

## **TUTORING NEWS: INSPIRED YOUTH**

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### **31st YEAR OF TUTORING PROGRAM**

The Tutoring Program began in September 1985. Volunteer tutors have now worked with neighborhood children in Uptown/Edgewater for 31 years. Here are the students and tutors in the three sections of the program this year:

Mon. 5<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> gr. Tutoring Section: 40 students, 26 adults

W/Th 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> gr. Tutoring Section: 38 students, 42 adults + 12 HS from New Trier HS

Sat. Kind-10<sup>th</sup> gr. Tutoring Section: 60 students (25 not in weekday prog.), 8 adults, 51 8<sup>th</sup> graders from Wilmette Jr. High.

(Several tutors volunteered more than one day per week.)

Total Individuals in Tutoring Program: 103 children (K-12<sup>th</sup> grade) with 76 adults and 63 8<sup>th</sup> – HS students tutoring

Choir, PK-HS, 50 children (34 not in Tut. Prog.) with 6 adult directors

**Total Individuals in Tutoring Program and Children's Choir: 137 children, 82 adults + 63 8<sup>th</sup> – HS tutors**

Of the 103 students in the Tutoring Program in 2015-2016, 46 were new to the program this year. Many were relatives of other students in the program, but many were the first in their family to be in the program. Ten students in the program were sons or daughters of "tutoring grads." Others were relatives of tutoring grads. Parents wanted their children to have the same good experience they knew about, so they sent them to the program.

### **STUDENTS DO WELL**

Kasey G., 4<sup>th</sup> gr., new to the Tutoring Program this fall, got C's and D's on his first 5-week progress report. He worked hard in the tutoring program, especially on math. By January, he was getting all A's, B's, and C's on his progress report. Way to go, Kasey! In the late 1990's, Kasey's relative, Sandra A., was in the Tutoring Program. Her math score went up 1½ years when she was in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, because of working hard in the Tutoring Program.

S.C., 4<sup>th</sup> gr., has been in the Tutoring Program since 1<sup>st</sup> gr. and has always had a hard time with math. She liked to hide under the table or sit on the floor by the wall. Her mom was good in math in school and wanted her to do better. Finally, this year, S.C. started memorizing the multiplication tables and was very proud. Now she has to work on word problems.

Berenice R., 1<sup>st</sup> gr., worked hard and progressed very well. Her mother Estelle was in the Tutoring Program several years ago. She made Berenice work hard at home, as well as at school and the Tutoring Program.

Layla S. and Marilu G., both 1<sup>st</sup> gr., learned to read! In different beginning books,

both were reading steadily, missing few words, and sounding out words they didn't know. With 3 minutes left in the tutoring session one day, Marilu said, "I want to keep reading." And she did. She had a sheet from school to record titles of the chapters she reads. The page was almost filled out.

In September Eden D., 3<sup>rd</sup> gr., only wanted to do math. She got a lower grade on reading and writing on her report card. By February, she was doing her reading and writing homework at the Tutoring Program. She is starting to concentrate and do better.

Christopher J. 5<sup>th</sup> gr. and Amy J., 4<sup>th</sup> gr. were new to Inspired Youth in September. They both struggled with their homework. By February, they understood more and were doing much better.

Keyla A. (5<sup>th</sup> gr.) and her sister Stefany A. (3<sup>rd</sup> gr.) both worked hard at the Tutoring Program, and their grades went up every marking period.

Dioselyn G. (5<sup>th</sup> gr.) and Keydy G. (5<sup>th</sup> gr.) hardly missed a day of tutoring since 3<sup>rd</sup> gr., when they entered the program. They were both in the special education section, but in September Keydy was promoted to the regular class, and in April Dioselyn was promoted to the regular section. They both worked hard, and we are proud of them. They also became the mainstays of the Inspired Youth Singers. Way to go, twins!

Dayveana B. (3<sup>rd</sup> gr.) is a joy to have in the Tutoring Program. When she was in 2<sup>nd</sup> gr., she worked hard on math in the Saturday tutoring program, because math was her weakest subject. This year on Saturdays she worked on memorizing the times tables and did phenomenally! Now she has to work on spelling.

Dayveana's father, Lamont, was also in the tutoring program for several years when he was a child. Her grandmother, Ms. Dorie, has been the conductor of the Inspired Youth Singers since 2006! Dayveana also loves to sing. She is a mainstay of the Inspired Youth Singers and is in the Epworth Church School Singers. This year she joined a neighborhood branch of the Chicago Children's Choir, which performs in Chicago's Millennium Park in early June.

