

TUTORING NEWS: INSPIRED YOUTH

5715 N. Ridge, Chicago, IL 60660, 773-561-4759, inspiredyouth2@gmail.com inspiredyouthchicago.org www.facebook.com/inspiredyouth
Volume 28, Number 1, August 2019



Solo: "Part of Your World"



Duet: "Star Wars"



Duet: "Finale," from Brahms Symphony



Solo: "Ain't No Use," by Bob Dylan

SUMMER PIANO PROGRAM

The 18th year of Inspired Youth's Summer Piano Program was full! 70 students came to Room 204 in the Edgewater Presbyterian Church two times a week for an hour each day to play on the ten keyboards in Room 204. Some of the families had keyboards at home to practice on. 17 families borrowed keyboards from Inspired Youth for the summer. Most of the keyboards were donated by kind people or purchased cheaply from thrift stores by former piano tutor Jamey McDunn. A few other keyboards were purchased directly by Inspired Youth during the past 20 years.

The parents were involved, too. For many of the young students, a parent sat with the child at the keyboard during the Piano Program session and guided their learning with the help of Alfred's Basic Piano Library. The parents loved to learn!

The families were from many places: Mexico, Puerto Rico, Bolivia, India, Burma, Mongolia, Ethiopia, and the United States.

CHILDREN LOVED THE PIANO PROGRAM

A Report from the First Three Weeks

Bhagyaansh G., Pre-K, beamed when he heard the sound of the keyboard. Ashley S., 1st gr, really concentrated and was absorbed in learning to play the pieces. Bhaumik C., 2nd gr., finished Book A in 2 weeks and started Book B. He was so excited to play the piano that he learned to play "Happy Birthday" by ear. He also learned "Mary Had a Little Lamb" by ear.

Estefania O., 6th gr., was reluctant to try the piano, but when she played a few notes and heard the pretty sound, she was all smiles. She told her cousin about the Piano Program, and her cousin started right away. Selam D., 4th gr., practiced by herself and kept learning. Natalia N., 6th gr. and Sophia N., 3rd gr., also practiced by themselves. Natalie was reading the notes and taught her younger cousin Andrea N., 1st gr., at home. Baron F., kind., gained a lot since last year. He was also in the violin program.

Alan H., 10th gr., Emmanuel O., 8th gr., and Alexis H., 5th gr., all concentrated, and all learned fast. Emmanuel taught his younger brother, Gabriel O., 4th gr., who loved playing the keyboard. Danitzky R., 7th gr., Eduardo F., and Michelle F., 4th gr., all practiced by themselves and kept learning. Fazila V., 3rd gr., Alessandra P., 6th gr., and Mariana T., 7th gr., were just beginning and learned fast. Evelyn Z., 4th gr., wanted to play a "solo" for the recital, and not a duet!

Alex G., 16 yrs. old, but mentally disabled, was just starting to play the piano. He loved it. His mother labeled all the keys: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, and Alex was given an easy recital piece. He learned it in one day! He needed a harder piece!

Chikki K., 3rd gr., came the first day and was lent a keyboard to take home to practice on. She didn't come the rest of the week or the next, so Beth Palmer visited her family. Chikki came the 3rd

week, and she had learned a lot, just from one day at the program. She had been practicing at home!

All this was possible because of the wonderful Volunteer Piano Tutors who came to help the students learn. 17 people, besides the director, volunteered their time to help the students learn to play the piano. Five of the 17 Volunteer Piano Tutors learned to play the piano in the Summer Piano Program in previous years! One was a tutoring grad. All were excellent as piano tutors.

THE TWO RECITALS

58 students played in the two piano recitals on Aug. 6 and 8, 2019. Students came to the Piano Program twice a week for 6½ weeks and ranged in age from 4 to 16 years. For many, it was their first time playing the piano. Some had come to the piano program for several years. A student now in high school, Brandon W., had been part of the Piano Program for around 14 years! He was first part of the Summer Piano Program when he was three years old!

In the recitals, several students played pieces from the lesson book. Many students played well-known pieces using arrangements from books by Faber and Faber.

