TUTORING NEWS: INSPIRED YOUTH

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END OF YEAR REPORT: 2006-2007

STUDENTS IN INSPIRED YOUTH , 2006-2007.
Inspired Youth had an excellent year in 2006-2007. Here are the people involved in the tutoring sessions:

2006/7 Students	**Tutors**	**+ WJHS tutors**		
Mon. HS	7	11		
Tues. 5th-8th	27	31		
Wed. 1st-6th	34	19		
Thurs. 1st-6th		16		
Sat. 1st-7th	25*	5	+ 50	**Students not in another section. Sat. elem. total: 45*
Sat. 2 yr.- 5 yrs.	11	4		
Piano 2006	10**			*** Students not in another section. Piano 2006 total: ~25*
Singing	6***	6		****Students not in another section. Choir total: 42*
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	120	92	+ 50	

TUTORING SECTIONS: These are a few stories out of the many good things that happened during the year.

HIGH SCHOOL SECTION, MONDAY EVENINGS
Andrew (10th gr.) wrote this about his tutor, Jim Conlon:
Dear My Mentor Mr. Jim,

What I like about you is how you taught me math, how you taught me reading and more subjects. You put my height on a certain wall. You came to some of my events. You always shake my hand. You are a very sweet, nice, and a cool guy. –Andrew [Read more about Jim Conlon in the section about "My Hero" award of Lend-a-Hand Program of the Chicago Bar Association.]

Maria (9th gr.) was on the honor roll at Senn H.S. We hope she continues her good work as a sophomore. Latrice (9th gr.) is on a step team at her church, which won a bronze medal for national performance.

5TH-8TH GRADE SECTION, TUESDAY EVENINGS
Fermin (7th gr.) needed help in reading and math. Every week his tutor, Adriana Martinez, helped him study American History. At first it was very difficult. Then he wanted to do better on his tests. He studied really hard for a test, but did not do as well as he thought he was going to. Then he studied more for the next test. Then he began to know how to study and to understand when some of the wording was different in the test than it had been in the book. His social studies grade went from D- to C+; in math he went from D+ to C.

Marcus (7th gr.) needed a lot of help in math. His tutor, Liz Lowrey, helped him every Tuesday with his math homework, very difficult math. After a few months, Marcus started understanding it and getting the answers faster than Liz! Liz also helped Marcus with reading assignments. By the end of the year he went up in math and reading on his school report card.

A picture of Sam (6th gr.) and his tutor Ron Hazen appeared in the April 20 *Sun-Times,* p. 19.
"Acts of Kindness: Ron Hazen helps out Sam. Ron Hazen of Andersonville spends every Tuesday night tutoring a 6th grader named Sam at Bezazian Library in Uptown. Hazen, 28, has been a volunteer with the Inspired Youth tutoring Program for two years. 'It's fun working with the kids and great being a real, positive impact in their lives,' he said. 'And I've noticed Sam's reading skills have really been improving.'"

Sbhat,(5th gr.) wrote this to nominate his tutor, Chris Schmader, paralegal with Cooney & Conway, for a lawyer/mentor award from the Lend-a-Hand Program:
"Chris is my tutor helper. He helped me learn about the biggest river in the world, which is the Amazon River. He helped me write a summary about the Amazon River. One book we read was *The Truth About the Three Billy Goats Gruff.* He helped me write a summary about it. When he taught me how to write summaries, every time I read a book I write a summary without being distracted.

"Chris also taught me how to pronounce many vocabulary words. Chris helped me learn about what is inside the Earth. He told me about what lawyers do. I like him because he came all Tuesdays to help me learn things. And this is why I like him.

"Before, when I first came in the tutoring when I was in 4th grade around February 2006, I thought it was boring because I just came from Eritrea which is in Africa. In Eritrea I didn't use to do a lot of work so when I came to America it was new to me. After a month I got use to it. I found it was interesting. So this year when I have Chris to be my tutor, I don't feel bored. I thank Chris for tutoring me this year."

J. ran away from home and was away for 2 months. She came back.

1ST - 6TH GRADERS, WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY AFTERNOONS
A beautiful picture of Jasmine L. (1st gr.) accompanied an article in *The Reader,* May 25, 2007, on school lunches. You can see her picture on-line at www.chicagoreader.com/features/stories/schoollunch/

"Into" Reading
Fredy (3rd gr.) could hardly read as a 2nd grader. He got into fights at school, and he and some other 2nd graders talked about gangs. But there was a sparkle in his eye. He had potential. We thought that if he were in the Tutoring Program, he wouldn't get into so many fights and it would develop his reading.

In 3rd grade Fredy started coming to the Tutoring Program. He came two days a week, hardly missing a day all year. He said, "I come every day." He brought other friends with him from 3rd grade. He also began singing in the Youth Choir. At the Tutoring Program, after finishing his homework from school, he read the stories we suggested. He read one, and then another and another. By the end of the school year, he sometimes read two books a day. We asked if Fredy had really read them. His tutor, Sheldon Landy, said, "Oh, yes, Fredy is into reading." During the summer, in the afternoons after summer school, where did Fredy go? To the library, to study with some friends. And he didn't get into any fights at Tutoring during the year.

Jaime and the Frog
Jaime (3rd gr.) could not read in 2nd grade. He could not speak or understand English. He continuously talked to the other children in class at school. When he was bored, he made neat piles of spit balls. He also liked to draw.

