

TUTORING NEWS: INSPIRED YOUTH

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FALL TUTORING IS BUZZING

The Tutoring Program of Inspired Youth at the Bezazian Branch of the Chicago Public Library is packed, with many volunteers helping many students. The 5th-12th grade section is calm; the two 1st-4th grade days buzz with excitement. It is a good experience for everyone.

Here are the people participating so far:

Mon., 13 HS, 22 5th - 8th graders, 30 tutors

Wed., 31 1st-4th graders, 29 tutors

Thurs., 32 1st-4th graders, 27 tutors

Alt. Sat., 40 K-8th graders (21 beyond the weekday program), 51 peer tutors from Wilmette

Total: 88 individual students (98 tutor/student sessions during the week days, and 40+ tutor/student sessions two Sat./month).

This is about the same number of students as in 2009-2010, but the Wed./Thurs. sections of 1st-4th graders show a 16% increase in attendance this year over last year. A lot of children are doing a lot of work in the afternoons.

THE BEGINNING OF THE TUTORING YEAR

When Lizbeth V. (2nd gr.) heard the Tutoring Program was about to begin, she exclaimed, "I love tutoring. I love to go there."

Tutors' meetings set a good tone. College students who volunteered last year couldn't wait to see their students again. Several tutors said, "I can't wait to get started." "I'm looking forward to starting."

In the first week of tutoring, Jennifer R. (1st gr.) said, "I didn't read before, but I read that book" (Tip I). Her tutor said, "Jennifer didn't know how to add, but she learned today."

The tutor of Fernando B. (2nd gr.) wrote, "He's a bright boy. After he got settled (which took half an hour) he did everything very quickly."

The tutor of Jaritz E. (2nd gr.) wrote: "Math is difficult for her, but she's picking up."

With his tutor's help, Kalip T. (3rd gr.) wrote an excellent essay on about, "My Neighborhood."

On Thursday, Rickiah J. (1st gr.) couldn't do $2 + 3 = \underline{\quad}$ or $6 - 2 = \underline{\quad}$. She refused to try. On Fri. she practiced addition and subtraction on her

fingers. At Sat. tutoring she did two sides of a math worksheet. She learns fast! Rickiah, on her good side, is curious and enthusiastic. On the way to tutoring, she found a long seed pod on the ground and turned it into a percussion instrument. She loves to sing. In kindergarten last year her class sang "We Are the World" in English, Spanish, and Urdu. Now she makes up her own songs in Spanish (her own version) and made up languages. Maybe she'll be a linguist.

Darylmiah W. (1st gr.) had a hard math assignment: to count by 5's as far as he could. At the beginning of the homework worksheet he could count to 15. By the end of the worksheet he counted to 100 twice, with a little stumbling. By the next week he counted by 5's to 100 with no mistakes.

Fernando B. (2nd gr.) has scars all over his face. During a tutoring session in late Oct. he said he wanted to read a book from the library. He selected a book of scary stories, at Level 2. He read the whole book during the session! He was so proud. He said, "I want to read all the books."

Brayant S. (5th gr.) is behind his grade level. It's hard to get him to do math and to write answers to questions about the stories he reads. One day his tutor couldn't come. He did a math work sheet all by himself. Then he read half a chapter book and wrote answers to all the questions. He was proud to be able to do this by himself.

Four little brothers are coming to tutoring and are doing beautifully -- Isaac R. (1st gr.), Kevin R. (1st gr.), Darylmiah W. (1st gr.), and Frankie F. (K) -- all serious students and learning to read.

Every fall the progress the students made the previous year jumps out at us. As a 1st grader Marleny R. (4th gr.) played and wouldn't do a thing. In 2nd grade she started working. She kept working in 3rd grade. Now at the beginning of 4th grade she is analyzing stories and writing articulate reports. We knew she could do better, but we didn't anticipate this!

Nathaniel B. (2nd gr.): Self-motivated, he whips through math work sheets, writes sentence after sentence, and reads. His mother and father are happy.

Mary Ann B. (6th gr.) is conscientious about her work. Last year (5th gr.) she started from scratch to learn the times tables. This year her mind is more alert and she's more articulate. Last June she wrote: "Dear Ms Beth, Thank you for doing a program on tutoring and singing class. For the program I did in tutoring I did better in school and for singing class I learned more songs that I like. That is why you are the best." Her mother wrote: "Ms. Beth, I really, really thank you for your program. My 2 daughters enjoy all the activities. I don't have to force them. Thank you!!!"

FAMILY NIGHT

Inspired Youth's fall Family Night was a huge success. We were expecting 85 people to come, but 109 poured into the Edgewater Presbyterian Church for the event – parents, students, little brothers and sisters, and lots of tutors. Tutors got to meet the parents of their tutees and experience the family groups and relatives. Parents got to see the tutors and be part of the Tutoring Program experience. Students had a good time with their friends, parents, and the tutors.

Tutors were everywhere during the evening. They cooked hotdogs, brought delicious food (food kids enjoy), they got more chairs when so many people came, they served the food, cleaned up, and washed the dishes. It was a bountiful potluck dinner.

After dinner the Youth Choir sang. People loved it when one after the other the students sang solo lines on "We Are the World." They said it was "very dear," and "so cute."

