

TUTORING NEWS: INSPIRED YOUTH

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INDIVIDUALS IN PROGRAM, 2016-2017

	STUDENTS	TUTORS	
Mon. HS Tutoring	5	21	
Mon. 5th-8th Tut.	27		
W/Th 1 st -4 th Tut.	29	27*	+ 12 HS from New Trier HS
Sat. Kind-7 th (+2 HS)	22**49total	7	51 8 th gr. from WJHS
Individ. in Tut. Prog.	<u>83</u>	<u>55</u>	<u>63</u>

*Several tutors volunteered more than one day per week.

** Sat. students who are not in weekday Tutoring Program.

Of the 83 students in the Tutoring Program, 33 are new this year. Many are relatives of other students in the program, but many are the first in their family to be in the program. Eight students in the program are sons or daughters of "tutoring grads." Many are relatives of tutoring grads. Parents want their children to have the same good experience they had.

NEWS ABOUT STUDENTS

A four-year old child in a tutoring family was not enrolled in school. We bought her a simplified preschool workbook so she could begin learning, and she loves it! Her sister, Layla S., 2nd gr., helped her understand the directions for some of the pages. She figured out other pages by herself. Hurray!

This year Leonardo M., 2nd gr., is a wholly different student compared to last year. Here he is in Sept. 2015: Leonardo M., 1st gr., entered the tutoring program bawling. He cried, didn't talk, and bit pencils for four weeks. Various tutors tried different things to work with him. Rorie tried art. Zak tried tug of pencil. One tried talking in Spanish to him. Nothing worked, although the tutor usually helped him complete the worksheets of his homework. In Week Four of the Tutoring Program something happened. Leonardo was a changed person! He didn't cry. He walked willingly with the other children to the library, even helping to push the cart full of folders. He eagerly did his homework. We don't know how this happened. We are just in awe.

Last year, in first grade Leonardo was in the program only until December, but in 2nd grade he is back because the tutoring director walks him home along with a small group of other students. And this year Leonardo is still a changed person. He leads the students walking from school to the Tutoring Program. When he gets there, he sits down and immediately begins his work. On the first day he did his math homework and read "Tip 3." Last year in September he couldn't read any words. We are happy for Leonardo and hope he will continue to do well.

Jovanny S., 8th gr., along with Jose L., 8th gr., Jason L., 8th gr., and Miguel O., 7th gr., are on Goudy's soccer team.

The uncle of some tutoring grads was in the library during the tutors' orientation meeting. He remarked afterwards, "What a great group of people!"

BIRTHDAY PARTY INVITEES COME TO SATURDAY TUTORING

Have you ever heard of tutoring being included in a birthday celebration? On Oct. 22, Reaisha J., 3rd gr., brought her birthday party guests to Saturday Tutoring. She brought 6 girls from the birthday sleep-over Friday night; 2 girls also came who went to the party afterwards. This was a win-win for everyone, including Reaisha's mom, Crystal C. (a tutoring grad), who did further preparations while the girls were at tutoring. To top it off, during tutoring, a tutor at the same table as Reaisha had the same birth date as Reaisha! They had fun comparing plans for their celebrations. And both included tutoring in their birthday weekend!

FAMILY NIGHT

Monday, Columbus Day, was a great day for a Family Night. On that beautiful evening, over 60 people gathered at Epworth Church—parents, students, siblings, performers, and performers' guests. It was a happy event.

All the tutoring students came with their parents! This was a first! It was really a "Family Night."

A delicious potluck meal was served by eager volunteers, headed up by the chair of the Board of Directors of Inspired Youth, Heather Conlon, also known as the "Hotdog Lady."

The center of the evening was an exciting performance by the "Young Stracke All-Stars," an ensemble of elementary school students from the Old Town School of Folk Music, who played guitar and violin and also sang. On one song in a concert of accessible folk music, the audience participated in a rhythmic clapping/patting routine. The song had many verses, but everyone kept clapping through the whole song.

Corrientes, the group which performed for Inspired Youth in 2015, also performed two songs, with lyrics for the audience to sing along in Spanish and English.

It was a happy evening.

FAMILY DAY

It was raining hard, but 30 people came to Bezazian Library for the Family Day of the 1st-4th graders' Tutoring Program. (Parents with babies under 2 stayed home.) After the students studied for an hour, the families came into the tutoring room, and parents got to meet the tutors. The children's choir of 10 (3 were performing for the first time) sang three songs. The hit was "Sing a Rainbow," where everyone got to hold up a colored placard as their color was sung in the song.

