

TUTORING NEWS: INSPIRED YOUTH

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20th Annual FAMILY NIGHT, June 2006

Mothers wheeling babies in strollers, street-savvy youth, moms and dads (the age group advertisers seek), young professionals, retired people, lots of kids – over 100 people came together for this celebration of families, as Inspired Youth held its 20th annual Spring Family Night, June 6, 2006. Everyone brought a dish of food to share. A brother and sister made a fluffy, delicious cake. A tutor brought corn jambalaya. Other tutors brought heaping amounts of fried chicken. There was Vietnamese fried rice, Ethiopian injera bread, and heaping buckets of fried chicken. People filled their plates and there was plenty of food.

After dinner the Inspired Youth Singers sang, directed by Dorie Burrell and Eleanor Bilby. The audience sang along. The music sounded so good, it echoed down the hall where the desk attendant at the end of the hall enjoyed it.

36 STUDENTS RECITE POEMS

From the moment they came, the kids asked when they were going to say their poems. Several said they weren't going to say them, but 36 students said poems by memory. The students spoke into a microphone, clearly and slowly. The poems were the best in many years, even though four children started to speak English only this year. One mother, Teresa Trujillo, a tutoring grad who had been in the program in the late 1980's, said, "The poems were better than when we were kids. My poem was 'Dreams,' [by Langston Hughes]." When her sons, Fernando (3rd gr.) and Jonathan (2nd gr.), heard they were going to say poems, they found a book of poetry their mother said she "bought in a rummage sale for 25 cents." They picked out poems and started memorizing them.

Clara's mother couldn't believe her daughter (3rd gr.) memorized such a long poem, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," by Robert Frost. Students who had been nervous the year before, spoke this year without hesitation. A couple of students saying a poem at Family Night for the first time almost got choked with fear, but went ahead. Sam (5th gr.) said, "That was the first time I ever spoke

before a large group." Some kids were surprised at how easily they memorized their poem, and they started memorizing their friends' poems as well. Brenda (3rd gr.) wanted to say two poems, but we limited it to one.

RAPPER

In the midst of the poems, a tutoring grad, Lamont Burrell, gave a rap. He wrote the words, and a friend of the family made a sound track on a CD to accompany the rap. The students loved the rap. Lamont has performed rap at Loyola Park and at several clubs.

When Lamont was in 3rd grade his tutor was Elizabeth Connor, a former teacher at Walt Disney School. Ms. Connor loved working with Lamont. When Lamont was in 7th and 8th grades, his tutor was Stefanie Shanebrook, who also enjoyed working with him. Now attending high school, Lamont is writing songs this summer. He carries around a spiral notebook wherever he goes to write songs in.

GOOD NEWS OF STUDENTS

José (6th gr.) sang with the Goudy School choir this year. Also in the choir were Johnesha (7th) and Khadijah (6th). The Goudy choir sang a song by Vivaldi this year and many other songs.

Carly (10th), Andrew (9th), Adan (7th), Betzabe (7th), Andre (6th), and Salvador (5th) worked hard on math this year. Maria (8th) worked on English grammar. Fabricio (6th) read Charlotte's Web with his tutor. Ilse (6th) and her cousin Dulce (5th) worked on reports on science and social studies during the tutoring sessions. Shonesha (5th) read book after book this year. Marco (5th) asked a lot of questions about scientific phenomena while walking to the tutoring sessions. He also improved in writing. Vicente (4th) had a good time reading stories and talking about them with his tutor. Odalís (4th) continually improved in reading, writing, and arithmetic. Alexsandria (3rd), Leslie (3rd) and Vladimir (3rd) gained immensely in reading and math. Daisy (6th), Sbhat (4th), Yulisa (3rd), Itzel (3rd), Hugo (2nd), Fabiola (2nd), Denise (1st) and Marta (1st) learned English.

Student Magazines

The 5th - 8th graders and the 1st - 4th graders each put out two magazines of things they had written this year. The 1st-4th graders wrote on any topic. In the fall the 5th - 8th graders wrote on "The Year 2025" and in the spring they wrote on "Aspects of Africa."

