

HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS**INSPIRED YOUTH SINGERS**

The Inspired Youth Singers began rehearsing in October, with many new children participating -- many of them Hispanic, which we have always wanted. The choir began practicing in Eleanor Bilby's small living room. Can you imagine 16 children in Eleanor Bilby's living room? Now they practice at the Edgewater Presbyterian Church.

Many of the children in the choir had never sung before, so the choir literally started "from scratch." Their voices are beginning to develop.

The big event was a Christmas concert at the Bethany Terrace Nursing Home in Morton Grove. The children had to practice hard. Several practiced at home with a tape we had given them. Some got together with other children from the choir and practiced on their own. One girl was so excited the night before the concert, she left a message on the answering machine: "It's 10:15, and I can't sleep. Could you bring work sheets for us to do in the car tomorrow?"

The day of the concert was very cold. Nineteen children came, all the children who had signed up for the trip! The father of some of the children drove a large van, so with the other four cars, transportation was fine.

The children sang beautifully at the Bethany Terrace, accompanied by two flutes and piano. The tone was beautiful, and some of the carols sounded even better than in previous years. Rev. Song of Bethany Terrace gave each child a gift certificate to McDonald's, which they appreciated.

Two days after the concert, the Inspired Youth Singers combined with the Girl Scouts to sing a concert at the Alden-Lakeland Nursing Home. It was amazing. Thirty-seven youth sang in the small dining room on the fourth floor. They sang with gusto and joy. The residents sang along with them, rejoicing in the happy carols. An adult who came said, "You rock!"

The Inspired Youth Singers, along with the Girl Scouts, are working on songs for a concert in February at a nursing home where a student's mother works. The theme is love and hearts.

PRESENTS FROM KINGSWOOD UMC IN**BUFFALO GROVE**

Seventy-five children from Inspired Youth received Christmas presents from members of Kingswood United Methodist Church, coordinated by Jeanne Forsythe. Two cars and a pick-up truck picked the presents up. (Thank you, Pat, Norma, Fred, and Matthew.) The families and the children really appreciated them. One boy kept asking when the presents were coming. The day after he got his package, he wore his new coat and brought his new hand-game to school. One mother said the presents arrived on her child's second birthday, and the clothes fit perfectly! One family put the presents for the four children under the Christmas tree. The 3-year old boy loved to look at the packages, feel them, carry them, and re-arrange them under the tree. What joy!

JEWEL GIFT CERTIFICATES FROM INDIAN HILL GARDEN CLUB

Forty-six families of the Inspired Youth program received gift certificates to Jewel Food Store from the Indian Hill Garden Club this holiday season. In December, Sharon Weingarten of the club held a luncheon in which members were asked to bring Jewel gift cards for our families. They brought over \$1000 of certificates for the families.

The parents appreciated them very much. Ms. C. Smith left a message on the answering machine: "Thank you for the gift certificate. You're so nice to us. I really appreciate it." Ms. Banks said, "What a surprise. Thank you. It means a lot to us." Ms. L. Smith said, "I just lost my baby sitting job, and I really appreciate this. Thank you." Ms. Johnson had asked earlier if there would be any Christmas presents for her children and nephews, but they had signed up for the program after the deadline for the other presents. We caught up with the family after Christmas and gave the gift certificates to her grandmother -- Ms. Johnson had just had another baby on Christmas Eve! We know they appreciated the gift certificates.

TOYS FROM IOWAN ENID YOUNG FOR CHILDREN AT GOUDY SCHOOL

Enid Young, who lives in Dysart, Iowa, sent seven large boxes of stuffed animals to give to the youngest children at Goudy School. Ms. Rodriguez, Jennyfer, Eleanor Bilby, and Beth Palmer wrapped the toys. Wrapping was also a service project of the Girl Scouts who were proud of helping. One said, "We finished wrapping all the toys!"

Mr. Durkin, the principal of Goudy School, passed the gifts out the day before Christmas vacation. He was very happy with the presents. "We got all the way to up to second grade!" he exclaimed. It means a lot to him to be able to give gifts to the children, because he knows how much it means to the families.

HOLIDAY LETTERS TO RESIDENTS OF THE METHODIST HOME

Thirty-six students of the tutoring program wrote holiday letters and cards to thirty-two residents of the Methodist Home. A few of the students had never written a letter before. With all the emphasis on getting things, it is good to have opportunities for the children to give.

FUNDS NEEDED

If you would like to donate money to the Inspired Youth Tutoring Program, make a check to **O.N.E. (Memo: Inspired Youth)** and send your donation to

***INSPIRED YOUTH
5346 N. KENMORE
CHICAGO, IL 60640***