Norma J., grandmother of Jordynn J. (1st gr.) commented: "I thought it was interesting. It was very entertaining. I loved the music, and to see the progress my granddaughter is making was really rewarding. Speaking with her tutor, and the things that she told me, was very inspiring. I think that Inspired Youth is some place that I'm very happy that my granddaughter can participate in, and I just loved it. I had a good time." Norma's daughter, Johnesha J. (Jordynn's mother), a "tutoring grad," was in the

program for 7 years as a child. Norma J. is a founding member of Inspired Youth, Inc. Look what those founding meetings in 2004 resulted in!

TURKEYS IN SATURDAY PROGRAM

“Thank you so much for this turkey,” one of the mothers exclaimed. 33 families received turkeys on the Saturday before Thanksgiving from the 8th grade tutors from Wilmette Jr. High School. Everyone was happy. “I took the turkey to Wisconsin,” remarked one of the mothers whose family went to Madison, Wisconsin to spend the holiday with her sister. Another mother showed a picture of the cooked turkey on her Facebook page. It was a happy Saturday at the Tutoring Program and a happy Thanksgiving for the families of Inspired Youth. Thank you, 8th grade tutors from Wilmette Jr. High.

GIFTS FOR 51 CHILDREN FROM GLENVIEW UMC

Again, for the ninth year, Dorie Burrell opened her apartment to receive bags and bags of gifts for 51 Inspired Youth from families at Glenview United Methodist Church. The children receiving the gifts were the 1st-4th graders from the Wed./Thurs. afternoon tutoring section and their younger brothers and sisters

In early October, the IY families had given gift suggestions, along with the children’s sizes, to Sue Ready of GUMC for “Whose Birthday is It, Anyway?” In early November, the names, gift suggestions, and a photo of each child were laid out for members of GUMC to choose. Two other organizations also had names for the people to choose. The Glenview families bought gifts for the names they chose and brought them to GUMC the first Sunday in December. Sue Ready’s husband brought the presents for Inspired Youth to Dorie Burrell’s apartment in huge bags. As the gifts were sorted into families, Dorie’s whole living room was filled with beautifully wrapped presents. (See IY’s Facebook page.)

The parents (and children) came to get the presents after school. Everyone was happy. Jason R., a first grader, was so excited he jumped around and couldn’t wait to open his present.

Glenview UMC has sponsored “Whose Birthday Is It, Anyway?” since 1986. The families of Inspired Youth are grateful to be included in this program.

TUTORING GRADS

“My name is Maria Y. Najera. I was a part of the Inspired Youth Tutoring Program in the early 1990s. Those years were full of fond memories of Beth Palmer and the volunteers working to help the kids from Goudy Elementary with their school work. I feel very fortunate to have been part of the program during that time. The program introduced me to many first-time experiences which strengthen my education. I remember, the first time I was taught how to use a computer, how to perform a poem in public, how to carefully complete my homework and be able to double check my work. As a child of only Spanish speaking immigrant parents it was difficult to get assistance at home with school work. This program pivoted me toward a more rounded education. I was able to graduate Goudy grade school. I went on to Mather High School and graduated in the Honor roll. After that, I was accepted to the University of Illinois at Chicago and graduated with a psychology major. Currently, I work as a social worker

with the Department of Human Services. I enjoy working in the community and helping out its residents. I feel this would not have been possible without the assistance from the Tutoring Program.”

Blanca F. is attending Truman College. She came to Chicago from Mexico several years ago and was in the tutoring program for a year. We wish Blanca well.

Fredy F. is also attending Truman College. He was in the Tutoring Program from 3rd grade through early H.S. He plans to be a police officer.

Ariana T., 10th gr., is taking all honors courses at Senn H.S.

Cordell Y., will take one semester of college in Chicago and then transfer to a college in Ohio on a football scholarship. Cortez Y. has three part-time jobs. Both students want to go into music production.

PROBLEMS

A tutoring grad was not able to adjust to being a young adult. He had to be sent to a psyche ward for a few days.

In 2015-2016 there were many seventh graders in Inspired Youth. In 2016-2017 several of the students, now in eighth grade, didn't want to be in Inspired Youth any more. A few of them came to the library with other friends on the first day of the tutoring session, but they did not want to be part of the Tutoring Program. They sat at together at a large table in the Reading Room and were so noisy that, after several warnings, the librarian asked them to leave. On the way out, several of them banged on the glass window. The librarian said that with that behavior, they couldn't come back to the library. One of the main offenders later apologized, and the students went back into the library.

