

TUTORING NEWS: INSPIRED YOUTH

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Caring Tutors, Wonderful Students

The Fall session of the Inspired Youth Tutoring Program had a smooth start. The tutors and the students were fully engaged on Day 1. Twenty years ago in tutoring programs children took six weeks to learn to study and concentrate, but in the past few years, schools have been preparing students better. Now students are expected to learn in kindergarten what first graders once learned.

The tutors have always been good, but the tutors this year are wonderful. Several professors at Loyola University require their students to complete 20 hours of community service as a form of experiential learning. The college students participate in hands-on justice, as they help rectify the educational disparities of society through tutoring individual children. And the children get to learn.

So far, these people are participating:

Mon., 10 HS, 2 elem., 14 tutors
Tues., 23 5th-8th graders, 20 tutors
Wed., 26 1st-4th graders, 27 tutors
Thurs., 26 1st-4th graders, 22 tutors

Stable neighborhood

In the Wed./Thurs. section of the tutoring program every single child from last spring returned. The families that had their children in the program last year wanted their children to be involved this year, too. In addition, there are 8 new first graders in the program, all of whom have siblings in the program. We have noticed a synergy when several members of a family are in the program. Five new families wanted their

children to join the 1st-4th grade section, but the children had to be put on the waiting list because the space is full. People talk about transient neighborhoods and families moving a lot. It doesn't seem to apply to Uptown/Edgewater. Only one family moved – two blocks!

“The Hundred Dresses”

In October, 25 children, 4 parents and the tutoring director are going to the Royal George Theater to see the play “The Hundred Dresses.” The trip is sponsored by tutor Lisa Witmer, who works at the box office of the Royal George Theater and got a discount on the tickets for Inspired Youth. During the first weeks of tutoring, student/tutor pairs are reading the book, “The Hundred Dresses,” a Newbery Honor book, in order to know about the story, which is about bullying.

New Sound Equipment

In September Inspired Youth purchased new sound equipment: a small speaker, a small amplifier, two microphones, and 2 mic stands. This equipment will be used at Family Nights and Youth Choir concerts, and the piano recital. It will be especially important in June when the students recite poems for the families. The equipment is replacing a system which is 15 years old and is literally falling apart. The wire mesh on the heads of the two mics fell off a few years ago and is being held on by scotch tape. The children will be excited to be using the new sound equipment.

Christopher and Tori

On first day of 1st-4th grade tutoring Christopher (3rd gr.) cried, "Where's my tutor?" Beth Palmer said, "She's going to Hollywood to become an actress. Nesreen is your new tutor. Isn't she beautiful?" Chris had worked with Tori Oman spring semester and saw her during the summer because her apartment was across the street from a park where he played. When Christopher saw Tori going home in July, he ran to catch up with her. Now in September he couldn't understand why she wasn't at tutoring. He put his head down and cried softly for around 20 minutes.

On Thursday at tutoring Chris read a little and did 4 math problems (math facts) and then got frustrated. He sat under the table and began to look at the book again. Nesreen joined him under the table with another copy of the book.

Walking home after tutoring we saw a car pass with people madly waving. The car pulled over and Tori jumped out! Chris ran up to her. "Why didn't you come to tutoring?" She gently explained, "In four days I'm going to California to become an actress." Christopher and Tori stood there for a minute--Christopher, short, with a scar on his dirty face, Tori, tall, kind, beautiful, with dangling feather earrings. The soft way she said to him, "I'm going to California to become an actress," seemed like a scene from a movie. The two characters stood silent for a moment in time. Chris said, "Are you coming to tutoring next week?" He didn't understand. Tori said, "I can't come next Thursday. I'll be in California. Chris, I want you to meet my parents." Her mother waved and said "Hi," from the car. Her lanky father got out of the car and reached down to shake hands with Christopher. "Keep your eyes on the prize," he said. "That's what I heard all while I was growing

up," Tori told Chris. We could see the support she got. She said, "Chris, did you study hard today?" Chris nodded. "Be good," she said. Beth Palmer said, "Tori, we hope you do well." Her father said, "That's what we hope."

"They Are Precious in His Sight"

The eight new first graders seem so small compared with last year's first graders (as we remember them from May).

This year's second graders learned a lot last year during first grade. In September 2008 they couldn't read and could hardly do math. Now all of them are reading and doing basic arithmetic. Darryl (2nd gr.) read without balking. Kalip's (2nd gr.) tutor said, "He's doing fine in math."

This year's third graders have come a long way. Beginning in April 2009 we could see how Summone (then 2nd gr.) was starting to apply herself. This year as a 3rd grader she is focused.

The students in fourth grade through high school seem very mature. They are concentrating on their work and learning. On the second day, Mario's (4th gr.) tutor wrote: "Did a good job. Worked the whole hour and a half." (Up to mid-2nd grade he kept hiding in the stacks of the library.)

An old Sunday School song describes the children in Inspired Youth:

*Jesus loves the little children,
All the children of the world.
Red and yellow, black and white,
They are precious in his sight.
Jesus loves the little children
of the world.*