

## TUTORING NEWS: INSPIRED YOUTH

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### "WE WON THE PRIZE!"

Inspired Youth received the 2006 Much Shelist Founders' Award through the Chicago Bar Association's Abraham Lincoln Marovitz' Lend-a-Hand Program at the Grant Reception on Dec. 8, 2005, in the City Council Chambers at City Hall in downtown Chicago.

Inspired Youth applied to the Chicago Bar Association for a Lend-a-Hand grant, and was one of three nominees for the Inaugural Much Shelist Founders' Award. Several members of the Much Shelist firm visited a Thursday afternoon session of the Inspired Youth Tutoring Program in late November. They spoke to students, tutors, and the director about the program.

After the visit Inspired Youth was asked to bring eight students to City Hall to "sing a song for Mayor Daley." The students were asked to prepare speeches (printed below) about how the Tutoring Program was important for them. At least one had to be in English and Spanish. The speeches had to be submitted for approval to the Mayor's Committee on Special Events. This was very exciting for the children. Many things had to be packed into 30 minutes, and everything needed to be timed to the second.

Two speeches were chosen, Jasmine's and Fabricio's. The song chosen was "Count on Me," following the theme of mentoring. Jasmine and Fabricio practiced their speeches at the Tues. evening tutoring session. Fabricio was going to give his speech for his class at school, but he forgot it at home. All the students practiced the song.

The Chicago Bar Association (and Much Shelist) sent a shuttle to bring the students downtown. This turned out to be the day of Chicago's first big snowfall. Traffic was slow, but we arrived at City Hall exactly on time.

The Inspired Youth students wore white shirts, and the girls put on red silk plaid vests at City Hall. The students practiced their song, and Jasmine and Fabricio practiced their speeches with the microphone.

Attending the ceremony were program directors of 17 organizations which were to receive awards from the Lend-a-Hand

Program; Board members of Lend-a-Hand, including Bernadette Nowakowski of the Chicago Public Library, who had given approval for Inspired Youth to tutor at Bezazian Library; members of the press, including a TV camera; attorneys from several firms including Much Shelist; children and parents from two other youth organizations; and 5 tutor/mentors from Inspired Youth who wanted to support the children. Everyone's names had to be submitted beforehand.

The Grant Reception was wonderful. It was calm and beautiful. A lot happened in 30 minutes. It began when Mayor Daley entered the Council Chambers. He spoke passionately about the importance of education, comparing our system with China's. He said that in many countries, students spend 50 hours a week in school, whereas in this country most students spend only 30 hours. Everyone in the room felt that education was important, and to have the mayor extol it corroborated their life's work. (Afterwards one of our students said she didn't like what the mayor said because "We need our summer vacation!" She had listened to what he said.)

Then Mayor Daley spoke about Abraham Lincoln Marovitz, the founder of the Lend-a-Hand Program, and how Mr. Marovitz was at their house so often when Daley was a child that he was like a member of the family. Daley didn't know until he grew up that "Uncle Abe" wasn't a real uncle. The mayor's remarks provided a warm, sincere atmosphere for the ceremony.

Awards were given to 17 organizations through the Lend-a-Hand program of the Chicago Bar Association. When Inspired Youth was given the 2006 Much Shelist Founders' Award, Beth Palmer was given a large styrofoam check. All the Inspired Youth were very happy.

Inspired Youth sang "Count on Me," and Fabricio and Jasmine, along with a student from another program, gave their speeches. Their speeches were strong and confident.

## "We Won the Prize!" (Continued)

Inspired Youth, Inc. was overjoyed to receive the 2006 Much Shelist Founders Award. The eight children, five mentors, and director from Inspired Youth who were there were very excited. After the ceremony, while waiting in front of City Hall for the shuttle to come, the children held up the large styrofoam check for the people walking by to see, and they yelled, "We won the prize! We won the prize!" They were so happy!

When the shuttle arrived, the children found packets of fancy gingerbread people from Much Shelist waiting for them in the van. It was a happy evening.

The award will help Inspired Youth get established as it works to enrich the lives of children and families in Uptown/Edgewater in Chicago.

Inspired Youth changes lives. This was exemplified in the Grant Reception ceremony. Every year Inspired Youth has a Family Night in which each child recites a poem for the families. For two years in a row Fabricio refused to speak when it was his turn to recite his poem. He got up in front of the people and froze; he wouldn't say anything.

This year we sensed there had been a change in Fabricio. We thought he could "give a speech for the Mayor" for the Grant Reception in December. We practiced with Fabricio in front of his parents and also in front of the other tutoring students, but we didn't know if he would freeze at the last minute at City Hall. When the time came for him to speak to the mayor and all the other people, he said his remarks brilliantly!