"Aspects of Africa": To write about "Aspects of Africa," 5th - 8th graders brainstormed topics they were interested in, and tutors found short articles in books and on the internet for the students to read and write about. 29 students wrote 33 articles about an aspect of Africa. Some students did the assignment very quickly. Others took several sessions. Tutor Susan Mattison said, "We took *months* doing the assignment. Our topic was 'Rwandan Orphans.' My student, A___ (5th gr.), didn't understand what the article was about. She didn't know what an orphan was. She didn't know what 'to place a child' meant. She didn't understand about the civil war in Rwanda. First we had to understand the article from the book, then we made an outline, then we had to work sentence by sentence. I explained the method of organizing writing that I learned in college: Tell them what you are going to write about, write about it, tell them what you told them. Write it so *anyone* could pick up your paper off the floor and understand it. I noticed that A___ was not used to writing. Apparently there were not many writing opportunities in her classroom. Each sentence took us about 20 minutes. I feel it was a very worth while assignment."

To go along with the emphasis on Africa, the Family Night in the fall featured 2 speakers from Africa, musical instruments, and food from Africa. We hope the students gained an appreciation for the richness of culture in the many aspects of Africa.

"Sunshine"

The tutors noted that the stories of the 1st - 4th graders' magazine showed a tremendous gain in sentences, articulation, and thought process. Four 2nd and 3rd graders could not speak English at the beginning of the year. Three 1st graders were just learning English.

One series of stories in "Sunshine" were letters 3rd graders had written to a favorite tutor from Loyola University who had gone back home before the tutoring year ended. The students were really serious about writing to

her. We sent the letters to the tutor by email.

Letters to Julie, a tutor; sent by email

Dear Miss Julie, I miss you so much I want you to stay with me but I know you want to go. Thank you for your letter. It was so sweet. I love you so much. It hurt my feelings. In Goudy I like to type on the computer. On May 24 we went to a Field trip. We said a poem, and then went outside to do some activities. Then in the field trip we ate. Then we went to Goudy. We colored a Chicago flag. Then we traced a castle. Then we went home.
Love so much, Itzel (3rd gr.)

Dear Miss Julie, Miss Julie I like your letter and thank for your letter. And my mom say thank for your help because you are nice. And Itzel say you are nice. Miss Beth say thank you to because you help me and Itzel and Esther. And my teacher say thanks for helping me. My father say thank you for your help.

I love you always, Yulisa (3rd gr.)

Miss Julie we miss you so much. We always think about you. You always help us in everything. We wished that you didn't go. Today we had a problem. Itzel and Yulisa were mad at each other and the same day I lost my new hat. But let's get back to Yulisa and Itzel. They were mad because Yulisa said that she needed help but Itzel said that she always needs help and she always copies Itzel. Then Yulisa started crying and she didn't talk to Itzel. Then I said that I felt bad because I lost my hat and then Itzel said that I was making fun of Yulisa her best friend, and then Itzel got mad at me and then Itzel didn't want to say sorry and then it ended and they still didn't say sorry.

Sincerely, Esther (3rd gr.) We miss you.

Dear, Miss Julie Date 5/24/06

Miss Julie I thank you for helping me like a tutor. I still go with Miss Beth to tutoring. In three weeks I'm going to fourth grade. My teacher took us to a field trip today. Today the date was 5/24/06. My teacher this week taught me about things in fourth grade. I wish you had a good time because I had a good time.

Love, Michelle (3rd gr.)

A 3rd grader wrote a story for "Sunshine" about her First Communion (her mother was a

tutoring grad).

COMMUNION

Before my communion I practiced. When I practiced we went out, sat, then out. We went up, ate fake bread but real wine. When people went back they made face because the wine was nasty. When my communion was here it was raining. I was wearing my clothes for my after party. When we got to the church I changed to my dress. It was a big puff dress! I was stepping on it a little bit by accident. When it was time we stepped out, went to the back and came to our seats a few minutes. We stepped out and one at a time we took the bread and wine. When we got there we bow and step forward. If you write with your right hand, you put your left hand on top. If you write with your left hand, you put your right on top of your left or open your mouth. Then the priest will say the body of Christ. Then you say Amen. You go to the other priest and bow. Then he will say the blood of Christ. Then you say Amen. Then you go back to your seat. Then when everybody is done the kids will get together. Then everybody takes pictures and it's like they took thousands. When you're done you leave. Then do your after party.