In 3rd grade Jaime reluctantly started coming to the Tutoring Program with his friend Fredy. Each day it was a struggle to get him to do his homework and to read. But by the end of the session, he had done at least part of the work. One day he finished all his homework, and he was so happy he ran around the room telling everyone. Another day he finally completed a difficult math homework assignment. He was so happy he started dancing. His tutor, Susan Mattison said that was her best day all year. Along the way, Jaime finally mastered our easiest pre-primer: *Tip I, II, and III*, which has 20 words. Then he read two more pre-primers, and then a regular 1st grade book. He was reading!

In June we took some of the students and their parents to the North Park Nature Center. The highlight of the trip: Jaime found a frog. It was small, half an inch long. He put it in a plastic cup his mother had brought. All the kids came to look at Jaime's frog. He was so proud of the frog. He carried the frog with him the whole trip. It was like a friend. When we passed another group on the path, we told one of their leaders about the frog. He looked at it and said it was a toad, because its skin was rough. At the end of the field trip, we told Jaime that he had to let his toad go free, because the center was a Nature Preserve. Jaime was sad, but he finally agreed to let the toad go, and we looked for a good place. We decided on an area right next to the lodge. Luckily, we got a picture of Jaime holding the cup with the toad, and the other children pressing in to see it. We hope Jaime does well this year.

Antoine (6th gr.) began the year by coming very late. He arrived when tutoring was almost over. He never brought homework. His tutor, Joey, a student at John Marshall Law School, had him read out of the day's newspaper. Gradually Antoine began coming a little earlier, and Joey was able to help him more. Finally towards the end of the school year, Antoine was coming on time and bringing his homework. His study skills really improved.

Comments from Wed./Thurs. Tutors

From Susan Mattison:

The Tutoring Program gives the children a nurturing, safe, encouraging environment to work in, at their own speed. I think the children are more comfortable with taking risks while at tutoring.

I noticed a lot of growth in maturity in many of the students this year. I think they eventually come to realize that we won't let them get away with anything, because we care. It may frustrate some kids for awhile, and some may not change. But I think many students do improve their skills and behavior immensely.

Something special I remember:

(1) Jaime being overjoyed at finishing all of his homework and running around the room telling everyone.
(2) Bsrat & Anahi reading together and each found a new friend. They are both from different countries.
(3) Seeing Jaime reading by himself, on his own. At the beginning of the year, Jaime knew so few English words that he would "parrot" my words.

From Tom Walsh:

It is always rewarding for me to see any gradual progress in the students that I work with. I have definitely enjoyed seeing Alex [6th gr.] read books for fun, whether they are history books or comic books. I do wish that Alex's attendance could have been better this year, since I know that he still needs a great deal of help. However, I do think he has shown great potential. He seems to view reading as something to be enjoyed, rather than a chore to be endured, and I think that is a great foundation. I've actually learned quite a bit from him – even history facts! One memorable moment was when he told me a story about the Mayan leader 18-Rabbit. I had never heard of 18-Rabbit, but I later learned that the Field Museum was going to include a sculpture of him as part of their new Meso-American exhibit. So, I thought it was pretty neat to have learned about 18-Rabbit from Alex, before reading about him anywhere else.

I definitely enjoy meeting the other students in the program, as well. I think Sam is very bright and creative. Antoine is very polite and seems committed to doing better in school. Jasmine and Sophia are always full of energy. The entire Negassi family, from what I can tell, is fully committed to education and learning the English language. I haven't necessarily spent much time with any other students, this year, but it is always good to see the regulars around, like Fredy and Jaime. It contributes to a sense of community.

As far as suggestions go, I do think the idea of inviting parents to visit periodically is worth at least trying. I'm sure the kids (and the tutors) would work harder if the parents were around.

From Nita Keating:

At first this year was unpredictable. I never knew who I was going to get. I worked with as many as seven different kids. I learned to be more versatile and to adapt to what that student needed. Then in January I started working with Jennifer Salinas and found her to be slower with reading. The *Tip* series was at her level, and she progressed to *You and Me* and handled this more challenging book well. I also saw a lot of progress in math. At first she had difficulty with double digit addition, as well as adding change. With the one-on-one instruction, she eventually caught on and could work more independently. This was very rewarding, seeing Jennifer grow during the year.

I have enjoyed being part of the Tutoring Program each year. The program is good for the children because the instruction is more individualized.

SATURDAY TUTORING

Many good things happened in the Saturday program. Spanish-speaking children improved their English. First graders learned to read. A fourth grade girl finally started reading better. A seventh grade boy learned to concentrate. (He said after one Saturday session, "I like Saturday tutoring.")

The eighth grade tutors from Wilmette were wonderful. They were patient with the children. They engaged them and kept encouraging them. It was sometimes poignant to read their remarks on the daily evaluation sheet:

Saturday Tutoring, *continued.* "Doesn't work well when friends present," or "Didn't stay on task." It was beautiful to watch the eighth graders' persistence in helping the children. One tutor wrote in three successive sessions: "Struggled a bit w/ math but pulled through in the end." "Good at reading, getting better at math." "Much better w/ math." The children really appreciated the tutors. One said, "He's cool. Can I work with him again next time?" Another said, "He explains things so I can understand them."

The students made paper towers that stood, actual kaleidoscopes, murals on world peace, and flower pens for their mothers. They played kickball, did aerobics and relay races, and had a water-balloon toss. We took a group photo, and each student made a special frame for the picture. We did exercises on understanding where the other person was "coming from." We read *The Story of Ruby Bridges* and talked about being treated badly because of one's ethnic group. The Chicago children and Wilmette youth both enjoyed the program, which creates bridges within the larger community.

