

* *Good News from Inspired Youth, 2010*



“Let’s do something special for the children of the city.” That was our idea in 1980. This year the Youth Choir Fest celebrates its 30th anniversary. This fall, in the 26th year of the “Tutoring Program,” 83 adult volunteers and 51 8th graders from Wilmette Junior High tutored 93 students from Uptown/Edgewater/Albany Park in 1786 tutoring hours. Here are some special things that happened this year.

Rickiah is a stubby first grader. One Thursday in October she couldn’t do $2 + 3 = ?$ or $6 - 2 = ?$. She refused to try. On Friday she practiced addition and subtraction on her fingers. The next day at Saturday tutoring she did two sides of a math worksheet. She learns fast! On her good side Rickiah is curious and enthusiastic. On the way to choir practice one day she found a long seed pod on the ground and turned it into a percussion instrument. She loves to sing. In kindergarten last year her class sang “We Are the World” in English, Spanish, and Urdu. Now she makes up her own songs in Spanish (her own version) and made up languages. Maybe she’ll be a linguist.

Fernando (2nd gr.) has scars all over his face. He admires his uncle, a gang member. During a tutoring session in late October he said he wanted to read a book from the library. He selected a book of scary stories, at Level 2. He read the whole book to his tutor. He was so proud. He said, “I want to read all the books!” When the temperature was below freezing in December, he was still wearing only a hoodie outside. In mid-December his family received Christmas gifts from Kingswood UMC in Buffalo Grove. He opened them right away and has been wearing his new coat ever since – a perfect fit, and very warm.



Inspired Youth Singers: 26 youth with 10 parents and directors took the L to downtown Chicago to sing at the Harold Washington Library, with its polished marble floors, huge rotunda, oculus (open area to look down to the lower level), and mosaic of the life of Harold Washington. Their music was glorious. The children sang for 55 minutes – many carols and some Disney songs. The audience, seated in the lobby and watching from the balconies, loved it. Find a link to a medley on www.facebook.com/inspiredyouth.



Inspired Youth with their tutors

Edgar (5th gr.) entered the Tutoring Program this fall. He has a lot to make up. In September he could barely read, he couldn't spell, and he didn't know any multiplication facts. But he is in the choir and also very photogenic. During the fall his tutor worked with him to begin learning. Now he is memorizing multiplication facts, learning to spell, and reading better. We expect miracles from Edgar.

Leslie (8th gr.) has been in the Tutoring Program since 1st grade. School work has always been hard for her, but her parents have always brought her to tutoring, even when they moved to Albany Park. Last year her tutor, Kim Dunlap, worked with her for weeks on the very difficult 7th grade math homework. One day after Kim had had a hard day at work, she came to tutoring and Leslie told her she had scored "above the line" in math (above the cut-off line for passing). That made Kim's day.

Latrice (age 18) has been in the Tutoring Program and Youth Choir since she was 4 years old. She graduated from high school in June 2010 and is now going to Northeastern (NEIU). Hurray! We are proud of her.

Last summer Inspired Youth took 65 children, parents, and younger siblings to 5 museums and parks in Chicago. One student wrote about the trip to the Museum of Science and Industry (sponsored by the lawfirm Much Shelist), "The thing that I learned is that eggs hatch slowly and tornados are made of air, and I saw the earth moving." Another wrote about Millennium Park, "A man taught me how to



balance a feather with my chin and the front of my hand." And another, "It was fun in the water. I liked the man who was juggling. We played games and we ate. I liked all of it."

Season's joy to all of you from Beth Palmer, Director, Inspired Youth Tutoring, Inspired Youth, Inc., inspiredyouth2@yahoo.com, www.inspiredyouthchicago.org, www.facebook.com/inspiredyouth.

Tax-deductible donations to Inspired Youth may be made through PayPal on our website www.inspiredyouthchicago.org or sent to "Inspired Youth," 5715 N. Ridge, Chicago, IL 60660.

Inspired Youth juggling scarves at Chicago's Millennium Park