

TUTORING NEWS: INSPIRED YOUTH

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NEW NAME, NEW LOCATION

The Tutoring Program is now part of Inspired Youth, Inc., a new not-for-profit corporation. Weekday tutoring sessions are held at the McCormick Boys & Girls Club, 4835 N. Sheridan, and Saturday sessions are held at the Margate Park Field House, 4921 N. Marine Drive. The Inspired Youth Singers are currently rehearsing in the living room of Eleanor Bilby, co-director of the choir. Altogether 61 children, 31 adult/high school tutors, and 42 junior high tutors are involved

The Tutoring Program began at Epworth Church in September 1985 as a response to the high drop-out rate in among high school students in the city of Chicago.

In August 2004, Epworth Church decided to go in a new direction for its tutoring/ outreach ministry, and said the Tutoring Program per se would not be possible there any longer.

Several parents wanted the program to continue, so along with tutoring director Beth Palmer, they formed a new corporation and found new locations for the programs.

As we looked for new space, we had several disappointments, but we said, "We keep going on faith and hope." A colleague said, "Someone with space available will have to have charity." Actually, we realized that more than charity, we had to find someone who shared our vision of the importance of tutoring/mentoring for city children. We realized that along with faith and hope, we were kept going by our love for the children.

Finally we found space, and tutoring began the last week of October. Now everything is going as we had hoped.

Weekday Tutoring

at the McCormick Boys & Girls Club

Weekday tutoring sessions are held at the McCormick Boys & Girls Club, which offers excellent space. The Club Director, Christopher Brown, shares the vision of the importance of children and youth studying with tutor/mentors to improve their education and minds.

Monday evenings 5-7 high school students come to the Boys & Girls Club to study with their tutors. Tuesday evenings, 18-20 5th-8th graders work with their tutors there.. Wednesday and

Thursday afternoons 12-13 1st-4th graders study at the Boys & Girls Club with their tutors. The children are working hard at their studies, trying to do their best. The sessions are going well.

All students in Inspired Youth are members of the Boys & Girls Club. Some of their parents paid the \$20 registration fee, other children received full or partial scholarships from Inspired Youth. We didn't want anyone to be left out of the Tutoring Program because they couldn't pay the membership fee. All the Inspired Youth students can participate in the activities of the Club during the other afternoons and evenings in the week. Some of them are taking advantage of the activities and really enjoy the facilities.

Saturday Tutoring

at the Margate Park Field House

Two Saturdays a month the sessions are held at the Margate Park Field House, with eighth graders from Wilmette Junior High School as tutors. The Saturday Program was organized in about two weeks as the space at Margate Park was obtained and the WJHS teachers who are coordinating it decided to go ahead. We didn't know how the space would work out, how the new format of the two hour session would work, what things would be like. As the first session began, WJHS teacher Susan Lorch and Tutoring Director Beth Palmer looked at each other and exclaimed, "We did it!" "Exactly what we wanted to happen was happening: peer mentoring/tutoring was going on between eighth graders from WJHS and children from Chicago. Everyone was learning. everyone was having a good time." In fact, so far, the students seem quieter and calmer and studying better than last year! It's going to be a good year.

Turkeys

For several years the WJHS students have raised money through candy and bake sales to give a turkey to each family of children participating in the Saturday tutoring program. The Saturday program started this year just two weeks before the day when the turkeys usually had been *(cont)*

Turkeys (continued)

handed out. They decided to go ahead with it.

They raised money at school, and on Nov. 20, they passed out 30 turkeys to families of the Tutoring Program. Some of the families who had received turkeys in the past had been calling asking if turkeys were going to be passed out. The families really appreciated the turkeys.

Craft Turkeys

On November 20, the crafts project for Saturday tutoring was making ornamental turkeys out of pine cones, colored crafts foam, and craft eyes. The turkeys the children made were adorable and actually had personalities! We have always wanted the children to have experience working with different media. Pine cones were a wonderful media.

INSPIRED YOUTH SINGERS

The Youth Choir has been rehearsing in Eleanor Bilby's small living room. One week there were 16 children, the next week 15, the next week 17. This is more than there were last year, with many singing for the first time. We have wanted to have Hispanic children as part of the choir for the last several years, and finally a whole group of Hispanic children are part of the Youth Choir..

The choir is singing several general songs, but they are also working on 10 Christmas songs for two concerts in December. One of their favorite songs is in Spanish, "Los Tres Santos Reyes." An African American girl said, "I can't believe I'm singing in Spanish!" The next week she said, "'Los Tres Santos Reyes' is one of my favorite songs."

In the coming months, we hope to present a concert in February, March, and April. In February we hope to sing at the Sheridan Shores Nursing Home, celebrating Valentine's Day with songs about love and hearts. In March we will sing in the Youth Choir Fest. In April we hope to be one of the choirs singing at a benefit concert in Evanston for Senior Connections.

Over 40 children and youth are involved in various rehearsals of the Inspired Youth Singers. Many of the children have never sung before, so their voices are developing as they learn new songs. The Inspired Youth Singers love to sing.

NEWS OF CHILDREN

Linda (5th grade) came to Saturday Tutoring a few times last year and began coming to the weekday

tutoring and Inspired Youth Singers this year. In mid-October she exclaimed, "Guess what? I've been promoted to the 5th grade reading book. Most of my class is in the 4th grade book." The next week she exclaimed, "Guess how many homework assignments I've missed? Only four! I've started doing my homework every day, and I've only missed four assignments." Linda also has a nice voice, which gets better week by week.

