

TUTORING NEWS: INSPIRED YOUTH

December 2008, Volume 18, Number 1
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FALL 2008 AND HOLIDAY FESTIVITIES

1. NEWS OF STUDENTS
2. FALL 2008
3. 5TH-8TH GRADERS on TUESDAY NIGHTS: "Intrepid!"
4. 1ST - 4TH GRADERS on WED./THURS. AFT.: "They like coming!"
5. HIGH SCHOOL TUTORING
6. SATURDAY TUTORING
7. FAMILY NIGHT FEATURES MINISTER DARNELL BRADLEY
8. NEWS OF TUTORING GRADS
9. GIFTS: From Kingswood UMC
10. Coats For Kids
11. Students Write Holiday Letters to Seniors
12. Stuffed Animals
13. Eye Glasses
14. INSPIRED YOUTH RECEIVES MUCH SHELIST AWARD FOR 3rd TIME
15. YOUTH CHOIR CONCERTS: Eckhart Park Apartments
16. Singing at Winter Wonderfest
17. Multi-cultural Children's Community Choir Concert
18. Singing at Bethany Terrace
19. Grace Baptist Church
20. GOING TO A BULLS BASKETBALL GAME
21. DONATIONS NEEDED

1. NEWS OF STUDENTS

Christopher (2nd gr.) has made phenomenal progress this fall. We draw a diagonal line upward with the hand to show tutors how much he is gaining. In September he read pre-primer books. He read book after book. By December he had gained about a year in reading. In September he wouldn't do math sheets with math facts above 10. By December, he wanted to do math first. In September he refused to write sentences or do any writing; his penmanship was scrawly and huge. By December his writing was small and legible and looked like it had been done by a different person. (We are still waiting for him to enjoy writing sentences.) We are very proud of Christopher and his phenomenal progress! He enjoys tutoring so much he wants tutoring to be more days each week.

Oscar (6th gr.) began to come to the Tutoring Program in October 2007. He couldn't read or write sentences, and he brought no homework. During the year, he gradually learned to read, and by the end of the year he was bringing homework from school. This year he is continuing from last year. He brings homework every session, and he works well. Reading and writing are not his favorite activities, but he will try. Congratulations, Oscar!

We are worried about M. (6th gr.) because of reports about bad things she has done. But she has hardly missed a day of Tuesday evening tutoring. Her tutor/mentor brings out the best in her. M. wrote some beautiful essays in the fall and three holiday letters to seniors in the Covenant Methodist Home. We told M. that she may be writer some day, or she may use writing as an asset in her

profession. She wants to be a teacher.

Shonesha (8th gr.) is in the small group of students taking algebra this year at Goudy School.

Fredy (5th) was in the hospital in November with stomach problems. Academically, he is working hard and progressing, and his reading especially keeps improving.

Joshua (2nd gr.), Joaum (5th gr.), and Ckoryna (6th gr.) are all doing well, and their mother is so happy. Joaum is a different person from last year. Last year he was impolite to everybody and got all D's on his report card. This year he got A's and C's – with no attitude! He is especially proud of getting a C in math.

2. FALL 2008

The 2008-2009 tutoring year is going well. Here are the numbers of students and tutors who are participating so far in the five sections of the Inspired Youth Tutoring Program and the Inspired Youth Singers:

Mon. HS, 16 students, 15 tutors

Tues. 5th-8th, 23 students, 24 tutors

Wed./Thurs. 1st-4th, 27 students, 37 tutors

Sat. K-7th, 45 students (*27 students not in weekday sections*)

Sat. tutors, 50 peer tutors from Wilmette Jr. High, 5 adult coordinators

Choir, K-HS, 22 students, 7 adult assistants (*8 choir members not in a tutoring section*)

TOTAL: 99 students, 88 tutors, 50 peer tutors

3. 5TH-8TH GRADERS on TUESDAY NIGHTS: “Intrepid!”

Every Tuesday evening the auditorium at the library is filled with 5th - 8th graders with their mentors. On a school holiday in November, 17 youth came to study. On a cold December night 22 youth came to work. During a severe snowstorm on a Tuesday, a tutor from Evanston couldn't come because she had driven only one mile in an hour, yet 12 students and 12 tutors came to work at the library. Mark Kaplan, the head librarian, looked over the tutoring pairs who had walked there in the deep, blowing snow and said, “Intrepid!”

4. 1ST - 4TH GRADERS on WED./THURS. AFT.: “They like coming!”

