

TUTORING NEWS: INSPIRED YOUTH

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OCTOBER FAMILY NIGHT

"It was remarkable to have such a renowned person as Hector Molina [sportscaster for Spanish-language radio] come to speak at the Parents' Night," exclaimed Nita Keating, afternoon tutor, about the October Family Night. "Where did we get him? He spoke about his experiences in Vietnam and about going to college afterwards. It was remarkable."

Over 70 people came to the Inspired Youth Family Night to meet each other and celebrate children at Edgewater Presbyterian Church. Several young families walked 3/4 of a mile to come, pushing their infants in strollers and carrying a dish of food to share. We "lucked out" on the weather. The previous day had been unbearably hot (two days prior runners fainted from heat in the Chicago Marathon). The day after was cold. Family Night was perfect.

Pat Charles, president of the Board of Directors of Inspired Youth Inc., opened the evening with a prayer. Youth served the bountiful pot-luck supper. It was heart-warming to see one of the 13-year olds serving food. When he was younger, he had been "one of the least of these my brothers and sisters." Now he was serving people responsibly, knowing what he was doing.

After dinner the Youth Choir sang. Dorie Burrell directed the choir. It was stupendous! In rehearsals the students had been ragged and rough. Now at Family Night, 17 youth stood in front of the families and sang out lustily and beautifully. One mother came just to hear her 5-year old sing in the choir for the first time. All the families were pleased.

Hector Molina, radio sportscaster for the Chicago White Sox and Milwaukee Brewers, had been invited by tutor Jim Conlon. Mr. Molina also used to broadcast Bulls' games, but not recently. He knew Michael Jordan and Scotty Pippin.

At the Family Night he spoke first in English and then in Spanish. Mr. Molina came from a small town in Puerto Rico. His dad went to school through 8th grade and then began picking sugar cane. His mom had a 3rd grade education. Their family moved to New York City. After high school Mr. Molina went to Vietnam during the war. One of his buddies had gone to Hunter College. He asked Hector Molina what he was going to do after the war. Hector said,

"Get a job." His buddy said, "No, don't do that. Get an education. It will last you your whole life." So when Hector Molina got back to the US, he went to college on the GI bill.

He told the students, "There are going to be roadblocks in your way to stop you from getting an education: friends who are gang-bangers, your girl friend, your boy friend. Don't let anything dissuade you from getting an education."

During Mr. Molina's talk there was a sense of peacefulness in the whole group. People felt a sense of gratitude about being there. One of the parents was so impressed by Mr. Molina that she told her own parents about the Family Night the next day.

REPORT ON FAMILY NIGHT, from a tutor,

Veronica Neubauer

Honestly, it is always such a pleasure to be with all our "folks/families." I truly enjoy doing this. I hope Quita starts coming back to the tutoring. When I saw her I mentioned that I thought she told me last year that she was moving out of the city (to the burbs). Quita said it fell thru. Actually, I was surprised that she referred to me as "her" tutor, even though it was only for a few times that we "grouped." Nonetheless, I hope this is a new beginning for her.

I picked up one of the mothers to take her to the pot-luck. She is in very, very bad health and she also has other adversities. I gave her my address and phone # for her to call me for anything.

I can honestly say that I firmly believe that God puts every individual on this earth on journeys that intersect with many others whom HE wants us to show love, compassion, and attention to because this is an integral part of our existence. We all reap so many joys and blessings because of this.

Thank you for letting me be a part of this journey.

Sincerely, Veronica ;)

SATURDAY COORDINATORS TO EVALUATE READING LEVELS OF STUDENTS

Julie Nesheim and Steve Rish, teachers at Wilmette Junior High School, will be evaluating the reading level of Saturday tutoring students. They will begin Nov. 3 and note children's progress during the year.

