

## **TUTORING NEWS: EPWORTH TUTORING**

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### **1. EPWORTH TUTORING PROGRAM IS THRIVING THIS AUTUMN**

We started in mid-September, and in the past two months, all sessions have been strong:

Mon. evening: 40 5th-8th graders, 27 tutors

Tues. afternoon: 22 1st-4th graders, 16 tutors

Wed. afternoon: “ “ ”, 15 tutors

Wed. evening: 12 HS students, 5 tutors

Sat. morning: 8 preschoolers, 6 tutors

Sat. morning: 16 K-7th students not listed above, 51 students from list above, 75 8<sup>th</sup> gr. tutors from WJHS, 10 adult tutors

The total program has around 98 children and youth, 79 adult or high school tutors, and 75 jr. high tutors.

### **2. Students Progressing**

Already we see students making gains from last year. Carly Hope (5<sup>th</sup> gr.), who gained so much in reading last year, is eager to learn new things in math this year. Shanese Watts (3<sup>rd</sup> gr.) has already improved in reading. Fernando Manra (3<sup>rd</sup> gr.) and Javier Lopez (2<sup>nd</sup> gr.) come ready to work. Jorge Gomez (5<sup>th</sup> gr.) is reading a lot and working on math. Gelisa Garner (6<sup>th</sup> gr.) is gaining in math. Augusta Bullette (6<sup>th</sup> gr.) is doing the worksheets of the stories he reads.

Danyelle Webb (8<sup>th</sup> gr.) was very motivated to write a story for our magazine; then she proceeded to fill up her whole journal; now she is beginning to work on math. Isamar Manrra (1<sup>st</sup> gr.) is really reading the books she checks out from our lending library. Eugenia Ruiz (1<sup>st</sup> gr.), who skipped kindergarten, is doing 1<sup>st</sup> grade work. Monique Smith (5<sup>th</sup> gr.) is ready to answer every question in our age group sessions. These are a few students whose progress we already see.

### **3. Monday Night, 5th-8th Graders**

Monday night, Nov. 6, was cold, windy, and rainy. A tutor said, "Not many students will be here tonight." Thirty-one 5th-8th graders came. The next Monday was Parents' Night, a day when the temperature dropped and snowflakes were in the air. Thirty-nine 5th-8th graders came, many bringing their families. The next Monday was even colder, with the first blizzard snow of the season. Thirty-one youth came. Usually we have enough tutors to help the students focus. If there aren't enough tutors, the evening is wild. If there are enough tutors, the students actually study—read, write, and do math and homework. It's beautiful. 39 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders wrote/typed stories for our fall magazine.

The tutors on Monday nights are designing "Internet Tutorials" for the students, i.e., lesson plans of Web sites to visit on the Internet to learn about facets of Chicago. The first tutorial, on skyscrapers, was done by Brant Feltner, who works at the Field Museum. Other topics will include the 1873 fire, public art, waterways/Lake Michigan, history, and famous people.

### **4. Tuesday/Wednesday Afternoon, 1st-4th Gr.**

The first through fourth graders on Tues. and Weds. afternoons usually have a lot of homework to do from school when they come to tutoring. Year after year we find that the teachers at Goudy, the local school, assign more and more homework. The Board of Education has been requiring more homework, but also the teachers are probably finding that the students are able to do more homework. The tutors make homework quality time.

One feature of the afternoon program is science, held for each grade level for 20 minutes a month. The lessons are led by Joan Sheffield, microbiologist newly retired from Cook County Hospital. Some tutors have said they learn more about science from Joan than they learned when they were in school! In Oct. Joan used carbon dioxide made from vinegar and baking soda to put out a candle flame. She helped the students understand how this could be used for fire extinguishers. In Nov. students got to look through a microscope at slides Joan prepared. Also in Nov. Joan gave each student a packet of information on one of the planets. She had printed material from two Web sites and had made out a question plan for each planet, in order to help the children learn about the planet. In Dec. the students will give oral reports on their planets to others in their age group.

### **5. Epworth Teen Study Group**

The high school students come on Wednesday evenings to do their homework and

extra work on the computers. Many students are coming and doing a lot of work.

Last summer we tried something for the first time. We had a series of math workshops during the Wednesdays in July. These were taught by Roger Affleck, who tutors in the Saturday preschool, and tutored in the high school section last year, but this year has a part time position teaching math in a college. Roger designed workshops to demonstrate principles of math in a fun way. One task was counting beans; another was dividing pies. Many teens came, and the math series was a success.

