

Path To Shine®

February 2015

Thanks for the Encouragement



As we enter into the last month of winter, we give thanks for all the "warm and fuzzies" experienced around Path To Shine. Be it new books or coats for Christmas, financial support to a family who lost everything in a fire, or the new friendships formed between a mentor and a child, Path To Shine has been celebrating and encouraging children all winter long. We've been recognized by the National Episcopal Church for our commitment to empowering children living in poverty through our designation as a Jubilee Center. And we could not have done it without your generous support. Whether it is a "like" on our Facebook page, a visit to our website, or a financial gift, your support continues to encourage and support children all across Middle and North Georgia.

Special Visitor at San Benedicto

In January, the San Benedicto Path To Shine program had a special visitor: Lt Andreas Wilder, Army National Guard. Lt. Wilder was only known to the students as Mr. Andreas because he is also a mentor at St. B's. The students' eyes opened wide as Lt. Wilder, dressed from head to toe in his gear, walked in and took a seat! He told the students about his job in the National Guard, and related it to them; for instance, last year he worked during "Snowmegeddon" helping people who were stranded. Lt. Wilder showed pictures and let the students hold his equipment. We learned the Army paid for Lt. Wilder to go to college to study whatever he wanted, and he told the students that he had learned how to jump out of airplanes. Now that's cool!



Educational Opportunities Partnership

In our annual letter last November we announced the formation of the Path To Shine Scholarship Fund, established to support exceptionally bright Path To Shine students who are accepted into independent schools. We are thrilled to say that "Ricky," our first beneficiary of this program, is thriving in his new school. Path To Shine hopes to make opportunities like Ricky's available to more children graduating from our program and heading to middle school. If you would like to make a contribution directly to this fund, please mark you donations accordingly via Pay Pal or check.



You Can Help

- Volunteer: Be a weekly tutor. Previous teaching experience is *not* necessary.
- Be a Guest Speaker: Share the story of the challenges you overcame as a child.
- Donate: Send a check, or visit our website to use PayPal for monthly deductions or one-time gifts.
- Shop at Amazon via the "donating & shopping" tab on our website, and we will get a commission.

Reversing the Impact of Neglect

Path To Shine attended the Annual Interfaith Children's Movement Forum last month. The director of the Division of Children and Family Services, Bobby Cagle, was the keynote speaker. He grew up in the foster care system, and received welfare services, so he knows first hand the importance of having trusting adults to undo the stigmas and hurts that come from an under-privileged home. But mentors and tutors can also have a great impact on victims of trauma. Children who suffer abuse and neglect may have chemical changes in the parts of their brain associated with rational thinking and processing emotions. However, Mr. Cagle cited new studies that show making even one meaningful connection with an adult who cares (like our volunteers in Path To Shine) can reverse the previous chemical effects. To learn more, visit www.childwelfare.gov.



New Summer Program Curriculum



Studies show that the achievement gap increases dramatically during the summer, when under-served children lack access to enriching activities. Path To Shine Main Office is currently working on a new curriculum for a three-week summer program. The theme is all about science, and the children will be doing experiments, reading books about habitats and exploring space. If you are interested in volunteering during the summer contact your local program's leader. If you wish to donate supplies to the program, contact our Road Fellow, Ciara Rowley at Ciara.rowley@ymail.com.

New Programs Coming

We are happy to report that a second program in Macon is getting ready to begin. Volunteers from St. James Episcopal Church and New Heights Baptist Church, along with the support of Christ Episcopal Church, are working together to bring hope filled dreams to the children in their community. The volunteers have been trained and supplies have been gathered. However, they are still figuring out transportation for the children who will attend Path To Shine. If you would be interested in helping find a solution please contact Barbara Windom at barbara.windom@gmail.com. Additionally St. Aidan's Episcopal Church in Milton is working with St. David's Episcopal Church in Roswell to start a new program for children in north Fulton County. We expect both programs to be up and running next month, helping more children find their own 'path to shine'. If you would like information on how you can help, please contact Lesley-Ann at lesleyann@pathtoshine.org.



For more information about Path To Shine and about the articles in this newsletter, please visit our website at www.pathtoshine.org or contact us: Lesley-Ann Drake, Executive Director, Path To Shine, 2160 Cooper Lake Road SE, Smyrna, GA 30080. 678-279-4308 lesleyann@pathtoshine.org [facebook.com/pathtoshine](https://www.facebook.com/pathtoshine)