LEARNING EDGE

Impact Report

2025-2026 School Year







www.learningedgetutoring.org

From our Board

Sharon Hermanns



Dear friends and supporters of Learning Edge Tutoring,

It was my daughter who first connected with Learning Edge Tutoring a decade ago. She was in high school and looking for volunteer opportunities when I encouraged this connection–both because tutoring matched her skill set and because I fondly remembered how rewarding my own prior tutoring experience had been with Cabrini Green Tutoring Program through the 90s. She reflected my enthusiasm for tutoring back to me: "You clearly loved it; why don't you tutor?"

I started working with Bryson when he was in first grade. Because his homework typically was math, which he enjoyed doing and was good at, we usually focused on that. However, he was well below grade level for reading. Honestly, I struggled with how to best address this issue. Thankfully, we have a breadth of resources within the organization; I was able to tap into those to help Bryson decode words well enough to read his assignments and boost his confidence in reading! As Bryson's reading skills grew, so did my investment in the program, and I stepped onto the Board of Directors.

My current student, Jacob, is a delight–a quiet, studious fifth grader. We discovered something that brings him out of his shell: chess. We play together during game time each week, and he has gone from not knowing what each piece does to handily taking most of my pieces.

Our program is so much more than tutoring. We are mentors–another caring adult in each of these kid's lives. What's more, I get as much out of it as my student. We are making a difference in our community one child at a time! Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Sharon Hermanns
Board Member

Who we are

Mission Statement

To strive for more equity in education by providing Chicago-area students who live in underserved communities free one-to-one tutoring and academic enrichment opportunities enhanced by caring, mentoring relationships.





Student Demographics*

110 students served in grades K through 12.

Students primarily come from the Austin neighborhood on Chicago's West Side.



93% of students are African American and 7% are Latino/a.

85% of students returned from the prior year.

87% of students are eligible to receive free or reduced lunch.

23% of students have an Individual Education Plan (IEP), meaning they qualify for extra accommodations and services in school.

*All data is based on the *completion* of the 2025-26 school year.

What we do

Our Program Offerings

One-to-One Tutoring: Students and tutors meet in person on a Monday, Tuesday, or Thursday evening. Students and tutors work on reading, math, and/or homework. They meet for up to 30 weeks throughout the school year for 90 minutes each session. In addition to the evening program, Learning Edge has a partnership with St. Catherine-St. Lucy School, where we host a weekly on-site daytime program for its first- through third-grade students.

All measures of reading mastery have improved each year for **five** years!

Ready Readers: For students in kindergarten through sixth grades, Learning Edge focuses on literacy. Following the completion of easyCBM reading assessments, students identified as working below grade level receive individualized reading plans to help improve their fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Our on-site Reading Specialist provides consultation and guidance to tutors, students, and parents/caregivers.

Just the Facts Math: For students in first through third grades, our Math Specialist conducts customized assessments to identify gaps in students' math knowledge. Students progress through a series of math packets that support the development of number sense, which research has shown leads to a better understanding of basic addition and multiplication math facts.





Project Next Step: With the assistance of our Program Coordinator, students prepare for life after high school. They are provided with information about opportunities for college visits and career training programs, individualized free or reduced-cost summer academic and personal enrichment, and support in completing financial aid (FAFSA) and college applications.

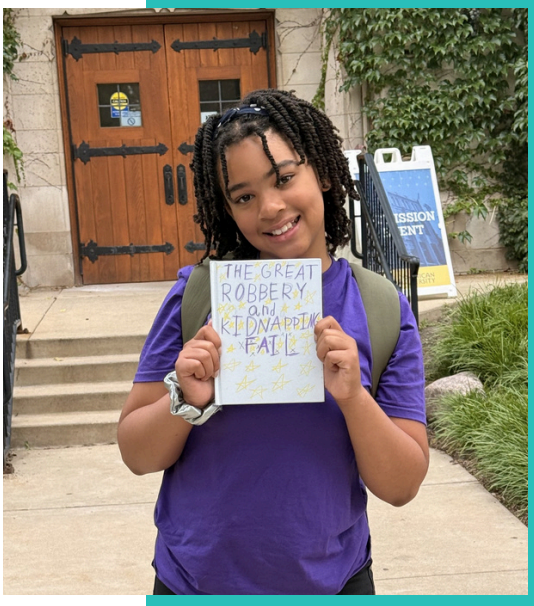
Brain Food: Recognizing that good nutrition and learning go hand-in-hand, Learning Edge provides enrolled families access to fresh produce delivery through its partnership with Forty Acres Fresh Market, an Austin neighborhood-based grocery service. Families are eligible to receive biweekly deliveries from October through May.

