



IVC Reading Tutoring Project

The Ignatian Volunteer Corps invites men and women 50 years and older to put their talents, life skills and experience at the service of people in need in their local area. Each volunteer gives a dedicated year of service in a non-profit organization, school or agency that primarily serves poor or marginalized people. IVC's overarching goal is to mitigate and alleviate the harmful effects of urban poverty by calling people of faith to work for justice, equity and compassionate community in the city where they live.

In 2017-18, IVC volunteer Anne Curley gave her year of service as a reading tutor for 3 children at St. Catherine school on 51st and Center Street in Milwaukee. Anne was greatly moved by the goodness of the children and their great need for individual help. Anne realized that there were many more than 3 children at St. Catherine who had this same need. Inspired by this need Anne made a proposal to expand tutoring to more children.

In the Spring of 2018, Anne reached out through her own network of neighbors, friends and parish contacts and recruited 15 volunteers for the 2018-19 school year. Over the summer Anne set up training sessions for the tutors with Michelle Paris. By January of 2019 the corps of tutors had stabilized to 9 tutors serving 25 students with weekly one-on-one reading coaching at St. Catherine School. Anne coordinated the project by scheduling the volunteers, connecting with school leaders and trouble-shooting as needed.

In 2019-20 new school leaders and administrators were hired for the Seton network of schools. Because the IVC Reading Tutoring Program had been successfully designed and piloted at St. Catherine school the new leaders eagerly asked IVC to continue the program there and add an additional school, St. Rafael. Anne Curley remained the lead coordinator and we brought an additional IVC volunteer, Kathleen Mantz, on board as the school coordinator at St. Rafael. Anne expanded her outreach for community volunteers and recruited 35 tutors. Working together with Amy Barbiaux and Leni Dietrich (Seton Administrators), Anne and Kathleen set up new and improved tutor training. The 2019-20 school year began with a full complement of reading tutors serving weekly in two Seton Schools.

From a small beginning with one IVC volunteer a successful and robust reading tutoring program has blossomed. Thirty-five community tutors were recruited, trained and scheduled in two schools. Each tutor met weekly with 3-4 students and over 175 students were served. The impact of this program has been significant. Reading scores have gone up. Loving relationships have developed. Seton has become a stronger system. Faith and action have improved lives.