

The Inspire Spotlight

Newsletter of Inspire: A Shalom Afterschool Initiative

December
2015

Inspire by the Numbers

12

New exploration topics students have studied this semester (including Women in Sports, Seasons, MLK Jr, Food, Music Around the World, Me, Cultures, Families, Obama, Heroes, Business)

62

Home Visits this semester (that's an average of almost three per student!)

11

First languages spoken by the 23 students at Inspire this school year



INSPIRE
a shalom afterschool initiative



The Gift of Music

If you walk past the Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church campus around 6:30pm on a Wednesday evening, you're bound to hear a lot of noise.

Down in the gym you'll hear excited voices chattering about science, technology, engineering, and mathematics as our students attempt to win the weekly STEM Challenge (eg: Who can build the tallest structure out of 50 straws and tape that can hold on orange on top?). Upstairs, you'll hear adult English Language Learners repeating new phrases after their teachers at the International Rescue Committee's English/Civics classes. Walk past the chapel, though, and you'll hear a sound you might not expect – the sound of drums.

Peak inside and you'll see a small group of Inspire students, drumsticks in hand, listening intently to Ms. Annika as she demonstrates a paradiddle drum stroke. Students focus hard and then try to repeat the stroke on the snare drums in front of each of them. It is a noisy endeavor, to say the least. But the students love it.

Annika Thesing, known to our students as Ms. Annika, is an 11th grader at Greater Atlanta Christian School and a snare drum player in the marching band. On Wednesdays Annika shows up to Inspire carrying a bag full of drumsticks and an excitement to share her love of music with our students: "Before I started teaching music at Inspire, I heard the kids talking about how they either don't do anything in music class at school, or don't have one. That's what made me want to teach them in ways that aren't like any boring music class they may have at school. I'm excited

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The Gift of Music continued...

that the kids will be able to see that learning music is fun and cause them to maybe be interested and pursue it too.”

Every now and then Ms. Annika will demonstrate an elaborate cadence she plays in marching band - an event that leaves students with gaping mouths as they are astounded by her drum skills. Annika explains, “The kids love asking me the question, ‘How did you get so good?’ I love that question for the sole reason of being able to show them how their classes and practice is how to ‘get so good.’ Whenever they play something better than the week before, I remind them of how their practice is paying off!”

On Friday November 6th, twelve Inspire students and six chaperones took a **field trip** to watch Ms. Annika and her marching band in action at the Greater Atlanta Christian School Spartans football game. It was a nail-biter of a game in which the Spartans (“our team” as our students began to call it) made a game-winning touchdown in the last seconds against their rivals – the Wesleyan Wolves. Our students enjoyed learning about the game of football, and they excitedly put on rain ponchos when the mist began to fall. But the highlight of the night was watching the Spartan Marching Band out on the field during half time. “There’s Ms. Annika!!!” they shouted, pointing excitedly as she swept across the field, accenting the tune of *Phantom of the Opera* with the stroke of her snare.

During the third quarter, Ms. Annika invited our students down to the marching band section of the stands. Students looked at giant tubas, met other band members, and played Ms. Annika’s snare drum. A few students even got to try it on – and were impressed that Ms. Annika was strong enough to carry it around so long!

At Inspire we offer academic support to our students that they likely can’t access elsewhere. But we offer them much more than that: we help expand their minds, interests, and hobbies; we expand their opportunities; and we teach them that learning can be fun. As Ms. Annika aptly explains, “Music, or any form of art, in my opinion is essential for anyone. Art is the way to express yourselves without rules and frustration for not doing something ‘right.’ Yes, I teach the kids the proper ways to play certain patterns and dynamics, but in the end they are expressing themselves. That’s why at the end of every lesson, I let the kids each have solo time to play whatever they want and get all the stresses of life out by producing music. I think, and hope, that the kids will get something out of learning music. If not a love of music, then seeing how learning can be fun and expressive!”

Thanks to the generosity of Ms. Annika, all of our volunteers, and our donors, Inspire continues to make a difference in the lives of the youth in Clarkston.



Fall 2015 in Pictures



Clockwise from top left: Alliance and Lois build a house with LEGOs; Emmanuel guards Chance closely in basketball; students wait anxiously to see who will win the Build a Rollercoaster STEM Challenge; students mix a salad to understand the Mixing Bowl metaphor off culture in the United States; Hilena shows off her Life Saver Racer (complete with a little seatbelt!) ready to race in the STEM challenge; Abdifatah enjoys our field trip to the Atlanta DREAM game.



This holiday season, as you contribute to the organizations that matter most to you, **please consider a tax-deductible donation to the students of Inspire.**

- **\$1,800** – sponsor one student’s holistic development at Inspire for the entire year.
- **\$300** – for one month, provide all 23 students with healthy, substantive, culturally appropriate snacks.
- **\$75** – for the entire year, provide one student with supplies for academic and enrichment activities.

How to Donate

ONLINE: www.rally.org/shalominspire

CHECK: Make checks out to “New Church Development Commission” and write “Inspire” in the memo line.

Mail checks to:

New Church Development Commission
1024 Ponce de Leon Ave. NE
Atlanta, GA 30306

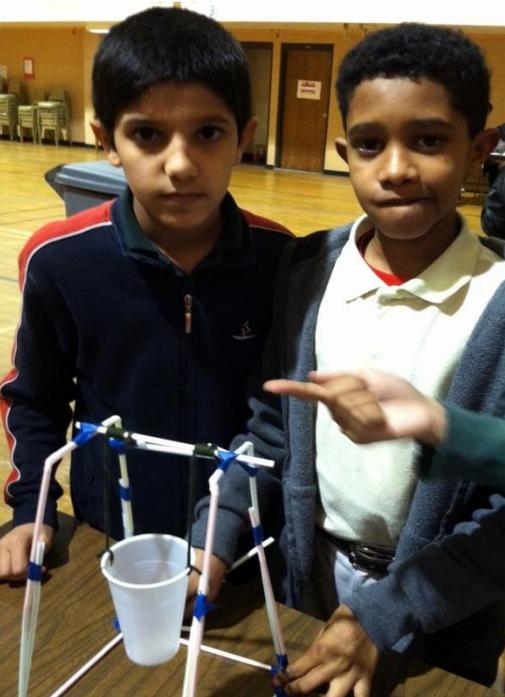


Why do we come to Inspire?

- 47 % - for homework help
- 18 % - to learn something new
- 15 % - it’s fun!

A Note from Ms. Natalie

It has been harrowing to witness the anti-immigrant rhetoric being thrown around this country in recent weeks and months. In the midst of the messages of fear and hostility that pervade the news, I find hope in the welcome that Clarkston continues to offer to its newcomers. As we continue to build relationships through daily interaction and home visits, I feel blessed to see the ways that our students and their families contribute to our community and to this country – making it a richer, more loving place by their mere presence. I am deeply grateful to our donors and volunteers who, through their support, allow us to offer our neighbors in Clarkston an alternative message: a message of welcome, of support, and of hope. I encourage each of you to consider how you might spread this message to newcomers in Clarkston and in your communities.



Al-Ridha and Yonathon are proud of their suspended bucket tower they built for our STEM challenge.

To Volunteer, Email:
inspireshalom@gmail.com

To See Photos, Visit:
www.facebook.com/inspireafterschool



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Stone Mountain, GA
678-871-6065

View online at:
www.shalompcusa.org/inspire-spotlight-newsletter



Shalom,

Natalie Schmucker
Program Coordinator