

# TUTORING NEWS: INSPIRED YOUTH

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### **1. INSPIRED YOUTH SINGERS PERFORM AT FOUR SEASONS HOTEL FOR LAWYERS LEND-A-HAND TO YOUTH AWARDS DINNER**

“We’re going to sing at a hotel!” “We’re going to sing at a hotel!” The children were so excited about getting to “sing at a hotel!” Not only that -- they were going to the exclusive Four Seasons Hotel in downtown Chicago.

On Thurs., Mar. 31, 35 people from Inspired Youth took the CTA bus to the Four Seasons Hotel-- 23 children, 7 parents, 2 directors, a helper, a board member, and 2 high school students who represented the Tutoring Program.

As the group got off the CTA bus on north Michigan Avenue, the children gasped with awe to see the huge skyscrapers and the luxurious shops. At the hotel they were met by a friendly doorman wearing a long coat and an interesting hat. In the lobby they took a group picture to remember the occasion.

They took the elevator to the seventh floor to put their coats in the “green room.” They couldn’t get over that the “green room” was gold.

The children were hyper with excitement. “The soap in the bathrooms smells so fresh,” exclaimed Edward (4<sup>th</sup> gr.). “There’s even a sink in the bathroom stall!” Another said, “The paper towels are real cloth!”

Afterwards David R. (6<sup>th</sup> gr.) reflected, “Everything was fancy,”--the huge chandeliers, the

mirrors, the ornate furnishings. Leslie G. (6<sup>th</sup> gr.) said, “It’s like a castle.” Michel R. (6<sup>th</sup> gr.) said, “It was like home. I felt comfortable,” perhaps because of the thick rugs and the couches.

Marco G. (6<sup>th</sup> gr.) said, “I saw men in tuxedos and women in fancy dresses.” Fermin E. (11<sup>th</sup> gr.) said, “They looked like they were really rich.”

Families took pictures on the grand staircase leading up to the ballroom.

The choir sang during the reception time, while the guests were coming into the banquet hall. The choir stood in a corner of the large “living room” at the top of the grand staircase. As the people came up the stairs, they stopped to listen to the children singing, and they clapped.

The choir sang 26 songs, for 55 minutes. They sang really well, with a beautiful tone. The repertoire was mostly secular. The children had only a month to prepare for this special concert because at the end of February they had just sung a concert of religious music -- the Youth Choir Fest. The choir learned seven new songs for this concert, as well as singing repertoire from last year-- peace songs and Disney songs. The children sang well, and it was a wonderful evening.

Four songs from the evening can be heard on [www.facebook.com/inspiredyouth](http://www.facebook.com/inspiredyouth).

### **2. INSPIRED YOUTH REPRESENTED BY TWO HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH AND A BOARD MEMBER AT THE LAWYERS LEND-A-HAND TO YOUTH AWARDS DINNER**

While the Inspired Youth Singers were performing, Hirut N. and Fermin E., two high school students from Inspired Youth, and board member Pamela Loose were at a display table of Inspired Youth, Inc. talking to people who came by. The three stayed for the banquet and sat at a table with people from another tutor/mentor program.

After dinner three dignitaries who founded Lawyers Lend-A-Hand to Youth received awards. Hirut N., from Inspired Youth, made a short speech and presented an award to Judge Michael B.

Hyman, a Cook County Circuit Court judge since 2006. Judge Hyman was part of the law firm Much Shelist when he founded LLAH, and since Inspired Youth was a recipient of the Much Shelist Founders Award, Hirut, from Inspired Youth, presented him with the award. Everyone was proud of Hirut.

The speeches given during the banquet were very uplifting. LLAH raised a lot of money, through ticket prices and an auction, to donate to tutor/mentor programs throughout Chicago.

Pictures of the high school youth and the choir are on Inspired Youth's Facebook community page, [www.facebook.com/inspiredyouth](http://www.facebook.com/inspiredyouth).

