

TUTORING NEWS: EPWORTH TUTORING PROGRAM

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TRIP TO THE SHEDD AQUARIUM

All year the 1st-4th graders studied sea life, coral reefs, and explorers during monthly science time with Joan Sheffield. We wanted to go to the Shedd Aquarium to see the Caribbean Coral Reef and to see the divers feeding the fish.

We planned all year for the trip, the first the afternoon program undertook. We chose a tutoring day when there was no school, rented a bus, got two passes from libraries, invited children who would behave well, and the trip was on.

Twenty-three children (2nd-6th graders) and eight adults went. It was a gloriously sunny day, and the trip was beautiful. We watched fish in the Caribbean Coral Reef for around 45 minutes.

"The children were fascinated, simply fascinated looking at the fish," a tutor reflected later. The children saw hammerhead sharks, puffer-fish, "angel fish," "glow in the dark fish," "rainbow fish," and "ugly fish." One big fish was an inch from us on the other side of the glass; it swivelled its eye socket to look at us! Some children said they saw the electric eel which only comes out in the dark.

The children were amazed at the diver who fed the fish: "He wasn't even afraid," one child wrote afterwards.

The children loved seeing the beluga whales, the vista of beautiful Lake Michigan on the other side of giant picture windows. We saw the trainers feeding the whales. The children figured out how the whales knew there was food: they saw a yellow wooden flower-shape which the trainer held over the water. The children were fascinated at seeing the whales stick their heads out of the water to get the fish the trainers offered them. It was wonderful.

Then the children saw the penguins. They said the penguins standing on the rocks looked like they were talking to each other and having a meeting. It was hard to tell they were birds because they didn't look like the birds we are used to. One child wrote, "I like their fur."

The children also loved the dolphins which they could watch under water. The children were amazed at how fast the dolphins swam and at how peaceful they looked. One child said, "I wish I were a dolphin."

The beauty of the experience, the bonding in the group as we watched the beautiful sea animals, the peace of sea creatures getting along – this sums it up: "I wish I were a dolphin."

PARENTS' NIGHT: PARENTS CARE!

Rain all day, and a rain storm at night. Even in the rain, 78 people poured into the Tutoring Center for the Parents' Night for families of 1st-4th graders. Parents *do* care, despite what some say.

After a supper served by older youth, 26 children said poems they had memorized. People cheered for every student. Parents cared about all the children. Students who were afraid last year went ahead this year with no problem. All the students loved speaking into the microphone.

The students sang songs for the audience and then children received awards and tutors received certificates of appreciation.

The parents and tutors honored tutoring director Beth Palmer that evening. Parents Pat Charles and Norma Jones gave her an expensive engraved plaque with three large gold stars on it. The stars were so large they hung out over the edge of the plaque. The plaque said, "Our Rising Star: We gratefully acknowledge the significant contributions of Beth Palmer for her 18 years of leadership as Director. She has given generously of her time and talents to the direction and growth of the Epworth Tutoring Program. We are deeply aware of her unselfish and devoted service. May 14, 2003."

Pat Charles' two older children were in the tutoring program 17 years ago in the second year of the program; her younger daughter is in the program now; two grandchildren will enroll in the preschool section this June. That's a long history of involvement. Norma Jones' two daughters are in the program for the second year.

Tutor Elaine Tormey gave Beth Palmer a special certificate that she had designed on her computer. It said, "The Afternoon Class of the Epworth Tutoring Program present this award to Beth Palmer for eighteen years of excellent service. We thank her for always working hard, inspiring others and believing that every child can be their best. May 14, 2003." At the bottom of the certificate, all the afternoon students signed their

names. Ms. Palmer also received a large bouquet of purple flowers (purple for royalty).

YOUTH CHOIR SINGS FOR GIGI HEAD

We heard GiGi Head was in the hospital, then we heard she was in the Alden-Lakeland Nursing Home near-by. For many years Gigi had helped tutor in the afternoon program, the Monday evening program, and the Saturday preschool. She helped with the Youth Choir and three Epworth Girl Scout troops. She often walked the children home from evening events. She was everywhere. And now she was in a nursing home!

In visiting her we saw she had lost so much weight she looked like a skeleton with skin stretched over it, and she was in a wheel chair. We had thought about taking the Youth Choir to sing for her because we knew she would like it, but we didn't know if it would scar the children who had known her previously as a strong force in their lives. Finally we decided to schedule a choir trip on a Thursday after school.

It was raining off and on that day, but we walked the 20-min. walk to the nursing home. We took the robes because we knew GiGi would love to see the robes.

