

# TUTORING NEWS: INSPIRED YOUTH

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## Fall 2012

### FALL TUTORING OFF TO A GOOD START

This fall 98 youth are being tutored by 82 adult volunteers and 50 8<sup>th</sup> graders from Wilmette Jr. High, for a total of 1825 tutoring hours. The students are working hard. The tutors keep guiding them and pushing them further.

### PARENTS' DAY for 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> grade Tutoring

At 4:30 sharp the Latina mothers flung open the doors to the auditorium at the library, marched in, and took their place at their children's tutoring table. Parents from 16 families, along with 5 younger children, joined 29 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> graders and 22 tutors for Inspired Youth's first "Family Day" of the afternoon tutoring section.

It was a great success. Nathan's tutor Alex K. wrote, "Had a great talk with his father." Ana's (gr. 4) tutor Lucina S. wrote, "Discussed w/ mother how to better improve Ana's focus, attention and motivation to do her HW w/o distractions." Tutor Susan Mattison told of the extended talk she had with Jaely's mother, with Jaely (gr. 4) translating between the two. Ms. Susan asked if it was hard to turn off the TV to do homework, and Jaely said she was able to do her homework with the TV on. Tom Walsh's student Jovanny S. (gr. 4) wrote about how to walk safely to the library and work better at tutoring: "I should stop at the stop sign. I should not run. I should listen to Ms. Beth. I should work all the time. I should pay attention to my tutor."

While the parents were at the individual tables with the tutors and children, some of the tutors continued to help their students, thus modeling helping the children with their homework.

As part of the afternoon, members of the youth choir sang three short songs, with tutor Amber Liu accompanying them on her electric ukulele.

The premier Parents' Day was a success. Tutors and parents got to talk to each other about how to help the children academically; parents got to observe the tutors working with their children; and the parents got to be part of Inspired Youth in session. Hurray for the Tutoring Parents!

### PARENTS' NIGHT for 5<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders

The Family Night for the 5<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders was held at the Edgewater Presbyterian Church on Nov. 12. 70 people came—students, parents, tutors, younger siblings. This year the tutors specifically sat at the tables with their tutees, so the parents could meet them. After a bountiful potluck dinner, everyone was given questions for the tutors to discuss with the parents.

Here is what David W. said (tutor of Lupe -- 8<sup>th</sup> gr.): "I thought the Parents' Night was the best ever. The hand-out with the questions directed the interaction. It was really valuable, and I had a nice conversation with Lupe's mother. It was beneficial. Some of the parents can be shy, and the tutors, too, and not all of the tutors speak Spanish, but the directed activity was beneficial. Everybody was leaning in and listening. There might have been a bit of a language barrier, but everybody was tuned in, definitely. It was the best Parents' Night ever."

### SATURDAY TUTORING, A Beautiful Start

46 eighth graders from Wilmette Junior High School and 44 K-8<sup>th</sup> graders from Uptown/Edgewater in Chicago came ready to work. Students had been paired up and folders of work prepared beforehand. This year's first day of Inspired Youth's Saturday tutoring at Margate Park was the best ever. Everyone worked well and "outdid themselves."

The 8<sup>th</sup> grade tutors were fantastic in how they got some of the difficult students to read, write, and do math—Adam, Isaac, Nebai, Awat. All the students worked well.

After doing academic work from the folders, the students did group activities—Fruit Basket Upset, followed by a contest creating greeting routines with hand-gestures, and tutoring pairs working as teams to draw Halloween scenes, followed by a picture walk to vote on the best picture. Everyone had a good time. Chicago students in Inspired Youth can't wait for Saturday tutoring; and WJHS has a waiting list of 8<sup>th</sup> graders wanting to be tutors. Hurray for a wonderful day in a good program!

## TUTORING CHILDREN IS NOT EASY

A tutor of a first grader wrote, “Got her homework done, then went off the rails. She needs more than I can provide.”

A tutor of a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader wrote, “I honestly do not know what to do anymore to motivate him. I have tried being accommodating, and, for lack of words, he just doesn’t respect me. I also think that he does this crying act for attention. Please give me some insight.”

## STUDENTS PROGRESS

When Lizbeth (4<sup>th</sup> gr.) was in 1<sup>st</sup> grade, her mother brought her to the Tutoring Program. The teacher had recommended the program because Lizbeth needed extra help. By the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, Lizbeth was at the top of her class in math, and she continues to study hard and do well this year. Her mother said the program has significantly helped her daughter.

