

# The Inspire Spotlight

Newsletter of Inspire: A Shalom Afterschool Initiative

December  
2018

## Inspire by the Numbers

13

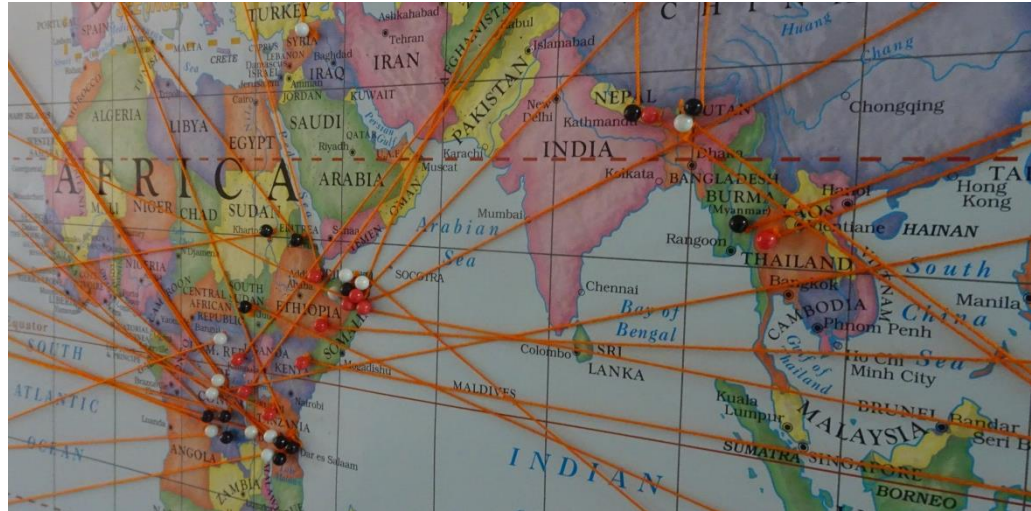
Student Countries  
of Origin

20

Volunteers who  
come each week  
to work with our  
students

311

Books, color-  
coded by level  
and in the hands  
of our students!



### Inspired to Read

"Ms. Natalie - this word is 'in'?" Alimasi asks excitedly, pointing at the word in his book, *Little bit: The Sound of Short i*. When I tell him yes, that he is correct, his face *lights up* with pride. Beaming, he settles back down on the couch and continues reading - out loud - to himself.

The next morning, Pastor Gad and I sit in Alimasi's living room with his parents and little sister. A space heater warms the chilly room as they serve us peanuts and casava while we talk. Alimasi's dad tells us he's not surprised that Alimasi is only now, at age 12, learning to read the word 'in.' Alimasi's education was highly interrupted in Tanzania, his father explains. When the family was applying for resettlement to the United States, the process required that they travel to a city six hours away from where they lived. They had to make this trip multiple times a year, and Alimasi would be away from school for weeks at a time.

Alimasi now finds himself in middle school in the United States, needing to learn the very basics of reading, writing, and speaking English. His family arrived in the U.S. in 2017, and after just one year - and despite the fact that he didn't speak English or know how to read - Alimasi was passed on to the 6th grade. But his classes do not provide any instruction in reading. Alimasi feels lost at school and unable to complete his assignments at home, which is why he comes to Inspire every *single day*.

At Inspire, Alimasi spends much of his time in the Learning Center, excitedly working on activities that help him learn to read. Some days he rifles through the green bin of books - given

[continued on back...]



**INSPIRE**  
a shalom afterschool initiative

## [Inspired to Read continued...](#)

by Inspire supporters - which is full of titles that are at his beginner reading level. Other days he sorts words based on beginning letter sounds, putting a picture of a cat under the heading C. Sometimes, he uses tiles from the game Bananagrams to build words and construct simple sentences. Last week, he built three sentences in a row: "My name is Alimasi. I am from Tanzania. I like Mr. Peter."

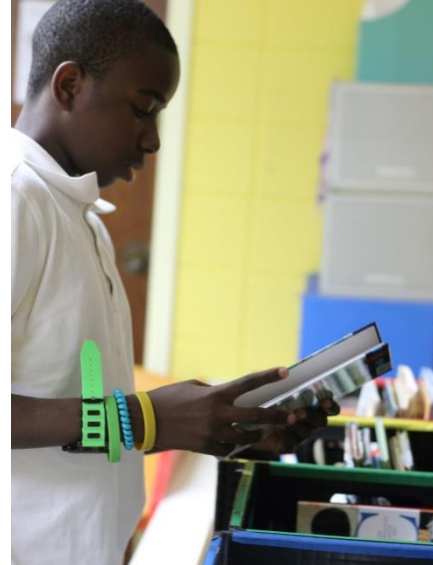
Mr. Peter, who volunteers once a week, spends his time at Inspire teaching Alimasi to read. Working on basic phonics "is arduous," Mr. Peter explains, "but to Alimasi's credit, he takes real pleasure in success and is willing to keep working, even after what I know must have been a long and frustrating day at school." "Mr. Peter is the best," Alimasi says. "We read and work on pronunciation and spelling. I like him!" Mr. Peter reciprocates the feeling: "There is for me a special joy in watching a young man like Alimasi get a kick out of reading *Pete the Cat* after we have talked about 'bats' and 'cats' and how to sound out the word 'kick.'"