SATURDAY TUTORING

"This is the best thing I do all year," exclaimed Steve Rish, teacher at Wilmette Junior High and co-coordinator of the Saturday Program of Inspired Youth. "This makes my week. I love teaching kids and even better, I love seeing kids teach other kids." He pointed to the room full of 13-year olds patiently helping 6-13 year olds with reading, writing, and arithmetic. "I'm not religious," he reflected, "but right here," he pointed to the youth, "is the spirit of God."

The first day of Saturday Tutoring was a perfect, crystal clear day with a perfect temperature. 45 eighth graders from Wilmette Jr. High came to work with 32 children of Inspired Youth. Some Chicago children walked a long way to the program. Gustavo (7th gr.) walked a mile by himself to get there. Sophia (2nd gr.) walked 2 miles with her mom who was pushing a stroller with two infants while keeping track of her 5-year old son. Ashton (6th gr.) walked and Lamarr (2nd) and Summone (1st) rode bikes over a mile to come. Myanna's younger brother and sister came, but Myanna (5th gr.) couldn't come because she had to stay home to help take care of her 3 infant siblings.

Efrain (4th gr.) was ecstatic about being there. On the way he talked about last year when he did the crab walk in the relay races. He grinned, "I fell down but didn't hurt myself." He was laughing and happy the whole morning working with his tutor.

Gamaliel (5th gr.) worked with two tutors. An adult said to the tutors, "Isn't Gamaliel a great student?" Before the tutors could reply, Gamaliel exclaimed, "These are the two best tutors ever!"

After studying, the 4th-7th graders played kickball outside and the 1st-3rd graders decorated mini-pumpkins. Everyone was happy.

TUTORS FROM LOYOLA'S NSCS AND FUTURE TEACHERS

Many students from the Loyola chapter of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars are tutoring with Inspired Youth this year. Laura White, an officer of NSCS tutored last year just for the experience and became hooked. She came this year and asked, "Where is Sophia whom I tutored last year?" when told she had transferred to a school nearer her home Laura said, "I have Sophia's picture on my refrigerator. I know I'll enjoy working with my student this year."

Loyola's Future Teachers Club is also sending tutors this year. The college students are getting good experience and the children enjoy working with them.

TUTORING YEAR LAUNCHED: 2007/2008

Tutoring is off to a good start. Years ago it took two months for students to learn how to study in the program. This year they began studying the first day.

Every week new students and tutors are signing up to participate. Here are the people in Inspired Youth as of mid-October 2007:

	STUDENTS	TUTORS	WJHS
Mon. HS	9	9	
Tues. 5th-8th	22	18	
Wed. 1st-4th	23	19	
Thurs. 1st-4th	23	20	
Sat. 1st-7th	32*	6	45
Choir, K-HS	26	7	
	(*24 Sat. students are not in another section)		
TOTAL	78	61	45

FIRST GRADERS GALORE

Inspired Youth has 11 first graders and 3 second graders learning to read. It is exciting to roll these children into reading. Christopher Z., Jonathan D., Yaheim, and Kedus can already read. Another child, Omega, said after the first day of tutoring, "I couldn't read, but they taught me how to read. I couldn't write, but they taught me how to write. I am so happy." Tora approaches reading like a mountain climber. With energy and power, she reaches, grabs, and pulls herself up, reaches, grabs, and pulls herself up. In a soft voice Marleni says the sounds the letters make, but she is working on saying and knowing the English words. Jayla, Joshua, Christopher S. and Summone are working to decode the letters and figure out what words they make. Summone spent over an hour sounding out, reviewing, and being able to read eight sight and rhyming words from school. Brayant and Mario are reviewing "Tip" from last year and beginning to read "Bears." Keily is concentrating on phonics homework from school. It is exciting to watch these children learn to read.

DONATIONS NEEDED: Inspired Youth, Inc. is doing a lot with minimal funds. Your contributions are important for enriching the lives of children and families in Uptown in Chicago. Inspired Youth is a 501(c)(3) organization with the IRS, so your contributions are tax-deductible. Checks may be made to "Inspired Youth" and sent to *Inspired Youth, 5715 N. Ridge, Chicago, IL 60660.*