When Armando S., 8<sup>th</sup> gr., entered the tutoring program as a 6<sup>th</sup> grader, he couldn't do multiplication; he didn't understand multiplication facts. He could read, but he couldn't write sentences. He worked hard in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade and learned about multiplication. He came for most of 7<sup>th</sup> grade and kept working. As an 8<sup>th</sup> grader, he came almost every week. He did long division and fractions. He wrote sentences and paragraphs. It is amazing what Armando has gained in these three years in the tutoring program. In addition, he helps the teachers after school, and they depend on him. We are glad to have him in Inspired Youth.

Diego L., 2<sup>nd</sup> gr., entered the program in Nov. 2015. He couldn't read, and he had trouble with math. We started to work hard on reading. In a couple of months, he learned to read. He got really good at simple math. He has to keep working on reading and writing, but we are proud of the progress he has made.

Marilu G., 1<sup>st</sup> gr., and Berenice R., 1<sup>st</sup> gr., had a school assignment to color pictures of the nine planets, cut them out and paste them onto white paper, and then write a sentence about each planet. They loved the project. Their tutor, Barbara Mordock, showed them how to Google the planets on her cell phone, and they learned that in 5 min. They could do it themselves. The students were motivated; they concentrated the whole 90 min. Barbara said, "This is such a change from the fall. Today these first graders were working independently. I didn't have to coax them. They were motivated by science!"

Shannon C., 3<sup>rd</sup> gr., has been in the program since first grade. His sister Karah P. was in the Tutoring Program and the Inspired Youth Singers from 1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade. Shannon has worked hard in math and reading. This is the article he wrote for IY's magazine

*Sunshine:*

"My dog is a pitbull. I call him my brother. His name is Melo, Melo 'cause he's mellow. Sometimes he can be very playful. If he doesn't know you and if you try to pet him, he will bark. Then, he will try to hop on you and lick you. It's OK, because he doesn't bite, at all. If he wants to play, he will grab one of his toys and drop it by you. The only thing is he will lick you to death. This is about my dog/brother."

## **HONOR ROLL**

Many Inspired Youth made the honor roll during the year. Berenice R. (1<sup>st</sup> gr.) got straight A's! Her parents were very happy. Larry S. (3<sup>rd</sup> gr.) got an A in math, and his parents were over-joyed! He also made the A/B honor roll. Phyllis R. (3<sup>rd</sup> gr.) and Kasey G. (4<sup>th</sup> gr.) made the A/B honor. Keydy G., 5<sup>th</sup> gr., got an A in reading on her progress report. Frances C., 5<sup>th</sup> gr., got an A in math on her progress report. (Her mother was disturbed. Frances reads a book a day but got a B in reading.) Taylor H., 2<sup>nd</sup> gr., and Kimora D., 3<sup>rd</sup> gr., each received the good citizenship award for their class. All the parents were happy.

Jacelyn G.!, 1<sup>st</sup> gr., daughter of two tutoring grads, got all A's on her report card. Hurray!

Guadalupe E., 5<sup>th</sup> gr., a returning student, received straight A's on her report card. Her writing is fluent and interesting. It almost sounds professional! Here is a letter she wrote to her tutor:

"May 16, 2016

"Dear Mrs. Stacy,

"Thank you for helping me throughout the year. Thank you for helping me study words, correcting my mistakes, getting my homework done, and putting a smile on my face. Especially, thank you for helping me and being my tutor.

"I can still remember when you taught me your son's handshake. Thank you for taking your time helping children. I can remember that last week I had some wrong answers and you corrected them. You helped me understand many things. You helped me practice the poem, too. I can still remember that we thought the character from the poem was a type of bug. But Ms. Beth said it was a human. Then minutes later we understood the poem.

"Thank you for all your support throughout the year. Thank you for being my wonderful, funny tutor. It's all coming to an end soon. Who knows if I'm going to be with you next year.

"Sincerely, your thankful student,

"Guadalupe E.

"Thank you."

## **FAMILY DAY, 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> Graders**

15 adults, including four fathers (!), came to Bezazian Library for Inspired Youth's Spring Family Day for 1<sup>st</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> graders. Parents of students in the afternoon tutoring section really care about their children's education. Two mothers brought new-born babies to the event.

Berenice's mother brought her 2-month old baby, and Maria's mother brought her 1-month old baby. (Larry's mother's premature baby was still in the hospital and came home in early-June.)

The center of the 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> graders' Family Day was when 19 children recited poems on stage using a microphone. Most of students memorized their poems. For 10 of the children, this was the first poem they had memorized and the first time they had spoken into a microphone in front of an audience. All the children did well.

Before the children recited their poems, six children from the Inspired Youth Singers led the audience in singing. The audience had fun with the song "Sing a Rainbow," when placards of various colors were passed out for people to hold up when their color was mentioned. After the singing and after the poems, people had refreshments of pizza, cookies, and soda.