The 18 children of the Epworth Youth Choir lined up ready to sing, waiting for GiGi to come out of her room into the TV room where other residents were sitting. When GiGi came out, she saw the 18 beautiful children in their choir robes standing in two rows ready to sing. At the same time one of the parents, Devon Tripp, gave her a bouquet of roses. GiGi was overcome with emotion and started weeping. Tears came to some of the children's eyes and they had to turn aside. We said, "Those are tears of joy. Everything is OK. Everything is beautiful." And the choir started to sing, song after song.

After a few songs, GiGi started singing along with the choir. Then she started clapping to the music. When she first came out she looked very old, but the more the choir sang, the younger she seemed. She was smiling and participating and seemed to grow younger and stronger by the minute.

The concert inspired other people present, too. When she saw "Amazing Grace" on the program, a resident said, "There's another verse." When the choir finished singing "Amazing Grace," this resident kept sing, "Praise God, praise God ..," and the choir joined with her on the extra verse.

After the last piece on the program, UT, the activity director for the floor, said, "One more

song." We said, "No, that's all." But Devon Tripp, the parent who brought the flowers, took the microphone and began singing a gospel song, just for GiGi." The whole room was still. Afterwards Ms. Tripp said she hadn't known beforehand she was going to do that. It just happened.

During the whole concert the children sang their best and behaved their best. GiGi was so happy the Youth Choir came to sing. Now she enjoys the memory of the visit and shares the photos of the concert with other visitors.

The Youth Choir members felt it was a good trip. They said, "She didn't look as bad as we had heard." They felt it was a momentous occasion.

GIRL SCOUTS VISIT GIGI HEAD

Inspired by the Youth Choir's visit, 18 members of the Epworth Girl Troop went to the Alden-Lakeland Nursing Home to visit GiGi Head. It was a wonderful visit with many photos. The girls wore their sashes and vests with all their badges on them. They looked stunning.

As gifts for the residents, the scouts made egg-shaped Easter baskets. They wrapped string around balloons and smeared it with paste. When they took the balloons out, they filled the baskets with colored "grass" and plastic eggs (many of the residents are diabetic), and tied colored ribbons around them. They made 71 baskets, one for each resident on the floor. (This took a lot of time.) They also brought the residents large tag-board Easter eggs, specially painted by the Saturday tutoring children in the crafts workshop.

PEACE SING-A-LONG

Singing Out for Peace & Social Justice

On a Saturday night in May the Youth Choir sang in a concert sponsored by The Children's Music Network. The program was in Spanish and English with some Hebrew. Eleven members of the Epworth Community Youth Choir with three adults went by bus to the Second Unitarian Church in Lincoln Park in Chicago. Our choir sang, "It's Up to You and Me," and "I've Got Peace Like a River." At the end they sang "Vine and Fig Tree," with a Middle Eastern dance. Our choir was the highlight of the night!!

STUDENTS WRITE AGAINST THE WAR

Some students read the book, "Faithful Elephants" about how elephants in a Tokyo zoo fared during World War II. This is what students wrote:

"I think the War is a terrible thing to waste over some oil. Think about your family being in that war and they got killed. I know you wouldn't want that war to come. Now think of how you would feel if your family members was killed over some oil and money, just so it can go all to Bush. Now think about that. Think about how other people would feel if their family member died in a war. So please follow my advice and ... STOP THIS WAR! SMASH IT! WAR (x-ed out)" –Glenda W., 7th grade.

"Dear People, Please stop the war. You're hurting all the people that didn't do nothing to you. You're destroying each other with hate. Other people are sad, hurt, and angry, so please stop." Sincerely, Elizabeth A., 7th grade.

"Why were you a president anyway? You suck. Where's a real president like Al Gore!!!!!" – Harif A., 9th grade.

"Do you like wars? Well I don't. I don't like them because it destroys many people and things. Would you like if a country came and bombed your country? I know you would be very upset. I think you should think about things before you do something that is not necessary to do, and I mean it. I think you guys need to have a word from God.

"I really think you should stop the wars. You are killing so many people, places, and things. Before you decide to go to war I think you should sit down and think for a long time about all the people you are hurting, things you are destroying, and innocent children and animals, and how you would get hurt. When you think about that, I'm sure you would realize war is bad. I assure you you won't want war." – beautiful Shanese W., 5th grade.

"Could you please stop all the wars that are going on in the world? The wars make me feel sad, because you are destroying homes and people. You are breaking families apart." – Shonquil M., 5th grade.

