

## **TUTORING NEWS: INSPIRED YOUTH**

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### **INSPIRED YOUTH SUMMER PIANO PROGRAM**

Students kept pouring in for piano lessons in the 8 sections of the Summer Piano Program. Altogether 56 students participated in Inspired Youth's program twice a week for 6½ weeks at the Edgewater Presbyterian Church.

Of the 56 students, 28 were new this year! New children from the Tutoring Program came. People in the violin program at the church came because they wanted to take piano lessons. Parents told their relatives. New students kept coming and coming.

### **Recital**

46 students played pieces in the final recital. Over 95 people came. Because of all the students scheduled to play, we knew there were going to be too many people for the Fellowship Hall, so we had the recital in the church's sanctuary. Everything was beautiful. The entire audience was polite during the entire recital, while 46 beginning piano students were playing their pieces! It was phenomenal!

After the recital there were refreshments brought by the piano tutors and the parents. Everyone gorged and enjoyed the party.

### **New Pieces for the Recital**

To get enough repertoire to give all the children special pieces at their level, Inspired Youth purchased 60 piano books during the past two years. The books, from the series Faber & Faber, each contain 10-12 graded pieces of pop, favorites, kids' songs, jazz, rags, rock, classical, and hymns, as well as Christmas songs. In order to find what we needed, before the piano program began, we made an index of all the pieces--526 songs in all. (We haven't added the songs from the 6 Christmas books yet.) The index is helpful in finding which book various pieces are in.

Some of the songs the students enjoyed playing were "Over the Rainbow," "Ain't She Sweet," "Hokey Pokey," "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning," "Scooby Doo," and "Jeepers Creepers." The songs have flashy duet accompaniments, which make the students happy and proud.

### **Exceptional Students**

All the students gained during the summer. Four older students accompanied children in the recital: Hellen, Katie, Fatima, and Josue.

Katie accompanied a younger student and also played a piano/flute duet, with her sister Hellen on the flute. Josue taught a younger student every Monday.

The students did exceedingly well. On the first day, Jeffrey, 1<sup>st</sup> gr. (about to turn 6), enjoyed being back. He played even better than his friend who is several months older. Jeffrey's family moved to another part of Chicago in the middle of the summer, but all three children continued to come to the piano program.

On the first day, Luz, 2<sup>nd</sup> gr., smiled the whole time. She loved hearing the sound of the electronic keyboard and playing the music. At the end of the first day, she played a song for her mom! They were both happy.

Matthew, 4<sup>th</sup> gr., has watched his siblings in the Summer Piano Program since he was an infant. He has never been able to concentrate enough to work at the lessons. This year—Hallelujah!—he concentrated, he worked hard, and he learned piece after piece. Hurray!

Katie, 4<sup>th</sup> gr., and Hellen, 5<sup>th</sup> gr. were fiends at practicing. They worked hard at the Piano Program, and they practiced at home every day. They tore through the lesson books and accompanied other students at the recital besides playing their own pieces. Hellen also played a flute solo with Katie accompanying her. Next summer they want to teach other children as well as work on their own pieces.

Roberto S., 6<sup>th</sup> gr., played all the songs in Book A in two days! He loves to sing and he enjoyed learning songs on the piano.

Ashley R., 6<sup>th</sup> gr., shrieked for joy when she saw Jill Werner, her piano tutor from last summer. They hugged and Ashley started playing her pieces.

Nathaniel, 9<sup>th</sup> gr., Lucia, 7<sup>th</sup> gr., and William, 5<sup>th</sup> gr., live a few miles west of Edgewater. Their mother saw a notice about the Summer Piano Program on the internet and applied in April. Her two older children play cello and violin, so they had a head start, and they began learning how to play the piano very quickly. Around the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of the piano program, they went to a far south suburb to pick up a real piano which they found on Craigslist. They began practicing up a storm! They all worked very hard on the pieces they chose to play at the recital. Nathaniel played "Für Elise," Lucia played "Moonlight Sonata," and William played "This Land Is Your Land." All these pieces were difficult for them, and they all did a splendid job.

This is the 5<sup>th</sup> year David R., 10<sup>th</sup> gr., has been in the Summer Piano Program. This year he wanted to learn chords and chord inversions so he could play songs in his church on the piano. He also wanted to play a song for his church, "Dios Manda Lluvia." We showed him the chords for the song, and he started practicing. He

played the song at his church, with his sister Jennifer, 5<sup>th</sup> gr., singing, and his brother Edgar, 9<sup>th</sup> gr., playing the guitar. (Edgar began learning to play the guitar this year.) We asked David, Jennifer, and Edgar to play the song for the recital, and asked the audience to sing with them. The song was beautiful. David has a wonderful command of the piano. After the recital, we gave him the notes for another song he wanted to learn, “Tu Bandera.” He enjoys playing for his church.

