

Greetings from the Epworth Tutoring Program, Christmas 2003

*O-- star of wonder, star of light, star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.*

The children of our Youth Choir love to sing "We Three Kings" because three of them always get to sing solos. They always want to sing it. This year I realized how beautiful the words are.

O-- star of wonder, star of light Last summer we gave free piano lessons to 60 children of the Tutoring Program. During the summer we had two recitals and also took them to other places to play their pieces. When we went to the Alden-Lakeland Nursing Home, one of the piano tutors took the keyboard in the car and the kids walked the 20-minute walk there. The residents loved the concert.

The day of the final recital was the hottest day of the summer in Chicago, 100° heat. The mother of four of the children was very appreciative that her children were able to take piano lessons because they loved it and it was good therapy for them. She said, "The kids were so excited about playing in the recital today they stayed up until 1 am last night playing their duet "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" over and over again on our keyboard. Then this afternoon we took the keyboard to the Alden-Lakeland so they could play for my father who is there." I asked how they got the keyboard there. She said, "We carried it," walking, in 100° heat. *O-- star of wonder, star of light*

Star with royal beauty bright LaMonica and her two brothers were in the Tutoring Program, 1992-1997, when she was in 4th through 9th grades. School was not easy for her, so she had to work hard. She never missed a day of tutoring, of Youth Choir rehearsals, or of Girl Scouts. Her mother Gigi was a tutor, a chaperon for the Youth Choir, and the assistant Girl Scout leader. In high school LaMonica got a job at McDonald's and was assistant manager. She was also a cheerleader. After she graduated from high school she began college, got a job, had a baby, and is now in college full-time. Last year her mother Gigi was so ill she had to go into a nursing home, the Alden-Lakeland. Lamonica, age 21, and her younger brothers are responsible for her.

In December we took the Youth Choir to sing at the Alden-Lakeland, and LaMonica happened to be visiting her mother. LaMonica has turned into a beautiful woman. She loved seeing the Youth Choir because it brought back memories of when she and her friends were in the Youth Choir. After the concert the children didn't think they had sung very well. LaMonica said, "These people loved the concert. Just seeing your youthful, happy faces brings joy to them. They don't get to see children very often, and you cheer them up just being who you are." *Star with royal beauty bright*

Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light. Tommy: Think 9 years old, short and stocky, big front teeth, long hair lock at the back. In September 2002 I told Tommy's 4th grade teacher at school, "Expect a miracle." Tommy had just registered for our program, and we felt good things were going to happen during the year. We soon found that Tommy hardly ever did his homework and hardly did any of our work. In November we asked the students to write something for our magazine, and he spent the whole session writing! –the story of "John Henry." His tutor couldn't get over how he concentrated. After that he did a little work, then wandered around the table in his tutoring area, did a little work the next day, and wandered around the table in his tutoring area. By May he was concentrating a little more. In June I happened to see his teacher at school. She exclaimed, "Thank you for telling me last fall, 'Expect a miracle.' I've had some difficult times with this class this year, and it sustained me. And the miracle happened! Tommy progressed 2 stanines on the Iowa Test. That is a miracle. His study skills and self-control have improved immensely. Thank you."

This fall Tommy has continued concentrating a little more each session. Recently a tutor worked with him who had worked with him last year. She was excited. "I can't believe how much Tommy has progressed compared to last year! It's amazing!" *Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.*

Blessings to you and yours, Beth Palmer, epworthtutoring@ameritech.net, www.geocities.com/epworthtutoring