Parent Café: Learning Edge offers twice annual Parent Cafés–a casual gathering of parents and caregivers chatting over refreshments. Facilitated by a child psychologist, families discuss topics related to their children's academic achievement in a setting that allows for sharing concerns, group problem solving, and identification of local resources.

18
students received Summer Academic Enrichment scholarships.

Summer Academic Enrichment: Learning Edge offers families the opportunity to apply for up to $500 toward attending summer programs, including art, sports, music, and academic subjects. This program is focused on assisting students in enhancing their learning development year round.

Summer Reading Program: This four-week program keeps our readers engaged and focused through the summer. Using poetry and common poetic devices, our students work on letter sounds, vocabulary, and flow in order to increase their fluency and automaticity in reading.



Mathnasium: Learning Edge has a partnership with the local Mathnasium to provide qualifying students with twice-weekly math support. This program is offered as supplemental tutoring during the school year and as a part of summer academic enrichment.

Outcomes

Our Impact in Numbers

100% of students reported that their tutor helped them learn!

68% of students maintained a 3.0 grade average or higher.



Students in grade 1 improved their word reading fluency by 57%. In grades 2 through 6, 78% of students improved reading fluency, and 61% improved vocabulary.

86% weekly attendance rate for both students and tutors.

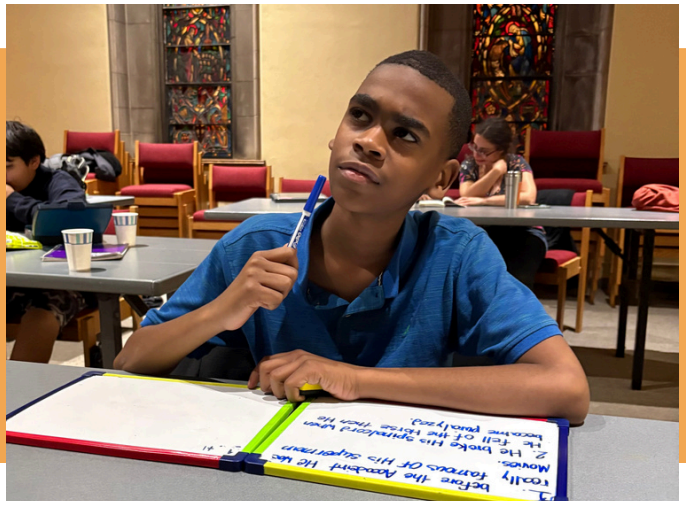
100% of students reported enjoying their time in the program.

98% of parents surveyed reported having an 'excellent' experience at Learning Edge.

91% of volunteers surveyed reported having an 'excellent' experience at Learning Edge.

100% of students in grade 12 (seniors) graduated from high school.





A Duo for a Decade

A Celebration of Growth in All Areas!

Jayden, a very tall, self-possessed, and witty ninth grader, said he was only *just this tall* when he started working with Mim Geraghty as a kindergartner. Mim described the daunting stack of index cards they employed for word recognition activities at that time as the same height! Jayden laughed and explained that "those cards were what got our relationship going!" He continued, "The relationship grew, the work got hard, and we're still going."

These two have been through it all over the course of their ten years together. They have progressed through the typical skill-building of elementary school work to addressing the higher-level assignments of Jayden's high school courses. They have also seen one another through life's challenges, evolutions, and joys. Last year, Mim went to Jayden's eighth grade graduation. "He came across the stage, and the crowd went wild," said Mim. "He is very well loved by teachers and students."

