

MINUTE FOR MISSION

EDUCATE A CHILD, TRANSFORM THE WORLD

The second grader that Susan Byrne tutors at Willow Brook Elementary holds her hand the whole time they are together, working on building his reading skills. Can you just imagine how wonderful that connection must feel for both of them?

“My little guy is just so delighted to have an adult paying extra attention to him. When I peek in his classroom window, his face lights up,” Susan said. “No one is as glad to see me all week as that little boy. He’s so bright, but just needed a little help with reading.”

Susan, who attends First Presbyterian Church of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, helps organize tutors for the elementary school, and nearly half come from First Presbyterian. Willow Brook Elementary sits in one of the lowest-income neighborhoods in Oak Ridge, and many of the students’ parents are working multiple jobs to make ends meet, while others are incarcerated or absent. That means some of the children need a little extra help to further their learning.

It was First Presbyterian member Rosalyn McKeown-Ice who made the connection between the church and the school.

“I sit on an *Educate a Child, Transform the World* roundtable in Louisville. At the August 2017 roundtable meeting, we were challenged to ‘go home and try something,’” said Rosalyn. “Willow Brook’s principal Sherrie Fairchild-Keyes also attends the church, so I asked her for some ideas on how to help out at the elementary school.”

The result has been so good for everyone involved. The church provides volunteer tutors and the school provides training—teaching the volunteers how to work with the children in the most effective ways—and matching each volunteer with a student. Principal Fairchild-Keyes says she’s seen a transformation in the students who are part of the program.

“The relationship built between a tutor and student is so important—having another adult to count on and look up to. It makes the children more excited about learning and helps build their confidence and even correct behavioral issues.”

During the Pentecost season, Presbyterians around the country join in a churchwide effort to support young people and nurture their faith through the Pentecost Offering. A portion of this Offering supports the education of every child in this country, through the *Educate a Child, Transform the World* national initiative. Gifts to the Pentecost Offering also help youth and young adults build a life of faith.

God’s youngest family members need support for developing their full potential in both faith and life, and all of us have a role to play. “Our immediate support of children is critical,” says Susan Byrne. “If a person can get a good education, they have a chance to succeed in life, no matter where they come from.”

Please give generously.

Let us pray,

*Jesus, you called all children to you
and did not turn them away.
Let this church support all children
to develop in mind, body and spirit,
so that the potential you gave
each of them might be known
and shared to your glory.*

Amen.