

# TUTORING NEWS: INSPIRED YOUTH

Fall 2014, Volume 24, Number 2

## FIRST DAYS

Children piled into the large room at Bezazian Library, and tutoring began. In the afternoon program, 28 students came, almost half of them new, with two more expected the second week. In the evening program, the 5<sup>th</sup>-12 graders worked hard. Learning was happening.

**Reisha**, 1<sup>st</sup> gr., wrote in her journal, *"I like to do school work."* She told her tutor, "I learned to read and write at Girl Scouts."

**Giselle**, 3<sup>rd</sup> gr., goes to a select class at school to read the Junior Great Books.

For most of last year, **Dioselyn**, 4<sup>th</sup> gr., "just sat there," but she started to work in April. On the first day of tutoring this year, she worked the whole 90 minutes straight, and she continued to do her homework and extra work from the tutoring folder.

**Armando**, 7<sup>th</sup> gr., entered the Tutoring Program in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. He could read a little, but could hardly do math or write a sentence. During the year he gained steadily. This year in September he continued to work hard and gain.

Older students are taking responsibility for their education. A senior in high school suggested to the director what she expected in a tutor. A 9<sup>th</sup> grader told the tutoring director that he was beyond 8<sup>th</sup> grade math; he wanted to do math at his level.

A tutoring grad, whose 6-year old son is now in the Tutoring Program, suggested what her son should work on at the Tutoring Program.

## FAMILY DAY, 1<sup>ST</sup>-4<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS

Picture the Auditorium at Bezazian Library jam-packed with children, parents, tutors, and preschool siblings --altogether 74-80 people-- and at least four large strollers. That was Parents' Day for families of 1st through 4<sup>th</sup> graders at Inspired Youth's weekday tutoring session in October 2014.

19 parents from 18 out of 23 families came to support their children and learn about the Tutoring Program. That's a lot of parents! Parents talked with tutors about the children, and the tutors gave suggestions for how they could help their children at home.

After they had a chance to talk, children from the Inspired Youth Singers sang four songs, with members of the audience singing along.

While they were singing, cookies and soda were passed out by 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders--Armando, Ana, Jose, and Judit.

People enjoyed Parents' Day. It was an opportunity for parents to be a part of their children's education and be a part of the Tutoring Program.

## Comments from Parents (some in rough translation) about Family Day:

Sheily's mom: "Parents' Day was very nice. I liked the children singing."  
Tania's mom: "The singing was nice. The tutor is helpful." Another mom: "Parents' Day was nice." Khodi's mom: "Parents' Day was awesome. I didn't

expect there to be so many people. It was really fine, really informative, and I liked the feedback that the tutor gave.” (*Did you like the tutor?*) “I love his tutor, actually. She understands him.” (*How did he do in tutoring that day?*) “He read the whole story [Tip 2] missing only two words. I love those practice sheets you gave. They’re so good.”

### **Comments from Tutors about Parents’ Day**

#### **From Marlene S.**

The treats and the music at Family Day were appreciated and enjoyed by all!

As for my experience yesterday, it was difficult to converse w/ the mom of Luz because of the language difference, yet thanks to the help of Luz interpreting, I was able to convey that Luz needed to work on her reading/pronunciation/comprehension. It sounds like her dad may be more proficient in English and that he would be of help to Luz, yet her mom can also help in the role of "enforcer" and make sure Luz spends time working on those three areas.

Luz is the only child at home, so I'm hoping she'll receive more attention regarding her skills. If not, she will continue doing her work only by matching words, yet not knowing how to pronounce them or how to define them. As you know, this will really prevent her from progressing.

Thanks again for ALL that you do!

#### **From Carolyn K.**

I thought Parents’ Day went well. The families seemed appreciative! Thanks for all you do! You put a lot of effort into this program and it shows!

### **TUTORS FROM NEW TRIER HIGH SCHOOL**

Seven to twelve high school students from New Trier HS come every Thursday afternoon to Bezazian Library to work with children from Inspired Youth. The adult tutors are also there, but there are so many 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> graders that we re glad the high school students are also tutoring.

### **GIVING STUDENTS EXTRA WORK TO DO AT HOME, SO THEY CAN CATCH UP**

This year we sensed that several parents could help their children at home “catch up” in their school work. We gave eight parents extra material for their children to read, and in some cases, extra math sheets. The parents have helped the children, and they are progressing well. The parents enjoy it, too. (See comments by Khodi’s mom about Parents’ Day.)