### **3. STUDENTS MAKE GALLOPING PROGRESS**

Jennifer R. (1<sup>st</sup> gr.) finished reading a book and began a book of the next level. She read the whole book and was very proud.

Three first graders in the afternoon program are reading short books every tutoring session: Isaac R., Rickiah J., and Darylmiah W. The other four first graders all finished reading pre-primer books and are reading basal readers: Jennifer R., Jahit H., Kevin R., and Estefany V.

Six second graders are reading short books and doing worksheets about them: Jose L., Yulissa L., Fatima D., Fernando B., Efrain B., and Amaire P.

Other 2<sup>nd</sup> graders are reading better and better: Jaely E., Melissa D.C., Jovanny S., Lizbeth V., and Ana L.

Jose L. (2<sup>nd</sup> gr.) is working like a locomotive. One day he finished reading a book and did so well he jumped two levels. After he finished one book, he picked up another and continued reading. He wouldn't stop reading. He was like a small steam engine. He plowed through and kept on going.

One day tutor Jose Yanez was working with Fernando B. (2<sup>nd</sup> gr.) who is bright, but "at risk." That day Fernando read a library book "cover to cover." He did several math work sheets, as well as his school homework. His tutor wrote on the evaluation sheet: "Great day Doing awesome work Ivy League" No tutor has ever written "Ivy League" on the evaluation sheet in the Tutoring Program before!

A visitor to the 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> grade section said, "These children study well. I bet the high school group is rowdy and rambunctious." "No, they are quiet and studious. Some of the students have been in the program for 5 or 10 years and have learned to

study. The students who don't settle down get rowdier and drop out; some join a gang."

Sixth graders have to go to summer school if their grades aren't high enough. But here is what some 6<sup>th</sup> graders said: Guadalupe M.: "I won't have to go to summer school. I pulled my grades up!" David R.: "I'm doing much better in math. I don't think I'll have to go to summer school." Marco G.: "Not me! I'm getting all A's and B's!" Leslie G.: "I don't think so. I'm getting A's, B's and one C." About Michele R.: "We don't know. She got a failure notice."

Five students in special education have progressed substantially because of the Tutoring Program. K.F. (5<sup>th</sup> gr.) refused to come to the program in 1<sup>st</sup> grade. In 2<sup>nd</sup> grade she came and didn't try. In 3<sup>rd</sup> grade she began to learn to read. Now in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, she is very serious, and she tries. She enjoys math, she loves writing and is working hard to read better. M.D.C. (5<sup>th</sup> gr.) has been very influenced by the Tutoring Program. This year in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, he brings school homework, and his tutor Alan Feiler helps him. He works well and continues to progress. B.S. (5<sup>th</sup> gr.) finds math very difficult. He likes to read and loves to write. He draws pictures to illustrate what he writes. For the assignment, "Picture Yourself There," he wrote the most imaginative story of all the students! L.A.B. (7<sup>th</sup> gr.) has improved significantly in reading, writing, and in relating to the other students. She has to keep working on reading comprehension. O.B. (8<sup>th</sup> gr.) continues to progress. For students with learning disabilities, it takes a few years of patient work for them to progress. All these students are doing better and better.

### **4. EXCITEMENT AT SATURDAY TUTORING**

"Oooooe! Saturday tutoring! Wooooee!" shrieked Jamileth D. (5<sup>th</sup> gr.) when she knew there would be Saturday tutoring on Apr. 16, the first day of Spring Break.

It was drizzling in the morning when 15 out of 35 students walked, ran, and scooted to Margate Park to do reading, writing, arithmetic, conflict resolution, and origami with 8<sup>th</sup> grade tutors from Wilmette Jr. High School.

Afterwards Jamileth D. (5<sup>th</sup> gr.) said, "I did everything in my folder! Next time give me more math – division and fractions. I could do another report on Chicago, maybe on the Civil War." Her brother, Efrain B. (2<sup>nd</sup> gr.) said, "Civil War? That was 150 years ago." Very few of the students in the tutoring program know that the Civil War was 150

years ago. Perhaps their class had just read about Fort Sumter in the Scholastic Readers.

