



NOVEMBER 2011

Director's Report

"We have a rising first grade student who is in need of a reading tutor. He is a very bright young man, but he is struggling in literacy. He has made progress, but we are concerned about regression over the summer. Do you have any tutors available in the summer? If so, we would love for you to consider matching him with a tutor for the coming school year."

An Augustine tutor responded to this request in May and arranged to see the child over the summer. She continues to see him twice a week at his school and shares this update:

"Although he is really struggling, he is making progress. He is beginning to read words without having to sound out each letter first. We spent our time going over a story he was writing. I had him sound out words that he had misspelled, and he was able to correct some of his own mistakes, including the word 'confusing.' I can see the wheels turning in his head, and it's beginning to make sense to him."

According to current research, the approach used by an Augustine tutor is a *best practice* method. A trained tutor augments classroom instruction with explicit, systematic, sequential, one-on-one instruction. As a result, a bright but struggling child will progress in literacy skills and begin to understand how our language works.

Our mission is to increase the reading, writing, and spelling skills of low income children and teens who struggle with literacy skills. The Project trains and supports volunteer tutors who provide free, long-term, one-on-one instruction using the principles of multi-sensory learning based on the Orton-Gillingham approach and Wilson Reading System® materials. To learn more about us, visit our website at www.augustine.st-peters.org

Early intervention is key in addressing the reasons a child falls behind in reading skills. Like the child in our story, we know there are many more children in our community who would benefit from early literacy intervention.

This year we have our largest group of committed volunteers. We offered a summer training program at Lake Forest Church in Huntersville, in addition to our annual fall training. As a result, we have added twenty-one new tutors to our ranks in 2011.

We continue to consider ways to bring more trained tutors into our schools to serve and we invite you to join us. Please contact us if you are interested in becoming an Augustine tutor, or would like us to speak to your group about our program. We also ask that you consider the gift of your financial support to supplement the fees we charge for training and tutoring materials.

Candace Armstrong, Director

Augustine Has Lost a Wonderful Friend and Tutor

We are saddened by the death of Augustine tutor John Cress this past August. John was the sort of person the Augustine Project for Literacy had in mind when they began recruiting tutors. He had a talent for working with children and recognized the value of literacy skills in a child's life.

John completed his Augustine training in 2008 and worked with students in Lansdowne Elementary School. He planned to continue working there this autumn. Augustine tutor Rosanne O'Rear spoke with John's wife, Kathy, and fellow Augustine tutor, Bev Gilman, and helps us remember John and his contribution to fostering literacy in the Charlotte community.

I got used to seeing my friend John in the Lansdowne Elementary School Media Center, his tutoring supplies sprawled all over a table. Beside him would be a small first or second grade boy. If I stopped to greet them, John would interrupt his lesson long enough to introduce me to his student, who would grin and beam because John had thought to include him in our conversation. For the moment, the boy was a very important person, and that counted as much, maybe more, than any carefully structured lesson plan.

I watched John work his magic for three years at Lansdowne. For each year he was there, three lucky schoolchildren are carrying his kindness around in their hearts, walking a little taller, reading better. When John died in August, it was unexpected. I felt a huge void.

"Tutoring meant a tremendous amount to him," said John's wife Kathy. "He got so much out of seeing the progress of children."

She recalled John would sometimes feel discouraged when he thought his pupils weren't making more progress. Then each year he'd be vindicated by his students' end-of-year test scores, which showed his Augustine training and commitment to literacy tutoring had been right all along.



John Cress 1940-2011

Kathy went on to note that John was good at allaying children's fears. "Something's wrong with my brain, I'm not smart," one boy told him. "You're fine," John responded. "There's nothing wrong with your brain." At the end of the school year John gave this child a dictionary. "I can't take it," the boy responded. "Your name is in it. You have to take it," John replied.

Always a natural with children, Kathy recalled years ago watching a stream of kids follow John around at a local park where the couple were working at a concession stand. Later on John became a commercial photographer. His specialty -- photographing children.

Fellow Augustine tutor and former studio assistant Bev Gilman recalls "He [John] was so good with kids. He didn't talk down to them, so they'd come alive for him. He'd ask them to do something silly, and they loved that. He was having a good time. He was like a kid himself." It was Gilman who introduced John to the idea of taking Augustine instruction. "The program needed him," she said. "I hate that he's not still here, doing what he did."

Rosanne O'Rear, Augustine Tutor

Augustine Students Showed Progress in 2010--2011

- Thirty-seven Augustine tutors worked with 39 students last year.
- 90% of students were in elementary grades, with most in grades 1-to-3.
- Here are the results of assessments for Augustine students who met with their tutor 30 times or more during the school year:
 - ⇒ IOTA Single Word Recognition: averaged 1 year of growth;
 - ⇒ Morrison McCall Spelling Test: averaged 8 months of growth;
 - ⇒ Sight Word Recognition: averaged 29% increase in performance.
- Review of IOTA data for students who have been tutored by an Augustine tutor for more than one year show that each student began at, or below, grade level, and gained between one semester to four years of growth, with an average gain of two years observed.



For information about the volunteering with the Augustine Project, or to refer a student:

Visit: www.augustine.st-peters.org

Contact: Candace Armstrong, Director
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TUTOR PLACEMENTS

Currently, the Augustine Project for Literacy has placed 47 tutors in Charlotte--Mecklenburg or other schools, and in other settings such as day care centers.

Schools placements for the Autumn 2011 term include:

Barringer Academic Center

Hidden Valley Elementary

Park Road Elementary

Berryhill School

Lansdowne Elementary

Rama Road Elementary

Blythe Elementary

Mallard Creek Elementary

Sedgefield Elementary

Bruns Avenue Elementary

McAlpine Elementary

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Westerly Hills Elementary

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

We continue to build this vital community project with the generous support of the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, as well as St. Peter's Episcopal Church, St. Peter's Hospital Foundation, and individual contributors.

We appreciate the support of IVIZE managing partner Tom Pagani and his staff for printing our training manuals for the past six years. We offer special thanks to St. Martin's Episcopal Church and to Elizabeth Traditional Elementary School for hosting our tutor training and practicum. Thank you to School Specialty and EPS Publishing representative Cynthia Holley, for her support.

Finally, we are pleased to acknowledge the support of Presbyterian Women of First Presbyterian Church, The Good Samaritan Fund, and University City Women's Group. Thank you to Annette Miner for her assistance in preparing this newsletter.

To join in supporting our work, make your check payable to *St. Peter's Episcopal Church* and note *Augustine Project* in the memo line of your check.

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Augustine Project for Literacy
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Visit the website for St. Peter's Episcopal Church at www.st-petersweb.org and select the link for **MAKE A PAYMENT.**



An outreach ministry of St. Peter's Episcopal Church, providing free literacy tutoring for low-income children and teens.