



East Side Learning Center

"Unlocking each child's potential through the foundation of reading" since 2001

An educational partnership with the School Sisters of Notre Dame

The Bookmark

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 8

OCTOBER 2013

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John A. Johnson Achievement Plus Elem School
740 York Ave
St Paul, MN 55106



St. Paul Music Academy
27 Geranium Ave E
St Paul, MN 55117



HOPE Community Academy
720 Payne Ave
St. Paul, MN 55130



Community of Peace
471 Magnolia Ave
St. Paul, MN 55130

Impact Beyond the Classroom

Miss Deb and Adna's Story

By Debra O'Connor

Once upon a time – a year ago, in fact – Miss Deb began to tutor a first-grader named Adna. They sat down together at Community of Peace Academy with an easy book, but it turned out to be a difficult situation. Adna seemed reluctant to learn to read. And Miss Deb – that's me – had no idea why, and no idea what to do about it.

The two students I'd tutored earlier in the year had been eager to learn. The girls' progress excited them and drove them to work even harder. The same approach I had used when helping my own kids learn to read 25 years earlier – a sort of "oh, boy, isn't this fun!" attitude – seemed to work just fine with them.

But it wasn't working with Adna. Was she even interested in learning to read? Was it because her home language was Somali, not English? Did she fail to see the point of reading at all? Did she simply



Adna and Miss Deb enjoy a book together

not like me?

I am a former high school English teacher, and as a reporter for the St. Paul Pioneer Press, I covered education for years. I know how important being a good reader is for virtually every goal in life, and that's why I volunteer as a literacy tutor.

But I didn't know how to help this particular student achieve the goals I consider the keys to success: The child needs to be so eager to find out what's in a book that she's willing to slog through the

mechanics of learning to read. And the child needs to become a good enough reader so that the act of reading doesn't slow the child down.

Adna and I were far from realizing these goals. By December I was so discouraged that I was ready to quit the program, or at least ask for a different student and give Adna a chance with somebody else.

I spoke with Adna's lesson plan writer, Linda Quast, a former kindergarten teacher with decades of experience. She suggested that I try putting firmness before friendliness for a while.

Adna's classroom teacher, Ben Block, told me Adna loved to draw and I might be able to use that for leverage. Sister Sharon White took over for a couple of sessions to help Adna realize she had to work with me.

So I made some changes, practiced patience and tried again. Slowly, Adna and I gained traction as a team.

All spring long, we were working hard, but the excitement of progress made it seem easy.

Continued on page 4

Help ESLC Reach More Students

You can **double your gift to the ESLC by qualifying for a matching grant!**

Help match a \$20,000 challenge grant from the Katherine B. Andersen Fund of The Saint Paul Foundation by December 31, 2013

Donations that meet any of the following criteria will be matched:

- Dollar for dollar for all **new contributions**
- Dollar for dollar for **contributions from lapsed donors** who have not given for a year or more in support of the ESLC
- Dollar for dollar for **increased portion of contributions** of those who donated during the 2012 calendar year

It is easy with the enclosed envelope.
Or if you prefer to donate online visit our website
www.eastsidelearningcenter.org
and click on the giveMN.org logo.



Thank you for your support!

Volunteer Highlights

ESLC Honored as America Reads Site of the Year

On Friday, April 19, 2013 East Side Learning Center received the America Reads Site of the Year Award. America Reads is a literacy mentoring program with chapters at colleges and universities all over the country. Each chapter is a little bit different, and we are happy to be in partnership with the incredible chapter operated by the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Minnesota.

We love our America Reads Literacy Mentors, and apparently the feeling is mutual. Here is what some of them had to say about ESLC:

"Everyone who works there is so nice and helpful and friendly. They always thank my fellow tutors and I. I would tutor there again in a heartbeat."

"They always greet us when we arrive and are always there to answer my questions. Another thing they do that makes me feel like I belong is they ask me how things are going with the site and with my students."

"This is a wonderful place to tutor because we are given everything we could possibly need in order to work with the students. It is fantastic to work in an environment where the students have such positive attitudes (especially for after school!)."

These encouraging words of support remind us that we are doing it right! At the award ceremony in April, representatives from ESLC were presented with the Site of the Year Certificate. Sister Sharon White, Program Director, spoke briefly about our wonderful experience with America Reads. We thank all of our Literacy Mentors, and hope this incredible partnership continues far into the future!