The tutors who came were wonderful. They related to the parents, talked with the children, kept order, set up the refreshments, and cleaned up. Family Day for 1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> graders was a fine ending to an excellent year.

### **FAMILY NIGHT, 5<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> Graders**

It was a beautiful occasion. Altogether 58 people came to Epworth Church for the 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> graders' Family Night: 11 parents, 15 youth, 7 younger siblings, 10 tutors, and 15 young people from Mississippi with the mission group called Praying Pelicans who were working at Epworth that week.

Before dinner people mingled and talked. People read copies of the three magazines of the children's writings. Children from the Tutoring Program selected books to take home which had been donated by the Library of the U.S. Courts. (*See article.*) A few people from the mission group played outside with the preschoolers. It was a festive occasion.

The tutors, led by Heather Conlon, and Jonathan E.'s mother, served the dinner. People enjoyed the dinner and got to talk with each other.

After dinner everyone went into Epworth's sanctuary for the program. Students from the Inspired Youth Singers led the singing. Three students relished using the microphones. The final song was "We Are the World," directed by Ms. Dorie Burrell. It was very meaningful.

The center of the evening was students reciting poems they had memorized. Leonela C., 5<sup>th</sup> gr., used gestures to go with her poem, "Afternoon on a Hill," by Edna St. Vincent Millay. Dioselyn G., 5<sup>th</sup> gr., used sign language as part of her poem, "Deaf Donald," by Shel Silverstein.

When Fernando B., 7<sup>th</sup> gr., recited his poem, his 2-year old brother and 9-mo. old sister gave their rapt attention. (See pictures on Facebook: Lusi DelaCruz.) Actually, those two preschoolers enjoyed the whole program. There wasn't a peep out of them all evening. Their mother is already planning when they will be in the Tutoring Program.

Two other young children who enjoyed the program were 4<sup>th</sup> grader Gregorio F.'s 4-year old and 2-year old brothers. During the whole program they sat on Epworth's "little steps" watching the students reciting their poems, and they didn't say a word. (See pictures on Inspired Youth's Facebook page.)

All the children enjoyed watching Phyllis R., 3<sup>rd</sup> gr., say her poem. While she recited "The Swing," by Robert Louis Stevenson, she played with her hair extension, putting it

straight up in back.

The student announcers, Marcus F., 8<sup>th</sup> gr., and Dioselyn G., 5<sup>th</sup> gr., were excellent. Marcus wants to go into acting, and he was a leader. The evening was a celebration of families and youth, a success.

Tutor Margaret Sullivan summed it up this way: “While the participation was lighter than usual, last night’s Family Night was really lovely. The kids sang great and recited their poems well, the students from Mississippi were very friendly and engaging, the parents and tutors seemed to enjoy themselves, and we could not have been blessed with better weather. Thank you. --Margaret Sullivan

### **STUDENTS WRITE**

In 2015-2016 Inspired Youth had a special emphasis on writing. 70 students wrote one or more articles for Inspired Youth’s magazines. 39 students wrote articles on “My Neighborhood,” with 7 students writing two articles for the magazine. 33 students, with their tutors, wrote “Scary Stories, Based on Famous Paintings.” 49 students wrote “Editorials: Here’s What I Think!” 34 students wrote “Raps, Poems, and Reports about States.” 36 students, kindergarten through 4<sup>th</sup> grade, wrote stories for Inspired Youth’s magazine *Sunshine*. These magazines, except *Sunshine*, will be on Inspired Youth’s website, [inspiredyouthchicago.org](http://inspiredyouthchicago.org), in mid-July. We are happy about the children’s writing.

### **CONFLICT RESOLUTION TRAINING**

The 5<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> graders had a session on conflict Resolution at the end of one of their tutoring sessions. The topic was about brainstorming solutions to a problem. Here is a report from one group:

“Our group did a nice job talking about the ‘friend stealing from the store’ scenario. They had fun with it and got a little goofy when they talked about tackling their friend, but acknowledged that that wouldn’t actually be the best course of action. I had a lot of fun working with the group and they seemed to have a good time as well. The other tutors’ help was invaluable with getting the group to run smoothly and stay on task!

“It was cute to see Alex interact with the students other than Nathan; since they were so enthusiastic, he got enthusiastic as well. His attitude seems to be a reflection of the other students that he’s around, and I’ve noticed on days that Nathan is in a poor mood, Alex’s mood sours as well.