On Wed. and Thurs. afternoons. 18-22 1st-4th graders come to work with their tutor/mentors. They do school homework and other reading, writing, and arithmetic. The day before Halloween the library planned to show a movie during part of the tutoring time. Someone said, “They'll like seeing a movie, for a change, instead of doing their homework.” A tutor reminded the person, “They like coming to tutoring!” The children enjoy being with their tutors, they enjoy being with their friends, and they enjoy being engaged in learning. On report card pick-up day, when there were no classes at school, 20 children came to study with their tutors.

5. HIGH SCHOOL TUTORING

The high school students are studious this year. They enjoy working with their tutor/mentors. Some of the tutors are majoring in secondary education at Loyola University and plan to teach in high school.

6. SATURDAY TUTORING

This year's peer tutoring between Chicago elementary children and 8th graders

from Wilmette Jr. High School is one of the best. Students work on reading, writing, and arithmetic and have a group time and a crafts or fitness activity. This fall the students decorated mini-pumpkins, built paper towers with a minimum of materials, made turkeys out of pine cones, and had training in conflict resolution. In November the 8th graders gave Thanksgiving turkeys to the 24 Chicago families present. On a cold Saturday in December, 45 Chicago children walked or came by bus or car to work with the 8th graders. The students read and did math, they wrote holiday letters and made holiday cards for seniors in the Covenant Methodist Home, they listened to the story *The Polar Express*, and they played Dreidl for chocolate candies. The 3rd-7th graders wrapped stuffed animals for preschoolers in Uptown, while the kindergarten through 2nd graders built snow people outside. What a festive day and a good fall!

7. FAMILY NIGHT FEATURES MINISTER DARNELL BRADLEY

In mid-October, 82 students, parents, guests, babies, and tutors gathered in the Fellowship Hall at Edgewater Presbyterian Church for a potluck supper, singing by the Youth Choir, and a talk by Minister Bradley.

The choir was fantastic, conducted by Dorie Burrell. 14 youth were poised and sang out. The security guard at the other end of the hall heard them singing and came to the doorway to listen. She said they were remarkable.

The guest speaker, Minister Bradley, was influential in starting Inspired Youth in August 2004. His daughter was in the Tutoring Program for eight years, and he saw the richness the program gave to the neighborhood. When the Tutoring Program could not continue in the space it had, Minister Bradley said it should reorganize and find new space and keep serving the children and families of the neighborhood.

In his speech on Family Night, Minister Bradley talked about the importance of education and the importance of guiding one's life on a religious path. Later a parent exclaimed, "He was awesome." Lamont, a tutoring grad, said, "I liked him."

8. NEWS OF TUTORING GRADS

Wood D. was working at a gym, but was laid off. Tanisha W. is working as an RN. Bobby D. is playing basketball in Europe. Diecell M.'s family moved to DeKalb, IL.

Premiere M. moved back in the area. "I have a job and I rap," he said. His job is maintenance in re-habbing buildings. He said to Beth Palmer: "[Your program] taught me to read!" Beth said, "That's worth quite a lot!" Then he offered, "Caitlin and Brittany are doing well in school – very well! They're smart." Beth said, "I'm not surprised. I'm glad, but not surprised." They had been in our Saturday preschool and kindergarten.

Carla Salazar is a manager at McDonald's. Maria E. (11th gr.) is a tutor at her school.

Mario Trujillo said recently, "I really enjoyed the program. Do you still give out cookies?"

Reiko Aylesworth is a TV star on "24." She was in the Youth Choir when she lived in Chicago. Her grandfather, David Aylesworth, helped start the Tutoring Program.

Portia Hemphill is a master pre-k teacher with the Centers for New Horizons. She wants to apply for Teach for America, and then go to Michigan State University to work on a Ph.D. Portia graduated from Wesleyan University in Connecticut, where she was a Gates scholar.

9. GIFTS

From Kingswood UMC

The members of **Kingswood UMC in Buffalo Grove** gave bundles of Christmas presents to 45 children from Inspired Youth. Some of the children didn't wait until Christmas to open the gifts. Marleni (2nd gr.) wore her new lavender coat the day after she got it. It's beautiful.

The parents were particularly grateful. The mother of Jaimé and Keily wrote on the form with her suggestion for a gift: *“Gracias por hacerles realidad su sueño de recibir unos regalitos por ayudar a los niños. Gracias por ser unas buenas personas que Dios los bendiga y los ayudes mas por ser unas personas buenas con los niños. Los ayude en su trabajo. Gracias.”*

Translation: “Thank you for the gifts to help the children. You helped to make a dream come true for these children. Thank you for being such wonderful people. May God bless you and others who are so good to children. May God help you in your work. Thank you.”