In January 2001 the Teen Study Group will begin to offer ACT/SAT study seminars as part of Wednesday night tutoring. We are contacting the high schools to publicize the seminars and hope to attract new students. The seminars will be led by Arie Dejong, one of the Wednesday night tutors. This new feature will be important for high school students as they prepare to enter college.

## **6. Saturday Preschool**

Every Saturday all during the year we have “school” for preschool children of families of the Tutoring Program. The children look at books and talk about them. They have a circle time with a lesson. Sometimes they play with toys. Sometimes they go for a walk to the park. They always have a crafts project (we plan for it to be messy!) and a time for cookies and juice.

The children love to come to “school.” It is so successful that some children who have grown up in our preschool can read in kindergarten, and most do well in first grade and beyond. Now in the 16<sup>th</sup> year of our program, children of our tutoring grads are preschool students. We hope to change educational expectations with this generational bridge.

## **7. Saturday Elementary Peer Tutoring**

Last May Jack Jacobson retired. He was the teacher at Wilmette Junior High School who inspired and organized one hundred 8th graders to come two Saturdays a month to Chicago to help city children study. He planned all last year for the transition because he wanted the partnership to continue. This year another teacher at WJHS, Michele de St. Aubin, is inspiring and organizing the 8<sup>th</sup> graders to come to work with our students. So far 76 students from Wilmette have signed up. We thought the Saturday program would be smaller this year because of the transition, but we’ve been having 57 of our students (ages 2 through 7<sup>th</sup> grade) come each week, and 50-60 WJHS students!

The Saturday before Thanksgiving the Wilmette students gave turkeys to 40 families of the Tutoring program, starting with families of the children who come on Saturdays. The 8<sup>th</sup> graders raised the money at their school through bake sales and pocket change. Altogether they raised \$684.92, mostly in one-dollar bills and coins. The families of the Tutoring Program were very grateful for the turkeys.

## **8. EYE GLASSES FOR STUDENTS**

Ten students were given a free eye exam this fall by Dr. John Walsh, optometrist in Wilmette, and eight of those received eye glasses from the Lions Club of Wilmette. The students were Amilia and Thomas Barnes, Felecia Pritchard, Tabitha McCullough, Jessica Cox, LilRita Mangrum, Djuan Beasley, and Earnest Marshall. Dr. Walsh has been doing this for students in our program for 13 years.

## **9. EPWORTH YOUTH CHOIR**

The Epworth Youth Choir will sing at the Bethany Terrace Nursing Home in Morton Grove, IL, at 2:15 pm, on Sun., Dec. 17. This is the eighth year the Youth Choir has sung there. It is a special trip for the 18-22 members of the choir, and the residents and their families enjoy the children singing. The Youth Choir will sing as part of the Epworth Church pageant and party on Sat., Dec. 9, at 7 pm.

## **10. NEW BOOKS**

The students are excited about new books the Tutoring Program purchased this fall: *Stickeen* (by John Muir), *A Picture Book of Sacagawea*, *The Ballot Box Battle* (about Elizabeth Cady Stanton), *The Worst Day of My Life* (by Bill Cosby), *Alexander Who Used To Be Rich Last Sunday*, *Satchmo's Blues* (about Louis Armstrong), *Frog and Toad Together*, *Frog and Toad All Year*, and two books about the planets. A few other books students will read this year are *Sea of Ice (Wreck of the Endurance)*, *Journey Home* (about Vietnam), *The Polar Express*, *The Legend of Sleeping Bear*, *Beezy*, and *Zora Hurston and the Chinaberry Tree*.

## **11. PARENTS' NIGHT FOR FAMILIES OF 5TH-8TH GRADERS**

Last spring the Monday night tutors of the 5th-8th graders said they wanted to have a Parents' Night in the fall in order to meet the parents of the children they were working with. We held the Parents Night on Mon., Nov. 13. We planned for 60-80 people, and 90 showed up! including adults from 14 families. There were mountains of food in the potluck dinner, which was wonderful. This year more than ever, the tutors talked with the parents so they could get to know each other.

The dinner was going fine, but the guest speaker hadn't come. Suddenly, Lois McCullen Parr, Epworth's new pastor, walked in and asked if there was anything she could do. We told her the guest speaker hadn't come, and we wondered if she could "say something" (that is, be the program) if he didn't come. She said that would be fine.

