

# The Inspire Spotlight

Newsletter of Inspire: A Shalom Afterschool Initiative

December  
2017

## Inspire by the Numbers

13

Different  
countries our  
students are from

92

Family  
engagement  
contacts with  
students' families

9

Beautiful heads of  
broccoli we grew  
in our garden  
plots this fall!



### Focusing on Phonics

Imagine you are a middle school student sitting down to work on your homework assignment. You open your social studies book and pull out your assignment. You write your name at the top of the page and then read the following:

*Hakuna mara hata moja katika historia ndefu ya ligi kuu wa Ujerumani Bundesliga ambapo mchezaji kutoka Afrika alikuwa ameongoza kwa ufungaji wa mabao ligini peke yake hadi pale Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang alipofunga mabao 31 msimu wa 2016-17.*

What do you do? Maybe you sound out the words -- it is the same script as English after all -- but do you understand what you just read? How will you ever answer the questions and complete your assignment?

How do you feel? Overwhelmed by all you are being asked to do? Frustrated with your inability to understand the language? Embarrassed about your abilities or insecure about your self worth? Just plain confused?

Unlike years past, this year at Inspire we have a large number of students who have just recently arrived in the United States and for whom English -- speaking, reading, and writing -- is especially difficult.

One of our goals at Inspire is to offer our students academic support, which can look very different from year-to-year or from student-to-student. We strive to know our small group of students well, to be responsive to their particular needs, and to be flexible and ever-changing as a program in order to meet those needs. This year we realized that what our new group of students most needed in order to move forward academically was basic, foundational phonics instruction.



**INSPIRE**  
a shalom afterschool initiative

## Focusing on Phonics continued...

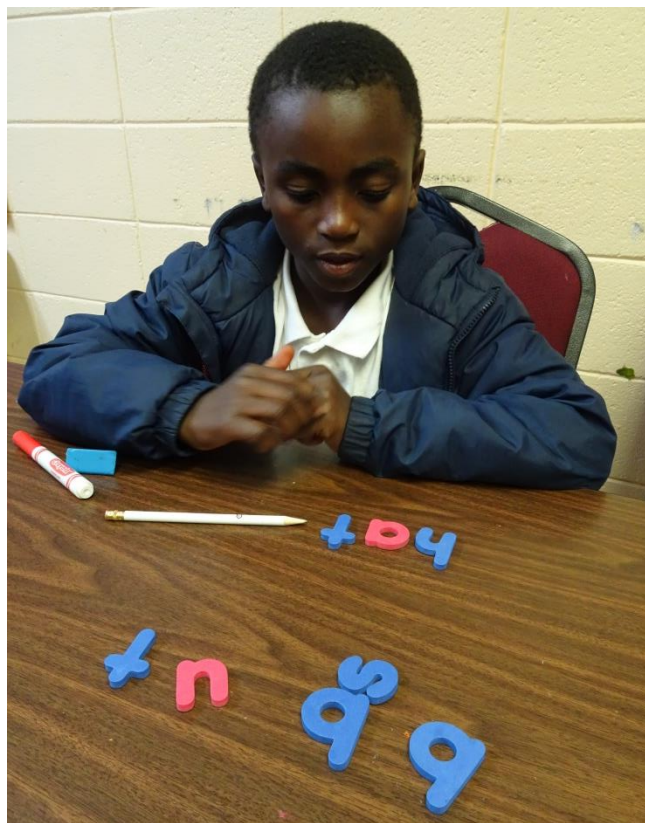
We shifted our academic focus towards teaching the building blocks of reading. We purchased new materials and consulted librarians to check out level-appropriate books. Many of our volunteers felt at a loss as to how to help students learn to read, so we invited in Ms. Leah Cauley, a reading specialist, to train us on best practices. As a program, we now have the resources and knowledge to make a difference.

Walk into our homework room any given day and you'll see Shukuru, a 6th grader from the Democratic Republic of Congo, running up to a teacher saying, "I want to read!" He sits at the table and chooses an *I Can Read* book from the collection we've checked out from the library. He eagerly opens to the first page and tries his hardest to sound out the words.