“Thank you so much for all your hard work with putting together the tutoring and conflict resolution sessions! The kids really seemed to have a good time with the conflict resolution and it was good to see them talk about pro-social ways to deal with problems. ---Amanda Synder, Tutor”

### **CONCERNS**

M., a seventh grader in the Tutoring Program, left home during spring break, and for two weeks no one knew where she was. A friend (in the Tutoring Program) searched with her friends on Facebook and finally located her and got her to come back home. Then she left again. Then she came back – in a cab for \$50. She was put in a near-by residential treatment center for one week. The residential center has strict rules, careful surveillance,

and strong psychiatric treatment. The student has been a leader among her fellow students in the Tutoring Program. Her absence leaves a hole in the program. Many people are praying for this student.

### **TUTORING GRADS, AN ENCOUNTER**

On a dark and rainy night in December, Tutoring Director Ms. Palmer was walking home from Monday night tutoring, pulling a shopping cart full of folders, when she passed a man and woman in a brightly lit entryway.

The man said, "Hello."

Ms. Palmer turned around, walked back, and said, "Hi! Do I know you?"

The man said, "I'm Tiffany's father--Tiffany, the one with the red hair."

"Yes! Tiffany, Valerie's daughter! What grade is Tiffany in?"

"Grade?! She's 22 and is a manager in a store!"

Beth Palmer was incredulous! "Where has time gone?! I'm like Rip Van Winkle, asleep for decades! It must have been over 15 years since I saw her. I'm glad Tiffany's doing well."

(Tiffany's uncle is Bobby L., who put up Christmas lights in the Lincoln Park Zoo several years ago!)

### **TUTORING GRADS**

Shonesha J. is attending Philander Smith College in Little Rock, AR.

Asia J. and her cousin Sydney T. will be going to Malcolm X in the fall semester. Both are working nursing degrees. Sydney said, "I just love college."

Shayla H., just graduated from the University of Illinois in Champagne-Urbana. Congratulations, Shayla!

### **The Year of the Babies**

Former student Asia J. had a baby, prematurely, in February. We wish mother and baby well.

Former student Sandra A. and Cameron W., had a baby prematurely in April. The parents are happy, and Sanaya is growing well.

Former student Estelle L., had a baby Sofia, in April.

Tutoring parent Danielle M. had a son A'Marri in April. The baby's 3 siblings, Ariana, Isaac, and Elijah were in the program a few years ago.

Maria's mother had a baby at the beginning of May.

Tutoring parent Lusi D. had a baby, Brittany, in September 2015. The family is planning that Brittany will be in the Tutoring Program soon.

### **NEWS OF A TUTOR**

Saturday co-coordinator Elizabeth Ryan has been accepted to the Peace Corps. She will be going to Lesotho in southern Africa to teach science and math in high school. (The country of Lesotho is surrounded by South Africa.) Congratulations, Ms. Ryan.

### **A Parent's Comments: Jamila Johnson, Jan. 2016**

I think the programs that they have at Epworth United Methodist Church are good programs for young children because they get them off the streets and into

different environments so they can learn different things. Like for my kids, they're 8 and 12, and Jamyla right now is on a skiing trip [with the Epworth Girl Scouts] at Lake Geneva. Other kids in her class or in my neighborhood probably have never experienced that, and I want her to experience everything possible. I don't want her to be limited to just certain things.

And the Tutoring Program is really good, too, because if she's not good in one subject, the Tutoring Program can help her and give her some type of help that she may not get at school. And also, for Renita, she gets help in subjects that she needs help in. And they like the program, because they're with their peers, and they enjoy it.

They enjoy the choir. They love the choir. They love you, Ms. Beth, and they like singing. They sing the songs at home all the time. They've even got me singing. I barely even know the words, but I'm like, "Ooo ooo oo." I'm like their little back-up band. Yes, they remember the songs, and now they're in my head, too. So they enjoy it—the choir, the tutoring, the Girl Scouts. Everything about this church they enjoy.

## **ZOO LIGHTS**

Go to the zoo in the winter? What? Yes! 5 girls plus 2 tutors went to see ZooLights at the Lincoln Park Zoo on New Year's Eve, along with throngs of other Chicagoans. Years ago a tutoring grad, Bobby L., had a job putting up Christmas lights at the zoo. OK... Decorating a couple of Christmas trees? No! Creating a whole light show throughout the several-acre zoo. A special feature was a light show of trees dancing to Christmas music. The Inspired Youth were mesmerized.

They also loved the ice sculptures. A man was carving a block of ice around 5' tall. The bricks of ice he carved off fell to the ground, and one of his associates carried them around so people could touch them. They were pure, clear ice. Our group left to see other parts of the zoo. When we came back an hour later, the block of ice he was carving had become a delicately detailed seahorse, with a light inside the ice! It glistened and was glorious!

The kids enjoyed the animals, gazing for a long time at various families. They loved the many kinds of monkeys, the opossum, and the bats. But as we walked toward the small mammal and reptile house, 2 girls emphatically said, "I don't want to see a snake. I'm afraid of snakes." When they actually saw one, they weren't afraid.