After dinner, all 90 people crowded into Epworth's small chapel. The heat wasn't turned on, but we created our own heat. The youth choir sang a song, the entire group sang a song, and then Lois spoke. She talked about how important it was to be able to meet the parents, the students, and the tutors. Then she held up a lego block. Everyone knew what it was. She said she had just found it on the floor and she felt it was a symbol. She said when a lego is by itself, all it is is potential. When it is hooked together with other legos, it can form many kinds of structures

and do many things. She said the six little nubs multiply their possibility the more legos are attached. She compared that to people and our potential and possibilities.

Then she read a poem:

One day we will see God  
The Almighty, The Creator  
In every child  
And perhaps discipline the child  
As we wish to be disciplined  
And forgive the child  
As we wish to be forgiven  
And love the child  
As we wish to be loved  
And uplift the child  
As we wish to be uplifted  
And teach the child  
As we wish to be taught  
For one day we will understand, we will know  
the Child is God recreated  
And God is the Child manifested in flesh  
One day we will see God  
The Magnificent, The Beautiful  
In every child.

–Sonsyrea Tate (author and educator, Maryland)

There were 90 people at the Parents' Night, including at least 55 children—rowdy pre-teens, gang members, preschool children. But the whole room was still when Lois was talking. Everyone was listening. It was remarkable.

After Lois spoke, several parents stood up and told how much the Tutoring Program has meant to their children and their families—including Carla Flores (mother of Freddy, Carleen, Ericka, and Eugenia) and Shirley Carter (mother of Christopher, Ernest, Diecell, and Jasmine W.). A couple of tutors talked about why our program and education were important for the youth. Kevin Kreeger said that a friend of his, Joe, whom he had gone to high school with, never got on the right track after high school. Now in his late 20's, the only job Joe can get is cleaning toilets in a bar in the middle of the night. The students asked if Joe had a problem with drugs. Kevin said that was partly true. One student, Jesus Gomez, suggested that Joe's friends should take him to a drug treatment center. Kevin said that wouldn't work unless Joe wanted to be helped. The students were very concerned.

During the week after the Parents' Night, Carla Flores declared this was the best Parents' Night ever, and she wanted a copy of the poem Lois read. Shirley Carter

exclaimed, “If I had known that Parents’ Nights were going to be this good, I would have taken off work last year to come.”

## **12. A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM**

### **A Kindergartner on the CROP Walk, by Beth P.**

“My feet never get tired,” LaWanda Mangrum, who had just turned six, said at the beginning of the CROP Walk. We were walking together on the first block of a 6-mile walk, and she asked, “Are we almost there?” I said to myself, “This is going to be a long walk.” I said to her, “We have a long way to go. I hope your feet don’t get tired.” She said, “My feet never get tired.”

This is the first year LaWanda has been in our Tutoring Program. She is the daughter of Wanda Mangrum and the granddaughter of Alberta Watts, whose other grandchildren have been in our program for seven years.

We took the el downtown, along with 17 other people from Epworth Church. While we were waiting for the other 900 walkers to arrive at starting point of the walk (the Chicago Temple, across from the Daley Plaza), LaWanda’s tooth fell out. Her cousin Glenda Watts found it and washed it. I told LaWanda that the tooth was a sign of her starting to be a big girl.

During the walk LaWanda was curious about everything she saw. She noticed bronze sculptures of books, globes, and dolphins on the wall of a large condominium complex, and she talked about those. We talked about fog covering the tops of skyscrapers. As we walked east from Clark Street on Roosevelt Road, toward the orange line of the el, LaWanda started talking about “the museum.” That was a strange thing to be talking about. There aren’t any museums in that part of Chicago. After about three blocks, I saw it--the top of the roof of the Field Museum! LaWanda had seen that from afar and had recognized it as the museum! She started talking about dinosaurs and said she had gone to the museum with her preschool class at her other school! This was a smart little girl to have remembered and recognized the roof of the Field Museum from that far away!

We walked south to 21<sup>st</sup> street, and then the route we were supposed to go was straight north on Michigan Avenue to the Loop. All of us in our sub-group were tired—Shanese Watts (age 8), Jessica Cox (age 9), LaWanda, and myself. The children asked how far we had to go. I thought a good goal would help. I pointed to the tiny skyscrapers covered with fog in the distance and said, “We only have to go to those buildings over there.” That was the wrong thing to say! We knew it was impossible to walk that far!

We started talking about what part of our legs and feet hurt. Everything hurt on everybody. Then I said to LaWanda, “Who was it that told me that her feet never get tired?” She was silent a minute, then she said, “I did.” Then we didn’t talk about that any more.