Five students who had just finished kindergarten were amazing. Baron F., kind., played "I've Got Peace like a River." Girivar M., kind., played "The Greatest Love of All." Henry G., kind., played "Bye, Bye, Blackbird." Arun S., kind., played "The William Tell Overture." Rachel F., kind., played "God Is So Good."

The students loved their pieces. Sinai R., 1st gr., played "Let It Go." Ashley S., 1st gr., played "Down in the Valley." Jacob D., 1st gr., and Gabriel O., 4th gr., played "Star Wars," on two different nights. Donovan F., 2nd gr., played "It's Me., O Lord." Bhaumik C., 2nd gr., played "Theme from the 'Surprise Symphony.'" Akshay V., 3rd gr., played "Lean on Me." Zahira H., 3rd gr., played "Oh! What a Beautiful Morning."

Evelyn Z., 4th gr., played "Part of Your World." She wanted to play a "solo" (without a duet part) on the grand piano, and she did! It was stunning. Eden D., 3rd gr., played "The Rainbow Connection." Her sister, Selam D., 4th gr., played "Beauty and the Beast." Monish A., 5th gr., played "Do-Re-Mi." Jeffrey V., 5th gr., played "The Hokey Pokey!" Alexis H., 5th gr., played "The Entertainer." Sarahi R., 5th gr., played "Blue Moon." Maria M., 6th gr., played Beethoven's "Ode to Joy." Alessandra P., 6th gr., played "Finale," by Brahms. Yair S., 6th gr., played

"Looney Tunes." Feven M., 6th gr., played "It Don't Mean a Thing." She chose that piece because her school choir sang it. All these students loved their pieces.

Mariana T., 7th gr., and Jeraldine O., 6th gr., played "When the Saints Go Marching In," in two different recitals. Fidel V., 7th gr., played "The William Tell Overture." Eduardo F., 7th gr., played "It's You I Like," by "Mr. Rogers." (Fred Rogers was a very accomplished pianist and composer.) Gregorio F., 7th gr., played "Soon and Very Soon." Emmanuel O., 8th gr., played "American Patrol." Leonela C., 8th gr., played "A Whole New World." Danitzky R., 8th gr., played "Tomorrow." Valerie B., 8th gr., played "La Bamba." Katie S., 8th gr., played "Für Elise," by Beethoven. Her sister, Hellen S., 9th gr., played "Minuet in G.," by Bach. Jovanny S., 10th gr., played "You Are the Sunshine of My Life." Alan H., 10th gr., played "Ain't No Use," by Bob Dylan. Alex G., 11th gr., played "This Land Is Your Land." Brandon W., 11th gr., played "A Short Story."

Can you see how exciting these pieces were for the students to play? These were just a few of the pieces in the two recitals. All the pieces were challenging for the students, and all the pieces were fun to play. The students loved playing the pieces and loved making music.

Volunteer Piano Tutors

The volunteer piano tutors were excellent. They were patient at the lessons and helped the students learn. Stacy Arriola, Jim Conlon, Diane Danek, Josue Estrada, Eduardo Flores, Quinn Furness, Emmanuel Guijosa, Seth Kaplan, Maddie Lenzini, Girivar Mundhra, Beth Palmer, Ian Price, Ken Roman, Katie Sales, Hellen Sales, Sam Sibley, Rachel Smith, and Jill Werner were all excellent as piano tutors.

At the recitals, four piano tutors accompanied the students for the pieces which had "duet parts." Seth Kaplan, Quinn Furness, Katie S., and Beth Palmer played the duet parts. They were skilled and patient!

The mothers of several of the younger students helped their children practice at home and worked with them at the Piano Program. These mothers were essential to the Piano Program. Some mothers began to learn to play the piano, too!

The Audience

During the recitals, the audience was wonderful. People listened and enjoyed the music. They even clapped long enough for the students to get up and take a bow after playing their pieces. Many of the girls wore fancy dresses, and many of the boys wore

new shirts. They looked beautiful. The recital was special for everyone.