SINGING FOR THE EDGEWATER COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING SERVICE

“That was the best I've heard the children sing!” remarked Margaret Sullivan, a board member of Inspired Youth. Five other people—complete strangers---complimented the choir on how well they sang at the Edgewater Community Thanksgiving Service.

On the Sunday before Thanksgiving, 21 children with 9 adults and 2 other children went to Immanuel Lutheran Church to take part in the Community Thanksgiving Service. This was the third year the Inspired Youth Singers and the Epworth Church School Singers were a part of the program. This year they sang “Firm Foundation,” with Jasmine Tripp conducting. The song was beautiful. Listen to it on [facebook.com/inspiredyouth](https://www.facebook.com/inspiredyouth). The Community Thanksgiving Service also had participation from Christians, Muslims, and Jews. It was a wonderful experience for the children.

SINGING FOR THE SHELTER MEAL

The Inspired Youth Singers performed carols and other songs for the holiday meal which Epworth Church puts on annually for Epworth's Overnight Men's Shelter. This year the children sang 18 songs, for 50 minutes. 20 children were in the choir; 15 were singing for the shelter meal for the first time! Not only that: many of the children were very young; 9 of the 20 children were 1st graders, kindergartners, or preschoolers! Not only that: most of the songs were new to many of the children, but everyone

sang all the songs with gusto. Dorie Burrell conducted the choir. Jasmine Tripp helped keep the children in order. For one of the songs, Estefany V., 7th gr., led the hand motions. Three children played the piano accompaniment for songs, Leonela C., 6th gr., Gregorio F., 5th gr., and Phyllis R., 4th gr. Leonela and Gregorio had just learned to play the piano last summer in Inspired Youth's 2016 Summer Piano Program. Videos of three songs are on facebook.com/inspiredyouth, where you can also see the flute and guitar accompanists.

SINGING AT ALL AMERICAN NURSING HOME

Two days after Christmas 20 children from the Inspired Youth Singers and the Epworth Church School Singers sang at the All American Nursing Home. They sang 17 Christmas and secular songs, for a total of 40 minutes. The remarkable thing is that 12 of the 20 children were 4 to 7 years old, and that this was the first time 14 of the children had ever sung in a nursing home! All 20 children (plus one father) sang all 17 songs well.

Fatima E., 8th gr., accompanied 3 songs, and Leonela C., 6th gr., accompanied one song on the keyboard (she had just started playing the keyboard last summer at Inspired Youth's Summer Piano Program). Itzel V., 4th gr., led the hand motions for one song. Jasmine T., a tutoring grad, directed the choir. At the end of the concert the students acted out "freeze motions" to a special CD and enjoyed refreshments. It was a joyous day.

CROP WALK, 2016

19 people from Inspired Youth and Epworth Church walked the 2-mile CROP Walk in downtown Chicago to raise money to alleviate world hunger. The group raised \$317, quite a bit more than last year.

Everyone gathered for preliminary activities at St. James Episcopal Cathedral on N. Michigan Avenue. Melissa D., 8th gr., from Inspired Youth, started helping with face-painting the walkers. Others listened to a fantastic keyboard player and percussionist, who could be heard for blocks around.

Notable in the Epworth/Inspired Youth walkers was a 75-year old man who used a 4-pronged cane because of an artificial hip. Also in the group were pre-schoolers ages 1, 3, and 5. All three youngsters were perfect angels on the walk. Everyone walked the whole 2-mile route.

The Epworth/Inspired Youth group wore bright blue shirts, which they selected at Epworth before they went downtown. Myonna J., 6th gr., thought the 1-year old girl should wear a shirt, too, so she selected the smallest size for her--It was down to the baby's ankles, and she loved the shirt. At the end of the trip, the toddler didn't want to give the shirt back. Perhaps she saw how important the CROP walk was!

The group took the CTA bus downtown and back. On the way home, a woman with a baby-carriage got on and sat near the front. The bus driver said, "You have to fold up the baby-carriage. You can't leave it in the aisle." The woman argued with him. The bus didn't move. The bus, with a full load of passengers, sat for 3, 4, 5 minutes. Finally, Ian F., a father from Inspired Youth, walked to the front and said to the woman, "Let's work this out. You (pointing to the passengers in the side seats) find different seats. We'll fold the seats up, and the baby-carriage can go there." A passenger grumbled, but it was done, and the bus moved on.