### **FAMILY NIGHT, 5<sup>TH</sup>-12<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS**

The Mexican-American group “Corrientes” performed at Inspired Youth’s Fall Family Night. “Corrientes” (like the rivers we flow) is a group of families and friends, adults and children, who play all sorts of instruments: violins, guitars, string bass, accordion, trumpet, harp, small blow keyboard, .mbira, and percussion instruments. The Mexican-American music was a hit with the

audience. Families came who had never come to a Fall Family Night before. Around 70 people from Inspired Youth came, as well as over 20 people from "Corrientes." Everyone was engrossed and quiet in listening to the music, even younger brothers and sisters. Some parents stood up to take videos of the songs. At the end of the program when the leader, Maria McCullough, said there was time for one more song, a father stood up and said, "Two?" He wanted them to play at least two more songs!

Before the program some of our students watched a child practicing a tiny, quarter-sized violin. Valeria (6<sup>th</sup> gr.) asked, "Where can I get a violin to play? I want to play the violin."

A musician from Mexico who was visiting Chicago also performed. He brought native Mexican instruments in use 500 years ago--conch shells, drums, stones, and a whistle-flute. The conch shells of different sizes each could play several notes. He recorded a repeating melody and then played the conch shells along with it. It was beautiful and eerie. He also held a small whistle-flute in one hand and played a small drum with the other hand. He was an amazing musician, keeping the audience in rapt attention.

The hero of the evening from Inspired Youth was tutor and Board Chair Heather Conlon, who organized the huge potluck meal. Board member Margaret Sullivan organized the servers so the serving went smoothly. Thank you, Heather and Margaret!

Videos of songs from the evening were taken by tutor Roger F. and are on Inspired Youth's Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/inspiredyouth](http://www.facebook.com/inspiredyouth).

## **SATURDAY TUTORING**

On the first day of Saturday tutoring, 44 students came to study with 44 8<sup>th</sup> grade tutors from Wilmette Jr. High. The tutoring pairs wrote "Scary Short Stories m(Round Robin)" based on prompts. Typed out, the collection of 44 creative and horrifying stories--each with 3 sections--was 10 pages long.

On Nov. 22, 48 children came to Saturday Tutoring! With their tutors' help they wrote holiday letters and cards to residents of Mid America Care Center. Altogether, students from all the tutoring sections wrote 62 cards and letters. Here are two:

"Dear Friend, Happy Thanksgiving. I am thankful for turkey, for the food. I am thankful for my friends. I am learning science, math, and independent writing. I hope you have a good turkey day. From: Fidel."

"Dear Friend, I wish you a happy Thanksgiving. I am thankful for all of you because you've given us so much that we don't give you nothing back. I am learning about the human body and math."

At the end of the session we handed out 37 frozen turkeys to the families of the Saturday Program. (See pictures on [facebook.com/inspiredyouth](http://facebook.com/inspiredyouth).) The families were happy to get the turkeys.

## **TUTORS FROM VARIOUS COUNTRIES**

Tutors in the program come from several countries besides the US: China, Mongolia, Malaysia, Ecuador, Benin, and Mexico. Students in the program come

from Mexico, Eritrea, Ghana, Togo, and the US.

### **TUTORING GRADS**

Tutoring grad **Janeen B.** began a job as a mental health technician at Reed Mental Health Center.

**Shanara** is becoming a star. In October she put out an album and moved to California.

**Diego** was in the Saturday program when he was in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. He worked hard on reading. In 5<sup>th</sup> grade he moved to Colombia. Recently he moved back, and his parents want his sister (1<sup>st</sup> gr.) be to in the Saturday program.

#### **Caprice R.**

Caprice R. was in the Tutoring Program in its first years, starting in 1987 when he was in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.-Recently Caprice has been doing a lot of interesting things. He and a friend sponsored a backpack drive in August 2014 to give kids at Clarendon Park school supplies. They raised \$1500 (most was their own money) and purchased 200 backpacks and school supplies for kids in Uptown.

Caprice's next project is to buy 200 winter coats for the homeless.

Recently he read a book about finding your gifts by going back in your past, and seeing what you enjoyed doing.

He remembered when he was 10-years old he kept seeing a homeless couple about 70 years old. One of them was in a wheel chair. He started saying "Hi," to them. It was cold in the middle of December, and they had nowhere to go. He told them they could stay in the garage in back of his building. He told them, "When you need something to eat, throw a small pebble at my window, and I'll give you something to eat." He took care of them for three years. Now he wants to continue helping oppressed people.

When Caprice was in 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade there was a boy in his class who lived in a "Home" for youth whose relatives couldn't take care of them. This classmate had nothing. Caprice gave him some of his stuff.

There is an old acquaintance of Caprice's who always said hateful things to Caprice. Recently Caprice noticed that the fellow had given some things away to people in need, just like Caprice!

In addition to keeping his job as a janitor at a church, Caprice hopes to do even more things for people with challenges. This is what motivates and invigorates him

### **DIFFICULT NEWS**

A student related to Inspired Youth was arrested for stealing a purse. The student was sent to the Juvenile Detention Center.