"I want you to stop all wars. You want to know why? Because we should all get along. We should all be friends. Martin Luther King, black man, he had said a speech about 'Let freedom ring.' Now look at us. His dream came true. We do get along. We are free." –Latrice A., 5th grade

"We people don't want war because we all

have to live. And all the children that are coming to this world. And it is not good." –Maritza O., 6th gr.

APRIL DAYS SPARKLING

During Spring Break of the public schools, a group from New Trier High School did a service project at the Tutoring Center. They came two mornings and helped eleven children from the Tutoring Program who can only come on Saturdays and need extra help. Most children worked on reading and writing English, and some worked on math. They also worked on the computer.

The favorite part of the day was the crafts projects. The older boys got to use a digital camera. They took pictures of *everything!* The pictures were printed at New Trier, and the children made and decorated frames for the pictures to take home. The younger children made jewelry. They also made beautiful greeting cards with cute rubber stamps, stickers, and other decorations. The cards looked professional.

The children listened to a story and were treated to lunch by the New Trier students: submarine sandwiches one day and pizza the next. What a treat! The Chicago children and New Trier students all had a wonderful time and all learned a lot. Thank you, New Trier!

"REPLICATION" OF TUTORING PROGRAM

Board members of Epworth Community Programs, sponsor of the Tutoring Program, think there should be more programs like Epworth's.

Recently tutoring director Beth Palmer has been consultant to two new Tutoring Programs. Christ Lutheran Church in Albany Park wanted ideas about expanding their program. Educare, a Pakistani organization in Rogers Park, wanted ideas about starting an after school program. Beth Palmer gave these programs insights which the ETP has developed in the past 18 years.

At the Tutor/Mentor Connection Conference held the first week in June Ms. Palmer led a seminar on "Tutoring Programs in a Faith-Based Environment: The Epworth Model." We hope programs for youth gain from the interchange.

LETTER FROM A SATURDAY TUTOR (8th GR.)

Dear Jessica, I was so sorry to hear you had to leave. I actually brought your X-mas present today but you were not here. Right now, my new kid is Stephanie, and she is cool, but I miss you. I think it [must have been hard to leave.] Now I will never see you again. I am very sad, and I really miss you. I hope you receive

this, because I want you to know that I miss you. It must have been hard moving away from all your friends and school. I miss you Jessica, and I will always remember you. –Your tutor, Anna P.S. Write me if you need to.

PARENTS' NIGHT, 5TH-8TH GRADERS

The 5th - 8th graders' Parents' Night was a community celebration. It was a nice evening, and 73 people came, including two new-born babies. Everyone enjoyed the bountiful pot-luck supper.

After dinner 23 students recited poems, most from memory without looking at the paper. Everyone cheered for the students. During the program, 14 members of the Community Youth Choir sang four songs, with the audience joining in. People said the choir was so "together" it sounded like one voice.

The evening also featured two guest speakers. Judy Montalvo is a senior graduating from Von Steuben H.S. She spoke in English and Spanish about high school and her plans to go to UIC in the fall. The second speaker was Marshaun Marshall, who had been a part of the Epworth Tutoring Program as a high school student several years ago. A friend of his whose children are in the Tutoring Program now came to hear him speak. People enjoyed hearing him talk.

Following the speakers, the poems, and the songs, students and tutors received awards and certificates of appreciation.

Message by Marshaun Marshall, Given at the 5th-8th Graders' Parents' Night, June 9, 2003

The Importance of School It is important to have a good high school education, college, graduate or professional school education, art or even trade school education, a diploma and a degree that you got by working hard to make your path into the world. School gives us balance in the world to be challenged to motivate good minds that you may help others understand the humanity of life's cycle; to help others by contributing to the community or nation in which you were born into.

Education exists to give us insight on our experience in life, that help us function more organized with yourself, family, friends, neighbors and the many work associates you all will come to know when you join the work world.

The Importance of the Tutoring Program It helps you learn good study habits and carrying through on homework assignments. It creates more positive time efforts amongst your neighborhood and school friends. It keeps you

more motivated to do well in school and to resist the pressures of the "streets," to not become involved in drug selling or drug use, and to not become involved in gangs or gang activity. And the best reason to me is because it gives the parents who don't have time in the day to become involved in their child's learning environment in a setting just similar to PTA meetings which more parents should be encouraged to be active in because it gives you a view of your child's learning habits in interactive roles. We should encourage other parents become involved with PTA or tutoring programs. Socialize with each other; they are your neighbors. Be aware! A neighborhood that watches together grows and controls together.

