

May
2018

The Inspire Spotlight

Newsletter of Inspire: A Shalom Afterschool Initiative

Inspire by the Numbers

95%

Of students report
that they tried
something new at
Inspire this year

94

Family engagement
contacts with
students' families
this semester

36.78

Average number of
weekly volunteer
hours – *We couldn't
do it without you!*



INSPIRE
a shalom afterschool initiative



Inspired by Ultimate

Margot Thompson had a big task this year. Her high school ultimate frisbee team, Paideia Groove, had volunteered to teach ultimate to the students of Inspire. As one of the team's student-athlete leaders, Margot had the job of figuring out how to do it.

The Paideia players would have to teach the basics, of course - how to hold the disc, how to throw backhands and flicks. But ultimate is about more than basic rules and throwing mechanics. To truly teach the game, Margot and her teammates would have to teach what ultimate calls the "spirit of the game."

The "spirit of the game" is an essential piece of ultimate. Everyone has to practice honesty, good sportsmanship, and integrity for the game to work. Ultimate doesn't have outside officials to make sure that everyone is playing by the rules. Players are expected to call their own fouls and make their own rulings on the field. The "spirit of the game" means that each game is played with communication, knowledge, fairness, and respect. "These qualities are all so important growing up because they encourage kindness and empathy," Margot explains. This "spirit of the game" is part of what makes ultimate players all feel a part of one community, a feeling of community that the Paideia players wanted to share with the students of Inspire.

The Inspire kids proved to be enthusiastic students. "This year, many kids started out not knowing how to throw a frisbee," says Margot; "It's been so fun to teach them and watch them improve with every week."



Inspired by Ultimate continued...

"Teaching the rules of ultimate was hard," Margot recalls, "because of the varying levels of English among Inspire students, but their willingness to try always helped them learn... They embraced each practice with excitement and eagerness, which made teaching so much easier."

While seeing Inspire students develop their understanding and skills in ultimate was fun, it was especially exciting to see students embrace the "spirit of the game." Students began calling fouls, contesting calls with confidence and respect, and celebrating wins in a kind way. "During a running drill," Margot recalls, "two students were really enthusiastic and competitive with each other, but one accidentally tripped the other. Instead of continuing on to win, the student helped his friend up, both with enormous smiles on their faces laughing."

Inspire students were not the only ones learning. As the Paideia players taught throwing and catching fundamentals, they improved their own form. And both Margot and the team's coach, Miranda Knowles, saw how coaching at Inspire strengthened their team's chemistry. Miranda notes particular growth in Margot herself: "she stepped up and played a much bigger role for us this season...I think, because she was so much more invested in our team and the sport through her coaching work." Reflecting on her own growth, Margot remarks, "Teaching at Inspire has made me a more confident leader, something that I'll greatly value for years to come."

At the end of each practice, Margot would gather everyone into one giant circle. "Who has a highlight from today?!" she'd ask. One by one, Inspire students and Groove players alike would give "shout-outs" -- highlighting when they saw someone excel or put forth great effort. Margot remembers a few times when "a student would get a highlight and this huge smile would spread across their face." It would always make *her* smile too, she notes, knowing that noticing the good in others builds up an individual's self-esteem and a sense of camaraderie and community.

With this confidence and support, Inspire students are beginning to experience the wider ultimate community in Atlanta. Last fall, fourteen students participated in a tournament. One played on a city-wide team for girls whose schools don't have a team. Inspire and Groove players will join forces again this fall to host the 2nd Annual Inspire Ultimate Tournament Fundraiser.

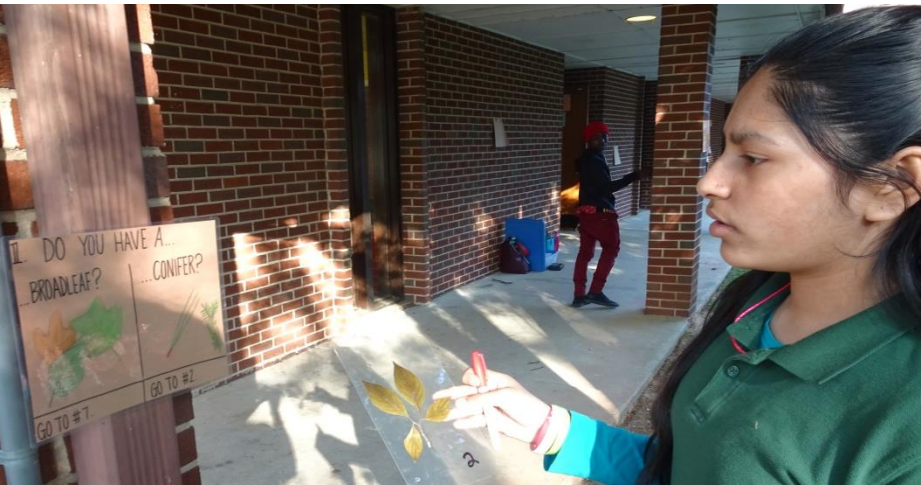
Thank you to everyone on Paideia Groove for sharing this community - and the "spirit of the game" - with our students. And thanks to *all* our volunteers, donors, and supporters for making possible the community of Inspire where our students can experience new things (like ultimate!), deepen their self-confidence and grow in respect for others.





Highlights from Spring 2018

We spent a lot of time OUTSIDE this Spring! (clockwise from top left) Elsabet leads Mala in a blindfolded tree game; students learn about their inner energy in Tai Chi; a field trip to Piedmont Park was, for many of our students, their first opportunity to ride the MARTA train; binoculars in hand students search for birds; Prince shows off his nature art during Outdoors; Tulashi determines what kind of tree leaf she has using an interactive dichotomous key brought by the Atlanta Botanical Garden.





A Note from Ms. Natalie

You made possible a new Learning Center!

This year our students' time in the United States ranged from 1 to 13 years. Likewise, their previous formal education, command of the English language, and basic math and literacy skills ranged immensely. In order to meet the needs of this incredibly diverse group of learners, we invested your gifts of time and money to create a hands-on, Montessori-inspired Learning Center. During our academic hour, students who don't have homework can *choose* an area of interest to work on, and pick an activity within that area that matches their academic level. See Landry (top) practicing spelling with Banagrams? And Oscar (bottom) studying math flash cards? With your support – our donors, our volunteers – each of these young men is engaged with something of interest to him and something that is helping his academic growth. Thank you for making a difference in the lives of these aspiring students!



With gratitude,

Natalie J. Schmucker

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Program Coordinator



Save the Date!

Saturday

September 29, 2018

Join us for our 2nd Annual
Inspire Ultimate Frisbee
Tournament Fundraiser

Python Park - Avondale Estates, GA

Middle school, high school, and adult leagues!

Check our [website](http://www.rally.org/inspire) later this summer for
details and to register!



How to Donate

All donations are tax-deductible.

ONLINE:

Visit www.rally.org/inspire

CHECK (our preferred method):

Make checks out to
"New Church Development Commission" and
write "**Inspire**" in the memo line.

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

SUPPLIES:

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

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