10. Coats For Kids

In December Inspired Youth was invited to request **winter coats** for 17 children in the program. We gave most of the “slots” to students who did not receive gifts from Kingswood UMC. The coats, with hats and gloves, came in early December, as a gift from **Coats For Kids** and **Lawyers Lend-A-Hand to Youth**. All the coats fit perfectly, and the students are grateful for the warm coats on these cold winter days.

11. Students Write Holiday Letters to Seniors

Students enjoy giving as well as receiving during the holiday season. This year 62 students of Inspired Youth wrote holiday letters or made holiday cards for 65 seniors at the Covenant Methodist Home on Foster and Glenwood. Some of the younger students' letters were the first ones they had ever written. Several of the letters written by older students were fantastic – beautiful and caring. We hope the seniors enjoyed their letters and cards.

12. Stuffed Animals

Enid Young from Iowa sent Inspired Youth 12 huge boxes of reconditioned **stuffed animals** and 24 Barbie dolls for children in Uptown. The stuffed animals and Barbie dolls were wrapped in marathon wrapping sessions by the Saturday tutoring students and their teen-age tutors and by the Uptown Girl Scouts. We delivered 62 toys to the Head Start in the large apartment building at 4848 N. Winthrop and 238 stuffed animals and Barbie dolls to the lower grades at Stewart School in Uptown. We know the children were happy to receive the LOV-EY toys.

13. Eye Glasses

In November Inspired Youth sponsored 3 students to get **eye glasses** at the Uptown Health Clinic. The optometrist, Dr. Glenn Londos, has examined students of the Tutoring Program for over 20 years. This past year he was in a

bicycle accident and was temporarily paralyzed from neck down. We are thankful he can walk now and is still able to be at the Uptown Health Clinic one morning a week. We appreciate his service.

14. INSPIRED YOUTH RECEIVES MUCH SHELIST AWARD FOR 3rd TIME

For the third year Inspired Youth, Inc. received the Much Shelist Founders' Award from Lawyers Lend-A-Hand to Youth. This award is given to a promising tutor/mentor program which is less than five years old. We were told that the founders of Much Shelist chose Inspired Youth because they liked our program best.

Tutoring Director Beth Palmer accepted the award with these words: "Inspired Youth and all its 100 children and youth, and all their families and teachers, and all its 100 tutor/mentor volunteers thank Much Shelist, and Lawyers Lend-A-Hand, and the Chicago Bar Association for this award. We especially marvel that the firm of Much Shelist had the vision and compassion to celebrate its 35th anniversary in 2005 with a \$35,000 donation to Lawyers Lend-A-Hand, to sponsor, encourage, and strengthen new tutor mentor/programs. This donation is providing educational richness to 100's of children and families in Chicago. One of the students in Inspired Youth wrote this letter to a senior citizen in December: 'Have a Holly Jolly Christmas, and I wish you a Merry Christmas. I am doing good in school. I get A's and B's because of the tutoring program. I love it at tutoring so very much.' Thank you Much Shelist and Lawyers Lend-A-Hand."

In addition to the award from Much Shelist, Inspired Youth also received an award from Lawyers Lend-A-Hand for the coming year. Thank you, Lawyers Lend-A-Hand.

15. YOUTH CHOIR CONCERTS

From Thanksgiving to New Year's Day, the Inspired Youth Singers sang in five concerts. On Thanksgiving Day the group went by bus to the **Eckhart Park Apartments** near Cabrini Green, to sing for senior citizens and a gathering of the Burrell family, hosted by Dorie Burrell's grandmother. 13 students, 2 parents, and 2 directors gave up part of their Thanksgiving Day to entertain people. The youth sang 10 songs and did a dance, the Cha-Cha Slide. The group looked good and sounded good.

16. SINGING AT WINTER WONDERFEST

On December 7 the Inspired Youth Singers sang at the **Winter WonderFest** at Chicago's Navy Pier, as part of the Chicago Bar Association's fund-raiser. When the 18 children, 4 parents, and 2 directors walked into the Winter WonderFest, they stopped and looked, their eyes wide and their mouths open as they saw how large it was. Their faces shone as they saw the colored lights, trees, and decorations, the huge Winter Wind Glider in the center beckoning them to ride on it. The kids couldn't imagine singing on a stage in such a wondrous place, but they were great! The sound engineer wanted the children "tight," close together. Directed by Dorie Burrell, the kids sang out, and microphones carried the sound across the Winter WonderFest. The choir sang for 15-20 minutes. Genita Robinson, the new executive director of Lawyers Lend-A-Hand, said the children were cute and sounded good. She had come to our Thanksgiving Day concert to audition them for the Winter WonderFest!

