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## Welcome!

We are excited to deliver our first online newsletter to the ACTS family – our tutors, our students and their families, site directors, supporters, and everyone who is now or has been an active part of ACTS. So what have our tutors and students been up to? How is our program growing and evolving? What is the next chapter for ACTS? Our goal is to provide you with more frequent and meaningful updates that follow our purpose! Reaching out to the whole ACTS family with this email newsletter is one more way we hope to live out our Vision and Mission.

### VISION

A community where elementary children thrive academically, relationally, and spiritually.

### MISSION

To provide free, one-to-one tutoring and mentoring to the elementary children of Springfield, in the Spirit of Christ.

## Something Else Is New, Too

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Our new logo greeted you at the top of this page. The previous logo has been in use for who knows how long, and we felt it was time for an update. Why? The old logo was familiar and showed teamwork, but was angular, static, and in black. The new logo is more up-to-date, in color, and gives an impression of positive energy, teamwork, and friendliness.

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Behavioral Specialist Melany Picard (far left) addresses participants at the February 1st workshop.

## Tutor Workshops: Coffee, Donuts, and Community

Tutor Workshops at St. John's Congregational Church give tutors tools they need AND a chance to mingle! In fact, our nickname for the workshops is Coffee, Donuts... and Community! ACTS truly appreciates all of our volunteer tutors and everyone who works with our students! We want to ensure proper training so that everyone can grow, learn, and achieve success.

ACTS put on two workshops recently. *How to Deal with Behavioral Issues* was presented by SPS Behavioral Specialist Melany Picard on February 1st. There was great dialogue and camaraderie, and everyone learned about how to work with students and really engage them with their academics. *Phonics for Emerging and Struggling Readers* was presented by board member Ruth Carlson on February 29th. Tutors and all those

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working with the students learned strategies on how to better teach reading, specifically with using phonics and tools to build comprehension skills.

The final workshop in our winter series, *Using Math Manipulatives*, was to be held March 14th, but has been postponed due to concerns about the coronavirus.

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## **ACTS and the COVID-19 Coronavirus**

We learned from Governor Charlie Baker on March 15th that schools statewide will be closed through April 6th. One of our guiding principles is, if there is no school, there is no ACTS. We pray that all families stay safe and we appreciate all health care workers and communities that are trying to contain this coronavirus. To stay in touch with developments for Springfield Public Schools, please visit: <https://www.springfieldpublicschools.com>

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## **What's Happening at Our Tutoring Sites?**

"Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain." Corinthians 15:58

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Site Director Francine Pina-Council (way far left) tracks responses during a game of Outburst at JC Williams.

## An “Outburst” at JC Williams

On a recent Monday, after snack time and Reflections on a Bible passage, the group at JC Williams divided into two teams for a quick game of Outburst. To play the game, the leader selects a category, such as foods you eat at a fair, and team members have three minutes to shout out as many responses as possible. Responses that match the list provided with the game get points. The game involves shouting out as many examples of a category as possible in three minutes.

The students of JC Williams are constantly engaged, learning, and having fun. Week after week, it is wonderful watching these students improve their academic skills and growing relationships with one another and with God.