### **Piano Tutors; Other Tutors Helping at the Recital**

During the summer 15 “piano tutors” worked with the students to teach them how to play the piano: George Albertson, Jocelyn Brickman, Paul Cernek, Diane Danek, Terri Edelson, Josue Estrada, Tasha Johnson-Lemjidi, Jamey McDunn, Beth Palmer, Ken Roman, Nikki Stricker, Jill Werner, Joy Wilder, Stephanie Wilder, and Andy Xu. We are grateful to all these people. They were dedicated and were excellent teachers.

We are also grateful to the tutors from the Tutoring Program who came to help during the refreshment time after the recital: Heather Conlon, Lauren Sandherr, Jan Schiltz, and Jasmine Tripp. We are grateful to these people and also to the parents of the piano students for helping serve and clean up after the recital.

### **GOOD NEWS and ACCOLADES**

#### **Awards at Goudy School, June 2014**

These students received all A’s on their report cards and were on Principal’s Honor Roll at Goudy School: Yulissa, 5<sup>th</sup>, Analucia, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Katie 1<sup>st</sup>.

These students were on the A-B honor roll at Goudy School (they received only A’s and B’s): Karah, 8<sup>th</sup>, Ladaja, 8<sup>th</sup>, Keily, 8<sup>th</sup>, Joanna, 7<sup>th</sup>, Fatima, 5<sup>th</sup>, Isaac, 4<sup>th</sup>, Frankie, 3<sup>rd</sup>, Edwin, 2<sup>nd</sup>, Giselle, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Phyllis, 1<sup>st</sup>

These students received the Citizenship award for their class in the final marking period at Goudy School: Myreanna, 8<sup>th</sup>, Ariana, 7<sup>th</sup>, Marleni, 7<sup>th</sup>, Valeria, 5<sup>th</sup>, Keyde, 3<sup>rd</sup>.

In the 8<sup>th</sup> gr. graduation ceremony at Goudy Elementary School, one of the students of Inspired Youth, Myreanna Smith, 8<sup>th</sup> gr.) was given an award for the Most Improved Student in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. In presenting the award, her teacher Ms. Oehlsen said,

“At Goudy Elementary School, many of the students challenge their brains, their bodies, and their spirits every day, which makes it tough to choose just one 8<sup>th</sup> grader for the Most Improved award. However, one student stands out for her consistent hard work, her ability to over-come obstacles, and her incredible aca-demic gains. That student is Myreanna S.

“Myreanna doesn’t make excuses. No matter what’s going on in her life, she gets the job done. She repeatedly takes on tasks that are just a little too hard for her and in the process she achieves a lot more than she could before.

“Myreanna’s diligent efforts have won her a spot in Amundsen High School’s International Baccalaureate Program. That means that the first reward for her hard work is even more hard work. But she’s up to the challenge. Her bravery, persistence, empathy, and grit will serve her well in high school and college and beyond.”

### **Posts from Larry White, tutoring grad**

“Hello Dreamers!!!! Don't allow doubt to cramp your energy. Listen to your first mind and know that this week you will accomplish great things. Be courageous, be fearless, and have faith. Most of all don't worry about what the next person will think about you. We came in this world by ourselves, and we're going to leave this world by ourselves.

“Always believe in yourself and don't allow that inner voice to stop you from becoming what you can be. We all have gifts that God blessed us with, so use them to make the next person feel good. That's why they're called gifts. Never stop pursuing what your heart and spirit urge you to do. Act, plan, dream, believe, because at the end of the day, we are who we believe we are--point blank, period.”

### **Email from Jack Jacobson, Co-founder of Saturday Program**

Jack Jacobson, former teacher at Wilmette Jr. High, initiated the program where 8<sup>th</sup> graders from Wilmette Jr. High come to Chicago to tutor students from Uptown/ Edgewater in the Saturday Tutoring Program. Here is an email he wrote recently to Tutoring Director, Beth Palmer:

“Dear Beth: I have followed the program all year and continue to marvel at the marvelous work you do. If you were Catholic, I would recommend you for sainthood for surely what you have done all these years is miraculous. I don't know anyone who has had a more positive impact on thousands of kids, both in Uptown and Wilmette, than you. For my part, while I am obviously out of the loop, I continue to kvel (yiddish for with pride) at the contributions of my Wilmette families and colleagues. It is hard for me to believe that it has been 14 years since I retired and I continue to be grateful for the many blessings I have. I hope you and Frank are well and hopefully we can see each other next year. With respect and admiration- Fondly, Jack”

### **Singing at the Kiwanis Club**

In June, 10 youth and 2 adults went to the Treetop Restaurant to perform for the Kiwanis Club of Ravenswood. The youth like to sing for the Kiwanis Club because they get treated to a delicious restaurant meal.

Beth Palmer gave a short talk about the Tutoring Program, and three students recited poems which they had memorized for Family Night. Then the choir performed a concert of 9 songs, including five new songs! We know the Kiwanis Club enjoys youth and support what we do, so we rehearsed some new songs which the choir members said they wanted to sing.