The children's eyes were so good they could look into habitats and spot animals which the adults could not see. In the "River Rising," they saw a large alligator which just looked like a log to the adults, except for the nose which was out of the water.

At the Center for African Apes all the gorillas were lying on their mats in separate corners at around 6:30pm. One can imagine the scene just before that: "OK, lights out, night lights on! I want everyone in your beds in 5 minutes. I said, 'Now, beds!'" Gorillas sleeping weren't just a display for the visitors. This was their real life.

The girls loved the sand cats, and also the family of 40 small mouse/rat-like animals. The girls watched them for a long time. They also discovered tiny babies in a hide-out at the bottom of the rocks.

The girls also enjoyed the crafts section where they got reindeer antlers and took free materials to make things at home.

Our last stop was the snack stand where the mother of Layla S., 1<sup>st</sup> gr., works. She gave us hot chocolate, which made the children happy. The girls sat at picnic tables, in the snow, and Ms. Wallie, one of the tutors, gave them ginger cookies, cuties, oranges, and bananas to go along with the cocoa. It was a wonderful ending to a beautiful trip.

### **BOOKS FROM THE LIBRARY OF THE U.S. COURTS**

Books, books, books. “You may choose two books to take home.” What joy!

Keydy G., Dioselyn G., Frances C., and Celeste L., 5<sup>th</sup> graders, and Ana L., 7<sup>th</sup> gr., along with Frances’ mother and Beth Palmer, tutoring director, went to the Federal Building in downtown Chicago to receive books from the Library of the U.S. Courts.

Every year the Library of the U.S. Courts collects books from lawyers, judges, and staff to give to a Tutoring Program sponsored by Lawyers Lend-A-Hand to Youth. In 2014 the Library of the U.S. Courts selected Inspired Youth. That year the head librarian of the U.S. Courts, Gretchen Van Dam, and assistants John Klaus and Claude Hayes were so taken with the enthusiasm of the children who went (Fernando B., Roberto S., Valerie S., and Fatima E., all 5<sup>th</sup> graders in 2014) that they chose Inspired Youth again in 2016 to receive the books they collected.

This year the group from Inspired Youth were met in the lobby of the Federal Building by Kathryn McCabe, executive director of Lawyers Lend-A-Hand to Youth. In the main office of the library of the U.S. Courts the children saw the books on a table and pounced on them. They each selected two books to take home and started reading. They got to meet a judge, Judge Geraldine Soat Brown, and had their picture taken with the judge.

Judge Brown invited them into her courtroom. This was a huge learning experience for the children. They learned about the range of federal cases the judge adjudicated. They saw where the lawyers sat and learned about the defense and prosecution. Celeste said she’d like to be a judge when she grows up. Judge Brown told them they’d need to be a lawyer first and outlined the education they’d need. She said that to be a lawyer they had to keep studying through elementary school, high school, college, and law school. Then Judge Brown let each girl sit in her judge’s chair and bang the gavel. The girls loved that!

When the visit was ended, the girls took their books, went down in the elevator, ran to the polished granite settee in the lobby, sprawled out, and started reading their books. After a light snack outside the Federal Building, the group took the train back to Uptown. Three of the girls kept reading their books on the train.

The next day boxes and boxes of books were delivered to the Tutoring Program at Bezazian Library. John Klaus and Claude Hayes brought five cartons of books, 180 books, for the children of Inspired Youth. The two men were greeted at the library by Mark Kaplan, Branch Manager of the Bezazian Branch of the Chicago Public Library. Mark Kaplan had met John Klaus several years ago in his work as a librarian, so they had a good conversation about old times.

When the children came and saw the books, they were so excited; they got to select books to take home. The next day we set out books on a table outside Goudy School, where students from the Tutoring Program could take two books each. Books were then available for 1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> graders of the Wednesday section and the 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders of the Monday night tutoring section.

The children were happy to receive books to read, and the tutors were happy to see the



children excited about learning. Thank you, Lawyers Lend-A-Hand to Youth and the staff of the Library of the U.S. Courts for giving books to Inspired Youth.

### **SINGING AT ALL-AMERICAN**

On a Friday holiday from school, 21 youth, 1<sup>st</sup> gr. through 11<sup>th</sup> gr. went to sing at the All-American Nursing Home. It was a splendid concert. The Director of Activities, Shawn Gordon, arranged the room for the singers and welcomed them happily.

Before the concert the students had lunch at McDonald's and then practiced at Epworth Church before walking four blocks to All American. All the students behaved well and sang well. This was the first concert for three first graders, and they sang well. We were glad that three 7<sup>th</sup> grade boys and three 7<sup>th</sup> grade girls sang, as well as an 8<sup>th</sup> grader and 11<sup>th</sup> grader who also helped chaperone.