At the end of the summer, the mother of **Gustavo** (4th grade) pleaded with Beth Palmer to find a tutor for her son. Now in the fall, Gustavo is coming to the Saturday tutoring program at Margate Park. He and his mother walk almost two miles to get there. He is working on reading and math with his eighth grade tutor.

Odalis (3rd grade) registered for the tutoring program this fall. She had a hard time with arithmetic, she couldn't speak English, and she didn't do her homework. After five weeks of Weds/Thurs. tutoring, she does her homework and is starting to learn to speak English. When she first came, she had a hard time understanding rounding and estimation in math. Now she has no trouble at all. Odalis also loves to sing. In the Inspired Youth Singers, she sings with total joy!

Edgar (4th grade) could not read in 2nd grade. We helped him in the Saturday program, but in September 2003, he still could hardly read. During the 2003-2004 school year, Edgar came every Tuesday and Wednesday to afternoon tutoring and sometimes to Saturday tutoring. On the weekdays, his tutor, Jeremy, a senior at Senn High School doing Service Learning at the Tutoring Program, patiently helped Edgar with his homework – spelling, math, and reading. During the year, Edgar learned to read. This fall, he reads slowly, but he can read! Miracles sometimes take patience and perseverance. We are happy for Edgar and thankful to Jeremy.

Andrew (8th grade) has been in the Tutoring Program since he was in kindergarten. He has always had a hard time in school. All of a sudden, he is doing very well this year! His November report card was fantastic!

Jennyfer (5th grade), **Jasmine** (6th grade), **Jonesha** (6th grade), and **Tiffany** (10th grade), also got excellent report cards. **Johnesha** (6th grade) got an A in reading!

NEWS OF TUTORING GRADS

Brenda (a 1st grader in spring 2004) came to Saturday tutoring with her aunt **Maricela** (7th grade). We were very impressed that Brenda could read so well and knew that Maricela had helped her. Brenda also recited a poem for the spring Parents' Night and did very well.

This fall we were trying to find Brenda to see if she could be in the afternoon tutoring program. One day in the public library a woman said "Hello" to Beth Palmer. It was the mother of **Tereza, Ociel**, and **Veronica**, who had been in the Tutoring Program in 1987. She said Veronica had a daughter who went to Goudy; her name was Brenda. It was the same Brenda! Brenda is in the gifted 2nd grade class at Goudy, her mother Veronica helps her with all her projects and enrolled Brenda in the afternoon tutoring program and Inspired Youth Singers. As one of her goals, Brenda wrote, "I want to be a music teacher."

Tereza also just transferred her two sons (1st and 2nd grades) to Goudy School.

Roy Erlin Pinnix has been working for Comcast for four years. He is a supervisor, driving a small truck. Look for him in his Comcast truck as he makes his rounds throughout the city.

Cheire Taylor works for Jiffy Lube in the neighborhood.

Janice Bryant Miranda has three small children and is working for her associate's degree. Her field is early childhood education. She plans to teach in preschool.

Maurice Thomas is living in Nebraska and works at a gas station. He travels by bicycle.

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

Kingswood United Methodist Church of Buffalo Grove is giving Christmas presents to 75 children from Inspired Youth. Next year we will be looking for additional churches, schools, or organizations that would like to sponsor other children in Inspired Youth.

TUTORING KITS

Evelyn Stone and Rosa Good, along with other United Methodist Women at Glenview UMC, made tutoring kits for the students. The students depend on those folders, paper, and pencils, so we appreciate the work the UMW did.

NEW WEB SITE

Inspired Youth has a new web site:

www.geocities.com/inspiredyouthchicago. Pat Zukosky designed the site, created it, and arranged for it. He is a wonderful web master. He first set up a web site for the Tutoring Program in June 1999. The new Inspired Youth Chicago site was created faster than we could imagine. Thank you, Pat.

GRIPP GRANT

Michele De St. Aubin, Stephanie Frent, and Susan Lorch, the teachers at Wilmette Jr. High School who coordinate the eighth graders coming to tutor the children of the tutoring program two Saturdays each month, applied for a grant from the Wilmette School District to cover the rental of the rooms in the Margate Park Field House where we have Saturday tutoring. They received the grant!

The teachers said there is a new emphasis on community service in the district. The program held up as an example is our Tutoring Program, where students from Wilmette Jr. High School have been tutoring for eleven years.

EYEGLASSES

Dr. John Walsh of Wilmette has been examining children of the Tutoring Program for the past 17 years. Last August he and the Lions Club of Wilmette gave glasses to 3 of our students, and one student he examined didn't need glasses. This November he is giving glasses to another 3 students, and a 4th student's glasses are fine. We appreciate Dr. Walsh's kindness, understanding, and gifts.

INDIAN HILL GARDEN CLUB GIVES JEWEL GIFT CERTIFICATES

For the second year in a row, the Indian Hill Garden Club has raised money to give families of the Tutoring Program gift certificates to Jewel. The families really appreciate this.

DONATIONS NEEDED

If you would like to donate money to the new tutoring program, send donations to

**INSPIRED YOUTH
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