The 8- and 9-year old girls in particular didn't think they could keep walking. We had a couple of M&M's which Diane Walker, Epworth coordinator, had prepared for the Epworth walkers. Then suddenly LaWanda started singing: "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus in the morning, Jesus in the noontime, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus till the sun goes down," the song the youth choir had sung in church earlier that morning. We all joined in, singing the song a couple of times, walking and walking. After another block, LaWanda started singing, "Love him in the morning, love him in the noontime ...," and we all joined in. It was as if she was singing the song in her mind and all of a sudden started singing out loud. Every few blocks, whenever we would start to lag, LaWanda started singing, and we all joined in. And we kept walking.

Finally we got to the Loop. We walked down State Street and over on Washington, back to the starting point, singing, "Praise him, praise him, praise him in the morning, praise him in the noontime..." All of us had made it. We got our ice cream treat and had a massage.

All 19 walkers from Epworth walked the entire 10 kilometer route. For the past two years Epworth has been awarded a gold-plated gym shoe for having the most walkers. This year we didn't have the most walkers, but we raised more money than before to alleviate hunger across the world, over \$1100. And a little child was the leader.

### **13. CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

This year in the Tutoring Program we are reviewing the methods we worked on last year, extending them to new students, and learning new methods. The afternoon 1st-4th graders had four sessions on conflict resolution, the Saturday 1st-7th graders had two sessions with three more scheduled, and the Monday evening 5th-8th graders had one session, with two more scheduled.

We began with a review of the method we worked on last year:

- 1. Look at the other person in the eye.**
- 2. Call them by their name and tell them what they did that you did not like.**
- 3. Tell them how it made you feel.**
- 4. Tell them what they can do next time.**
- 5. Ask them to respond.**

Many of the 1st-4th graders were learning the method from scratch. The 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders remembered everything surprisingly well from last year. When given situations to role play, several 5<sup>th</sup> graders acted as mediators when their classmates role played conflicts. When the 6<sup>th</sup> graders came to the session and saw the conflict resolution poster and slips of paper with situations to role play, they didn't even wait for the adult leader. They started to run the session themselves. Diecell Marshall took the chart, assigned roles to his classmates, and acted as mediator for them. Then all the students rotated among the roles. It was

amazing to watch.

#### **14. Importance of Conflict Resolution**

This method of conflict resolution is good for resolving squabbles among the students and helping students become aware that physical fighting isn't absolutely necessary all the time.

In the large fights, a combination of methods are necessary. One night at the end of the tutoring session two boys started fighting, the worst fight in our 15½ years as a tutoring program. One boy took his shirt off to fight. The boys would not quit. A tutor, Kevin Kreeger, separated them, but they were too angry to resolve the fight. We did not want the fight to continue the next day at school, so we alerted the principal as to the problem. He called the two boys and their friends into his office, talked with them all, and had them shake hands. Later that day several boys told us that the fight was resolved.

We have heard that some of our students are beginning to get involved with gangs and that one of our students is the head of a gang of younger children. We have to keep stressing the positive values for the youngsters.

#### **15. COMPUTERS NETWORKED**

Michael Mauntz, an executive at Bank of America and former Monday night tutor, has begun to network five of the 13 computers in our computer lab. He plans to connect them to the Internet through our one phone line and install a cable modem, which would speed up the Internet connection. When one of our good computers died, Mike donated a computer which he had built from parts of other computers. He also replaced the hard drive of another computer which died. He hopes to put CD-Rom drives into two computers which don't have them. As of November Mike was in the middle of networking the computers. Through his experience and expertise, he is expanding our vision and hopes for the computer lab.

The students love the Internet. Six or seven students come early on Monday nights and Saturdays to use the Internet. They all huddle around one computer and share the pictures they print from the Web sites. They are going to love having more computers running at faster speeds on the Internet.

**16. Web Site:** Pat Zukosky is keeping up our Web site:

[www.geocities.com/epworthtutoring](http://www.geocities.com/epworthtutoring). Pat had surgery on his knee in mid-November and won't be able to help with our computer lab for a while.

**17. New Computer:** We thank UOP (Universal Oil Products) for a Pentium computer for administrative work of the Tutoring Program. In March 1999 UOP gave us 13 Pentium/486 computers to upgrade our entire lab!

#### **18. GRANTS GIVEN TO THE EPWORTH TUTORING PROGRAM**

In October the Springboard Foundation, a donors' fund of the Chicago Community Trust, awarded a generous grant to the Epworth Tutoring Program, to be used to upgrade the director's stipend and for additional staff support and supplies. Beth Palmer and John Jenkins met with two of the three donor reps assigned to our program, Mark Fuller and Ned Jannotta. They were very interested in children and in what our program was like. They were very impressed hear that 50-60 suburban 13-year olds come to tutor two Saturdays a month in the Epworth Tutoring Program. They discussed our budget with us and hope to visit our program during the year. We appreciate the grant the Springboard Foundation awarded our program and the true interest of the donor reps in what we do.