## **CHICAGO BAR ASSOCIATION'S ABRAHAM LINCOLN MAROVITZ LEND-A-HAND PROGRAM**

The Abraham Lincoln Marovitz Lend-a-Hand Program of the Chicago Bar Association is exemplary in helping organizations which provide mentoring for children and youth on a grassroots level. Other firms and other professions should sponsor youth programs in the same way. Volunteer-based youth programs, such as Inspired Youth, have undergirded school reform in Chicago and cities across the US in the past 20 years and have furthered the education of countless children and their families. Bringing together volunteers and children creates a strong

human infrastructure in the city. Participating in this is what it means to be a good citizen. This is what the Lend-a-Hand Program does.

## **MUCH SHELIST HONORS FOUNDERS WITH \$35,000 CONTRIBUTION TO LEND-A-HAND**

*[Quoted from [www.muchshelist.com/512.htm](http://www.muchshelist.com/512.htm)]*

Much Shelist Freed Denenberg Ament & Rubenstein, P.C., in celebration of the firm's 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, has honored its five founders with a \$35,000 contribution to the Abraham Lincoln Marovitz Lend-a-Hand Program. The money will be used by Lend-a-Hand to create and fund the new Much Shelist Founders' Award, which will be given annually to an up-and-coming tutor/mentor program in Chicago that has been in existence for less than five years.

During each of the next five years, Much Shelist will fund a \$7,000 grant in support of Lend-a-Hand's ongoing mission to help young people in disadvantaged Chicago-area communities by providing them with the guidance and support they need to succeed in school and to reach their full potential as independent and productive adults. In addition to the firm's monetary contribution, Much Shelist attorneys and staff will donate time to agencies supported by Lend-a-Hand by serving as mentors and tutors to area youth in need.

"We view our 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a time to look back at the firm's proud history," said David T. Brown, principal and chair of the firm's Management Committee. "It is only fitting that we make a significant contribution on behalf of our founders to such a giving and important organization like Lend-a-Hand."

The recipient of this year's award was Inspired Youth, Inc., a one-year-old tutoring program that provides assistance with reading, writing, arithmetic and homework for low-income children in the Uptown/Edgewater community.

*Thank you, Much Shelist, for celebrating your 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary by honoring your founders with a contribution which helps young people in Chicago.*

## **HOW HAS THE TUTORING PROGRAM BEEN IMPORTANT FOR YOU?**

**Fabricio:** (*Fabricio was chosen to speak at City Hall.*) My name is Fabricio. Mentoring has helped me a great deal. Tutoring helps me with my homework. It helps me focus and concentrate and read books. In 4<sup>th</sup> grade I didn't like to concentrate. Then my mentor told me it was important to do my work because it would be important in my life, and so now I read books and I'm getting good grades.

I don't like the mentoring and tutoring program. I LOVE IT! Thank you, Mayor Daley, Much Shelist, and Lend-A-Hand for helping us.

Mi nombre es Fabricio. Tutoría me ayuda con me tarea. Me ayuda a concentrarme y a leer libros. Cuando yo estaba en 4 grado a mi no me gustaba concentrarme. Despues mi tutor me dijo que es importante hacer mi trabajo porque es importante en me vida, y ahora a mi me gusta libros y estoy sacando buenas calificaciones.

A mi no me gusta tutoría. A mi me ENCANTA! Gracias a Mayor Daley, Much Shelist y Lend-A-hand por ayudarnos.

**Jasmine T.:** (*chosen to speak at City Hall*) What the mentoring program means to me is that I get to be in a lot of activities, like singing in the choir and going to tutoring and getting to meet different people from different companies.

I like working at the tutoring program with Pam, Paul, and Erin. We have a lot of fun learning math, reading, science, and social studies. I like the mentoring program because I can get an A+ on my homework, because there are smart people there that can teach me things that I do not know yet.

I like singing because we get to go to different nursing homes, and singing to the residents really brings their hopes up. When we sing, other people there are inspired too, because they smile when we sing really good. Thank you, mentors, for believing in me.

**Shonesha:** Hi! My name is Shonesha and I am going to talk about my tutor in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades. My tutor's name was Ms. Elaine. She was a very nice tutor. She always helped me with my work. Sometimes when I finished my work, we did more work. It was challenging, but she helped me understand it more, and she gave me packets to take home to do. I liked her. She was a very thoughtful person. Ms. Elaine was the nicest tutor.

**Odalis:** I like going to tutoring. I have a very nice tutor with me, Ms. Debbie. She helps me with my math, and when I finish she gives me a sticker. She is my favorite tutor. She is fun. She is my best tutor. I love very much my tutor.

A mi me gusta ir la tutoría. Yo tengo una maestra buena para mi, Sra. Debbie. Ella me ayuda con la matematica, y cuando termino me da un sticker. Ella es mi favorita maestra. Ella es mi mejor maestra. Yo quiero mucho a mi maestra.

**Johnesha:** The tutoring program has meant a lot to me. They have picked good tutors who are able to help me with my school work and homework. When I first started the tutoring program, I wasn't so sure if it would help me, but when I kept going my mom and I knew it was going to help my sister and me with our work. This program has done a lot for a lot of kids.