Any other 12 year old boy might refuse to read *Pete the Cat*, believing it to be too juvenile. But Alimasi is determined. "By the time I go to high school I want to know how to read well." And his determination extends beyond just wanting to do well academically. "I want to be a good neighbor. People talk to me and I feel bad because they speak English and I don't know [what they're saying.]" Mr. Peter sees his perseverance too: "I am drawn in by Alimasi's desire to learn to read and his willingness to spend time on work that is rudimentary and repetitious. He knows that reading is critical to all school work, and I am frankly startled and humbled every week by his good spirits and his determination."

What keeps Alimasi going are his successes. Thanks to Inspire, and those who support it, there is a place where Alimasi can find joy in his accomplishments. The very first week of Inspire this year, I read with Alimasi in the Learning Center. He chose a book about baseball, and *really* struggled through it; it was a beginner's book, aimed at Kindergarten level readers. It was clear that he did not know how to read, and very quickly it also became clear how badly he *wanted* to read. He read the book **four times** in a row that day, each time working hard to master a new word or phrase. At the end of each reading, he excitedly asked if he could do it again, and read it each time with more confidence and more joy. Two days later, I visited with his parents at their home; one of the first things they said was that Alimasi had come home from Inspire that first week, just beaming, saying "Mom! Dad! I read a book! **I READ A BOOK!!!!**" It was the first time he had ever read a book cover to cover. When he thinks back about that accomplishment, Alimasi says, "I felt so good. I want to learn!"

While learning to read is the focus of their work, Mr. Peter believes that what Alimasi is receiving at Inspire is much more than that: "I think what he is grateful for is the encouragement that I am able to give him. He finds Inspire a place where he doesn't fail because the terms of relationship and engagement between adult and student are not about success or failure in any conventional academic sense. They are about taking a journey of learning together as partners in an enterprise that is challenging and fun and hopeful and doing so in an environment of kindness and regard."

Your gifts of time, interest, and financial contributions make it possible for Inspire to be a place where our students receive not only academic support, but also unconditional encouragement and care. On behalf of Alimasi and all of our students, we say **thank you**.







## Fall 2018 in pictures

(clockwise from top left)

A crew of alumni and current students played their hearts out at our 2<sup>nd</sup> annual [Ultimate Frisbee Tournament Fundraiser](#); Mr. Nestor teaches soccer techniques; Shamseh tries her hand at a new skill – weaving on a cardboard loom; Ms. Natalie & Ms. Hodan get to know Bouchra’s mother and sister at our [Open House](#); the girls’ book club delights in the wonders of books during their field trip to the Clarkston library!





# Your Support Makes the Difference



**\$1,788**

**Sponsor one student** for the entire school year

**\$6.35**

Provide one student with **snacks** for one month



**\$250**

Ensure **translation & interpretation** are available for family engagement



**\$500**

Make possible **field trips** for the year



**\$25.38**

Provide one student with **supplies** for the year

**\$100**

Ensure safe, reliable **transportation** for all students for one month



## A Note from Ms. Natalie

It's wonderful to have your support year after year. You understand how important it is to equip these young people with the basic academic tools they need for success. You share our passion for offering welcome to newly arrived refugees. Your gift will help the youth of our community become inquisitive, balanced young adults with a plethora of interests and a love of learning! Your support will give these students a place of belonging and the academic support they need to catch up. Your gift will give them a better today and make possible a better future. Thank you, from the depths of our hearts, on behalf of these incredible young people, for that gift.



With gratitude,

Natalie J. Schmucker  
Program Coordinator

## How to Donate

*All donations are tax-deductible.*

### ONLINE:

Visit [www.rally.org/inspire](http://www.rally.org/inspire)

### CHECK (our preferred method):

Make checks out to **"Inspire"**

### Mail checks to:

Inspire: A Shalom Afterschool Initiative  
c/o New Church Development Commission  
1024 Ponce de Leon Ave. NE  
Atlanta, GA 30306

### SUPPLIES:

Check out our  to donate specific items we need by searching **"Inspire: A Shalom Afterschool Initiative."**

5140 Memorial Dr.  
Stone Mountain, GA  
678-871-6065  
[inspireshalom@gmail.com](mailto:inspireshalom@gmail.com)

To See Photos, Visit:  
[www.facebook.com/inspireafterschool](http://www.facebook.com/inspireafterschool)



Inspire is an  
outreach of



View online at:  
[www.shalominternationalministry.com/inspire-spotlight-newsletter](http://www.shalominternationalministry.com/inspire-spotlight-newsletter)