Display at America Reads Awards Ceremony

2012-13 at a glance

339	Children served
207	Volunteer Tutors
38	Part-time Educators
5957	Volunteer Hours
8418	Part-time Educator/Staff Hrs
14,375	Hours of Tutoring
91%	Kindergartners tutored are ready for first grade

"Tutoring at the East Side Learning Center gives at-risk children a one-on-one relationship with a caring adult that increases their sense of connection to both the classroom and the school community. Kids view meeting with their tutor as a special opportunity that not everyone participates in – they feel very excited to be chosen. This 'specialness' adds to their sense of self worth. The gains these children make in their reading help them feel more a part of their peer group, help increase their feelings of competence, and help promote their comfort level at school."

**Anne Buchwald, M.A., LMFT, Wilder Child Guidance Clinic
Achievement Plus Program**

Evan Decker: A Local Volunteer Story

Evan Decker grew up on the East Side, even attending John A. Johnson in the early years of its reopening as an elementary school. Now a young professional, Evan decided that it was time to give back to the community where he grew up and continues to reside.

"Giving back to the community that I'm from while picking up some teaching and working-with-kids skills seemed like the perfect fit," he said.

Evan felt a need to serve, but he wasn't quite sure how to do it. "It was kind of a New Year's resolution - I wanted to try

something new, work with people more, and get a little out of my comfort zone," he explained. "A lot of times, the hardest thing with volunteering is having the initiative to reach out to an organization and say that you want to volunteer," he continued.

Once he started looking around for volunteer opportunities on the East Side, he happened upon East Side Learning Center. "It just seemed like a really good match," he said.

Evan's experience tutoring kids at Johnson has been an incredibly positive one. "My favorite part has been seeing progress in the students," he said.

He learned that progress comes in different shades, saying that it can be, "one session - where the student is upset and doesn't want to read at first, then by the end they've done a complete 180 and are enjoying reading; or over time when they make noticeable improvements to their reading skills." East Side Learning Center tutors take their victories where they can get them!

Evan explained the impact that volunteering has had on his life, "I guess the best way to sum it up is seeing what you're doing actually make a difference and help."



One Child. One Book. One Hour.

Will you be the one to make a difference?

Impact Beyond the Classroom

Mounds Park Academy Parent's Association Family Service Night



Families at Mounds Park Academy creating book bags and reading pillows

Mounds Park Academy Parents Association Family Service Night chose ESLC as one of seven non-profit organizations to benefit from their outreach to meet genuine community needs. Families joined together to make book pillows and "I'm a reader" book bags for children tutored by ESLC. As a bonus, books were included in the reading pillows and book bags!

Book pillows give ESLC children a special place to keep the books they are reading. Daily, as part of tutoring, children are provided with a book to practice at home. The book bags make that a proud activity!



Book Bag declaring "I am a Reader:!"

Reader's Theater at Saint Paul Music Academy

Along with one-on-one tutoring, children participated in Reader's Theater as part of ESLC's program at St. Paul Music Academy.

The school provided after school bussing twice a week. Parents were asked to provide transportation the other two days so their children could benefit from four days of one-on-one reading tutoring through ESLC.

Thanks to the commitment of the parents, twice a week children benefited from an hour of one-on-one reading tutoring and an hour participating in Readers' Theater.

ESLC children proudly and confidently performed *Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type* for their classmates and parents.

Through Readers' Theater children improved in fluency and gained self-confidence as readers and performers.



Students perform *Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type*

Learning to eat at a Restaurant

Reading involves more than decoding words. ESLC incorporates simple experiences for the children tutored.

Many of the children tutored haven't been to a restaurant. To develop oral language and build background knowledge for reading *Let's Eat Out*.

ESLC kindergartners learned to identify and label a place setting. They used initial letters and sounds to label their plate, fork, knife, spoon, cup, placemat. A pop tart added fun to this new experience!



A student enjoys her snack

"ESLC, a valued authorized partner with the Saint Paul Public Schools, has helped us to strengthen learning both during the school day and during out of school time. Our relationship with this organization is a powerful example of what can happen when our community comes together on behalf of all learners. The additional help that learners receive builds self-esteem and positive attitudes, while assisting them to become lifelong learners and productive citizens of the future. All Saint Paul citizens—parents, teachers, community members, and, most of all the children—benefit as a result of the East Side Learning Center's fidelity to "unlocking each child's potential through the foundation of reading."

