



TUTORS FOR KIDS, INC.

January 2017



Excited Children Eager to Learn

Our Children – Learners Today - Leaders Tomorrow

Tutors for Kids, Inc. is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit community-based organization of volunteers who support the local educational process.

Our Mission Statement: Meeting student educational needs as defined by the teacher through suitable and trained volunteer tutors in the local, tri-county Title 1 public schools as determined by the Board of Directors.

Good Tutoring News – Two schools have sent information about their tutored students' reading gains from the beginning of the school year. Villages and Wildwood – be proud of your accomplishments:

- At Villages, 75% tested better and 6% tested the same at mid-year as they did at the beginning of the year.
- At Wildwood, 87% tested better at mid-year than beginning of the year.

These are significant results because without tutoring these same students' scores may have stayed the same or decreased due to the increasing difficulty of their reading materials.

United Way Grant – More good news - United Way of Lake and Sumter awarded Tutors for Kids a grant of \$38,000 for:

- Books Shipping Costs = \$14,700
- Database Licensing Fees = \$7,500
- Partnering with Public Allies = \$16,700 (see below).

Partnering with Public Allies – Public Allies is a division of AmeriCorps (like our domestic Peace Corps). They interview and vet intern candidates to work with area non-profit groups. We have interviewed several candidates and have offered an intern position to Ava Ortiz. She will work with Tutors for Kids for the next 10 months and will attend some future meetings. She is a college junior studying criminal justice.

New Book Storage – In February, two schools will have Books for your Bag and Books for the Break stored at a secure site at the school. The first two schools are Wildwood Elementary and Leesburg Elementary. Each school has several School Book Coordinators (SBCs) who in addition to being our tutors have stepped up to help 'stock' inventory, re-order, and distribute books. Wildwood and Leesburg are identified in the email link with this newsletter. They will communicate with you about "open" times as well as the location.

In March, the other schools we plan to 'stock' with books are: Beverly Shores, Villages Elementary, Fruitland Park and Belleview Santos. They will follow the same process. Other schools not mentioned will still pick up their books at Frank and Carolyn's home.

More Training Dates – We thought we had finished training for the year with our last session on January 5 for 23 new tutors. However since that time we have had referrals from you, our tutors, of 15 new 'tutor applicants.' So there is another training session on Tuesday, February 7 in our home from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Fall Social and Awards Program – Many tutors have asked if Tutors for Kids will ever have a social. The answer is YES. The Board of Directors also wants to include a recognitions aspect to the social. Some of our donors have been very generous year after year and the

Board would like to recognize them as well as our tutors who have been working with our children year after year.

So, the answer is "YES," but we need HELP in organizing such an event. If you'd like to have some fun, then this project is for you. Gatherings of this type usually take 8 – 10 volunteers. So if you or friends like to plan socials, we need your help. After all, we do need to have fun along with our tutoring. The tentative date is fall 2017.

Board of Directors – A little history here. We started 8 years ago with six tutors in one school with no name for the group. Now we have over 420 tutors in twelve schools tutoring about 2,000 students per week. No organization can depend on its founders as it grows to this size. Some of your fellow tutors have stepped up to form our Board of Directors. To guarantee a long-term support system, the Board is working on several projects to develop a strategic plan for the future. This is an important and sustaining task.

The Board manages the tutor program, the book program, technology and database development programs, the fund raising/grant program, the training program, the speakers program, and the public relations/communication program. You can see that the size of the Tutors for Kids program needs structural support.

You can HELP! Many people you know may not want to tutor, but have skills that could be used to support our program. We need Board members, trainers for new tutors, interviewers for new tutor applicants, public speakers, help in grant writing and technology help - especially for updating our website and Facebook connection (we have two volunteers but could use at least two more).

Tutors for Kids Club Meetings

Monthly Workshops – Both Tutors for Kids Clubs meet most months. The meetings present the same program. AND, remember, we bring a selection of "books for your bag" for your students - IF they have "earned" a book.

Villages Club - the first Wednesday at Sterling Heights Rec Center - 3–5 p.m. Next Meeting: **Wednesday, February 1**

Other Club - the third Monday at the Belleview Public Library - 3–5 p.m. February meeting is cancelled because it's a holiday - President's Day, and the library will be closed. So, the next meeting is Monday, March 20, at 3 p.m.

Donations – Since the December newsletter, Tutors for Kids received over \$1,700 in donations from individuals and organizations. including a donation from a Knights of Columbus Council. Thank you!!!

Upcoming Events

The Villages Pops Chorus – is holding a fundraiser for Tutors for Kids, called a Hootenanny - folk music from the 1960 -1980s. It is in Lake Miona Recreation Center on Wednesday, February 8, at 7 p.m. Tickets are all sold out. Proceeds will go to managing our book and tutor program.

