



NOVEMBER 2011

## Director's Report

*"We have a rising first grade student who is in need of a reading tutor. He is a very bright young man, but he is struggling in literacy. He has made progress, but we are concerned about regression over the summer. Do you... have any tutors available in the summer? If so, we would love for you to consider him for services... we would really like for you to consider matching him with a tutor for the coming school year."*

An Augustine tutor responded in May and arranged to see the child over the summer and continues to see him twice a week at his school. Here is that tutor's response when I asked for an update.

*"Although he is really struggling, he is making progress. He is beginning to read words without sounding out each letter first....we spent our time going over a story he was writing. I had him sound out words that he had misspelled, and he was able to correct some of his own mistakes, including the word 'confusing' . . . and I can see the wheels turning in his head, and stuff beginning to make sense."*

This is a model of best practices according current research. Trained tutors who provide systematic, sequential, explicit instruction to one child or small groups, helping those children to make progress in learning how our language works and how to read and spell.

**O**ur mission is to increase the reading, writing, and spelling skills of low income children and teens who struggle with literacy skills. The Project trains and supports volunteer tutors who provide free, long-term, one-on-one instruction using the principals of multi-sensory learning based on the Orton-Gillingham approach and Wilson Reading System® materials. To learn more about the Project, visit our website at [www.augustine.st-peters.org](http://www.augustine.st-peters.org)

Early intervention is the key to addressing the reasons children fall behind in reading skills. We know there are many more children in our community who need the same type of help

This year we have our largest group of committed volunteers. We offered a summer program at Lake Forest Church in Huntersville, in addition to our annual fall training, and we continue to consider ways to bring more trained tutors into our schools to serve.

We invite you to join us. Please contact us if you are interested in becoming an Augustine tutor or would like for us to speak to your group about Augustine Project for Literacy. We also ask for your financial support to supplement the fees we charge for training materials.

*Candace Armstrong, Director*

## Augustine Has Lost a Wonderful Friend and Tutor

Augustine tutor John Cress, shown in the photo at right, died unexpectedly this past August. John was the sort of person Augustine Project for Literacy had in mind when they began recruiting tutors. He had a talent for working with children and recognized the value of literacy skills in a child's life. After completing training in 2008, John worked with students in Lansdowne Elementary School, where he planned to continue working this autumn. Thanks to fellow Augustine tutor Rosanne O'Rear, who spoke with John's wife Kathy and with fellow Augustine tutor Bev Gilman, for helping us remember John and his contribution to fostering literacy in the Charlotte community.

I got used to seeing my friend John in the Lansdowne Elementary School Media Center, his tutoring supplies sprawled all over a table. Beside him would be a small first or second grade boy. If I stopped to greet them, John would interrupt his lesson long enough to introduce me to his student who would grin and beam because John had thought to include him in our conversation. For the moment, the boy was a very important person, and that counted as much, maybe more, than any carefully structured lesson plan.

I watched John work his magic for three years at Lansdowne. For each year he was there, three lucky schoolchildren are carrying his kindness around in their hearts, walking a little taller, reading better. When John died in August, it was unexpected. I felt a huge void.

"Tutoring meant a tremendous amount to him," said John's wife Kathy. "He got so much out of seeing the progress of children."

She recalled John would sometimes feel discouraged when he thought his pupils weren't making more progress. Then each year he'd be vindicated by the student's end-of-year test scores, which showed his Augustine training and commitment to literacy tutoring had been right all along.



Kathy went on to note that John was good at allaying children's fears. "Something's wrong with my brain, I'm not smart," one boy told him. "You're fine," John responded. "There's nothing wrong with your brain." At the end of the school year John gave this child a dictionary. "I can't take it," the boy responded. "Your name is in it. You have to take it," John replied.

Always a natural with children, Kathy recalled years ago watching a stream of kids follow John around at a local park where the couple were working at a concession stand. Later on John became a commercial photographer. His specialty -- photographing children.

Fellow Augustine tutor and former studio assistant Bev Gilman recalls "He [John] was so good with kids. He didn't talk down to them, so they'd come alive for him. He'd asked them to do something silly, and they loved that. He was having a good time. He was like a kid himself." It was Gilman who introduced John to the idea of taking Augustine instruction. "The program needed him," she said. "I wish he was still here, doing what he did."

*Rosanne O'Rear, Augustine Tutor*

## Augustine Students Showed Progress in 2010--2011

- Thirty-seven Augustine tutors worked with 39 students last year.
- 90% were in elementary grades, with most in grades 1-3.
- Here are the results of assessments for Augustine children who met with their tutor 30 times or more during the school year.
- IOTA Single Word Recognition: averaged 1 year's growth;
- Morrison McCall Spelling Test: averaged 8 months growth;
- Sight Word Recognition: averaged 29% increase.
- Review of IOTA data for students who have been tutored by an Augustine tutor for more than one year show that each student began at or below grade level and gained from one semester to 4 years in growth with an average of 2 years.



**For information about the volunteering with the Project, or to refer a student:**

**Visit: [www.augustine.st-peters.org](http://www.augustine.st-peters.org)**

**Contact: Candace Armstrong, Project Director  
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## TUTOR PLACEMENTS

Currently, the Augustine Project for Literacy has placed 47 tutors in Charlotte--Mecklenburg schools and other schools, and in other settings, such as day care centers.

Schools placements for the Autumn 2011 term include:

*Barringer Academic Center*

*Elizabeth Traditional Elementary*

*Mooresville Christian Academy*

*Berryhill School*

*Hidden Valley Elementary*

*Park Road Elementary*

*Blythe Elementary*

*Lansdowne Elementary*

*Rama Road Elementary*

*Bruns Avenue Elementary*

*Mallard Creek Elementary*

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*Montclair Elementary*

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*Westerly Elementary*

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## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

We continue to build this vital community project with the generous support of the Jesse Ball duPont Fund, as well as St. Peter's Episcopal Church, St. Peter's Hospital Foundation, and individual contributors.

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Finally, we are pleased to acknowledge the support of Presbyterian Women of First Presbyterian Church and The Good Samaritan Fund.

To join in supporting our work, make your check payable to *St. Peter's Episcopal Church* and note *Augustine Project* in the memo line of your check. Please mail your contribution to:

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