We look forward to continuing our partnership with ESLC and its hundreds of professional and volunteer tutors who serve our students. Please extend sincere gratitude to the tutors at the East Side Learning Center for their dedication and commitment to the children of Saint Paul. We applaud your partnership commitment and thank you for your dedication."

**Valeria Silva, Superintendent
Saint Paul Public Schools**

May 14, 2013

Impact Beyond the Classroom

Miss Deb and Adna's Story Continued from page 1

Adna started smiling when she came to see me, gave me a hug when she left, and worked hard in between. Things were going so well that when the end of the school year came, I arranged to continue tutoring over the summer at Adna's home.

It was a pleasant surprise to meet Adna's three sisters, Yusra, age 11; Asahar, age 8, and Isra, age 5, who gathered around to listen when Adna and I read aloud, and who buried their noses in the stack of library books I brought with me.



Miss Deb and all the girls

I got lucky at a Mt. Zion Temple rummage sale and began to build a home library for the girls. Several Pioneer Press colleagues passed on books their children had outgrown, and my daughter Anne mailed her Harry Potter series back home. That brought the total to about 100 books, from Dr. Seuss to Newbery Medal winners. These multilingual girls, who speak Somali at home and also study Arabic, are learning to love the English language as they soak it up through literature.

This fall I started tutoring again with a different student at Community of Peace Academy. But because the girls asked me, I'll continue to come to their home on weekends. I'm not really their tutor any more – just a friend who is a pretty good reader and can recommend some pretty good books.

To volunteer, contact:

Kristina Scherber

651-793-7364 or
kristina.scherber@spps.org



One Family's Story

Amy and her husband Al have 4 birth children and 11 adopted children, a home of mixed race and culture. Amy and Al feel called to this type of family life, and they needed help along the way. With 15 children, time is of the essence. Meeting their basic needs can be a challenge, much less helping them with their reading. This is what Amy Ames, a parent who has had children in the tutoring program at the East Side Learning Center declared when I talked to her recently.

Enter the East Side Learning Center. Some of the children had special needs and among them were issues in reading and math. Because of the existence of ESLC, the Ames were able to adopt more children, and give a home to those who needed care and love.

Amy recalls how much the children who were tutored by ESLC loved their tutors, and couldn't wait to go to their time of tutoring. It also helped them to love school. School became something that was not to be dreaded. A few of her children were happy with the attention that the one-to-one relationship of tutoring brings. They considered their tutor a real friend.

"It equipped them so much more for further reading," said Amy. And today some of them go to the local library at least 2 times a week.

One of the children receiving services from ESLC didn't want to graduate out of the program because



he loved it so much. All their children found the relationship with the tutor to be so encouraging and respectful. They felt kindness and care from their tutors. Amy never had a problem to get them there; they wanted to go. One of the boys started being tutored in 1st grade, and was reading the Harry Potter series by third grade.

When asked what she would say to other parents about the possibility of sending a child to ESLC for tutoring, or to adults thinking of volunteering, Amy said, "It's such a positive influence on the child's life. It's a chance to give your kid one more opportunity to be successful.

One person can make such a difference in dealing with a child." Amy believes that the love of God is being shown through the tutors. Her one wish is that there would be tutors who live in the community, that come from the East Side. More tutors that look like the children and know the culture of the neighborhood would be a real boon to the program. There are many "in need" families that could use the help that the East Side Learning Center provides.

Make a Difference! Volunteer!

John A. Johnson Elementary [K-3] 740 York Ave St Paul		HOPE Community Academy [K-2] 720 Payne Ave St Paul	
Time	Grade	Time	Grade
9:15 – 9:45 AM	K	8:35 – 9:15 AM	2
9:45 – 10:15 AM	K	9:20 – 10:00 AM	2-4
10:15 – 10:45 AM	K	10:05 – 10:35 AM	K
12:20 – 1:05 PM	1	10:40 – 11:20 AM	1
2:10 – 2:40 PM	K	11:25 – 12:05 PM	1
3:10 – 3:55 PM	2	12:40 – 1:20 PM	1
4:00 – 4:45 PM	3	1:25 – 1:55 PM	K
Community of Peace Academy [K] 471 Magnolia Ave E, St Paul		Saint Paul Music Academy [K-2] 37 E Geranium Ave, St Paul	
Time	Grade	Time	Grade
8:10 – 8:40 AM	K	12:30 – 1:15 PM	1
8:45 – 9:15 AM	K	1:30 – 2:00 PM	2
9:20 – 9:50 AM	K	2:10 – 2:40 PM	K
9:55 – 10:25 AM	K	3:00 – 3:45 PM	2
		3:50 – 4:35 PM	2

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Will you be the one to make a difference?

