

**TUTORING CHICAGO KEY**

NOTABLE EVENTS

LEADERS

LOCATIONS



**1965**  
The Montgomery Ward Cabrini-Green Tutoring Program started in the summer of 1965 as one of 15 programs established by the Chicago Housing Authority. Sessions were held in the basement day room of the 412 W. Chicago Ave. building in Cabrini-Green. There were about 15 volunteers and 40 students.

**1965-1970**  
Herbert Thompson

**1965-1970**  
Chicago Housing Authority  
412 W. Chicago Ave.  
• Demolished in 2009  
• What's there now? Jesse White Community Center



**1970**  
• Moved to a larger space.  
• Started the year with 100 tutors.  
• Borrowed books from Chicago Public Library.  
• Established one-to-one ratio.  
• Allen Tyson (bottom left) completes his first of 46 years as a volunteer tutor.



**1970-1973**  
Barry Adelman

**1970-1983**  
Montgomery Ward Administration Building  
619 W. Chicago Ave.  
• What's there now? One River Place Condominiums



**1973-1975**  
Roger Kennedy

**1971-72**  
Volunteers from Cabrini-Green, Com-Ed, and Moody Bible Institute join the program.



**1975-1992**  
Dan Bassill



**1977**  
• Begin partnership with the Illinois Right to Read Initiative.  
• Barbara Crosby becomes the first employee of CGTP.  
• Mini-events start with visit from the Lincoln Park Zoo.



**1979**  
• Volunteers from Quaker Oats Co. join the program.  
• Quaker Oats becomes an official co-sponsor in 1982.

**1978 (10-10-78)**  
• District 7 Tutor's Workshop.  
• Joint training held with other programs including Fourth Presbyterian Church.  
• Partnership continues today with annual Tutor Training Conference.



**MARCH 1982**  
Dan Bassill receives Jefferson Award for outstanding community service.



**1983-1999**  
Montgomery Ward Mail Order House  
618 W. Chicago Ave.  
• Designated a Chicago Landmark on 5-17-2000  
• What's there now? 600 West office building



**SEPTEMBER 1983**  
Commodore 64 computers donated with 64 kilobytes of RAM (retail value \$595). Today the program uses iPads with 1 gigabyte of RAM (retail value \$399).



**1986 (1-21-1986)**  
Chicago Tribune article: "Tutors, kids learn about friendship."

**APRIL 1988**  
National study by the Center for Early Adolescence identifies CGTP as one of 32 local programs especially effective at boosting literacy skills.



**1990**  
*Cabrini Green: What You Don't See* documentary, produced by CGTP volunteer Sarah Coover Caldwell, airs on Chicago's local PBS television station.



**1990 (6-2-1990)**  
Jessie White Tumblers perform at 25th Year celebration.



**1990 (6-7-1990)**  
Cabrini-Green Tutoring Program, Inc. is formed as a nonprofit organization.

**1990**  
\$10,000 Jack Daynard Memorial Scholarship established by Montgomery Ward.

**1991 (1-15-1991)**  
Mayor Richard M. Daley visits the program.

*Barbara Bush*  
**1991 (3-6-1991)**  
Letter from Barbara Bush.



**JULY 1994**  
"Rights to Success" group travels to Washington, DC, presents child abuse bill to Congresswoman Cardiss Collins.



**1995-2005**  
Jill Christie



**APRIL 1996**  
Chicago Bulls forward Scottie Pippen visits the program.



**1997 (6-8-1997)**  
First Annual Legs for Literacy 5K.

*Bill Clinton*  
**1997 (7-30-1997)**  
Letter from Bill Clinton.

**1999-2007**  
New City YMCA  
1515 N. Halsted St.  
• Demolished in 2007  
• What's there now? NewCity mega-development



**2001-2002**  
Erin McPartlin's first year on staff.

**2005-PRESENT**  
Erin McPartlin

**2006**  
Received the prestigious Thomas A. Demetrio Lend-A-Hand Award of Excellence as an outstanding and exemplary tutoring program in Chicago.