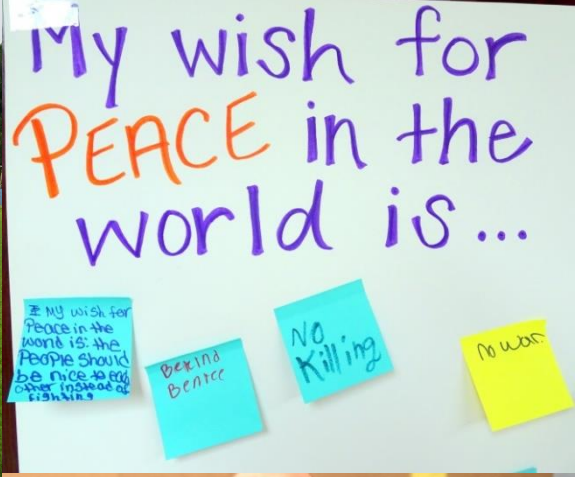
Shukuru began attending Inspire this year, just months after arriving in the country. Even though it is still a challenge to have a conversation with him, students and volunteers alike are drawn to his childlike innocence, wiley humor, and fun-loving attitude. As we continue to get to know his unique personality and gifts, we are working to respond to his particular needs and abilities. Little by little, we are building up his basic skills, building up his confidence, and building up his chances at success.

Thank you for supporting Shukuru, and all our students, in this endeavor.

*Clockwise from top right: Shukuru works to spell words with foam letters; Amisi matches letters to pictures that begin with the sound of each letter; Daniella and Ms. Mary work on basic phonics building blocks online; Ms. Judith and Giselle read a library book.*



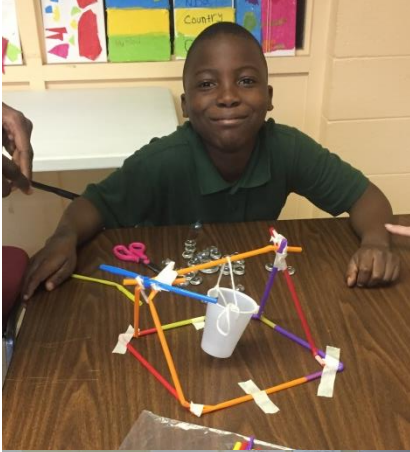




## Highlights from Fall 2017

(clockwise from top left)

Inspire students participate in the middle school division of our first annual Ultimate Tournament Fundraiser; Students recognized International Day of Peace by considering their own wishes for Peace in the world; Hala and her family attend our Open House; Ms. Noor and students create a mural in our hallway of the things we see in our neighborhood; students jam during guitar class; Prince grins with his successful STEM Bucket challenge; Aresema shows off her weaving project.





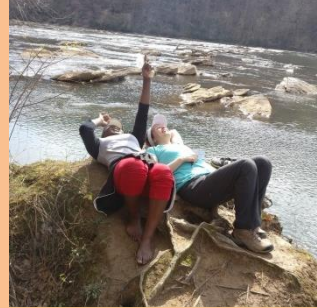


**\$2,000**  
**Sponsor one student** for the entire school year

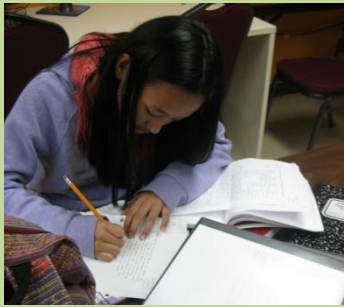
**\$8**  
 Provide one student with **snacks** for one month



**\$250**  
 Ensure **translation / interpretation** is available for families



**\$1,000**  
 Make possible **field trips** for the year



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

**\$100**  
 Ensure safe, reliable **transportation** for one student for the year



## A Note from Ms. Natalie

**We need your help!** Funding from our initial start-up grant from the New Church Development Commission of the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta is coming to an end this month. In order to continue offering our students access to academic support, a place of belonging, and opportunities to experience new things, we need your help. This season of giving, please consider how you can support our students as they transition to a new education system and a new way of life in the United States.



With gratitude,

*Natalie J. Schmucker*

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 "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

### SUPPLIES:

Check out our [amazon wishlist](https://www.amazon.com/wishlist) to donate specific items we need by searching "[Inspire: A Shalom Afterschool Initiative](http://www.rally.org/inspire)."

To Volunteer, Email:  
[inspireshalom@gmail.com](mailto:inspireshalom@gmail.com)



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