Brenda (3rd gr.)

Here are two contrasting views of a tutor, with pictures.

Mr. Mike oh Mr. Mike

You are my worst nightmare. You destroy everything I do. You are like the grinch. I wonder if he is going to steal Christmas? You ruined all the fun for me. – Brenda (3rd gr.)

Mr. Mike is my best tutor in the whole wide world. He teaches me a lot. Maybe that's why he's so smart. I wonder how old he is. Maybe that's how smart he is. – Clara (3rd gr.)

WALKING TO TUTORING

Two days each week Susan Mattison and Beth Palmer picked up students from Goudy School and walked them to Bezazian Library for the tutoring session, and then walked them back home. With the discussions that took place, the walk was part of the mentor/student interaction.

In crossing busy streets they talked about watching out for cars and not assuming the drivers were going to watch out for us just

because we had a green light.

They noticed many different kinds of flowers and talked about buds, leaves, flowers, and seeds in early spring. They talked about not picking the flowers because more people could enjoy them in the yards. They noticed the moon around 4:30 pm when walking home; they discussed the moon's phases—that the moon doesn't actually change shape--, and tried to guess when the moon would be full. They noticed the obvious change in daylight (the length of the day) between December when it was almost dark at 4:30 pm and May when it was pure daylight at the same time.

The students also asked about earrings and clothes. They talked about "tone of voice," and thought about the different things different tones of voice might mean. The walk to and from the tutoring session was definitely an educational feature of the Tutoring Program.

ORGANIZATIONS SEND TUTORS TO INSPIRED YOUTH

The National Society of Collegiate Scholars of Loyola University sent 16 college students to mentor youth of Inspired Youth in the spring semester. Two more were already working with the children. The young men and women were interested in the children. They helped them with their school work and talked with them about things that interested them.

The Care Team sent eight people to tutor with Inspired Youth in the late spring. Led by Jessica Maiorca, the mentors helped the youth in the last part of the school year and participated in the spring Family Night.

TUTORS FROM NSCS: March to College

The Loyola chapter of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars sent many students from Loyola University to tutor in the Inspired Youth Program this spring. The children loved their tutors and learned a lot through working with them.

At the end of April NSCS sponsored a field trip for students from Inspired Youth to visit Loyola and meet other students from NSCS. We thought that 15-20 Inspired Youth would go, but 25 students took the train early on a Saturday morning to visit Loyola. Sixteen NSCS students met the youth and stayed with them through the day.

The visit to Loyola included some "games" for the college students and youth to get to

know each other, a tour of the campus, lunch of delicious pizza, and a panel/group discussion about going to college.

The youth had many comments during the day and during the discussion. While walking by the lake, Maria, an 8th grader exclaimed, "It's beautiful." While looking up and seeing a stained glass picture of Christ, Maria breathed, "Oh!" with a sense of awe. Several students were excited about the pizza. Sam, a 5th grader said, "This is the best pizza I've ever had. Much better than school." One student recalled, "I liked the echo-thingy" as she thought about the campus tour and the building on campus with a special echo. During the discussion Itzel, a 3rd grader said, "I like when the tutors help us with our work at the Tutoring Program." When the visit ended, Irene, a 12-year old said, "I don't want to go home. I don't want this day to end." Carla, a high school student said, "I'm going to college, and I want to go to Loyola."

This visit was very important. A few weeks earlier a tutor mentioned to a very bright 7th grader something about studying to go to college.

The girl said, "I'm not going to college."

"Not going to college?! Why?"

"I'm Mexican."

"Mexican? What does that have to do with going to college or not going to college?"

"Haven't you heard?"

During the field trip, the question was raised, "Can Mexicans go to college?" A college student stood up and said, "I can speak to that. I'm Mexican and I'm doing very well at Loyola. She went on to describe her major and the student organization she was in. She spoke in Spanish to tell the Hispanic students why it was important to go to college. She said she would give people her email address and help high school students with their college essay.

Inspired Youth loved the visit to Loyola sponsored by the NSCS. We hope NSCS will send tutors to the Tutoring Program in 2006-2007.