Facebook Posting - Check our Tutors for Kids on Facebook and “like” us – spread the word to all your friends and family to “like” us as well!!!

Bulletin Board – School Help Wanted

These school need more tutors:

Belleview Elementary

More tutors – contact Laura Kammer for details - 352-633-6069. (See link in email accompanying this newsletter for STC contact info.)

Beverly Shores

Tutors needed for Kindergarten/Pre K - contact Sue McHale for details - 352-307-1756. (See link in email accompanying this newsletter for STC contact info.)

Leesburg Elementary

Kindergarten, kindergarten, kindergarten – contact Mary Kashner for details - 352-775-4538. (See link in email accompanying this newsletter for STC contact info.)

Articles of Interest

Why Johnny (Still) Can't Read

By Michael S. Roth

We know more than ever about how to teach literacy, but when we test American kids, two-thirds score at low levels of competency.

For as long as this country has been committed to providing a basic education to all its children, we have been arguing about the best way to teach reading. In the 1800s, Horace Mann posited that we learn by coming to understand whole words: We read for meaning, and words have a content unrelated to how they are spelled out. By the middle of the 1900s, researchers were arguing, on the contrary, that we learn to read by sounding out words through their basic components—phonemes—and that it is through building phonetic skills that reading capacity is best developed. The two sides have been going at it ever since.

The temptation for an author coming fresh to the topic today is to take the cultural historian's synthetic approach and show how each side has contributed positively to how we teach literacy. This is not Mark Seidenberg's approach. In "Language at the Speed of Sight," he develops a careful argument, backed by decades of research, to show that the only responsible way to teach children to read well is to build up their abilities to connect reading with speech and then to amplify these connections through practice, developing skillful behavioral patterns hand in hand with the neurological networks that undergird them.

"Language at the Speed of Sight" begins with the paradox that people become good at reading without having any idea of how they go about it. How did humans come to read in the first place? Drawing pictures of animals is one thing, but using arbitrary symbols to stand for speech-sounds that have meaning without resembling that to which they refer—that was a giant leap forward. Reading and writing are technologies that humans developed after many thousands of years, and the first chapters of the book provide a fascinating account of scholars' best guesses as to how we first began to use abstractions to denote the sounds that make up words. "To be effective . . .," Mr. Seidenberg writes, "the properties of a writing system must align with properties of the spoken language it represents." Due in part to the number of syllables in our speech, English employs an alphabet that represents both vowels and consonants. Phonetics matters.

Amazon Smile Foundation – If you buy from Amazon, Tutors for Kids benefits as you purchase. We get a small amount when you access Amazon through this link below.

<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/45-4815598>

School Tutor Coordinators (STCs): The link for your School Tutor Coordinators (STCs) is in the email accompanying this newsletter. NOTE: There is a dot (.) between the first and last name of each tutor coordinator followed by @tutorsforkidsinc.org.

PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE – If you receive an email or phone call please, respond immediately. Remember each STC is responsible for working with 20–25 tutors so duplicate calls or emails consume a significant amount of time. They are also volunteers.

School Book Coordinators (SBCs): The link for your School Tutor Coordinators (STCs) will be included with the February newsletter.

Helpful Tutoring Tips

Many folks ask how I get my students to “earn” a book each month. Here are some suggestions for your toolbox:

Awarding stickers for:

- accomplishments, achievements, or tutoring sessions well done.
- homework, attendance, and/or class participation.
- reading and telling you about the book they “earned.”

Some Heartwarming Notes from Students

“HEY GUYS IM A STUDENT AT WMHS AND I JUST WANTED TO THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME THE OPPURTUNITY TO READ A BOOK YOU GAVE”

“I would like to let you know that I received one of the books you sent to us at Wildwood Middle High School. The book that got my attention was the now in motion pictures, "Maze Runner". I am enjoying this book so far, it has so many things to learn about a certain characters personality! I hope next time you send us some more lovely books that I will get a chance to pick another book that will hopefully catch my eye.”

“Dear Tutors for kids, I am in Mrs. Hampton's 4th period class at Wildwood Middle High School and I would like to thank you for when you always are there to help us. I would also like to thank you for the books you gave us. The only problem is I can't stop reading it.”

AND

A principal observed that the kindergarten students at her school were clutching their new books and didn't want to stop reading them to go to the playground. The principals was very excited with the students' reactions!!!

Tutors for Kids

Frank Russo or Carolyn Ruhe - 352-245-9709

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2016 Book Grant for Lake and Sumter from:



United Way
of Lake & Sumter Counties

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