Jayden has the advantage of coming from a family of educators, with a mom who taught Special Education and an auntie who teaches math. Both Mim and Jayden attribute much of Jayden's academic achievement and executive functioning skills to these powerhouse influences in his life. Mim is proud to be in their company as another resource and long-standing friend.

It is fun to watch, one week at a time, as a tutoring mentorship grows–as did the once tiny child. "Jayden is kind of a dream student–he is very diligent and he's extremely funny," said Mim. "I look forward to seeing him each week."





News

Project Next Step Tackles Financial Literacy

In our effort to help students prepare for life after high school, we have expanded our Project Next Step programming to include financial literacy.

Financial literacy will impact each of their adult lives as they budget, take out loans, or invest, and studies show it is tied to later-in-life financial success. Learning Edge partnered with Byline Bank for a workshop; and mentor-tutors helped extend the thinking by continuing discussions with their students as they plan for college and beyond.

Learning Edge Hosts First Annual Fundraising Event

Learning Edge Tutoring hosted our first annual fundraising event: Trivia Night! In April, a crowd of mentor-tutors, family members, and supporters gathered in an academic sparring match at Robert's Westside. It was a particularly fun way to engage new allies and share about the work we do to strive for equity in education and enhance students' lives.

With your help, we raised $3,000 that will directly impact our tutoring and mentorship programming. A special thank you to Addis Cafe, The Book Loft, Cooper's Hawk Restaurant, Dandelion Bookshop, Elevate Creative, Hemmingway's Bistro, Oki Sushi and Thai, Polished, Sugar Beet Food Co-op, Unbreakable Fitness, Wise Cup, and the Learning Edge Board of Directors, who donated raffle prizes, and to Steven Rennau and Biz Price, who volunteered as our trivia hosts.



We loved being able to share about our mission and the incredible students with whom we work and learn.

Thank you

Volunteers, August 2025 to July 31, 2026

Collectively, our tutors provided more than 4,620 hours of free tutoring and mentorship in the 2025-26 school year.

Kaye Ahmed
Howard Anderson
Spencer Baker*
Karen Bardeen
Bob Becker
Sue Beckman
Marcel Belance
Rhoda Bernstein
Lisa Bierman
Janice Bratt
Julie Brich-Scheuring
Chris Buck
Sienna Campbell
Lloyd Coaker
Andrea Cohen-Agrimonti
Lynette Colmey
Diane Conmy
Ann Courter
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Kevin Cullinane*
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Bernadette Diaz
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Cheryl Flinn
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Mia Garcia
Kathryn Gargiulo+
Eileen Garvey
Mim Geraghty
Camila Gomez
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Nuala Hathaway
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Darnella Mosley
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Amy Stearns*
Christina Strand
Kevin Studer
Charles Swift
Jay Swift
Lucinda Swift
Diane Taylor
Cheryl Terhorst
Maggie Testore
Megan Tideman
Camille Tomasello
Mark Trinka
Jeff Tsan
Shelly Uslenghi
Seana Valentine
Cristen Vincent+
Sher Watts-Spooner
Zarine Weil
Kate Yannias
Ginger Yarrow
Victor Yipp
Mary Young



*A special thanks to those who also serve in a volunteer capacity on our Board of Directors.
+A special thanks to those who have supported more than one student in the 2025-26 school year.

Thank you

Individual Donors, August 2025 to July 31, 2026

Lauren & Francisco Achurra
Liza & Rey Achurra
Vicki Bartlett
Daniel Bassill
Myrna Baye
Susan Beach White
Laura Bernstein
Nadine Bolger
Nick & Sue Bridge
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Robert Mann
Steve & Janis Walter
Art & Sher Watts Spooner
Mark Wright
Kathleen Yannias
Linda Zurawski

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Costco
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First United Church of Oak Park
Fourth Presbyterian Church of Chicago
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Garry J. Scheuring Charitable Lead Unitrust
Grace Episcopal Church
Gulick-Baker Family Charitable Fund
Harmsworth/Ferrari Charity Fund
Helen & Curtis Pinnell Foundation
John A. Kenealy Memorial Fund
Malnati Organization, Inc.
McGraw Foundation
PayPal Giving Fund
St. Giles Family Mass Community

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