NEWS OF TUTORING GRADS

Shaton Watts is in Minneapolis, working at a Chinese take-out. The owner wants her to be a manager but she has no car, and her home is a 6-block walk from the bus. Nina Watts lives in Minneapolis and is taking care of her baby.

Mr. And Mrs. Hillman were driving along and saw Beth Palmer walking and stopped to talk to her about their grown-up children. Benita Hillman has two children. Jonathan has been ill and is in Reed Center. Emmanuel and Eureka are fine.

Diecell Marshall asked what was happening in the Tutoring Program. Beth Palmer said that Parents' Night was coming up. Diecell said, "Are they bringing back Parents' Nights?" Beth said, "Yes. Did you say a poem when you were in the program?" Diecell said, "I'm on the Internet!" Then he said, "We should have a big reunion of everyone who was in the program. I could invite ... everyone."

Larry White and his fiancée Dianna Balan had a huge birthday bash for their son Jakob for his first birthday. They held the party in the back yard of their new apartment on a beautiful sunny, spring day. Over 60 people came – friends, friends' preschool age children, and many relatives. Both grandfathers were there, one grandmother, one set of great grand-parents, and many other relatives on both sides of the family. People enjoyed heaps of food while talking to each other. The party was topped off by a piñata in the shape of a "one." Good time had by all.

Lamonica White and her daughter Cedria are living in Ames, IA. Lorenzo White is going to Joliet Jr. College and is on the football team.

Tanisha Winston will be a senior at Chicago State University. She is working for a B.A. and going into nursing. She has a son around 4 years old.

Bobby Dixon just graduated from Troy State University in Alabama, where he was a starter on the basketball team. He enjoyed traveling to different cities where the team played. He said, "I had such a wonderful time in college I just can't get it out of my mind." He was interviewed on television during the NBA draft.

SATURDAY PEER TUTORING

Students of Inspired Youth loved working with their Saturday peer tutors--eighth graders from Wilmette Jr. High School. On the last day of tutoring several children were crying because they knew they wouldn't see their tutors again.

The tutors were very dedicated in giving up

their Saturday mornings to come to Chicago to work with the children. Here are comments tutors wrote on the daily evaluation sheet:

Comments of Alli S., working with Anayeli, 6th gr.: 1/14 "Worked through a hard math problem well. She stays on task and doesn't give up." *4/8* "Tried hard and focused when discussing and reading about the difficult topic of apartheid." *5/6* "I loved working with Anayeli! She takes challenges well and is very bright!"

Comments of Kim H., working with Denise, 1st gr.: 2/25 "She is very good at math. She struggles with reading/writing/letters. I had to read to her a lot (Spanish/English translation). Very nice, but shy." *4/8* "Denise worked really well today. She was really focused. She really enjoyed drawing/coloring/math." *5/6* "Denise worked really well. She read without my help and wrote her own story. Her math is still very good."

Saturday Coordinator Susan Lorch Retires

For 6 years Susan Lorch, English teacher at Wilmette Jr. High, has been co-coordinator of eighth graders coming to tutor 1st-7th graders in the Tutoring Program in Chicago. She oversaw hundreds of kids involved over those years – Wilmette kids and Chicago kids! She gave up her Saturdays to be with kids like she was on Mondays through Fridays. She rounded up the youth, rode with them on the bus, maintained calm, and helped wherever needed; this was the foundation of the program. It created something that will be with those hundreds of youth all their lives.

When Susan read stories to groups of children, she brought the stories alive and her enthusiasm was contagious. Over the years, the kids have become good listeners and they love stories.

She had the children write poetry. One year on Valentine's Day she read several poems to the students. The poetry was so striking some people wanted her to read it again. Then she had the students write a poem "to" someone. The children put their poems on Valentines.

Susan did whatever was needed. When the children received turkeys (money was raised by the WJHS students), she drove children home with the heavy turkeys. She said, "Who is going with me?" She volunteered, not knowing where the children lived!

Susan Lorch has been one of the backbones of the Saturday Peer Tutoring

Program. She retired from teaching in June 2006 and we will miss her.

(Read more about the Saturday program in the April 2006 "Tutoring News.")