Dorie Burrell was the conductor. She was recognized during the concert for her eleven years as the director of the Inspired Youth Singers! Thank you, Ms. Dorie!

After the students sang for half an hour, Ms. Gordon put on some exciting dance music, and three of the students danced. Others joined in on "Cha Cha Slide" and "Ice Cream and Cake."

The star of the afternoon was 3<sup>rd</sup> grader Dayveana B., 3<sup>rd</sup> gr., who smiled during the whole concert as she led the singing, led the motions to the songs, and led the dancing. She made everyone happy.

Students and residents had a glorious time at the concert at All American. It was a wonderful afternoon.

### **35<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL YOUTH CHOIR FEST**

Over 100 people gathered at Epworth Church for the 35<sup>th</sup> annual Youth Choir Fest. Children's choirs from New Life Covenant North, Elston Ave. UMC, as well as the Inspired Youth Singers, and the Epworth Church School Singers performed. Each choir sang two songs, and all the children combined to sing five songs together. It was a joyous celebration.

The highlight was the final song, "We Are the Church." For this song, all the choirs and the total audience formed a huge circle around Epworth's sanctuary. Everyone sang, "Yes, we're the Church together," with the refrain first in English, then in Spanish, Tagalog (Filipino), and French. The song was acted out in a joyous drama, by people from many ethnic groups. (See video on Inspired Youth's Facebook page.)

As a special feature of the concert, Freya J. (2<sup>nd</sup> gr.) made an excellent drawing for the program cover. Phyllis R. (3<sup>rd</sup> gr.) played two short pieces on the piano as a prelude, followed by Fatima E. (7<sup>th</sup> gr.) playing "Für Elise." The audience loved it. Two days before the concert, Melissa D. (7<sup>th</sup> gr.) showed how she had learned to play the first melody of "Für Elise." We hope she was amazed when she heard the whole four-minute piece.

After the concert people were graciously treated to a meal hosted by the Epworth Girl Scouts.

Thanks to the many people who pitched in to make the 35<sup>th</sup> annual Youth Choir Fest a success. A group of people moved the heavy furniture in Epworth's sanctuary to make the front a stage. Another group of people reset the furniture after the concert. Several people greeted the guests and made them feel welcome. Pastor Carol Hill of Epworth

Church welcomed the audience and offered an opening and closing prayer. Mistead Sai of Epworth church announced the program. Conductors of the total group songs were Jasmine T. (a tutoring grad), Stacy A. (a piano tutor with Inspired Youth), and Dorie Burrell (a tutoring parent). Scart J. (a choir parent) oversaw the children's lunch before the concert and took videos of the total group pieces. Eva Schwinge planned and oversaw the dinner after the concert.

Look at the videos on Inspired Youth's Facebook page to experience the children's joy in singing.

Here is an email from former tutor, Cathy Pezdirtz: "We just loved being at the Youth Choir Fest. I sat there with tears in my eyes remembering the past when Epworth and you and Eleanor and so many others were right in the middle of our lives!

"The children sang with such energy and enjoyment! It was just a pleasure to listen and watch. Karen [Cathy's daughter] said it was like being in her classroom, since she has mostly kids of families who've moved from the city.

"I loved what you did with 'We are the Church!'

"Thanks again for inviting us. Keep me on the list!!"

### **SINGING FOR THE SHELTER MEAL**

Every Christmas season and also on Palm Sunday, Epworth Church sponsors a dinner for the men of Epworth's Shelter. This year the Inspired Youth Singers sang during the Palm Sunday dinner. 25 youth came to sing, and it was magnificent. In the rehearsal beforehand in Epworth's sanctuary, the music echoed from the rafters. When the children performed in the parlor during the dinner, the music resounded so loudly one of the church members serving said, "The singing was so strong the men who were eating couldn't hear themselves talking!"

The children sang for 45 minutes--18 songs. Dorie Burrell directed, and her relative Philinda conducted several songs. Jasmine T. helped with whatever needed to be done.

Four beginning pianists accompanied the singing: Phyllis R. (3<sup>rd</sup> gr.), Keydy G. and Dioselyn G., (5<sup>th</sup> gr.), and Melissa D. (7<sup>th</sup> gr.). All did an excellent job. (See [facebook.com/inspiredyouth](https://www.facebook.com/inspiredyouth).)

Seven adults who were relatives of the singers chaperoned. Around 2/3 of the children had relatives participating as singers or chaperones. It was a beautiful concert.