Yea, Ian! Once this happened, it was obvious, but no one else thought of it. No one else did it. Yea, Inspired Youth.

HALLOWEEN PARTY 2016

The neighborhood Halloween Party at Epworth Church was a huge success. 75 to 100 people--children, parents, and helpers--came from all over for the exciting event, thanks to flyers made by church secretary Vivian and distributed by Frank Palmer. Four generations came to the party from one neighborhood family. Everyone had a good time.

The costumes were gorgeous: A flirtatious preschool "pumpkin" won the contest for 6 yrs. and under. Phyllis R., 4th gr., a black cat, won for 2nd-5th graders. Batman won for the 6th graders, and Tony Y., 9th gr., won for the older students for his sword display. (See photos on FB: Epworth Church Children – Chicago.)

A special feature of the party was the face painting. Zoria O., 10th gr., and Anyia F., 9th gr. did the most elaborate face painting of any Halloween party. They came to the party offering to help, and Eva S. asked them to paint faces. They used models printed out by church secretary Vivian, and all the faces were beautiful.

Another exceptional feature of the party was huge pumpkins, donated by Connie G., which the children could paint. There were enough large pumpkins for everyone to paint, and the children became engrossed in their art work. A parent, mother of 1st grader Jason R., even painted a pumpkin.

The children got to decorate cupcakes. They were proud of their decorations, and then they ate them. They also loved the pizza at the party.

For games, the children played musical chairs (with DJ Marshall M.). They tossed bean bags into a big, orange box pumpkin, painted by the Girl Scouts and supervised by Leonela C., 6th gr. They tossed sponge balls into buckets, supervised by Mahelate T., 6th gr. They played musical chairs, led by Mistead S.

Because of the many, fun supervised activities, the children were on their best behavior. An adult helper, Elli H. commented, "The children behave much better here than where I came from." She kept marveling at how the children acted at the party.

EPWORTH CHURCH CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

The Epworth Church Christmas Pageant on Dec. 18 was marvelous. A tutoring student from many years ago, Sandra Williams, was Mary; her husband, Cameron Williams, was Joseph; their daughter, Sanaya, was baby Jesus; their son, Larry S., 4th gr., was a wise man. The other two wise men were Carlos F., 4th gr., and Gregorio F., 5th gr. The wise men's trio, "We Three Kings" was loud and happy. Phyllis R., 4th gr., was the angel Gabriel, with a long speaking part. The shepherds with short speaking parts were Donovan F. and Malik O., both in kindergarten. The narrator was Ian F., father of three of the boys. Many other children and adults also were characters in the pageant. Accompanying songs on the piano were Gregorio F., 5th gr., Leonela C., 6th gr., and Fatima E., 8th gr.

Costumes for the pageant were exceptional. They had been developed over several years by talented, creative church members. Eva Schwinge outfitted all the actors with costumes. Pictures on FB: Epworth

Church Children Chicago and FB: Inspired Youth show how beautiful the costumes were.

19 children and 5 adults performed in the pageant. This was on a day when the temperature was forecast to be 2°! Only 2 children didn't come. (2 came too late to be in the pageant.) It was amazing that 19 children came on such a cold day!

After the pageant there was a delicious luncheon with many kinds of food including black-eyed peas. It was a beautiful Christmas pageant celebration.

TICKETS TO "HAMILTON"

A patron of the Bezazian Branch of the Chicago Public Library gave the library two tickets to the musical "Hamilton," because she couldn't use them. Mark Kaplan, director of the Bezazian Branch, gave them to Inspired Youth, with the instructions that they be used by a student over 16 years old and a tutor. Mr. Kaplan had seen the production and judged that it wasn't for children.

The two who went to see the play were tutoring director Beth Palmer and former student Jasmine Tripp. Jasmine, a tutoring grad, is now a tutor, and a good singer.

In order to prepare for the play, Jasmine and Ms. Beth listened to the entire musical on YouTube, while following the script, which covers American history from 1775 to 1804.

The tickets (purchased August 4, 2016) were for the matinee performance on Thanksgiving Saturday. The theater was packed. Every single seat was taken. The people sitting next to Ms. Beth were a family of four from Atlanta. They came to Chicago instead of going to New York to see "Hamilton" because in New York the tickets were three times as expensive. These mezzanine tickets were \$150-\$225.

The whole production was extraordinary.

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 8th 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, or mailed to "Inspired Youth," 5715 N. Ridge, Chicago, IL 60660.