PARENTS' NIGHT

"There were more people there than ever before!" a student exclaimed. Over 96 people came to the Family Night for 1st gr. through H.S. students of Inspired Youth. We had to get extra chairs from down the hall. Parents from 17 tutoring families came to support their children. 32 students each said a poem by memory. Everybody was happy. When asked about the Parents' Night the next day, Maria, a shy 9th grader said, "It was wonderful."

The Youth Choir sang. It was Karah's first concert, although she had been to many rehearsals. Her parents said, "Karah has stage fright. She may not want to sing." After a little talk she joined the singers and sang exuberantly. The last song the choir sang was "'Neath Vine and Fig Tree." The choir stretched the entire length of the Fellowship Hall to do the Israeli/Iraqi dance that went with the song. One of the tutors remarked, "The choir put on a good show."

Magazines of the students' writings were handed out. Nita Keating, an afternoon tutor, was taken with a long story written by Brenda H in the magazine. She was praising "that girl's writing." The man sitting across from her happened to be Brenda's father. He said about his daughter's writing, "I don't know where it came from. It just came."

TUTORING GRADS

Gerald Boyce and his girlfriend are living in Springfield, IL and just had a baby. They would like to get married in October. Gerald is going to college on-line right now. Carvell Boyce is working and going to school. He is doing very well. He's a workaholic. All he does is work, go to school, and study. Gerald and/or Carvell might come back to Chicago because there aren't a lot of jobs in Springfield. Janeen Boyce is going to Truman College. Jenee Boyce is going to Northwestern Business College, but she might transfer to Chicago State University.

Larry White and Lorenzo Head are both enrolled in Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Missouri. They both work at a group home for troubled youth. Larry got the job upon the recommendation of Lorenzo, because Lorenzo works so hard.

Linda M. is on the honor roll at her new school on the West Side. She will be in 8th grade in the fall. Her brother Ramiro is enrolled at Rickover Academy (a special section of Senn H.S.). Remy E. will be a freshman at St. Gregory's High School this fall. He will receive a full 4-year scholarship from the Big Shoulders Foundation. He also was selected to go on his 8th grade trip to Washington, D.C., in May. Danielle S. has already begun attending St. Scholastica H.S. She says she learned more in a few weeks of summer school at St. Scholastica than she did in 8 years of attending elementary school. Her brother Denzell S. plans to attend Gordon Tech H.S. when he graduates from Goudy in 2008. Monique Smith works in a Hull House preschool on Beacon St. Augusta (Squeaky) Bullette graduated from Senn H.S. in June 2007. He has enrolled in DeVry Institute in computer engineering. Rachel Smith is taking general education courses at a junior college before taking nursing courses. Nelson Chavez is in his last semester at Northeastern Illinois University. Portia Hemphill just graduated from Wesleyan University in Connecticut. Jamine Burrell took a training course and is now employed as a construction worker. Benita Hillman is attending Everest College in Skokie to learn about medical billing. She has two children who go to Swift School.

Intrepid

One of our students moved to the South Side of Chicago. We wanted her to go on a field trip, so we decided to show her ahead of time how to transfer on the els. As we took the trip to the South Side to visit her, we found that

transferring from one el to another was more complicated than we had thought. To get from one el to the other, there was a long walk with four to five flights of stairs and escalators. After the el, the walk to her apartment was along a highway with semis roaring by. In talking with her we realized she probably was not intrepid enough to go by herself for the first time on this long el ride.

Her mother was coming back from Mexico, and her father was waiting for her mother in Texas. They were supposed to come home Wednesday, but it was already Friday and they hadn't come. Her mother was still in Mexico. I whispered almost inaudibly, "Sneak across?" The brother barely nodded, then said, "There's been a lot of rain. Everything is very wet." As I was leaving their home, I thought to myself, "Intrepid? Who's intrepid?"

SUMMER PIANO PROGRAM

37 students took lessons in Inspired Youth's Summer Piano Program at Edgewater Presbyterian Church. Two times a week for 7½ weeks students from the Tutoring Program and neighborhood worked in hour lessons with dedicated volunteers in an introduction to piano playing. The students were from Bolivia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mexico, Nepal, the Philippines, Turkey, and the United States. All did well and all gained.

In the final recital, 24 students performed one or two pieces with their piano tutors. We were amazed that 24 students came out of 24 students scheduled. There were lots of boys: 15 out of 24 were boys, almost 2/3. Many were young: 11 out of 24 were 6 years or under. They were surprisingly good during the recital.

Parents of all but two families attended the recital. Ms. Young said, "They really improved a lot since last year." Mr. Karatas said, "I appreciate this opportunity for my children. They haven't played the piano before." Ms. Denekew said, "I hope my children can keep playing the piano. Continue doing what you're doing." Ms. Martinez said, "Bien."

The students loved making music and playing duets with their piano tutors. Anahi's eyes sparkled as she heard what she was playing. Kedus' face broke into smiling sunshine when he played. Summone was very confident and loved playing. Junior was quietly proud. Lamarr was determined and wanted to do a good job. Narmere wanted to play everything correctly. "Hold it," he said. "Let's try it again." Mark tore through books A and B. Elija worked steadily and was quietly proud. Ckoryna practiced pieces over and over to play them well.

Students who did well last summer continued doing well this year. The students who did poorly last summer changed completely: they were fantastic this year! They seemed like different people. C., J., and J. could hardly concentrate for five minutes at a time last year. This year they worked for a full hour twice a week. Last year B. wouldn't touch the keyboard; this year he was driven with motivation to play all the pieces.

