

# The Inspire Spotlight

Newsletter of Inspire: A Shalom Afterschool Initiative

June  
2021

## Inspire by the Numbers

6+

Students received weekly homework support during virtual tutoring!

25+

Households received weekly food deliveries through Glenn Memorial UMC's Snack in a Backpack program!

40+

Students received school supplies and PPE!



*Rina and other Inspire students participate in weekly virtual tutoring class with tutors.*



*Inspire students receive weekly food and supply delivery at home.*

## Motivated by the Inspire Experience

By Rina Mohamed, Inspire Student

This school year was one of the most challenging I've ever seen. Everyone has been through a ton, and COVID has impacted a great number of people. People's primary concern was school. Students, parents, and teachers were all uncertain about how school would go during COVID, given that the previous school year ended abruptly with many unknowns for the future. We've begun virtual learning this year, which is a new experience for all of us. Although it isn't the best, we managed to adapt to this new way of life for our education.

For almost three years, I've been a student at Inspire. To say my time here was wonderful would be an understatement. I've gained a lot of useful things and met several incredible people. In sixth grade, we went to the Atlanta Science Festival, which was one of my favorite experiences. The trip taught me a lot of new things and introduced me to new people who informed me much about their professions. Going to see plays was another highlight of my first year at Inspire. These trips were not only entertaining but also educational. They've taught me things that I'm sure will come in handy in the future. Unfortunately, I didn't get to spend the entirety of my seventh-grade year at Inspire, not just because I arrived late, but also due to COVID's takeover.

Covid has taught me how to adjust to a variety of situations. Most people, including myself, were initially ecstatic about the prospect of taking a few days off from school. We had no idea that things would never be the same after that. We didn't do anything from home at the end of last school year because the teachers and staff, like us, were unprepared. This school year, though, we all had to adjust to online learning. The thing about online learning is that I don't believe it has had the same impact on students as it would if we were in the same room. Some students need more visualization and movement in order to understand. Some people just don't have the best resources or living conditions, making online education less than ideal. Most notably, not being at Inspire has had a significant impact on many students because Inspire motivates them. **[continued on back...]**



**INSPIRE**  
a shalom afterschool initiative

## Motivated by the Inspire Experience continued...

The great thing about Inspire is that, in my view, everyone can be who they want to be and no one judges them for it. Everyone is different and special in their own way, and the people here assist us in understanding and embracing our differences. I just can't talk about Inspire without mentioning the fantastic support group. Everyone there is so helpful, friendly, and supportive. The Inspire activities are also fantastic because they encourage children to try new sports or activities. Every Tuesday, for example, we had Ultimate Frisbee, which was my favorite. I had never known how to properly throw a frisbee, let alone play it, but it was one of my favorite things I learned during my time at Inspire. My first year at Girls on the Run (GOTR) was also last year. GOTR is a non-profit organization that works to improve women's social, physical, and emotional skills in preparation for future or current life experiences. It was not only entertaining, but it also allowed me to meet new people, including the wonderful and welcoming GOTR coaches.

Finally, finding a new leader each year is one of the highlights of my time here. My first year here, and meeting Ms. Natalie was pretty amazing. Last year, during my second year of Inspire, I met Ms. Teni-Ola, but our time together was cut short due to quarantine. I had the opportunity to join virtual tutoring classes with Ms. Charity during my final year here. They may not realize it, but they all mean a lot to me, and I admire them for what they do. It takes a lot of time and patience to support children in general. I'm not sure how difficult this task is, but they make it appear to be easy, so they must be doing something right. I really thank the volunteers and anyone who has come in to assist with events, including The Paideia School squad, soccer coaches, GOTR coaches, guitar instructor, and everyone else who has given up time out of their day to help others. Had I not joined Inspire my first year, I would not have all of these wonderful memories! ~ **Rina Mohamed**

Inspire students survived a full school year of virtual learning during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. This time at home away from their regular school, extracurricular, and other face-to-face activities reminded Rina and all students to value these experiences. Having hands-on learning experience, like Inspire afterschool programming, provides extra support to students from teachers and volunteers to understand the details of their schoolwork and practice ideas and skills they learn in school. Over the past seven years, Inspire has given students new experiences like learning to play Ultimate Frisbee or the guitar and participating in Girls on the Run enrichment activities. These experiences motivate Inspire students to be at their highest and best and to have fun. The Inspire community is ready to get back to the Inspire experience and continue the Inspire legacy of holistically developing for middle school youth in Clarkston.







## Spring 2021 in pictures

(clockwise from top left)

Inspire students in their communities during weekly COVID-19 home visits; Inspire students helping to drop-off food from Glenn Memorial UMC's Snack in a Backpack program; Inspire girls practice and record an informative video about Inspire Afterschool program and a fun dance video for Shalom International Ministry's Virtual Concert; Inspire Relief Support Coordinator, Mr. Israel, preparing to make weekly food deliveries. Thanks to Mr. Israel and Ms. Charity for supporting Inspire students each week this spring! Congrats to our 8th grade graduates and good luck in high school!





# Your Support Makes the Difference



**\$2,000**  
**Sponsor one student** for the entire school year

**\$8**

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



**\$250**  
Ensure **translation & interpretation** are available for family engagement



**\$1000**  
Make possible **field trips** for the year



**\$85**  
Provide one student with **supplies** for the year

**\$100**  
Ensure safe, reliable **transportation** for all students for one month



## A Note from Ms. Teni-Ola

Since the world was first impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak over a year ago, our lives have been altered. It has been hard to stay connected to the communities that we know and love. As we reach a turning point in this journey, people are trying to get back to "normal" life. For our Inspire students and their families, a "normal" life in America before COVID-19 was not so "normal" because many of them had to integrate into life here apart from their country of origin and multicultural backgrounds. Then their new "normal" life shifted again this past year with the COVID-19 experience. There is still a long road to recovery and rebuilding our communities. Inspire will need its community now more than ever to continue to address the academic, social, emotional, and practical needs of our students and their families. The consistent support from our volunteers, partners, donors, and friends is key to creating and sustaining short-term and long-term impact in the lives of our youth. Your gift will help Inspire restart our regular programming for students to relearn and expand their skills, explore new adventures, and adjust to a new "normal" post pandemic. Your gift will give students a fighting chance to survive today's challenges and make it possible for them to thrive in the future. Inspire needs your help to re-engage its community. Thank you, on behalf of these phenomenal young people, for that gift.

In service,

Teni-Ola Ogunjobi  
Outgoing Director



## How to Donate

*All donations are tax-deductible.*

**ONLINE:** Visit

<http://bit.ly/GiveToInspireAfterschool>

**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 visiting: <http://bit.ly/InspireAmazonWishList>

5140 Memorial Dr.  
Stone Mountain, GA  
404-832-5081  
[Taogunjobi@shalompcusa.org](mailto:Taogunjobi@shalompcusa.org)

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