A student's dad was arrested; perhaps he will be deported.

A student whom Inspired Youth has been the proudest of did not go home after school on a Thursday and was still missing on Sunday. His brother located him, and brought him back home.

A family in the Tutoring Program is living in a shelter and trying to get permanent housing.

Two children are living with their mothers in the home of a relative.

A child stays with various family members in turn, not her parents.

### **2014 CHICAGO CROP HUNGER WALK**

On a crisp fall day, 24 people from Inspired Youth, Epworth Church, and the Epworth Girl Scouts went to St. James Cathedral on Chicago's Magnificent Mile to participate in the 2014 CROP Hunger Walk. People wore bright blue shirts. (Look at Facebook: Inspired Youth and Epworth Church Children-Chicago. The group included 11 elementary students, 6 high school students, and 7 adults. All the youth were "as good as gold.")

The 2-mile course took them to Wells St., past Walter Peyton School, to Division Street, to N. Michigan Ave., past the Four Seasons Hotel and John Hancock Building (landmarks for the Inspired Youth Singers), and back to St. James Episcopal Cathedral. Jamila (6<sup>th</sup> gr.) said, "We should be walking the 6-mile route!" Maybe next year.

One surprise of the walk was seeing the decorated plaster horses in downtown Chicago. They were commissioned in honor of fallen police officers. They are creative and all different.

Another surprise was seeing a horse-driven carriage. Several students ran ahead to catch up with it. They followed the horse until it turned off our route.

The CROP Walk has many pluses: The walkers get to be with their friends. They get exercise. They get to see a part of Chicago many of them have never seen before. And foremost, they are part of a group raising money to feed hungry people around the world. It is a wonderful experience.

### **FALL FUN FEST**

Witches, goblins, dogs, cats, the Mad Hatter, Alice, and *Frozen's* Elsa came to the Fall Fun Fest at Epworth Church. Over 35 children, 13 parents, and 14 other adults came. People of many ethnic groups from Inspired Youth, Goudy School, and the neighborhood, as well as Epworth Church, all had fun together.

Every corner and table in the room had a different activity which the children could do. Children guessed the number of candy corns in a glass jar; they had their faces painted; they painted mini-pumpkins; they decorated cupcakes (and ate them); they colored Halloween pictures and pictures of leaves and; they threw bags in a bean-bag toss; they pinned feathers on a turkey; they played circle games and had refreshments; the toddlers ran around; and they had a costume contest, with everyone a winner. Everyone was happy.

### **CHILDREN GET PRESENTS FROM PEOPLE AT GLENVIEW UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

51 children, 11 years old and under, received gifts from parishioners of Glenview UMC. The children were happy to get the colorful packages wrapped so beautifully. Some children opened their present as soon as they got home. One boy got a warm, dark olive, heavy winter coat, just the perfect size. He liked it! (This is not to be taken for granted.)

Thank you, Glenview UMC, for giving gifts to 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> graders of the afternoon Tutoring Program and their younger brothers and sisters. Thank you.

## **SINGING IN A GOTHIC CHURCH**

Edgewater's Community Thanksgiving Service was held this year at St. Ita's, a huge, Gothic church, replica of a Gothic cathedral in France. 20 children, ages 4-11, from the Inspired Youth Singers and the Epworth Church School Singers performed "We Are the World," directed by Dorie Burrell. The microphones were top quality, and the children's voices filled the large church. A video of the children singing is on [facebook.com/inspiredyouth](https://facebook.com/inspiredyouth). The children got to hear songs from choirs of several other religious groups—Islamic, Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish. It was educational for the children to hear the variety of songs, and listen to the readings from other traditions. Pastor Carol Hill of Epworth Church read a short passage from the Bible. We hope to sing next year at the Edgewater Community Thanksgiving Service.

## **SINGING AT THE COPERNICUS THEATER**

It was spectacular! 14 children from the Inspired Youth Singers performed "The Little Drummer Boy" on the stage of the Copernicus Theater, accompanied by the Anthony Kawalkowski Orchestra. The children couldn't see the huge audience because the stage lights were so bright. Everyone sang well. When the song ended, the audience wouldn't stop clapping. The children were beautiful on stage.

After the children sang, Santa came down the aisle and walked onto the stage. The children were happy! Dayveana, age 7, smiled when she saw Santa. She was on the end, just where Santa went. He put his arm around her, and they danced. She beamed. Santa gave each child a small box with a gift card for Target's. 7 parents and 2 other adults came. (See video on [facebook.com/inspiredyouth](https://facebook.com/inspiredyouth).)

## **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 Inc. is a 501(c)(3) corporation with the IRS, so donations are tax deductible.

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.

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.