### **SINGING AT THE BREAKERS**

16 students sang at The Breakers on a Friday when there were no classes at school. This was the first time Inspired Youth had sung at The Breakers, and the audience loved the 45-minute program. The audience was so engaged, they wanted more.

The conductor for the program was Deyse S. (11<sup>th</sup> gr.). This was her first time conducting, and she did a good job. Esthefany V. (6<sup>th</sup> gr.) was one of the song leaders. She also directed the motions for "I've Got Peace like a River" and she and Dayveana B. (3<sup>rd</sup> gr.) sang the lead part in "If My People." Phyllis R. (3<sup>rd</sup> gr.), Dioselyn G. (5<sup>th</sup> gr.), and Keyde G. (5<sup>th</sup> gr.) accompanied songs on the piano.

A choir parent, Jamila J., works at The Breakers and recommended we sing there. It was an excellent idea.

### **SINGING AT MIDAMERICA**

During spring break, 10 students from the Inspired Youth Singers gave a concert at MidAmerica. The residents loved the music.

Esthefany V., (6<sup>th</sup> gr.) was the hero of the choir. She brought her 5- and 6-year old cousins to sing; she passed out the choir's red vests and collected and folded them at the end of the concert; she led the motions for "I've Got Peace like a River"; and along with Dayveana B. (3<sup>rd</sup> gr.), she sang the lead solo part for "If My People." Esthefany was the hero of the day!

Student pianists were Phyllis R. (3<sup>rd</sup> gr.) playing "Kum Ba Yah" and the twins Dioselyn G. (5<sup>th</sup> gr.) and Keydy G. (5<sup>th</sup> gr.) playing "This Land Is Your Land." The students sang well and the residents enjoyed the concert. (See the pictures on Inspired Youth's Facebook page.)

### **SINGING AT THE FOUR SEASONS HOTEL**

18 children and 3 adults performed for the annual banquet of Lawyers Lend-A-Hand to Youth at the beautiful Four Seasons Hotel in downtown Chicago. The students had a snack after school and then took the #147 bus downtown to Chicago's "Magnificent Mile" on North Michigan Avenue. This was the sixth time Inspired Youth was invited to sing for the LLAH banquet. Six of the students had just joined the choir in September 2015, so the whole experience was new to them.

The students were excellent on the trip and excellent in singing. Performing in the plush lobby of the ballroom while the guests were arriving, the choir sang 21 songs, for 50 minutes. When our allotted time was up, they said, "Is that all? We sang more last year." The children weren't even tired!

The student pianists were terrific: Phyllis R. (3<sup>rd</sup> gr.) accompanied "Kum Ba Yah" and Dioselyn and Keydy G. (5<sup>th</sup> gr.) accompanied "This Land Is Your Land." Dayveana B. (3<sup>rd</sup> gr.) sang the solo lead on "If My People." Jamyla J. (7<sup>th</sup> gr.) led the hand motions for "I've Got Peace like a River." Dorie Burrell directed the singers, and Jasmine T. helped lead two songs.

As the students were performing, guests to the banquet came up the grand staircases on either side of the singers and went into the ballroom. The guests wore fancy gowns and high quality suits.

Attending from Inspired Youth were the chair of Inspired Youth's Board of Directors, Heather Conlon, and her husband, Jim Conlon, a long-time tutor. When asked how the evening went, Heather exclaimed, "It was wonderful!" Everything went smoothly, and she and Jim had a good time.

The whole evening was excellent for the children. Thank you, Lawyers Lend-A-Hand to Youth, for inviting the Inspired Youth Singers to perform.

### **GOUDY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN A DRAMA**

"A Journey of Beetles & Angels" is a devised piece of theater based on three books about refugees to America. Over 200 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders from Goudy Technology Academy participated in the drama. The students, coming from 37 different countries, wove stories of their own experience of coming to a new country into the drama.

Esthefany V. (6<sup>th</sup> gr.) and Nathan G. (6<sup>th</sup> gr.) had solo speaking lines. Many other students and former students from Inspired Youth were part of the huge production of over 200 Goudy students. (See photos on facebook.com/inspiredyouth.)

The production was made possible for Goudy School, in conjunction with Writers Theatre, by a grant from the Creative Schools Fund of Ingenuity, Inc.

### **GOUDY SCHOOL TALENT SHOW**

Goudy's talent show of 2016 was remarkable. The show began with a team of young tumblers. Phyllis R., 3<sup>rd</sup> gr., was the star of the team, doing front and back summersaults, cartwheels, and backbends. Later the teacher in charge, Ms. Mayo, exclaimed that Phyllis was extraordinary, that she could do many more things than she did in the show. She was happy to have Phyllis as the lead tumbler.