Inspired Youth appreciates the support given by the Kiwanis Club. Through this connection, the choir has again been invited to sing “The Little Drummer Boy” in the annual Christmas Concert of the Anthony Kawalkowski Orchestra, to be held at the Copernicus Center, Saturday, December 6, 2014. Tickets are available on-line, so please come.

### **Singing for Epworth’s 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

On the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Epworth Methodist Church (1889!), 19 children from the Inspired Youth Singers and the Epworth Church School Singers performed in the special worship service. The choir led the congregation in singing “We Are the Church,” requested by a church member. The chorus of the song was in *five* languages! English, Spanish, Tagalog (from the Philippines), Yoruba (from Nigeria), and Arabic (in honor of the visiting district superintendent, Rev. Zaki Zaki, who is from Egypt). The children were proud of learning all the languages! They also sang “If My People,” with Fernando and Roberto singing the lead and everyone else echoing. It was meaningful.

Before the worship service started, the children gave a short concert in Epworth’s parlor, a beautiful occasion. Parents from 11 families got to hear their children sing. Another person who heard them was Rev. Bettye Mixon, a former pastor of Epworth, who always liked the children’s choir. She was re-assigned away from Epworth in 2000, so it was special for her to see and hear the current children’s choir.

### **TRIP TO THE BROOKFIELD ZOO**

Look at [facebook.com/inspiredyouth](https://www.facebook.com/inspiredyouth) to see photos of the children’s trip to the Brookfield Zoo, a preeminent zoo in the U.S.

14 children ages 3 to 14, from the Epworth Church School Singers and Inspired Youth, got to see giraffes, monkeys, gorillas, other apes, a tiger, a lion, a leopard, a snow leopard, otters, tortoises, turtles,

exotic birds, a polar bear, a hippopotamus, bison, and a whole dolphin show. Where else!

Bryson, age 4, was mesmerized by the animals. He wanted to keep watching each family of animals, but the rest of the group wanted to move on to see other animals. They had to keep telling him, “Time to go.” Bryson was fascinated by everything, especially the dolphins and the otters.

One of the group leaders, Beth Palmer, had last gone to the Brookfield Zoo in 1950 when her family traveled from North Dakota to southern Illinois to visit her grandfather. The two things she remembered about the zoo were the foliage (now cut down to make room for more exhibits) and the otters. She was amused that the otters still fascinated children: Bryson, age 4, loved to watch the otters!

### **TRIPS TO MILLENNIUM PARK**

The days were crystal clear, the only clear days in Chicago in two weeks of rain storms. Two small groups of students from Inspired Youth took the bus to Millennium Park in downtown Chicago.

Fernando learned the basics of juggling. Keydy and Dioselyn discovered

9-foot high corn plants, with actual corn, growing among the decorative plants in the Promenade. Jovanny stretched inside a six-foot high “German” wheel and was wheeled along. Celeste managed to spin 3 hula hoops at once. Esthefany spun a plate on a stick. One group of children decorated paper plates as face masks. Another group used small stick-blocks to build a circular castle 1.5 feet in diameter and 3 feet high. All the children played maracas in the concerts in the Family Tent.

The students got to hear a rehearsal of the Grant Park Symphony Orchestra (the “opera”). Both groups got to hear two concerts in the Family Tent, as well as take in all the other features of Millennium Park—seeing their distorted reflections in the “bean,” walking on the high bridge to the Art Institute, walking in the Lurie Gardens, putting their feet in the “river,” and – what they liked most -- getting wet and playing in the Crown Fountain.

On the way home, the children wrote about the trip. Dioselyn concluded, “We had a great time.”

Pictures of the trips are on Inspired Youth’s Facebook page. The articles the children wrote are on the website [www.inspireyouthchicago.org](http://www.inspireyouthchicago.org), Student Work.

### **TRIP TO THE FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY**

Seven children, one teen-ager, and three adults went to the Field Museum of Natural History on one of its rare “free” days. The

children were curious about all the exhibits. They saw a demonstration of how mummies were preserved. They went down into an actual Egyptian tomb. They saw the evolving history of life forms on earth in “This Evolving Planet.” They saw a large exhibit of dinosaur fossils, including the T-Rex, Sue, the most complete tyrannosaurus rex fossil ever found. They saw an exhibit of animals of North America. The students were interested and wanted to learn.

The group ate lunch outside on porch. During that time, the fast-flying Blue Angel jets were practicing for the weekend Air & Water Show. The children heard the jets and followed them across the sky. They had the best view, because the real show on the weekend was rained out!

On the way home the students wrote about what they saw and learned. The articles the children wrote are on the website [www.inspiredyouthchicago.org](http://www.inspiredyouthchicago.org), Student Work. Pictures of the trip are on Inspired Youth’s Facebook page.