We are thankful for the piano tutors who worked so patiently with the children: Jolly Alexander, Rob Christiansen, Adair Crosley, Joanna Drabik, Liz Jacobsen, Kelly Manigrasso, Susan Mattison, Veronica Neubauer, Karen Ng, Beth Palmer, and Natividad (Didi) Yabes. Many tutors said they enjoyed working with the children. One wrote, "Thank you for giving me the wonderful opportunity to work with the children. I learned so much!" Another said, "It helps organize my week. It focuses my mind. It improves my short term memory." It was a good summer for everyone.

"Teach Me to Read"

Summone (kind.) said, "Will you teach me to read?" Then she said, " I asked my brother, and he didn't help me. I asked my uncle, and he didn't help me. I asked my other uncle, and he didn't help me. My father didn't have time. My grandmother didn't have time. Will you teach me to read?" Summone wasn't able to come to the Saturday morning tutoring. Finally she began to come to the Summer Piano Program, and the foundation it gave her will help her read in first grade.

Former tutoring student, Pablo S. (7th gr.), needed extra work in reading before entering 8th grade, so he came two days a week during the Summer Piano Program and worked with Nita Keating on reading fluency, reading comprehension, spelling, and writing. They used many materials, but enjoyed two *Goosebumps* novels best. Pablo did assignments at home as well as with Nita Keating. His mother bought him seven *Goosebumps* books because he liked them so well.

FIELD TRIPS

Inspired Youth sponsored seven glorious field trips, January through July 2007, in addition to 12 youth choir concerts/trips September 2006 through July 2007. 57 different students went on the 7 field trips, along with 9 parents and 15 tutors. 42 students sang in the choir concerts, with 6 co-directors helping and many parents

chaperoning and attending.

***The Snow Queen*, Scrap Mettle Soul** (January 2007)
10 students went to see "The Snow Queen" at Ravenswood UMC, produced by Scrap Mettle Soul. The students loved every bit of the play and didn't want the evening to end. Fermin (7th gr.) and Maria (9th gr.) wanted to join the theater company and be in the play. 4th grader Yulisa's favorite actor was the Snow Queen. The students also liked the tap dancing. It was an enchanting evening.

Loyola University (April 2007)
22 students went to visit Loyola University, sponsored by the Loyola chapter of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, many of whom are volunteer tutors in Inspired Youth. The students made banners and decided on a slogan. They took a tour of the university. They played games outdoors. They ate pizza. And they got to talk with the college students about college life. Alejandra Cano, a graduating senior at Loyola, gathered materials to help the students decide about college.

North Park Nature Center (June 2007)
21 children, 3 parents, and 5 tutors went to visit the North Park Nature Center, 5801 N. Pulaski. The previous December on the way to Morton Grove on a choir trip, some of the boys were surprised to see there were woods in Chicago. We decided we had to take the choir students on a trip to the woods. For another choir trip in May, the bus we had hired did not come, so we ended up taking the El and two cars to Evanston. The bus company said they would give us a free bus, so we decided to go to the North Park Nature Center with the free bus.

The trip was planned as a science trip that was open to families of the choir. On the day we chose for the trip there was a 90% chance of rain, but it didn't rain at all. The bus came on time, and everything went like clockwork.

Right went we got off the bus, we saw a beautiful orange-brown deer right next to the parking lot, munching leaves in raised garden plots. The students silently stole towards it, and the deer ran. The children were awed to see it because there aren't any deer in our section of Chicago. Cordell thought at first that it was an ostrich, since it had such a long neck. (He hadn't brought his glasses.) We walked over to look at what vegetables were growing in the raised garden plots, and noticed that stalks had been freshly cut, probably eaten by an animal with a long neck which could bend across and eat the vegetables – such as a deer.

As we walked along the path, we saw so many things. We were excited at seeing ladybugs. We saw a plant whose stalk was covered with red aphids. Then Cortez saw one bug on top of another. He said they were making babies. We saw a monarch butterfly. We saw three kinds of dragonflies – big with transparent wings; small, thin blue; and one with black strips. Cortez heard all kinds of insects humming. Everything was exciting.

As we walked along the path toward the wetlands, we heard and then saw a red-winged blackbird. The students called out: "There he is." "There he is. Do you see it?" They saw the bird all while we were crossing the wetlands on wooden planks. Then the red-winged blackbird came very close and stopped on a branch close to us, the sunlight shining on his red strip (with yellow underneath the red stripe, as Cortez pointed out). The children were amazed and still as they saw the bright stripe on the red-winged blackbird. Then they heard its throaty sound. They saw the bird fly a little way and land in the grasses, probably near its nest. It was a time of awe.

In the woodlands we stopped so the kids could find small insects and look at them in magnifying boxes the Nature Center lent us. The children found ladybugs, ants, angleworms, and big crickets (small grasshoppers). They were very excited. As we went further through the woodlands, we passed a group of adults in a class. They were picking mulberries from a tree and making purple "paint" from the mulberries. Summone (kind.) somehow started touching the mulberries and got purple "paint" all over her hands and on her clothes. Her brother Lamarr (1st gr.) remembered the song, "Here we go round the mulberry bush... ."

We ate our lunches on the picnic tables near the lodge, and the kids played with balls, frisbees, jump ropes, and bubbles which Eva had brought. Just before we left, someone happened to go by a fence and see a small deer lying hidden in the grass. It was a fawn, orange-brown in color, with white spots. Its fur was beautiful, but it was dead and was attracting flies. Everyone came to peek and then turn away. Two adults went to tell the staff in the lodge, and a woman came out to look. She said that it might have run into some barbed wire and died, or that perhaps it got too near to humans, or a human had touched it, and the mother deer did not recognize the scent, so she abandoned it. We were sad, and a group of us said a few words of remembrance. Some men with a cart came

to take the deer to the other side of the Nature Center to bury it. Our trip started and ending with seeing deer. We felt privileged. Everyone enjoyed our science trip to the North Park Nature Center.