When Rickiah (3<sup>rd</sup> gr.) was in 1<sup>st</sup> grade, her favorite word was “No.” She never wanted to do math. When she was in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, her mother made sure she came to the Tutoring Program every session and asked for extra math worksheets for Rickiah to do during Christmas vacation, because she saw how behind she was. During 2<sup>nd</sup> grade Rickiah made a lot of progress. Toward the end of the year she reported, “There’s this boy in my class who’s good at math: I beat him!” Now in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, she continues to do some math every session, although her favorite subject is reading.

Karah (7<sup>th</sup> gr.) and her friends run from friend to friend in the schoolyard after school. (She wins matches in track and field.) Karah has been in the Tutoring Program and Inspired Youth Singers since she was in 1<sup>st</sup> grade, when she and her mother lived in a shelter. When Karah was around in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade her mother got subsidized housing – right in the neighborhood! In 6½ years Karah has hardly missed a day of tutoring or singing in a concert. Here is the note she wrote to a senior citizen in December:

“In the Tutoring Program my tutor helps me with my homework and I have worksheets and books that I do after I finish my homework. My tutor’s name is Mrs. Carrie. She has a very kind heart and is so nice. Every week I look forward to coming to tutoring. Karah”

## HOLIDAY CARDS WRITTEN BY STUDENTS

63 students, grades K-12, made holiday cards to give to senior citizens this year. Along with cards made by 8<sup>th</sup> grade tutors of the Sat. program and other tutors, we delivered 94 cards to the Methodist Home, the Alden-Lakeland Nursing Home, and Lakeshore Health Care, where former tutor Eleanor Bilby lives. The Tutoring Program has done this project of giving at Christmas for many years. For the youngest students, this was the first card/letter they had ever made. Here are selections from cards of some of the older students:

“I wish you a happy holiday and a Merry Christmas. Right now I’m doing hard algebra which I don’t understand. By the way, my tutor helps me better than my teacher at school. Happy Holiday. Fredy.”

“I like tutoring because I get better at reading. I was a slow reader. Now I’m a little faster reader. Victor”

“What I’m doing in the tutoring program is I am learning a lot more than in school. Kevin”

“What I’m doing in tutoring is having fun also with my tutor and her helping me with my homework. Jamila”

“Merry Christmas to you! This tutoring is awesome. Anahi”

## STUDENTS/TUTORS WRAP PRESENTS

The Saturday students and tutors had a festive day the first Saturday in December when they wrapped 291 presents for preschool children in Head Start programs in Uptown/Edgewater in Chicago.

The students loved wrapping the stuffed animals. Jovanny (4<sup>th</sup> gr.) asked, “Can I have these two little animals for my little sister?” Valeria (4<sup>th</sup> gr.) showed everyone two animals “who were hugging.” A sixth grade girl hugged a big bear and didn’t want to wrap it. Finally her tutor convinced her to wrap it.

The children were excellent in wrapping the gifts this year. In the K-3 section, the students made it a team effort: one person straightened the paper, another cut it, another put the toy on the paper and wrapped it, another took off pieces of tape, another brought it to the box. It was a good team effort.

The presents were taken to the Lutheran Social Services at 4848 N. Winthrop, the ABC Early Childhood Center, and the Albany Park Head Start at Edgewater Presbyterian Church. The Inspired Youth 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> graders of the afternoon Tutoring

Program along with some younger brothers and sisters also received presents.

The toys had come from Enid Young from Iowa. Ms Young collects and reconditions stuffed animals and sends them to places all across the country because she wants as many children as possible to have at least one toy they can love. Thank you, Enid Young.

### **INSPIRED YOUTH SINGERS**

The Inspired Youth Singers have rehearsed in the apartments of four singers this fall. We appreciate the hospitality of the families.

In late November the choir walked  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile to the Alden-Lakeland Nursing Home to sing for the residents. The residents always enjoy the children singing.

On January 2 the choir will go to LakeShore HealthCare, to sing for Eleanor Bilby.

### **Santa Lucia at Bethany Retirement Community**

On Nov. 30 seven students from the choir were invited to the Bethany Retirement Community to sing for the introduction of the “tree” lighting ceremony. 150-200 people sat facing a long black window. It was strange. The small ensemble of singers crowded against a wall and started singing carols. They echoed down the long hallway, bouncing off the window and off the walls. The few children sounded like a full chorus.

After the choir sang, there were short speeches, and then \*, the lights outside were turned on! Every tree and bush was bright with small lights. Figures of deer were filled with lights. It was gorgeous. In the mild evening people walked in the garden to look at the lit figures from different angles. It was magnificent. (*See the IY Facebook page.*)

Afterwards there were scrumptious pastries and treats in the auditorium, which the Bethany residents, their guests, and our children loved. We appreciated being invited and having a part.