**2007-PRESENT**  
St. Vincent de Paul Center  
2145 N. Halsted St

**2008**  
Received the Sun-Times Literacy Award from the Lawyers Lend-A-Hand to Youth Program.



**2010**  
Literacy Intensive Tutoring (LIT) program added.



**2011-PRESENT**  
Goethe Elementary School (Second location)  
2236 N. Rockwell St.

**2008**  
President-elect Barack Obama delivers his acceptance speech in Grant Park.

**2010, 2013, 2015**  
Blackhawks win the Stanley Cup.

**2011**  
Last Cabrini-Green high-rise demolished.

**tutoring CHICAGO**

**2012**  
Name changed to Tutoring Chicago.

**2014-2015**  
450 students and 500 volunteers. 150% increase over the last 8 years.

1965

**1966**  
Martin Luther King Jr. marches in Chicago.

**1967**  
The worst blizzard in Chicago history drops 23 inches of snow in 29 hours.

**1968**  
Democratic National Convention.

**1971**  
Union Stock Yards closed after 106 years of operation.

**1973**  
Sears Tower (later Willis Tower) completed, becoming world's tallest building.

**1975**  
King Tut Exhibition opens at The Field Museum.

**1975**  
Walter Payton is drafted by the Chicago Bears.

**1977**  
Chicago Marathon begins.

**1979**  
Jane Byrne elected first female mayor.

**1979**  
American Airlines Flight 191 crashes at O'Hare.

**1980**  
Taste of Chicago is started.

**1983**  
Harold Washington elected first African American mayor.

**1983**  
First American cell phone network opens in Chicago.

**1984**  
Rapid Transit Line extended to O'Hare Airport.

**1984**  
Michael Jordan is drafted by the Chicago Bulls.

1985

**1986**  
Oprah Winfrey's Harpo Productions, Inc. in business.

**1986**  
The Chicago Bears win Super Bowl XX.

**1992**  
The Great Chicago Flood.

**1993**  
Orange Line opens to Midway Airport.

**1995**  
Navy Pier reopens after renovation.

**1995**  
Heat wave with temperatures as high as 106 °F.

**1995**  
First broadcast of This American Life from WBEZ Chicago.

**1996**  
The Chicago Bulls set the NBA record for wins, finishing the season 72-10.

**1997**  
Montgomery Ward files for bankruptcy and eventually goes out of business in 2001.

**2004**  
Millennium Park opens.

**2005**  
The Chicago White Sox win their first World Series in 88 years.

2015





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With his tutee, Leo, in 1973



At the 2010 Tutor/Mentor Conference in 2010

## DAN BASSILL

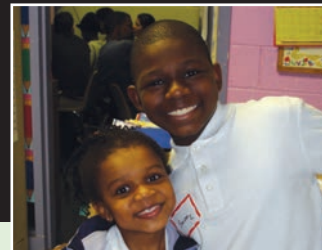
When a cute co-worker suggested it might be fun for the two of them to read to kids as part of something called the Cabrini Green Tutoring Program, Dan Bassill never suspected he was signing up for a decades-long commitment to Chicago children. It was 1973, the program was in just its eighth year, and Bassill had just started a career as an advertising copywriter for retail giant Montgomery Ward. Most of the volunteers who worked with local students were company employees, and on most days the only physical evidence of the tutoring effort was a group of metal filing cabinets filled with books in a basement cafeteria there. “People came down after work, and the kids would come in and we would spend an hour with them reading and talking about school and doing different things,” Bassill recalled.

The humble program to which Tutoring Chicago traces its roots had started in 1965 when the CHA reached out to local businesses and churches looking for assistance with kids who lived in neighborhoods including the Cabrini Green complex – a place that would become one of the city’s most notorious public housing sites. Montgomery Ward’s complex was right nearby. Bassill said most tutors there started the same way, with a rudimentary orientation that involved a promise simply to return the next week and be matched with a child. For Bassill, it was a 4th-grade boy he began reading to weekly. In his job and in the tutoring program, Bassill rose through the ranks. By his third year as a volunteer he had become the organization’s leader, guiding about 100 volunteers reading to children living in Cabrini’s high-rises and row houses. Those numbers would grow in just a few short years, as the program stressed mentoring and volunteers from beyond Montgomery Ward began to arrive. But by 1990, despite having been in charge of creative development for all of the company’s print advertising, Bassill did not survive a change in company leadership. And while he considered taking another advertising job elsewhere in the city, he instead decided to take the burgeoning Cabrini Green Tutoring Program to non-profit status. The organization had swelled to some 500 volunteers and 450 students.