Sarafina! The Music of Liberation, **Fleetwood-Jourdain Theater** (July 2007)
19 students (4th gr. through H.S.), 2 parents, and 8 tutors went to see ***Sarafina! The Music of Liberation***. We went on two Sundays because some of the students who we knew would like it could not come the first day. Former tutor Lisa Johnson, a lawyer, sponsored the trip. The play is about a group of high school students in Soweto, South Africa during the 1980's, and how they were inspired to fight the injustices of apartheid when Nelson Mandela was in prison. The parents of some of our students had seen a TV version of the play and all recommended it.

The afternoon started out with an elegant luncheon at Tedino's Pizzaria. Clara D. (4th gr.) said she felt like a princess at the long table with white tablecloth and napkins. The pizza was delicious. After lunch we took the El to Evanston to the Noyes Cultural Center.

Sarafina! The Music of Liberation was very exciting and very moving. It was filled with high quality singing and dancing. Andrew T. said he liked the moves. Hirut N. said she thought the play was sad. Rough encounters between the white police officers and the black South African students were portrayed. Sbhat N. said the play was [frightening], but at least it wasn't real. Since it was a play, the torture wasn't "real" at the time, but it represented something real. On the way out of the play Joey said, "Good show!" Alex S., a shy student, said of the play, "It was very, very good."

Millennium Park (July 2007)
11 children ages 2 through 11, 4 parents, and 2 tutors took the express bus downtown to visit Millennium Park. It was a beautiful day. We did one activity after the other, not realizing there was so much to see and do.

We saw a hands on exhibit sponsored by the Shedd Aquarium. We measured a whale shark (a blown up replica). We sorted through piles of beautiful shells. We dug in a small sand-box for shells. (Who would have thought children could spend so much time moving the sand with their hands?) We did a crafts project making jelly fish out of paper plates.

Then we heard music. The Grant Park Orchestra was rehearsing music by Leonard Bernstein for the evening's concert. We took seats in the Pritzker Pavilion and listened for 20 minutes to that world class orchestra with its beautiful instrumental sounds. The highlight was an African-American boy soloist singing a duet with a white woman. The boy was about the age of Cortez (10 or 11), and he had a pure sound and a trained voice. Cortez said he could sing like that. We were mesmerized by the music. Afterwards we ate our lunches on nearby picnic tables, still listening to the music.

Then we went to see the "Bean," ("Cloud Gate"). Yulisa said, "That's famous! I've seen pictures of it in books." According to the Indian-English designer, its curved surface was inspired by liquid mercury. Everyone wanted to touch it. Pictures of the children and parents reflected in the Bean in funny ways turned out fantastic!

Six-year old Summone's favorite part of the trip was the "tall man," the clown on stilts. She watched him juggle bowling pins. She talked with him. She laughed with him. She challenged him to get a cat out of a tree. She walked over to a small ledge next to a tree and motioned for him to come to look for the cat. She was laughing with the clown the whole time. The other children liked the clown on stilts and also the clown on a rolling barrel. The clowns were in the Promenade Central, so every time we went from one place to the other, we passed the clowns. It made everyone happy to see Summone and the other children laughing with the clowns.

The children's favorite activity was the Crown Fountain with its wading rink and the water streaming out from a girl's mouth projected on the wall at each end. Children's happy shrieks and squeals filled the air. Our kids took off their shoes and walked on the wet rink to join the fun. They tried to stay out of the spurt and shower of water, but sometimes it surprised them. On the Promenade next to the wading rink was a "swinging" sculpture which Cortez, Darryl, and Lamarr liked to climb on. As we left the Crown Fountain, Anahi said, "When are we coming again?"

Our last event at Millennium Park was a concert of Brazilian drumming for children. Mr. Dedé Sampaio demonstrated Brazilian drums, gourds, shakers, and bird whistles representing sounds of the Brazilian rainforest. Then he chose 10 children to come up on stage and gave each an instrument. Cortez Y. (5th gr.) was chosen to play a big drum. Marleny R. (kind.) was chosen to play a cabasa. Mr. Sampaio taught them a series of rhythms and how to watch for his hand signals. Then while the group played the rhythms, the audience stood up and danced as at Carnaval. It was a great show. We were proud of Cortez and Marleny.

We had come to Millennium Park to see the activities sponsored by the Shedd Aquarium, and we never imagined all the fun we would have. What a great day!

CHOIR CONCERTS, TRIPS

From September 2006 through July 2007 the Inspired Youth Singers performed on 12 occasions. 42 students sang in these concerts. A new student in the choir, Abigail P. (4th gr.) wrote this about her first concert: "One day Ms. Beth asked me if I wanted to go to participate in a concert. I said if I could ask my mom on that same day. My mom said where the concert was going to be. I said it was going to be in Evanston. My mom said Okay. I was very happy I was going to be in the concert. In the concert I'm going to sing 4 songs which their names are: 'Rejoice in the Lord,' ''Neath Vine and Fig Tree,' 'Let There Be Peace on Earth,' 'Peace Like a River.' I can't wait. It is tomorrow May 6th. It's going to be great!"

Alden-Lakeland Nursing Home (February 2007)

18 students sang at the Alden-Lakeland Nursing Home in February. For the concert on Lincoln's birthday, the choir sang songs of peace. In the lobby on the way in, we recognized from previous visits a man who is blind who always enjoys the children singing. We told him about the concert and he said he was looking forward to it. At the end of the concert a thin elderly man said, "That was the best concert I've ever heard."