**Andrew:** To Inspired Youth: Thank you for all the stuff you gave us, like the tutoring, singing, choir, and everything else. I want you to keep helping us for a long time. Beth Palmer, thank you for letting us be in the tutoring program and all the rest of the stuff. Thank you for letting us go to the Inspired Youth program and having fun plus enjoying what you have done for us. I just thank you for everything. Thank you for giving us everything that is good for us. Thank you for giving us those tutors. Thank you very much for letting us stay in the stuff you got us in. Thank you for letting us go the nursing homes and family nights at the Presbyterian Church and for us to be singing there, giving \$5 McDonald's tickets and snacks at the nursing home on Christmas. Thank you very much, Inspired Youth.

**Latrice:** I like the tutoring program because there are people to teach me things I don't know. If we didn't have tutoring we wouldn't know some of the things we know. I want to thank Beth for letting us go to tutoring. I also thank whoever the person was who let Beth have a tutoring program. Thank you from Latrice.

### **How Has the Tutoring Program Been Important for You? (*Continued*)**

**Andre:** Dear Beth, happy Christmas. It's been nice working with you this year. I like how

you've been doing math with me. I like how you've been doing reading with me. I like the songs we've been singing this year. I like the books you've given me this year. I've been doing times tables. I like how Estela has been helping me with my work. I like the program. I like singing for the people at the nursing homes. I like the people at the library, and I like how we sing Christmas songs. Thank you for everything you did for me. From Andre to Inspired Youth.

### **SATURDAY CARAVAN, LIKE CLOCKWORK**

It was a cold Saturday morning in December. All the children were ready, on time, to be picked up to walk to Margate Park for Saturday Tutoring. 8:35, 8:45, 9:00, 9:05, 9:15, 9:20 -- everyone was ready at the specified time, like clockwork.

On the first Saturday in December, 40 children came to study at Margate Park with 45 8<sup>th</sup> graders from Wilmette Jr. High. The pairs read, did math, wrote holiday letters to people in a nursing home, made holiday cards for them, and played kickball. For the closing activity, there were 10-minute presentations on Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa. Susan Lorch, a teacher at WJHS, told about Hanukkah; Vivian Eludinni, a mother of one of the students, told about Kwanzaa; and Beth Palmer, tutoring director, along with a student from Loyola University, told about Christmas. The students were wonderful listeners.

### **HOLIDAY LETTERS TO RESIDENTS IN THE METHODIST HOME**

56 Inspired Youth wrote holiday letters to residents of the near-by Methodist Home. This was a chance for the students to give, instead of get, at the holiday season.

Here are two examples of their letters:  
"Dear Mr. Ferdinand K. I wish you a big great holiday on Christmas. In school I am doing fine. I got good grades. In the tutoring program they help me. There is a tutor. His name is Tom W. He helps me on my homework and math. That is important too.

Happy holidays, By Alejandro S."  
"Dear Mr. John R., I wish you a happy holiday. I am doing times tables and what I am doing at tutoring is my math. I hope to see you some day. And I hope you [have a] happy holiday. Your friend, Fernando. "

### **KINGSWOOD UMC IN BUFFALO GROVE GIVES CHRISTMAS PRESENTS**

82 children under 12 received bundles of Christmas presents from families at Kingswood UMC this year. The children were very happy to receive the presents. One mother said, "Times are very hard right now. This is a blessing." At least seven other children also received gifts. Thank you to all the people who were so generous in sharing.

### **STUFFED ANIMALS FOR CHILDREN**

Enid Young, from Iowa, sent 14 boxes of beautiful reconditioned stuffed animals for children in Uptown. Students of Inspired Youth wrapped the toys. On Dec. 21, we gave 155 wrapped toys to K-3rd graders at Stewart School (Kenmore and Sunnyside), 99 toys to the Hull House Preschool (at Edgewater Presbyterian Church), 65 to the preschool at 4848 N. Winthrop, and 49 to the ABC & Me Toddler Center on Lawrence and Winthrop.

### **LITTLE CHRISTMAS at BETHANY TERRACE**

14 Inspired Youth Singers, 3 other students, and 8 chaperones, parents, and drivers joined residents of Bethany Terrace and their families for the "Little Christmas" service of Lessons and Carols this year. The children sang well. The Terrace served mounds of special cookies and gave each child a gift card for McDonalds.

### **INSPIRED YOUTH SING at GRACE BAPTIST**

On a cold Sunday night in December, eleven Inspired Youth Singers sang at Grace Baptist Church. They were treated to a wonderful kid-friendly sermon and gracious hospitality.

### **DONATIONS WELCOME**

Inspired Youth welcomes your donations. We are doing a lot with minimal funds, and your contributions go a long way toward enriching the lives of children and families in Uptown/Edgewater. Checks may be made to "Inspired Youth" and sent to Inspired Youth, 5715 N. Ridge, Chicago, IL 60660.