In September we received a grant from ASAP (After School Action Programs) for photos and photocopying associated with our Parents' Nights. Ironically, at our November Parents' Night, the battery was dead in our camera, and no pictures could be taken!

In November we received a grant from the Friends of Epworth, a fund started by parents of students at Wilmette Junior High School. We used the grant for a cabinet for the Saturday kindergarten class, books, games, Saturday art supplies, and table supplies for the November Parents' Night.

We appreciate the partnerships these groups have with our program. We still need more funds to help the children have quality educational time.

### **19. EPWORTH SUMMER MUSIC INSTITUTE**

In June 2000 the Tutoring Program began a new project. We sponsored free piano lessons for children of the Tutoring Program. Fifty children participated in the nine-week program. Of those, *34 children took one or two one-hour piano lessons each week*. A few children came for only one lesson, and a few students who had played the piano or sung before performed in one of the recitals. *Altogether 35 children played in one or two recitals*; most were beginning piano students. All were very poised and played well.

The piano teachers were Eleanor Bilby, Beth Palmer, and Didi Yabes, with help from high school students Judy Montalvo and Pam Kinlow.

Several children never missed a lesson in the nine weeks. Two families bought electric keyboards for their children. One obtained a used keyboard, and one got a keyboard fixed. At least four students plan to continue with private lessons.

One girl said, "A few years ago my father paid big bucks for a semester of piano lessons for my sister and me, and the teacher didn't teach us a thing. Now I'm really learning."

The students enjoyed making music on the piano and enjoyed exploring the

different sounds of the keyboard. At her first lesson, Yesenia Manrra, a very shy 7-year old girl, said, "I like the sound of the piano." A week later in a Girl Scout meeting when asked the highlight of the week, she said, "Playing the piano."

Five-year old Eugenia Ruiz's fingers danced on the keys as she played.

Cheire Taylor, a ninth grader who happens to have very long fingers, sped through two beginning piano books. Another student remarked, "Cheire was born to play the piano."

A 10-year old girl who has never been able to concentrate on math or reading in our tutoring program actually figured out how to read notes. She knew when she wasn't playing the right note and she practiced the piece over and over until she mastered it.

A girl with a good voice who likes to sing had to be dragged to sing a solo in the first recital. When she missed the second recital, she asked if she could sing her second solo for the Epworth worship service.

Nina Yabes, a senior at Lane H.S. this year, learned to play the flute in band class at Lane but had never had private lessons. Last summer she went from playing a few "Easy Pieces" to playing a long, complicated flute solo. She enjoys leading the flute section at Lane this year.

LilRita Mangrum and Rotimi Oshinubi sang "If My People" at the first recital. An older girl in the audience wanted them to sing it again at the second recital because she said it was so beautiful it brought tears to her eyes.

The parents were extremely proud of their children. One mother stood in awe as her daughter played a song on the keyboard. Another mother wrote, "Dear Beth, Miss Eleanor, Miss Didi, and her other teachers, I can't express enough how I appreciate all your help and time you all spent with Jackie on the piano lessons. My husband and I enjoyed the recitals and looked forward to going to them. You and the other teachers are very special people. I'm very grateful! Again, thank you. I am grateful for everything! Sincerely, Susan Campoverde"

We are still planning how to continue the Epworth Music Institute. We have 5 clarinets, a sax, and 2 trombones which students are waiting to learn how to play. We seek other band instruments as well. We also hope several students will continue with piano. If you know of people who are interested in being part of a "hymn band" or helping students learn piano or a band instrument, talk with Beth Palmer.

Studies have shown that participation in music programs increases students' self-esteem and leads to a decrease in youth violence and the likelihood of gang membership. Other studies show that music creates bridges between the "left

brain" and the "right brain," thus increasing children's intelligence. All we know is that everyone involved in the Epworth Summer Music Institute had a good time.

### **20. Instrument Donations**

In November the Kiwanis Club of the North Shore gave the Epworth Tutoring Program money for two keyboards with earphones. In October we received a used keyboard from First United Methodist Church in Evanston. A student at New Trier H.S., Adam Fresen, a former Saturday tutor, is going to collect used instruments for our program as part of his Eagle Scout award. He will conduct the drive all year and bring the instruments in May.