Youth Choir Fest, Granville Ave. UMC (March 2007)

17 students from Inspired Youth sang in the 2007 Youth Choir Fest at Granville Ave. UMC along with choirs from Rogers Park Baptist Ch., Granville Avenue UMC, West Ridge UMC, and the Multi-Cultural Children's Choir of Evanston. Inspired Youth's afternoon began with lunch at McDonald's. The choir practiced a little at Granville Ave. UMC, and then it was time for the concert. There were so many people in the church that people crowded into the pews, some people stood, and some people sat on the floor. The gathered assembly raised the roof with the praise songs, and the children were absolutely joyous singing the songs of the combined choirs. Inspired Youth Jaime (3rd gr.) and Yulisa (4th gr.) were all smiles. All the children looked so nice – Inspired Youth in their light blue T-shirts and jeans, Granville Ave. in white robes with black stoles, the Multi-Cultural Children's Choir in bright red satin blouses. The whole afternoon was one of praise. Afterwards members of Granville Ave. UMC served a huge dinner to the entire gathering. The choir director of West Ridge UMC mentioned that she had come to Epworth UMC from her church in Indiana when she was in 8th grade as part of a work party to help the shelter and the Tutoring Program.

Senior Connections Benefit Concert, Reba Place Church, Evanston (May 2007)

17 students from Inspired Youth sang at the Senior Connections Benefit Concert in Evanston in May. To prepare, the choir had lunch at McDonald's. We had reserved a bus to take us there, but when it did not come, some of the parents went in 2 cars, and most of the students took the El to Evanston. We knew there was not going to be any time to practice when we got there, so we practiced our pieces on the El platform waiting for the train, to the embarrassment of the students. They sounded great, and the other people waiting for the train enjoyed it. We arrived one minute before the concert was to begin. All the groups were magnificent. The Inspired Youth Singers sang songs of peace, and did very well. Afterwards there were delicious homemade cookies and treats. A choir member from another organization, who owned a van company, gave the Inspired Youth a ride home.

Ravenswood Kiwanis Club, Hilltop Restaurant (June 2007)

Article in *Inside*, July 18-24, 2007: "Kiwanis News"

"On June 16, the Inspired Youth singers performed for the Kiwanis club of Ravenswood, which holds its meetings at noon every second and fourth Thursday of the month in the private dining room at the Hilltop Restaurant, 2800 W. Foster Ave. Beth Palmer directs the group as part of the Inspired Youth Tutoring Program that provides tutoring and mentoring to low income public school students on the North Side, serving around 100 youth ages 2-18."

12 students went to sing at the Ravenswood Kiwanis Club at the Hilltop Restaurant in June. Cortez (5th gr.) was so excited about it that he couldn't sleep the night before. We had been invited for the second year in a row by tutor Mike Delaney, a member of the Club. The students sang beautifully, and they loved the food. Each was given a T-shirt from the Ravenswood Bank as a thank you gift.

Jefferson Park Lutheran Church (July 2007)
7 students, 3 parents, and 2 chaperons went to sing at Jefferson Park Lutheran Church on a very hot Sunday. Before singing, the choir had breakfast at McDonald's. Some people were so hungry they had two breakfasts: they ate for the whole day. The choir sang 8 songs during the worship service, including one song from JPLC's VBS. The pastor's daughter Lydia joined with the choir. The choir sounded very good, with a beautiful, rich, blended tone. People in the congregation really enjoyed the group. One person exclaimed, "Thank you so much for bringing the choir. They all sang on pitch." Afterwards Pastor Zuehsow gave each student a yo-yo and taught them how to use it. Andre practiced and practiced, and finally started using it well. The pastor also gave them bubbles.

We had planned to have sandwiches in the park after the worship service, but since it was so hot (97 degrees), and since the choir had sung so well and behaved so well, we decided to go to Old Country Buffet. When the students heard we were going to Old Country Buffet, they started chanting, "OCB! OCB! We're going to OCB!" They were ecstatic. They started talking about when they had eaten there before in previous years with other groups. We had a leisurely lunch, a fine finish to a good morning with good singing.

Co-director of the Inspired Youth Singers, Dorie Burrell, and John Rimmer had a beautiful baby, May 31, 2007. They named her Phyllis.

TUTOR JAMES CONLON RECEIVES "MY HERO" AWARD FROM THE SUN-TIMES JUDGE MAROVITZ LEND-A-HAND PROGRAM OF THE CHICAGO BAR ASSOCIATION

It was an elegant, formal banquet at the Standard Club in downtown Chicago. Over two hundred lawyers, judges, supreme court justices, and other distinguished guests were present. One of the six awards given was the "My Hero" award, given to a lawyer/tutor who has been nominated by a student as a top mentor. Andrew Tripp, sophomore at Mather HS, nominated Jim Conlon for his influence on him and the Inspired Youth Tutoring Program. (See two supporting nomination letters below.)

Andrew made a short speech on the stage as he presented Jim Conlon with a plaque. Andrew looked formal and fancy in a white satin suit and white shoes. Everyone was impressed with how he looked and spoke. One woman said afterwards, "It's wonderful to see you in a suit. Teenagers usually don't want to wear a suit. I can hardly get my 17-year old son to put his on. It makes everyone feel good to see you in a such a good-looking suit." The executive director of Lend-A-Hand, Karina Ayala-Bermejo, took Andrew aside afterwards, hugged him, and said, "We're so proud of you. You're our shining light." At the end of all the speeches, when the banquet was over, Andrew said, "Why was it so short?" When Karina was told this later, she smiled and said, "We didn't want it to be too long. People have to get back to work."