The Photographers

We are very grateful to Dinah Barthelmess and Stacy Arriola for taking photos of each of the students in the recitals on Tuesday and Thursday. Dinah Barthelmess is on the faculty at Wilmette Jr. High School and is one of the leaders at Inspired Youth's Saturday Tutoring Program. Stacy Arriola was a piano tutor this summer and has been a choir director for the Inspired Youth Singers. The photos they took of the students performing, the audience, and the refreshment time are on Inspired Youth's Facebook page (the Inspired Youth with the red-white-and-blue logo of the student reading a book).

The Meal, and the Servers

After the concerts there were refreshments. People brought delicious food to share. Notable were the 8 boxes of pizza the Vazquez family brought on Tuesday and the special saffron rice the Achanta family brought on Thursday. Everyone loved the food and the fellowship.

The servers organized the meal, served it, and cleaned up afterwards to "Board of Health standards." The servers on Tuesday were Sam Sibley, Dave Carmody, Dinah Barthelmess, Mary Blankenheim, and Jill Werner. On Thursday the servers were Sam Sibley, Dave Carmody, Dan Hutchins, Dan Solomon, Ken Roman, and Stacy Arriola. Everyone is grateful for what these people did.

Notes from Parents and Piano Tutors

The father of Zarah S. wrote, "Thank you so much for all your efforts of making these kids learn piano. It is much appreciated. I loved the event and would like to be a part of it next year. Special thanks to all the volunteers who have helped in making our kids learn."

The mother of Arinjay I. wrote, "We're already waiting for the next summer to come. It was a wonderful experience."

Sam Sibley, a piano tutor wrote: "A fine quality program. You have strong family support. Well done!"

Tutor Dan Hutchins wrote, "I really enjoyed the children and their music."

Well Wishes

For many years Enid Young, from Iowa, refurbished dolls and toys and sent them to Inspired Youth and other children's programs. She wrote, "I received your newsy newsletter. What you all do for these

children is amazing, and will change their lives forever. Love, thanks, and blessings to you, Enid."

REPORTS ABOUT STUDENTS

Some Report Cards, June 2019

Students did well in the spring semester in school. Some students on the Principal's Honor Roll were David Cruz, 3rd gr., and Jessica K., 2nd gr. Some students from Inspired Youth on the Honor Roll were Dayveana B., 6th gr., Nely A., 4th gr., Raul V., 3rd gr., Jah'Lil C., 3rd gr., Carlos, C.G., 2nd gr., and Eliza A., 1st gr. We are proud of all the students.

Student Fixed a Piano Keyboard

Gregorio F., 7th gr., was asked to see if he could fix a piano keyboard, two keys of which were not working. He took it apart and fixed it! Hurray!

Student Wins Swimming Competition

Michelle F., 4th gr., won first place in a swimming competition.

INSPIRED YOUTH SINGERS PERFORM IN A NIGHT CLUB

"This is the best the children have ever sung!" So proclaimed Mike Delaney, a long member of the Kiwanis Club of Ravenswood and also a former tutor with Inspired Youth.

The Inspired Youth Singers performed for the Kiwanis club at the night club Barba Yianni -- at noon! Thirteen children and three adults sang for the Kiwanis Club. The singers gave one of their best performances ever. Four children accompanied the choir on the piano. Eduardo F., 7th gr., Michelle F., 4th gr., Raul V., 3rd gr., and Girivar M., kind., each accompanied a song. All the students did a good job playing on the electric piano in the nightclub.

Before the children sang, 11 children lined up and recited poems, by memory, for the Kiwanis Club. These were the poems they had memorized for Family Night in the Tutoring Program. All the poems were good, and members of the Kiwanis Club enjoyed them.

To begin the presentation, Tutoring Director Beth Palmer gave a short talk about the Tutoring Program. She brought the painting/collage, "Collage of the Sun," done by tutoring grad Larry White. She told how the Tutoring Program had influenced Larry and also another young man, Caprice King, whose book, *Delivered from Genocide*, is being published. The Kiwanians were impressed.