### **Singing on the Stage at Bethany Retirement Community**

On Dec. 28, 18 members of the Inspired Youth Singers sang on the stage at the Bethany Retirement Community. They sang for an hour—a medley of 28 Christmas songs (including carols in German, French, and Spanish) and other favorites. Four students played their pieces from last summer on the piano, accompanying the singers. Six of the

students were new to the choir since last Christmas. Everyone did well.

The conductor was Jasmine Tripp, a tutoring grad, who did a stunning job. The stage was filled with bright red poinsettia plants, a Christmas tree, large stuffed animals, and other decorations, leaving only a thin strip for the singers, so Jasmine (6'2") stood on the floor in front. She was beaming the whole time. The students sang well with her.

The day was cloudy, but not cold (34°F.). The choir took the CTA bus part way and walked  $3\frac{1}{2}$  blocks from the bus to the center. The ground was covered with snow, but the sidewalks were clear—a perfect day for walking.

Myeesha (6<sup>th</sup> gr.) is a quiet girl. In late Nov. she broke her ankle at the roller rink. In the Christmas pageant at her church, she was an angel on crutches. For the concert at Bethany, she didn't need crutches; she only had a foot cast – which she wasn't supposed to get wet. After the concert, while walking the  $3\frac{1}{2}$  blocks to the bus, several of the students started scooping up handfuls of snow from the area next to the sidewalk and throwing it at each other. Myeesha stepped off the sidewalk into the snow to scoop up some snow to throw. “Myeesha, you stepped into the snow with your cast!” She replied, “I didn't see it.”

### **CROP WALK TO END HUNGER**

Oct. 21 was a glorious fall day. Eight youth, 3 young adults and 2 experienced walkers from Epworth Church took the bus to UIC (the University of Illinois Chicago) for the start of the 5-mile, 30<sup>th</sup> annual Chicago CROP Walk--“30 years of ending hunger, one step at a time.” Along with several hundred other people from across the Chicago metro area, the group walked through Chicago's near-west side and Greek town, across the expressway, over the river and to the Loop, down Michigan Ave. (winding through concert-goers coming out of Symphony Center), west on Balbo and Harrison, across the river and expressway, and back to UIC. All 13 people from Epworth completed the 5-mile walk.

The CROP Walk was especially good for the young people. They walked with hundreds of other people (mostly young people). They participated in helping to alleviate hunger in the world. They got to see many sections of Chicago, including UIC. And they walked for 5 miles! Everyone received a CROP Walk T-shirt and a red backpack from

Walgreens. Look at the photos on the Facebook page “Epworth Church Children – Chicago” to see a good time had by all.

## **TUTORING GRADS**

Johnesha J. is a sophomore at UIC. She works part-time at Jewel grocery store and is raising her 2-year old daughter. At UIC Johnesha is majoring in criminal justice and sociology. She says, “I love sociology.”

Danielle S. is a sophomore at Benedictine University. Denzell S. is attending Triton.

Linda M. will be attending Wright College in January. Her brother Ramiro R. attends the US Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD.

Virginia O. was a 1<sup>st</sup> grader in the Tutoring Program in the mid-1980s! Her sister Laura O., two years younger, is now a chef at an exclusive club in Edgewater. Laura remembers her family visiting the Museum of Science and Industry with the Tutoring Program when she was a little girl.

Tony S is a senior in HS. Next year he may go to Morton, which has offered him a soccer scholarship. He and his siblings have all been accepted in the dream amnesty program.

Jasmine T. will begin at Truman College in January.

Niesha L. is enrolled in a medical training program.

## **INSPIRED YOUTH’S BOARD OF DIRECTORS IN PLANNING SEMINAR**

In November Inspired Youth’s Board of Directors and two others met at DePaul University for a seminar facilitated by Gary Rush.

The group’s vision is “IY Grads Build Community and Endow the Future.”

The values are

1. Empathy and care for families and community
2. Volunteers helping children learn
3. It’s a grassroots organization
4. A safe and nurturing environment
5. Perseverance, by adults and children
6. Respect yourself and others

## **DONATIONS TO INSPIRED YOUTH, INC.**

Inspired Youth does a lot with minimal funds to enrich the lives of children and families in Uptown/Edgewater in Chicago, because of the many people who volunteer.

Inspired Youth has a wide range of donors. Gifts have come from a foundation, law firm, service organization, church women’s group, and 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 range from \$10 to \$7,000. Inspired Youth appreciates all these donations.

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.