Encouragement for Parents Parents, children do need positive role models. Your children will feel good about themselves when you feel good about yourself. Positive role models will help children gain healthy habits and attitudes. The examples we set will also help your children resist pressures to use alcohol and other drugs, pressures they receive from television shows and movies, commercials and perhaps from their friends. Exercise and good nutrition should always be a part of everyone's life. Always maintain supportive positive relationships with our spouses, children and friends. Spend time with each child alone individually. Listen to what your children have to say because just as well as they watch you, they are listening to you. Ask your child's opinion about family affairs and decisions, and never talk down to children. We and our children are equals as humans. You never want your child to feel fear or judgement or reprimand. We want to them talk to us freely.

AT EPWORTH CHARACTER COUNTS

The Language Arts section of the Saturday Tutoring Program this year was based on "Character Counts." The students examined different character traits and wrote about them.

Trustworthiness: They described a person of integrity, writing short essays on peer pressure. "*A Trustworthy person is honest.*" They read the book "Too Many Tamales" and summarized it.

Respect They read books with the theme of respect and wrote reports. ***Responsibility*** They read about Harriet Tubman and wrote about her.

Fairness They read folk tales from around the world that taught about fairness and justice.

Caring They read stories about caring and wrote a

"story tree." "WJHS and Epworth kids care about each other." They wrote "I Am" poems.

Citizenship They talked about recycling and wrote suggestions for "Good citizens recycle, reuse, and reduce," putting the suggestions as petals of a large flower. They wrote ideas for "Good citizens are good neighbors." Their work is displayed on the walls of the basement of the tutoring center.

"EXPECT A MIRACLE"

Last fall we told Johnny's 4th grade teacher at school "Expect a miracle." Johnny had just registered for our program, and we felt good things were going to happen during the year. In June his teacher exclaimed to us, "Thank you for telling me last fall, 'Expect a miracle.' It sustained me through difficult times. And the miracle happened! Johnny progressed 2 stanines on the Iowa Test. That is a miracle. His study skills and self-control have improved immensely. Thank you."

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND AWARDS

Here are students who improved significantly this year as based on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. These are only students from Goudy School.

MATH IMPROVEMENT

Shonquil Minors-gr. 5
Raul Mejia-gr. 6
Monique Smith-gr. 7
Elizabeth Lawal-gr. 7
(others)
Patrick McCoy-gr. 3
Denzell Steele-gr. 3
Manuel Rowe-gr. 4
Ramiro Lugarda-gr. 4
Stephanie Nichols-gr. 6
Raul Mejia-gr. 6
Kyara Newell-gr. 7

READING IMPROVEMENT

Shaquil Lewis-gr. 3
Adan Hernandez-gr. 4
Shonquil Minors-gr. 5
Liliana Ochoa-gr. 7
LaDonna Smith-gr. 7
Lamont Burrell-gr. 8
Augusta Bullette-gr. 8
(others)
Maria Marques-gr. 3
Jennyfer Rodriguez-gr. 3
Johnesha Jones-gr. 4

Lilrita Mangrum-gr. 5
Monique Smith-gr. 7

MOST IMPROVED STUDENTS

Marco Suarez-gr. 2
Edward Cabrera-gr. 6
Tiffany Nichols-gr. 8

SPELLING BEE

Johnesha Jones-gr. 4

SCIENCE FAIR

Edward Cabrera-gr. 6

HONOR ROLL

Jonathan Fernandez-gr. 1
Karla Marquez-gr. 1
Angel Cabrera-gr. 1
Anthony Campoverde-gr. 2
Shonesha Jones-gr. 2
Marco-Suarez-gr. 2
Jennyfer Rodriguez-gr. 3
Maria Marquez-gr. 3
Johnesha Jones-gr. 4
Ashley Lopez-gr. 6
Edward Cabrera-gr. 6

YOUNG AUTHORS

Dion Lewis-gr. 2
Khadijah Bradley-gr. 3
Martin Woffard-gr. 3
Montrel O'Bannon-gr. 5
Gelisa Garner-gr. 8
Royale Newell-gr. 8 (winner)

HISTORY FAIR (BILINGUAL)

Miguel Monroy-gr. 7
Salvador Suarez-gr. 7

ESSAY COMPETITION

Edward Cabrera-gr. 6

ORATORY COMPETITION (SPANISH)

Edward Cabrera-gr. 6
Elizabeth Arroyo-gr. 7

STUDENT COUNCIL:

Ramiro Lugarda-gr. 4
Carly Hope-gr. 7
Tiffany Nichols-gr. 8

PERFECT ATTENDANCE

Jonathan Fernandez-gr. 1
Shonesha Jones-gr. 2
Maribel Sanchez-gr. 2
Marco Suarez-gr. 2

Alejandro Soto-gr. 3
Raul Mejia-gr. 6
Salvador Suarez-gr. 7

READING RECOVERY

Kenneth Carter-gr. 2
Lawanda Mangrum-gr. 2

WECEP (WORK TRAINING PROG.)