Photos of the children singing in the Barba Yianni nightclub are on Inspired Youth's Facebook page. 3

STUDENTS PERFORM AT THE FIRST ANNUAL RAVEN FOOD TRUCK FESTIVAL

Ten children and two adults performed at the first annual Raven Food Truck Festival on Clark and Granville. The concert was outside on a beautiful Saturday evening in August.

The Inspired Youth Singers performed 13 songs. The pianists for eight (8) of the songs were children! Baron F., kind., Girivar M., kind., Rachel F., kind., Donovan F., 2nd gr., Michelle F., 4th gr., Eduardo F., 7th gr., Gregorio F., 7th gr., and Leonela C., 8th gr., played while the choir sang. They played the pieces they had played at the recital. They all played beautifully. It was a new venue, and a fun concert.

TUTORING GRAD IS BUSINESS OWNER

Christel Frausto was in the Tutoring Program in the early 1990's. On July 4, 2019, she called Beth Palmer to thank her for everything the Tutoring Program, children's choir, and Girl Scouts did for her. Here is part of her phone call:

"I had a lot of trouble in high school. I dropped out. Things happened. I didn't let that stop me. I graduated from high school, went to college, and I kept going and worked at corporate jobs for 13 years. But then I left that to start my own business and I'm really thankful.

"We have three businesses now. I'm so thankful. We moved to Peoria because there are more opportunities, and we can afford to grow our business, and Chicago is more expensive. We have an insurance agency and a gas station here in Peoria. I've actually taken on the role of helping start an Hispanic Chamber, and now tutoring girls, and I'm going to start working for the city on commission.

"There are just different things that I never imagined I'd be involved with. I've been applying for grants, and I'm thinking of all the opportunities these kids have. I want to make sure my business stays in an area that needs it. I don't want to move my business to an area that already has opportunities. I want to stay where people and the community need help.

"I live in Peoria, three hours away from Chicago. My business is in a tough area. All our businesses have always been in a tough area. I kind of love that. Why would I want to move? I applied for a grant last week, so I was pouring over the business plan, and I was thinking things through, and I realized, I don't want to leave. I want to stay right here and help people in the community and get things done, and

the oddest thing is it led me back to thinking about you and the Tutoring Program!

"I don't know if people message you or call you or email you, but you really helped me.

"I'm so emotional because on Saturday last week the Peoria local baseball team invited us to come sit in the skybox. ... The kids were so proud. [I want them to have opportunities, like] all the opportunities I had as a kid."

TUTORING GRAD IS A CASE WORKER

Shana Tims was in the Tutoring Program and children's choir in the early 1990's, along with her sister and cousins. Shana visited Chicago at the end of July. This is what she said:

"I am a case worker in Milwaukee. I work with children who have been neglected, socially abused, and physically abused, also in life and service injury.

"I have two degrees, in social services and applied science, and also one in real estate. I have three kids now, and I just bought a house in Milwaukee. A lot of good things have been happening.

"When we came to Chicago for the weekend, I was taking the kids to see my old school, my old church, my old house. And Beth is still here. I'm so happy to see her, so happy."

NEWS OF TUTORS

Hasan B., who was a tutor a couple of years ago, is in graduate school in Houston, TX. Jill Werner, a piano tutor for many years, is moving to Washington, D.C., because her husband just got a job as a journalist with the *Washington Post*.

DONATIONS TO INSPIRED YOUTH, INC.

Inspired Youth has a wide range of donors. In the past year, gifts have come from a foundation, a church women's group, a service organization, and around 80 individuals, including present and former tutors, parents of 8th graders from Wilmette Jr. High School, pastors, friends, family, and community members. Donations have ranged from \$25 to \$3,000. Inspired Youth appreciates all these donations.

Because of the many people who volunteer, Inspired Youth does a lot with minimal funds to enrich the lives of children and families in Uptown/Edgewater in Chicago. Inspired Youth Inc. is a 501(c)(3) corporation with the IRS, so donations are tax deductible.

Contributions to Inspired Youth can be made through PayPal on the Donations page of the website: www.inspiredyouthchicago.org, or mailed to "Inspired Youth," 5715 N. Ridge, Chicago, IL 60660.