The main feature for the evening was training in Conflict Resolution. Tutors at each table led the students and parents in resolving scenarios of conflict using the "Five Steps to Peace." This was the first time the program has done this at a Family Night, but everyone was engaged. Everyone enjoyed it. (See the pictures on Inspired Youth's Facebook page, www.facebook.com/inspiredyouth.)

The evening concluded with a big dance! Everyone joined pinkies in a large circle around the Fellowship Hall. The Youth Choir sang the song "Neath Vine and Fig Tree," and led the students, parents, and tutors in a Middle Eastern/Israeli/ Assyrian circle dance. The pictures on Facebook show what a good time everyone had. At the end of the dance, everyone cheered! Scart, a parent said,

"It was so much fun!" Maxine, the church's security guard, heard it from the end of the hall and said, "I really liked the 'Vine and Fig Tree.' You all had so much fun!"

SATURDAY TUTORING

Two days before the first day, 2 more children registered. On the day of tutoring, 2 more registered for the 2nd session. The first day was smooth as cream. The 50 8th grade peer tutors from Wilmette Jr. High School were already like teachers, helping the 40 younger children with reading, writing, and arithmetic. After working in the folders, the youth enjoyed decorating mini-pumpkins and then playing fruit basket upset. Everyone had a good day.

MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY

In September the law firm Much Shelist took Inspired Youth to the Museum of Science and Industry on the south side of Chicago. It is the largest museum devoted to science in the Western Hemisphere. 21 children (4th-8th grade), 4 parents, 5 tutors, with 5 attorneys and two children from Much Shelist, spent a day interacting with and reveling in science at the museum. The larger group divided into groups of 4-5 children, a parent, tutor, and attorney, and walked around in wonder at the fascinating, interactive displays. Some of the favorites among the children were the trip to the coal mine, watching a real chick hatch from a real egg, watching how a tornado develops, tractors and farm equipment, distorted mirrors, and making silly putty. The reports the children wrote on the way home on the bus about what they liked and what they learned are posted on Inspired Youth's website.

The trip was sponsored by the law firm, Much Shelist. In response to Inspired Youth's letter of appreciation, Morrie Much, one of the founders of the firm and chief sponsor of the field trip, wrote:

"It was our pleasure, really. You and your volunteers do a wonderful job during the year tutoring over 100 kids per week and teaching them piano.

"I only hope that the museum sparks further curiosity and desire to appreciate all there is to learn—like tsunamis, tornados, the births of chicks, weather around the world, etc. The museum is a great place to open eyes and the mind. You and your tutors can help them along to get there."

SCHOOL SUPPLIES FROM LAW FIRM MUCH SHELIST

The law firm Much Shelist collected hundreds of dollars worth of school supplies and snacks for Inspired Youth. Thank you, Much Shelist!

What the children really were excited about were the “lead” (mechanical) pencils. Last year about 20 lead pencils were put in the older students’ tutoring folders. The first students to see them rifled through all the folders and took all the lead pencils. This year each student received a lead pencil to take home and a lead pencil for the tutoring folder. The students also received pens to use at home. The crayons, rulers, sharpies, and beautiful folders Much Shelist collected will be used during the tutoring sessions. Cookies and snacks will be given out at the end of each tutoring session. Thank you, Much Shelist, for this bonanza.

OVERHEARD

Kaleidoscopic conversation the day before Election Day between an adult and a 6th grade girl:

“Tell your mom to vote tomorrow.”

“Who should they vote for?”

“I like Giannoulis.”

Student: “I like the girl.”

“Who? Hilary Clinton?”

“Yes.”

“She’s not running this time. She’s Secretary of State.”

“Who is the one you like running against?”

“Mark Kirk.”

“Why do you like the other one?”

“Because the Republicans don’t want the rich people to pay any taxes.”

“What do you mean, taxes?”

“When your mom and dad work and get their pay check, the government takes out some money for taxes.”

The student was horrified, “What?!!!”

“Yes. How do you think the streets get paved?”

“Who pays for the schools and the libraries?”

“The library is free.”

“We all have to pay for them.”

HARD NEWS

The brother of Dorie B.’s daughter-in-law Sara was shot in the head and killed. Dorie knew the young man and knows his parents. Sara is “trying to be strong” for her parents.

POLITICIAN VISITS INSPIRED YOUTH

Hearth Steans, a State Senator in the Illinois Senate, visited Inspired Youth at Bezazian Library on Thurs., Oct. 7. The 1st-4th graders and their tutors listened with wide eyes as she told them about her work in Springfield: making laws and working on the stated budget for education, health care and libraries. During question time the children asked, “Do you arrest people?” “Why is there a curfew?” This was a teachable moment. We hope everyone voted on Nov. 2. The election was very important.

DONATIONS WELCOME Inspired Youth does a lot with minimal funds because of the many people who volunteer. Your contributions are important for enriching the lives of children and families in Uptown in Chicago. Inspired Youth Inc. is a 501(c)(3) corporation with the IRS, so donations are tax deductible.

Contributions to Inspired Youth can be made through PayPal on the Donations page of the website: www.inspiredyouthchicago.org