What's New in 2013

East Side Learning Center Receives the Gift of a New Website

Our Website Story

ESLC has been fortunate to have free web support from Mark Nutter for many years. He designed our first site, taught staff how to make changes and hosted the site for us until February of this year. We are GRATEFUL for Mark's invaluable support across the years!

Our Story Continues: The Nerderly Overnight Website Challenge

As Mark's support was ending in 2013, we discovered the annual Nerderly Overnight Website Challenge (NOWC). This is a friendly challenge for teams of 8-10 web design professionals who compete with each other by designing and implementing websites for nonprofits like ours (with limited technology resources) within 24 continuous hours.



ESLC's new home page

By the time we came across the Challenge website, we only had a few weeks to make our case. Our goals were simple: We needed a site that would help us share the HEART of what we do, help us share our SUCCESSES and our LEARNINGS, help us shine a light of GRATITUDE on our PARTNERS, and provide USEFUL INFORMATION for our constituents. All of our goals were in support of our desire to expand our mission, "unlocking each child's potential through the foundation of reading."

Nonprofit selections were based on a written application, followed by testimonials from supporters.



The Nerderly Team

Our application was strong and we received more than 90 supportive comments from collaborative partner organizations, board members, current and past tutors, donors, school staff, and with some help, even a few of our students.

We were so touched, that even had we NOT been selected, it would have been worth the effort to apply!

If you haven't had an opportunity to visit our page for a while, we encourage you to check it out, together with our re-branded Facebook and Twitter pages: <http://eastsidelearningcenter.org>; <http://www.facebook.com/eastsidelearningcenter>; <http://www.twitter.com/EastSideLC>.

THANK YOU

To our NBRC team members: Jeanne Spoden, Ken Sykora, Matt Luker, Tommy O'Neill, Jason Dicks, Natasha Gaffer, Wade Kallhoff, Tim Kelly, Tyler Collard, and Shawn Burtis for your tireless efforts which helped us realize our goals, and for giving us the website of our dreams!

One Good Thing Leads to Another: MAP Technology

On the heels of our successful website makeover, we turned our attention to other technology needs. We knew Windows XP would be obsolete next year, and we wanted to make better use of our donated server. Given the age of our equipment and software, and with a server that needed updating, we decided to take the plunge and invest in our technology infrastructure.

To help us with this daunting task, we hired MAP for Nonprofits, first to help us create a technology plan, and then to help us implement it. We have updated our server, placed new computers and laptops, and are now in the process of networking all of our computers with our server.

A big thank you to Karen Graham, Director of Technology and Innovation, and to Ber Yang, Senior Technology Consultant, for helping ESLC update our infrastructure!

Can You Help East Side Learning Center Keep Our Technology Up To Date?

Our technology budget needs to expand to accommodate all of these positive changes. Now that we have a current website and network/computers, we need to keep everything "up to date."

- We hope to contract with MAP to support our new technology infrastructure going forward
- We have 9 – 13 hours of additional website update work
- We have been looking at LCD projectors to help us with our many staff meetings and tutor training sessions
- We will begin paying for our website hosting in first quarter 2014

We are exploring technology grants to help offset our increased costs, and are always open to other forms of support. Your donations make a difference!

Thank you for the many ways that you support East Side Learning Center!



One Child. One Book. One Hour.

Will you be the one to make a difference?

Thank you volunteer & professional tutors

The Word on the Street.....

Many children do not have the opportunity to read at home with their families. It is volunteers who are key to helping “unlock each child’s potential through the foundation of reading.” Thank you for touching the lives of the children you tutored, strengthening the ESLC program with your presence, and giving hope to Saint Paul communities.



