It's about motivating.

And....

It's about feeling needed!

And that's fulfilling.

YOUTH CHOIR FESTIVAL at EPWORTH

On Sunday, March 16, four youth choirs joined the Epworth Youth Choir for an afternoon of joyous song. Youth choirs from Epworth UMC, Granville Ave. UMC, Humboldt Park UMC, Rogers Park Baptist, and St George Orthodox Church of Cicero, IL, participated in the 22nd annual Youth Choir Festival, with 150 people present.

The choirs sang 7 songs altogether with the audience joining in on two, and each choir sang two songs of their choice, except St. George, which will sing next year. Two soloists from Epworth were Stephanie Nichols and Johnsha Jones, with Rotimi Osinubi playing the tuba on two of the songs.

We were particularly happy that parents of most of the Epworth Youth Choir members came to the concert and helped with refreshments afterwards. Out of the 18 choir members, all but two had parents present.

Report of the concert by Raymond Wentworth of Epworth's Chancel Choir:

My son and I had a wonderful time at the Youth Choir Festival last Sunday! And I believe my hearing will be back to what passes for normal these days by next Sunday.

It was good to see so much enthusiasm, and so much energy, devoted to the musical praises of our Lord. Obviously, a lot of child-hours of work went into the preparation of the numbers.

I can appreciate this, and savor it, even though the music presented is not of my culture and wouldn't be my personal choice. At least not so exclusively. Still, it obviously strikes a chord in the children, and I think that's wonderful.

The little group from Rogers Park Baptist even sang with enough head tone to make me think they might be able to do one of the Ave Verums (Mozart or Elgar, your choice), and they were well disciplined.

Our own Epworth crowd also did Beth and Eleanor proud, both as their own group and as part of the combined choirs. The finale certainly got the blood pumping. I like hearing children sing with such verve, even when it's with chest voice in full cry. The support the kids got from the audience was inspirational, too.

It's a wonderful work that Epworth does.

St. George Orthodox Church Children's Choir

One of the children singing at the first Youth Choir Fest 22 years ago was Kathy Faycurry, who went to Bethany Ravenswood UMC. Kathy remembered what a wonderful experience it was to be in a youth choir, and

she saw many children in her new church, St. George Orthodox Church of Cicero, IL, but there was no youth choir there. So she started one this year.

Kathy brought 13 children to watch the concert this year, hoping they could sing next year. During the refreshment time, Beth Palmer asked them to sing, and they sang two songs, in English and Arabic.

Beth Palmer's note to Kathy Faycurry after the concert:

It was so good to see your choir at the Youth Choir Festival. I guess I take choirs for granted, but upon hearing that there wasn't a children's choir at St. George before you started it -- even with all those children at the church -- I realized what a gift you are bringing to those children. They love to sing, and when they sing with their friends -- and sing church music -- a bond is formed that is beautiful. You have really given them a gift. I heard it in their eagerness and in the way they sang.

Kathy Faycurry's reply

It was a delight to see you and to hear all the choirs perform on Sunday. St. George Children's Choir and I appreciated the invitation. We really enjoyed ourselves.

When I told St. George Children's Choir that you were my choir teacher when I was about their age, they were so surprised; they looked at me with such amazement....and replied "Really ... Wow!"

The gift that I am giving them was the wonderful gift you gave me, my siblings and peers at Bethany. I am glad I was able to use what I learned from you and pass it on. When something like this occurs, you know that something good has happened and something special was given back to the world/society. Hopefully, the children are able to do the same and develop their own choirs in the future. And all this began because of you. THANKS!

My children's choir was so happy when you asked them to sing for you. They love to perform. On the way back to St. George Church, I played the music cassette you gave me, and the children in my car were so happy to sing along. You don't know how many times they had me rewind the tape from the beginning so they could sing alongwhat a pleasure it was to hear them pick up the words so quickly and sing to the tunes over and over. It really reminds me of the good old days with you/Bethany.

Again, it was wonderful to see you, Frank, Jane Holmes and Rev. Hudson.

God bless! Take care.