Royale Newell-gr. 8
Lamont Burrell-gr. 8

NEWS OF TUTORING GRADS AND FAMILIES

Portia Hemphill graduated from North Side Prep HS and received a Bill Gates scholarship. She will attend Wesleyan Univ. in Middletown CT. Alex Harris graduated from North Side Prep HS and will go to DePaul Univ. in Chicago. David Roman graduated from Lane Tech HS and will go to U of I in Champagne. Freddy Amarillo graduated from Lane Tech HS and will train in the National Guard for five months; in January he will go to Triton College; he plans to be an electrician. Jonathan Brady graduated from Senn HS in 2002 and is attending Truman College. Lorenzo Head graduated from Sullivan HS. Judy Montalvo graduated from Von Steuben HS with honors in languages; she will go to UIC. For the third summer, Carleen Amarillo (a student at North Side Prep HS) will go with a team from the University of Chicago to Wyoming to look for fossils. This summer she is a paid teaching assistant. Terri Walker graduated from Columbia College in Chicago; she majored in film. This past year Emily Acevedo (4th gr.) was in the traveling "Vivace" Touring Choir of the Chicago Children's Choir. These former students are pregnant: Felicia Pritchard, Nina Watts, Loresa Ortiz, and Shenika Johnson. Flora Johnson, Shenika's mother, has had a life turn-around. She is involved in a church and has been clean and sober for 3 years and has held her job for 2 years.

THE SECOND GENERATION

We are happy to have children of former students as part of the program. The parents care about their children having an early and good education. Myanna, Myreanna, and Christopher are the children of Jennifer Smith. Alex Vasquez is the son of Rosamaria Martinez. Nathan and Isaiah Wells are the grandchildren of Norma Fuller. Tiffani Thomas is the daughter of Valerie Logan.

MUSIC INSTITUTE BEGINS

This is the fourth summer free piano lessons are being offered to students of the Tutoring Program. At the 1st - 4th graders' Parents' Night we invited children to sign up at the end of the evening, and 23 children signed up that night! Altogether 40-50 students have signed up to participate. They will come for two one-hour lessons each week for nine weeks. There will be two recitals for all the students to perform solo pieces, as well as 3 trips to neighborhood organizations where they can perform. Volunteer "piano tutors" are needed to help the children learn. Keyboards are welcome.

THE BOILER IS PAID FOR!

The boiler that heats the basement of Epworth Church, where the Tutoring Program is located, broke down at the beginning of December 2002. Everyone had to crowd into the first floor, and students' hands froze when they used the computer lab.

People from many places helped pay for a new boiler so the Tutoring Program could have heat. Parents of tutors and former tutors from Wilmette Junior High School contributed money. The Springboard Foundation, a donor's fund of the Chicago Community Trust, gave a generous donation to help pay for the boiler. Many other people contributed to help pay for it. By the end of April the boiler was paid for. Hallelujah! And thank you.

CONTINUING DONATIONS WELCOME

The Tutoring Program has received donations this spring from many individuals as well as from many organizations, among them, the Robi Fund, a donor's fund of the Chicago Community Trust; the United Methodist Foundation; the Glenview United Methodist Women; and the Friendship Circle of Edison Park United Methodist Church.

A family is giving the Tutoring Program a donation in memory of their mother. The children of Ruth Randolph are remembering their mother by giving the Tutoring Program a memorial of 12 reference books: an unabridged dictionary, a large world atlas, 5 Oxford pocket dictionaries, and 5 poetry books. Ian Randolph, Ruth Randolph's son, was a former member of Epworth Church; he teaches Spanish at Morgan Park H.S.

A work party from a church in Colorado came to Epworth for a week in June to do special work projects. Among other things, they painted the computer lab – walls and floor! It looks

beautiful. Thank you, Colorado.

The Tutoring Program is grateful for all these contributions. They are being turned into richness of life for a whole community of people.

Individuals or organizations wishing to make contributions to the Tutoring Program should write checks payable to "Epworth Community Programs' or the "Epworth Tutoring Program," and send them to Epworth Community Programs, 5253 N. Kenmore, Chicago, IL 60640.