After the choir sang, the children got to explore the Winter WonderFest and go

on rides – free with their special CBA bracelet. Their favorite ride was the Winter Wind Glider. They lay on their stomachs in a harness and went hurtling around, 40 feet in the air at a fast speed. As Wudassie (kind.), flew above her mother, she shouted, “Mommy!” Afterwards she said she wasn’t scared. Her sister Nubia (2nd gr.) said, “I could feel my lungs move and my heart thump, but I wasn’t scared.” Later loud, high-pitched screams came from the ride. One of our 12-year old girls was screaming during the whole ride. Some kids went on the ride a second time.

The kids explored many things. Some children went on the carousel. Many kids ice skated for the first time. They loved skating. Cordell (5th gr.) climbed a vertical rock at least twice. A rope was attached to the top of the rock, but there were only scruffy, little knobs to hold onto. Some of the kids decorated huge cookies. The Chicago Bar Association had special delicacies in the separate Lakeview Terrace for people from CBA. You can imagine how much the children enjoyed the wonderland. Karah (3rd gr.) left her bracelet on for a whole week.

As we were leaving at the end of the afternoon, a man said, “You all did very well.” He had heard the choir sing earlier in the afternoon and said he was a lawyer. We said, “Thank you, Lawyers Lend-A-Hand.” We went home by the Navy Pier trolley and an express bus.

17. Multi-cultural Children’s Community Choir Concert

On Saturday, Dec. 13, the Inspired Youth Singers sang in the **Multi-cultural Children’s Community Choir concert** at Hemenway UMC in Evanston. The concert was truly multi-cultural, with a Chinese children’s choir, a Jamaican steel-drum soloist, two sopranos performing “Ave Maria,” a liturgical dancer, a dance troupe, plus two children’s choirs. All the music was top quality. The Inspired Youth singers were fortunate to be a part of the concert.

18. Singing at Bethany Terrace

Sunday, Dec. 21, was freezing -- minus 2 degrees, over 20 below with the windchill. In that Arctic weather, 11 children, 2 parents, 2 drivers, and the director met at McDonald’s for lunch, and then drove to Morton Grove, IL to sing in the worship service at **Bethany Terrace**. In anticipating Bethany Terrace, Cordell (5th gr.) remarked, “Isn’t that where they have the birds?” As soon as the children arrived, they went to look at the small tropical birds in a glass habitat in the lounge. Tony (1st gr.) found a small egg in a nest, and Kalip (1st gr.) saw a bird sitting on an egg in another nest.

The children sang 5 songs as part of the worship service, and afterwards they shook hands and greeted the residents, some of whom were part of an Alzheimer’s Unit. After the service the children were treated to cookies, hot chocolate, and punch and were given gift certificates to McDonald’s, M&Ms, pencils, candy canes, and sleigh bells – all things the children enjoy. This is a beautiful, mutual ministry of Bethany Terrace and Inspired Youth.

19. Grace Baptist Church

On Sunday Dec. 28, 14 children, 2 parents, and 2 directors sang for the **Grace Baptist Church service**. One woman from the church said, “The children were so cute!” Another woman said, “I heard the children last year. They get better every year.” A man said, “I’m so glad the choir sang ‘The Birthday of a King.’ I sang that as a child, and it brought back so many memories to hear the children sing it. I had tears in my eyes because it was so beautiful.”

20. GOING TO A BULLS BASKETBALL GAME

Deven (9th gr.) and Steven (9th gr.) went to a Bulls pre-season game in October with tutor Steve Duncan, a professional trombone player. Steve Duncan was given the tickets by the parents of his trombone student. Deven and Steven hope to be in the NBA some day. Their seats were very close to the court, and Deven stuck out his shirt as the players were passing and got his shirt autographed. Steven had a calendar autographed. Deven said he knows the Bulls player Derrick Rose from where he used to live.

21. DONATIONS NEEDED

Inspired Youth, Inc. does a lot with minimal funds because of the many people who volunteer. Your contributions are important for enriching the lives of children and families in Uptown in Chicago. Inspired Youth Inc. is a 501(c)(3) corporation with the IRS, so donations are tax deductible. Checks may be made to "Inspired Youth" and sent to *Inspired Youth, 5715 N. Ridge, Chicago, IL 60660.*