It was a successful switch, but in the fall of 1992 Bassill would leave the program that would go on to become Tutoring Chicago. With the help of six other volunteers, Bassill would start another Cabrini organization to help youths who had aged out of the original program, and founded Tutor/Mentor Connection in 1993 to assist programs in disadvantaged communities around the city. He finally established the Tutor/Mentor Institute in 2011. In many ways, that effort was the culmination of many years of Bassill’s work. He had studied history and spent time in U.S. Army intelligence, so gathering information to create a record of tutoring processes and provide resources for others in the city and across the country came naturally.

It started with his first moments in 1973, he said, when like most of today’s new tutors he struggled with the central question of how to help his student: “What do I do?” “In some ways I feel like I’ve been building a library for 40 years,” he said of the institute, which now pools data at [tutormentorexchange.net](http://tutormentorexchange.net) and [tutormentor.blogspot.com](http://tutormentor.blogspot.com). “If there’s a spiritual guide, that spiritual guide has kept me on this path,” Bassill said. “They haven’t made it easy, but in the darkest of times, there’s always been something that’s helped me and energized my batteries at a key point.”

Bassill never started a relationship with that co-worker back in 1973, but he found a calling that remains part of Tutoring Chicago’s DNA. He began to understand children in poverty and their educational challenges, and he began to see how caring Chicagoans could do something about it. “Over time,” he said, “that became a life.”



With his sister, Alonje, in 2006



As A freshman at UIC in 2013

## SAVON CLARK

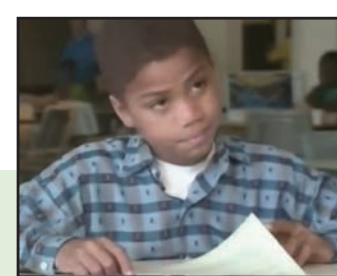
Adorned in his white graduation robe and green cap, the then 10-year-old Savon Clark stood a little wobbly kneed and sweaty palmed on the podium facing a crowd full of familiar faces. This was his big moment – his first public speech. Clark was speaking at his sixth grade graduation ceremony for Cabrini Green Tutoring Program (CGTP). His tutor, Tom Staunton, recommended him as the graduation speaker and he accepted immediately, not realizing until the very last minute that it was kind of a big deal.

“Tom always challenged me and pushed me the extra mile to do things that would help me learn better and do better. That moment, however, was the biggest push and gave me a huge confidence boost that impacted my life greatly,” said Clark, now 20 and a third year industrial engineering student at University of Illinois in Chicago (UIC). “Tom and the program helped start a foundation for students at a really young age that builds up for the latter. They helped build a structure that, if followed, would ensure us successes in our later life.”

Sitting on a wooden chair in a small room of the Literacenter – a co working space for literacy organizations – Clark reminisced about his first day at the program in 2001. “The program had recently relocated to the YMCA building on Clybourn and Halsted. I remember that because I had to walk down the street every Tuesday evening for my tutoring sessions,” said Clark. “I walked in and was asked to sit in the waiting room – a room with a long line of chairs facing a wall clock that slowly ticked away the minutes before Tom showed up at the door. All students were handed a small juice box and a granola bar as they waited for their tutors.”

According to Clark, the homework never took him too long to finish and they spent the rest of their time working on learning life skills like answering the telephone, solving math puzzles, playing board games, etc. “Tom always made everything seem really easy and that’s what I loved the most about him. He would give me new challenges every session and sometimes even give me upper grade homework to do,” said Clark. “The best part about the program was my relationship with Tom and how he became such an integral part of my life.”

At the program, Clark won awards for being among the top 5 students in his grade and he won the Spelling Bee competition. Looking back, Clark said he believes that he had a smooth and simple time growing up because of all the help and support he got from his parents, his tutor, and the program. “My parents made sure I was at the sessions on time, my tutor and the program in general made sure that I was learning and moving forward and that kind of support was what one really needs to be honest,” said Clark. “It’s exciting knowing how greatly the program has expanded and continues to grow and change people’s lives just like how it had affected mine.”