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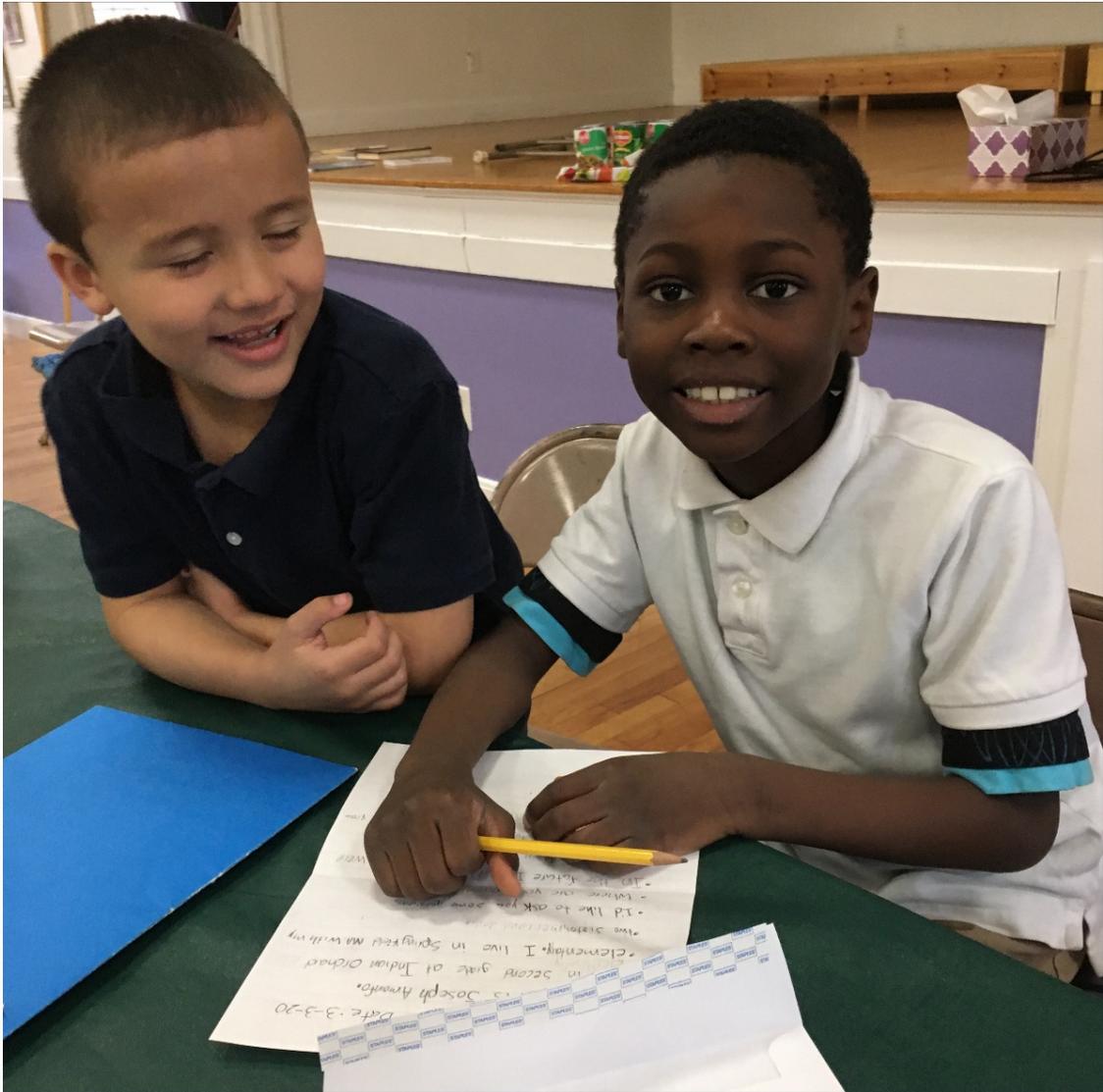
Tutor Miss Vickie (back left) and her student Maddie G greet tutor Miss Cheryl (back right) and her student Madi G.

## Madi, Meet Maddie!

On Monday March 9th, student Madi G transferred from Bethesda Lutheran Church to St. John's Congregational Church. There she met and was welcomed by a new group of tutors and students, including another student named Maddie G!

Madi had been a student with us on Tuesdays at Bethesda Lutheran Church, but – good for her! – she was recently accepted into the Girls on the Run Program which operates on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Madi and her mom Julie were determined to keep her in the ACTS family, and we were able to find a home for her at St. John's on Mondays. Cheryl Adamson, a tutor at Christ Church Cathedral, was quick to volunteer and fill the role of Madi G's mentor and tutor. The ACTS family is thankful that God brought Madi and Maddie together!

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Justin (left) and Joseph (right), second graders at Orchard Covenant Church site work on their pen pal letters and enjoy their friendship.

## Pen Pal Day Grows to Six Sites This Year

An annual tradition at Orchard Covenant Church and Faith United Church has been the exchange of letters between students and a meet-and-greet party on Pen Pal Day when students from the two sites get to meet in person. Joy Holsing, Site Director at both churches, launched the program in 2009, and it has been going strong ever since! Last year, Jackie Blount at St. John's Congregational and Francine Pina-Council at the JC Williams Community Center joined in. The program is growing again this year, with the addition of Evangelical Covenant

Church under Site Director Frances Corgnati teaming up with students at Sacred Heart Church under Site Director Jeannine Ruccio. With six sites involved, more than 40 ACTS students will participate!

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