“I can’t thank the East Side Learning Center enough for the wonderful work that they do. My daughter was in the summer program last year. She loved her tutors, enjoyed the sessions and is ‘hooked’ on books.”
Karen, parent



“The East Side Learning Center does amazing work. The students who are lucky to take part in the program benefit from the professional experience, dedication, and consistent high standards of the ESLC staff and volunteers.”
Amy Fink



“With every tutoring session I see a new spark of excitement about reading, whether it’s because the child has sounded out a new word or is so excited about the topic of the book that it prompts him to talk about connections with his own experiences.”
Gail Engstrom, tutor

“I like reading with my tutor. I like when my tutor reads to me too!”
Abygail K, student



“I like ESLC because I get to read my favorite books and play board games that include reading.”
Gerardo, student

“I have always been impressed by the work of the East Side Learning Center. This year I feel even luckier to have the ESLC at Community of Peace Academy because my daughter, a Kindergartner, is benefiting. My daughter loves working with her ESLC tutor. I’m amazed at how fast her reading has progressed. She is enthusiastic about reading and uses so many decoding and self correction skills independently already.”
Kirstin Moldan, teacher and parent Community of Peace Academy

“Everything about the ESLC is commendable -- the caring, helpful staff, friendly volunteers, prepared lesson plans, students eager to improve reading skills and atmosphere most conducive to foster a love of reading.”
Mary Meyer, tutor



“We are so lucky to have ESLC at our school. Thanks to all the tutors for all your help and support. We couldn’t do it without you!”
Kris Klinger, teacher

“As a volunteer I am so impressed with the way kids enjoy the great materials we use--tools that were never dreamed of when I was a kid.”
Harry Wernecke, tutor.



“I always tell people about ESLC. I tell them how important it is to have people who actually care about little kids’ successes. The educational games, interesting books, and the training that the tutors get from ESLC sum up everything to create healthy, strong, and successful students.”
Jando Danial, tutor



Funders & Donors

At East Side Learning Center, we can only fulfill our mission through the generosity and steadfast support of our many educational and funding partners.

Every way you contribute makes a tremendous difference.

Your financial contributions, hours served as a volunteer tutor, gifts-in-kind, and most of all, your passion for improving the lives of children, enable us together, to keep “unlocking each child’s potential through the foundation of reading.” All are vital investments for the success of ALL our children.

All Funders, Donors, and In-Kind contributors are listed on our website www.eastsidelearningcenter.org.



Thank you Funders, Donors and In-Kind Contributors!



Children proudly display their books



Children are excited to select their very own books to keep! ESLC is extremely grateful for all the donated new or gently used books so children can have books they love to read in their homes.

Funding Partners

3M GIVES Volunteer Match
Katherine B. Andersen Fund of The Saint Paul Foundation
Catholic Church of Saint Casimir
Christian Brothers Youth Home
Deluxe Corporation
Ecolab Foundation
Greater Twin Cities United Way
Greater Twin Cities United Way President’s Fund
In honor of BNSF Railway Challenge Win
Jostens Foundation
Kinney Family Foundation
Knights of Columbus Wright-Hennepin Council #4174
Leonard, Street and Deinard Foundation
Richard A. Newman Foundation
Saint Paul Public Schools Foundation
Academic Intervention Grant
School Sisters of Notre Dame
The Stablish Foundation
The June Stern Foundation
Travelers Employee Giving Campaign Matching Gifts
Many individual donors and memorials

Help ESLC Continue Giving Free Books

Many of our students do not have books at home with which to practice their reading skills.
Please donate new or gently used books, suitable for grades K-3.
Books may be dropped off at any ESLC location or call 651-793-7331.

Thank you!



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Will you be the one to make a difference?

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Address Service Requested

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Our Core Values are summarized as

LEARN

- LOVING**, affirming and respectful atmosphere
- EDUCATION** that transforms, encouraging each child to reach the fullness of his/her potential
- ACCOUNTABILITY** and careful stewardship of community resources
- RESULTS**, driven by high quality, systematic approach and academic rigor
- NEEDS** of children drive where resources are allocated



A Happy Reader!

ESLC CONTACT INFORMATION

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ESLC Website/ Facebook	www.eastsidelearningcenter.org www.facebook.com/eastsidelearningcenter
SSND School Sisters of Notre Dame Ministries	www.ssndcentralpacific.org

Online with ESLC

Have you seen ESLC's **new website?**

www.eastsidelearningcenter.org

If you haven't visited it lately, we invite you to explore what's there.

In addition to our updated website, you can find ESLC on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Sign up and become a friend of ESLC.

Finally, after you have visited us on the web, let us know what you think. Our emails are to the left. **Happy surfing!**

Thank You ESLC Staff, Board, Communications Committee and
 Ideal Printers for Your Time, Talent, Commitment and Contribution to this
 Newsletter