Parent Magazines Given to Tutoring Grads

Former coordinator of the Saturday Peer Tutoring Program, Connie Gallart decided to give subscriptions of the *Parent Magazine* to a few tutoring grads with children. She wants to extend the educational influence of the Tutoring Program to the children of grads.

CONCERT IN EVANSTON: Celebrate Life!

The Inspired Youth Singers sang as part of the 7th annual benefit concert for Evanston's Visiting Ministries, held at Reba Place Church in April. Nineteen youth aged 7-13, along with 4 adult leaders, 4 chaperones, 2 friends, and 2 preschool brothers rode on a school bus to Evanston. Of the 19 children in the choir, 5 were new the previous Monday; one was new two days before; they learned the 4 pieces in less than a week, with extra rehearsals.

The Inspired Youth Singers sang very well and looked calm in their blue T-shirts. Eleanor Bilby and Dorie Burrell directed the choir, with Beth Palmer playing the piano.

The two-hour concert was top-grade, dynamic, and exciting. The Oasis Drill Team shouted Bible verses. The large suburban Musical Offering Children's Choir sang classical music and jazz. A folk trio, Rooted Transformers, led the audience in familiar songs. A gospel choir and gospel quartet raised the roof with passionate, brilliant music.

In the midst of these "professional" groups, the Inspired Youth Singers was humble. A woman from another group asked if Inspired Youth was a "neighborhood choir." She said, "I saw you last year, too. Your youth were very determined."

A woman in the audience wanted the music for one of our songs, "Precious Lord." She said the children sang very well. She said it was moving and that the group added a depth of diversity to the afternoon concert.

The children enjoyed the two-hour concert and ate their share of home-made refreshments after the concert.

KIWANIS CLUB AT THE HILLTOP

Mike Delaney, afternoon tutor, invited the Inspired Youth Singers to sing for the Kiwanis

Club at the Hilltop Restaurant on Foster and California Ave. Ten children and their two directors took the Foster Ave. bus there.

Some of the children had never been in a fancy restaurant before. "Why are there two spoons?" "Is that liquor in the gold-tinted glass?" The best part was the food. Everyone got a cup of soup and found out about the rolls and the bread sticks. Then the hamburgers! They were as large as pancakes. The French fries were home made. (Some of the kids put "red rooster" on them.) For dessert there was angel food cake (one of the Kiwanians said, "Angel food cake in honor of the angels who are singing.") The angel food cake was topped with ice cream, strawberries, and whipped cream.

The children, looking very nice in their light blue T-shirts, sang six songs, directed by Dorie Burrell, with Beth Palmer playing the keyboard.

The Kiwanians enjoyed the program. Rev. Warren De Spain, of the Bethany Home, said it was a very meaningful program and he was glad he came. He also knows John Jenkins, a supporter of Inspired Youth.

USED COMPUTERS GIVEN TO STUDENTS

Crow Island School in Winnetka planed to get rid of 8-year old MacIntosh computers (without Internet) and asked if any families from Inspired Youth would like one. With 8 phone calls we found 8 families who would like one--Johnson, Dotton, Young, Estrada, Thomas, Arvidez, Trujillo, and Sanchez, families with a total of 25 children, including preschoolers.

Teri Frigo (Girl Scout colleague of Eva Schwinge) and Tony Spreitzer from Crow Island School brought the computers to Chicago. They took them to the children's homes and set them up.

The children were eager and excited to get the computers. Breanna couldn't sleep the night before it came because she was thinking about the computer. In the morning, even though the computer wasn't scheduled to come until 2:30 pm, when the doorbell rang at 9:30 am, she shouted, "The computer's here!" Veronica was waiting outside for the computer so that the teachers from Winnetka would know the right door. Esther's eyes were huge when the computer came. She couldn't take

her eyes off it. Asia's brother helped set it up himself. Clara's mother started to use it right away because she had always wanted to learn how to use one. Clara has used it a lot since.

Since the computers came, the children have been using them for hours at a time. Everyone is grateful for their gift from Crow Island School.

DONATIONS NEEDED: Inspired Youth, Inc. is doing a lot with minimal funds, and your contributions are important for enriching the lives of children and families in Uptown/Edgewater. Checks may be made to "Inspired Youth" and sent to Inspired Youth, 5715 N. Ridge, Chicago, IL 60660.