## ISAIAH BROOMS

It was the summer of 1989 when 10-year-old Isaiah Brooms, who was playing outside his dilapidated home in Cabrini Green, first heard that they were giving out free milk and cookies at Montgomery Ward’s cafeteria. Deciding that this was too good of an opportunity to miss, he crossed the street and walked through the tall glass doors of the building that loomed over him. Once inside, however, Brooms was not prepared for what he saw.

The cafeteria was a gigantic open space with rows and rows of bookshelves and computers and it was abuzz with people from all over town. Turns out the milk and cookies were for the students enrolled in the Cabrini Green Tutoring Program. So he enrolled and was matched with a tutor named Sara Coover. “All someone ever has to do is reach out and that can change someone’s life. Like the person who donated the milk and cookies will probably never know how he changed mine. I was always a smart kid, but I hated being smart because being a nerd in Cabrini Green wasn’t really a good thing. But, Sara changed that in me. She exposed me to my full potentials and made me realize that I could go anywhere and I could do anything just by being myself.” Today, Brooms is the Director of Admissions at Westwood College.



## LUCIANA JENKINS

Luciana grew up and lived for 25 years in the neighborhood of Cabrini Green. For her, the tutoring sessions were a way to escape from the rough life around her and she believes that the program prepares students to face real life outside the classrooms.

As she sat on a wooden chair surrounded by her two young children, she smiled as she remembered her days as a tutee in the program. “My tutoring sessions were a learning avenue that taught me that there’s a life beyond the neighborhood that I could be a part of.”

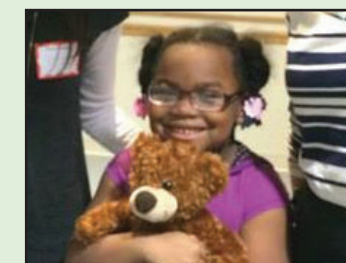
My tutor Jim Caldwell taught me to be open to new things and he helped me because he wanted to, not because he thought he should. That made a difference.”



## DANIEL SHERROD

Daniel grew up in Cabrini Green as well and he remembers the neighborhood was rough and violent. He hardly ever went out of his house and felt the tutoring program and the church were the only two places where you saw some peace because people respected them and it produced great results. He believes that if more programs like this existed then there would be more stability in the society and it would help cut down violence in the neighborhood.

“It’s one of those programs that build unsung heroes who’re making a positive impact on everyone. With time and effort the program made me the complete person that I am today and helped me build a tremendous relationship with the people there.”



## JERMISEHA COOKS

Tonya Laramore-Bassett wanted to get her 1st-grade granddaughter, Jermiseha, some extra reading help, so she enrolled her in Tutoring Chicago at the program’s Lincoln Park location. “She’s made a lot of progress and she loves coming here,” Tonya says. “It brightens up her evening when she sees Stacy.”

That’s Stacy Druker, who started with the program in 2010 after a friend at work convinced her she had the skill set to make a difference. Stacy had no teaching experience and not much experience working with children at all, really, but she found TC to be open and supportive of those who want to give tutoring a chance. She started working with Jermiseha in 2013.

“She’s adorable and excited and eager to learn new things,” Stacy says. “She loves reading. And she’s taken some huge leaps even separate from the program – she’s at that age.” Tonya agreed but gave Druker a lot of credit for helping. The extra attention has been a real boost to Jermiseha’s education, she says, pointing out Jermiseha is now reading on her own even when she doesn’t have to for school. “She loves to read and she’ll say, ‘Stacy says I need to do it this way,’” she says. “Now Jermiseha just goes through one book after the next. She sleeps with a book in her bed. I have to go in and take her glasses off.”



# tutoring CHICAGO

50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

SERVING KIDS IN CABRINI GREEN  
AND BEYOND SINCE 1965

# 50



## MISSION

Tutoring Chicago develops a foundation for life-long learning by providing free one-to-one tutoring and mentoring to economically disadvantaged children.