The speeches were amazing. The opening remarks were by Victor Henderson, President of the CBA. Four students of the Tutoring Program met him December 2005 when they visited former tutor and lawyer Lisa Johnson at her law office at Holland & Knight. One of the themes of the speeches was "Do a Mitzvah every day" (something to help someone), a motto of Judge Marovitz, who started the Lend-a-Hand Program in 1993. The other amazing thing is that during the speeches, two poems were quoted in full, and one of the speakers said he had been looking for a certain poem for years. How often are poems quoted in speeches at a formal banquet? How often does someone say they have been searching for a poem? One of the poems, "At Day's End," was a favorite poem of Judge Marovitz.

Noteworthy of the awards was the variety of places lawyers worked and the variety of ways they helped youth programs, from law firms to an insurance company, to the Illinois Dept. of Human Services, to the City of Chicago Dept. of Streets and Sanitation (Jim Conlon), to a circuit court judge of Cook County; from tutor/mentor programs, to schools, to the Girl Scouts.

The Sun-Times Judge Marovitz Lend-a-Hand Program promotes and celebrates law professionals getting involved with the ordinary children of Chicago. This is exemplary among professions. We hope other professions will follow.

NOMINATION OF JAMES CONLON FOR THE LEND-A-HAND AWARD OF THE CHICAGO BAR ASSOCIATION

Inspired Youth, Inc. nominates James J. Conlon ("Jim") for the 2007 Lend-a-Hand "My Hero" Award for his outstanding contributions to Inspired Youth, Inc.

When asked what he does, Jim usually says, "I'm with Janitorial and General Maintenance." Actually, he is Assistant Commissioner in the Department of Streets and Sanitation of the City of Chicago. He is also a lawyer.

Since September 2004 Jim has been a mentor and tutor with the high school students of Inspired Youth. He has been essential to the overall program. In the past three years Jim has hardly missed a day of the Monday night section of the fledgling Inspired Youth tutoring program, as it began in the Boys & Girls Club, moved to a student's small apartment, and then moved to Bezazian Library, going to Starbucks Coffee on Monday holidays, and the Edgewater Presbyterian Church for Parents' Nights. Jim stayed with the youth in all these moves.

The high school group is small, so Jim relates to all the students. When he comes on Monday evenings, he shakes hands with each student, looks them in the eye, and asks, "How was your weekend?" He wants them to have a firm handshake, to look adults in the eye, and to talk with them. In interviewing, hiring, and supervising people he has found that how employees relate to other people is an important part of their job.

Another feature Jim introduced is "Going Live." He chooses an article from the day's newspaper and has students read it as if they were TV reporters. He wants to motivate them to speak more clearly and improve their reading skills. When a student is sullen and disgruntled, Jim writes that on an evaluation sheet and shows it to the student, in order to make them conscious of their behavior. On cold or rainy Mondays he gives students a ride home. In 2006 he began measuring students' height and marking it with a small tic on the library wall. This spring he brought a tape measure to the Family Night and measured all the older youth, keeping the track of their heights in his tutoring folder. The tallest is a girl who just turned 14; she is 6'1" tall.

Jim's mentee for 2006-2007 asked him in December if he would buy tickets to her choir concert at school. He said, "You have to sell them to me. Why should I buy the tickets?" She had to figure out what she should say about it. At the end of the tutoring session, he bought the tickets. The day before the concert the student called the tutoring director and asked her to get hold of Jim to say that she couldn't be in the concert. The director left messages for Jim on three phones. The following Monday the student asked Jim if he had received the message that she couldn't be in the concert. He said, "Yes, but I went to the concert anyway and it was very good."

Jim has helped his students with algebra, geometry, biology, chemistry, trigonometry, and vocabulary. In working with the students he decided there were certain scientific/mathematical facts that every student should know: How many inches in a foot? How many feet in a yard? How many feet in a mile? How many yards in a mile? How many miles from the earth to the sun? etc. He typed the questions up and drills the students on them.

Jim Conlon has been essential for the tutoring program as a whole. Inspired Youth sought permission to tutor in the auditorium of Bezazian Library. The local librarian said it would work well. She needed to get permission from the person in charge of Children's Services in downtown Chicago. That librarian had to get permission from the Library Commissioner in charge of the total Chicago Public Library system with its 77 branches. The local librarian put in the request, which was handed up. Then we waited and waited. We mentioned this to Jim Conlon, and he said, "Mary Dempsey? (the commissioner of the total library system). She's a friend of mine. I just saw her in a meeting last week. I'll email her and tell her I recommend it." The next day we received word that permission had been granted for Inspired Youth to tutor at Bezazian Library. This happened two different years.

Inspired Youth ordered new tables for Bezazian Library so that there would be enough tables for all the tutoring pairs. A table arrived with its leg detached. Jim said, "No problem. I'll bring my drill next week and fix it." It was done. It's still good. A table which the library already had could not be used because the plastic ribbing became detached and the library said it was dangerous. Jim said, "Piece of cake." He brought his drill and a screw and had a student help him fix it. The table is fine.

On December 8, 2005, Jim attended the Lend-a-Hand Awards Ceremony at City Hall, where Mayor Daley spoke. At our program's Parents' Night in October 2006, Jim was one of five tutors who spoke about their job in a program about careers. In April 2007 Jim brought a friend of his to speak to the high school students at their tutoring session -- Kim Toy Huh, an African American woman who is a lawyer and a police officer; she speaks

fluent Chinese and is learning Italian. Jim thought she would be a good role model for the students.