The final number in the talent show was a jazz trio, Jason L., 7<sup>th</sup> gr., on keyboard, a female 7<sup>th</sup> grader singing, and Jovanny S., 7<sup>th</sup> gr., on drum set. Jason has been in IY's Summer Piano Program for two years. He has also taken piano lessons from a friend and has learned from YouTube videos. Jovanny has been in the Tutoring Program and Inspired Youth Singers since 1<sup>st</sup> grade, and was in the Summer Piano Program for a year. He got a small drum set a few years ago, and now has a larger drum set at home. The trio in the talent show was excellent. Snippets of Jason and Jovanny are on IY's Facebook page.

### **A WEDDING!**

Sandra A. and Cameron W. got married at Epworth Church on May 7, 2016, in a beautiful ceremony. Sandra A. was a tutoring student in the late 1990's when she was a 6<sup>th</sup> grader. Now her son Larry S. (3<sup>rd</sup> gr.) is a student.

Bright red and bright white: those were the colors. Not just the bridesmaids, but all the women who came were invited to wear bright red. Sandra wore a white dress with a train and a veil. Larry and Cameron wore bright white suits and white shoes. It was a happy day. Sandra remarked, "We did this all ourselves!"

Cameron's grandmother, Carole J., who raised him, said, "He came to live with me at age 5, and I can't believe he's [an adult already and] getting married, and he's so much in charge!"

The wedding ceremony was bilingual, in English and Spanish. The guest pastor, Rev. Paula Cripps-Vallejo, was bilingual. Epworth's pastor, Rev. Carol Hill, was at a family funeral, and the guest pastor was fine. Pastor Carol had counseled the couple, and she had written a whole sermon to be read at the wedding.

One special touch was that the printed program included as a flower girl Sanaya Isabel Williams, Sandra and Cameron's baby daughter, still in intensive care after a premature birth.

After the ceremony, people were invited into Epworth's parlor for a wonderful chicken dinner, followed by dancing to music from a DJ. A photographer, whose children attend Goudy School, took many pictures.

This was a happy, happy wedding, a beautiful day.

### **PROFILE OF A HS TUTOR/LEADER**

For two years, **Emma Wise**, a student leader, along with a faculty advisor, brought students from New Trier H.S. in Winnetka, IL, to Chicago's Uptown neighborhood. They came after school, driving 45-minutes each way, to tutor 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> graders in the Inspired Youth Tutoring Program.

What Emma organized is very important for the Chicago children. The students from New Trier arrived for the last 45 minutes of the tutoring time. The Chicago children couldn't wait for them to come. At the beginning of the tutoring session, the Chicago children would say, "When are the other tutors coming?" When the New Trier students arrived, the children said, "I want her to work with me," or "I want him to work with me."

The New Trier tutors were always assigned where they were needed most. Emma was assigned after the other tutors from New Trier, but two or three children always pointed to her and said, "I want her!" Emma was always assigned to work with a "difficult" student. She figured out how to have them work well.

Besides tutoring during the year, Emma, along with the New Trier staff, obtained free supplies for Inspired Youth from a special catalogue. Emma asked what Inspired Youth needed, and she obtained mailing labels and work books for the students. Those items were useful for the children and the program, and we appreciated them. From the same company, she also got small games and paper umbrellas for the children, which they grabbed up!

Emma Wise was a substantial leader in recruiting and bringing high school students after school from Winnetka to tutor children in Chicago's Uptown neighborhood for two years. The amazing thing is that two years ago she was on crutches for the entire year, and she came anyway!

Inspired Youth Tutoring is very grateful to Emma Wise for her leadership in the Tutoring Program. It was wonderful for the children. Thank you, Emma.

### **TUTORING DIRECTOR RECEIVES AWARD**

**Beth Palmer** started the Tutoring Program in September 1985 at Epworth Church. It was vibrant, important to the children of the neighborhood of Uptown/Edgewater. In 2004/2005 the Tutoring Program incorporated as Inspired Youth and relocated to the Bezazian Branch of the Chicago Public Library for the weekday program and to Margate Park Field House of the Chicago Park District for the Saturday Tutoring Program.

On June 6, 2016, at Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, Ms. Palmer received recognition for her work with children and youth. She was awarded the Katherine B. Greene Child Worker Award, from United Voices for Children, of the Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church. She was nominated for this award by **Rev. Carol Hill** of Epworth United Methodist Church, with supporting letters from **Ms. Pamela Brandt**, principal of Goudy Elementary School, and **Susan Mattison**, a volunteer tutor for 14 years. Since 1985, hundreds of children have been helped and influenced by the hundreds of volunteer tutors who have given their time to undergird the education of neighborhood children in Uptown/ Edgewater.

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

Inspired Youth has a wide range of donors. In the past year gifts have come from a foundation, church women's group, service organization, and around 55 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 \$6,000. 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.