Families see the importance of the Tutoring Program. Rickiah J. (1<sup>st</sup> gr.) was picked up at home by her great-grandmother (“Granny”). They took an L-train and a bus to get to Saturday tutoring.

Here are comments 8<sup>th</sup> grade tutors made on the evaluation sheet: “Cordell Y., (7<sup>th</sup> gr.) is a great kid + quick learner; works diligently.” Jennifer S. (6<sup>th</sup> gr.): “Great job! Worked hard on math.” “Arturo P., (5<sup>th</sup> gr.) needs very little help and is a pleasure to work with.” Josephine A. (3<sup>rd</sup> gr.): Great at multiplication.” Melissa D. (2<sup>nd</sup> gr.): “Very good! Melissa stays focused and is hard working! Her reading has improved.”

## 5. TUTORING GRADS

Linda M., is a junior at Schurz H.S. She had been in the Inspired Youth Tutoring Program and Inspired Youth Singers when she was in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, before she moved away. She remembered being in the Tutoring Program “for at least 2-3 years.” She told Beth Palmer, “That was one of the best decisions I ever made.” “What was?” She said, “Joining the youth choir.” Beth was in awe.

Danielle S., is a senior at St. Scholastica High School. Danielle had been in Inspired Youth’s predecessor program from 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grades and in the Inspired Youth Tutoring Program from 6<sup>th</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup> grades. She said, “My brother and I were just talking about the Tutoring Program yesterday.” “What were you talking about?” Danielle said, “My brother liked the cookies.” Then she said, “I just now thought of Conflict Resolution.” Danielle will be going to Benedictine University in the fall. We are very proud of Danielle and her brother Denzell, a junior at Senn H.S.

Johnesha J., a senior at Rickover Naval Academy, was in Inspired Youth from 3<sup>rd</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup> grade. In January her contact lens seriously injured her eye. The eye is still healing.

Fermin E., a junior at Amundsen, is taking two AP classes and the rest honors classes. He was in the Tutoring Program from 4<sup>th</sup>-through 8<sup>th</sup> grades.

Monique S. is graduating from HS this June.

Quiana J. is still working at 911. Her daughter Briana is a junior in HS. Shenika J. is doing home care. Dwayne J. is incarcerated. Quiana and Dwayne were in the Tutoring Program in its first year, 1985-1986.

## 6. 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL YOUTH CHOIR FEST

Five children’s choirs sang in the Youth Choir Fest in February, this year held at Rogers Park Baptist Church.

The highlight of the concert was the final song of the combined choir, “I Need You to Survive.” Afterwards Jennifer R. (1<sup>st</sup> gr.) said, “I started crying (because it was so moving).” She told that to the pianist, Pastor Keith Edwards. Director Margaret Hoover said, “My students sang out more on that song than ever before!”

Three of the choirs were from Chicago (Rogers Park Baptist, Inspired Youth, and Hermon Baptist) and two were from Evanston (Multi-Cultural Children’s Choir and Oasis). All the choirs had 13-19 members each.

Rogers Park Baptist Church made the afternoon an extra special event for the children. After the concert they prepared a banquet, with white table cloths, sparkly decorations, and favors for the children--decorated sacks as mementos of the afternoon. Everyone felt honored

## 7. DONATIONS TO INSPIRED YOUTH, INC.

Inspired Youth has a wide range of donors. In the past year gifts have come from a foundation, law firm, church women’s group, service organization, and around 40 individuals, including present and former tutors, parents of 8<sup>th</sup> graders from Wilmette Jr. High School, pastors, friends, family, and community members. Donations have ranged from \$25 to \$7,000. Inspired Youth appreciates all these donations.

Because of the many people who volunteer, Inspired Youth does a lot with minimal funds to enrich the lives of children and families in Uptown/Edgewater 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](http://www.inspiredyouthchicago.org), or mailed to “Inspired Youth,” 5715 N. Ridge, Chicago, IL 60660.