James Conlon has been essential for the Inspired Youth Tutoring Program. He has enhanced the lives of the high school students and the program as a whole. He makes a difference to everyone he meets, and he keeps making a difference to Inspired Youth. I nominate James Conlon for the 2007 Lend-a-Hand Tutor/Mentor Making a Difference Award.

Nomination of James Conlon for the Lend-a-hand Award of the Chicago Bar Association,
By Heather Thome, tutor for 5 years

Jim Conlon is a great tutor in many ways. Certainly he is more than qualified to help high school students with algebra, which we all do, but he always takes time to go further with his students and with all of the students with whom he comes into contact. Jim concerns himself with the whole individual and encourages the development of life skills that go beyond mere academic performance. Jim encourages the young people to read newspapers, to make eye contact when they shake his hand, and to stand up straight. Jim thinks about their futures and asks them to do so too. He reminds the students that they are making contacts now with individuals who can help guide them as they move out into the world and he encourages them to think of us when they need a recommendation, information or a lead on a job. In addition, Jim demands that they learn the more basic facts that they may have missed or forgotten such as how many ounces are in a gallon or how many feet are in a mile, and he can be heard quizzing them regularly.

Jim shows such warmth and personality with the students in the program; over time they come to realize that he doesn't forget about them during the week, that he really is taking a personal interest in their lives. He will notice a new haircut, ask how a basketball game went or inquire about their families. Consequently, the students respond to him in kind. They look forward to telling him about their lives and asking him about his. I believe the students feel better about themselves when they are with Jim and I hope he will stay in our program for a very long time.

INSPIRED YOUTH IN NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Inspired Youth has received various publicity this year. Some articles were mentioned earlier in this newsletter.

***USA TODAY*, June 26, 2007**

A letter to the editor from Beth Palmer appeared in USA TODAY: "Tutoring isn't a loss: USA TODAY's editorial on the failure of federally sponsored tutoring programs drew too general a conclusion. As a tutor with two decades of experience in successful tutoring programs, I know what works. The government programs have failure designed into them.

"When a reasonably intelligent student tries to learn a particular lesson and fails, it is almost always because that student lacks some piece of learning that the lesson requires. As a tutor, I watch the student attempt a homework assignment. I see exactly what that student is lacking and teach the needed concept. A teacher with a class of 30 students can repeat a lesson, but it is probably not going to help a student who needs more individualized instruction."

Medill/Northwestern Website

Two articles by students in Journalism at Medill at Northwestern appear on-line at
http://observer.medill.northwestern.edu/301-wi07-sec02/02_young_families/01main_story/ and
http://observer.medill.northwestern.edu/301-wi07-sec02-2007-03/bilingual_tutoring_enhances_education_for_uptown_youth

THANK YOUR MENTOR DAY

Printed in the Chicago Bar Association's *CBA Report*, January 2007

Today, January 25, marks the fourth annual "Thank Your Mentor Day." But as I consider the mentoring programs that try to help Chicago's youth, I fear that not enough of our children have someone to thank.

It is well documented that mentoring can have a tremendous positive impact on the life of a child, particularly at-risk and disadvantaged youth. But unfortunately, too many of our young people do not have someone in their lives to provide them with encouragement, support and the ability to accomplish more on many levels.

The entire month of January is National Mentoring Month, created by the Harvard Mentoring Project to

highlight the positive impact mentoring can have on young people. It is also designed to call attention to the need for more adults to become mentors and make a real difference in the lives of the next generation. Therefore, I believe that the impact of this one day on the calendar needs to go far beyond its name and drive benefits on a larger level – it needs to help make sure that each and every year more "thank you's" are bestowed on these everyday heroes.

Thank Your Mentor Day, *continued*

As the director of Inspired Youth, a volunteer-based tutoring and mentoring program geared to elementary and high school students in the Uptown/Edgewater community, I've seen first-hand the influence mentors can have in inspiring and encouraging young people to achieve success. The stories of real-world impact are truly astounding. I've witnessed students who come into the program discouraged and failing in school, only to grow into successful and confident young adults. Under the guidance of their mentors, these kids emerge equipped to reach their full potential.

Mentoring programs have also strengthened school reform in Chicago and elsewhere. They've furthered the education of countless children and provided support for their families, two of the most worthwhile investments that can be made for Chicago's future. Our program is fortunate to have been chosen by the Abraham Lincoln Marovitz Lend-A-Hand Program, created by the Chicago Bar Association, to receive a financial award donated by the law firm Much Shelist. Their support has helped us make sure that more mentors reach more kids who desperately need the help.

Certainly, financial support is one source of lifeblood for organizations like ours. But, above all, Thank Your Mentor Day should be about volunteering time to become a mentor yourself. So as many of us reflect today about those people who have been mentors to us – a coach, a teacher, a neighbor – and make an effort to thank them for the invaluable impact they've had on our lives, the real message is to those who will receive their first thank you's next year because they got involved at some point in 2007.

Let this day be a rallying cry, a turning point that will benefit the literally thousands of young people who haven't yet benefitted from a positive mentor influence in their lives. From experience, I can tell you that there are few things more rewarding than being on the receiving end of an explicit or tacit "thank you" on this day, and every day throughout the year on which you play a role in a young life.

DONATIONS NEEDED: Inspired Youth, Inc. is doing a lot with minimal funds. Your contributions are important for enriching the lives of children and families in Uptown in Chicago. Checks may be made to "Inspired Youth" and sent to *Inspired Youth, 5715 N. Ridge, Chicago, IL 60660.*