



Afterschool is  
OK!

The Urban Mission S.P.A.R.K. Program

Summer 2011

## S.P.A.R.K.

### Support Program of Arts and Reading for Kids

For over 50 Oklahoma City students boredom is as a thing of the past! S.P.A.R.K. (Support Program of Arts and Reading for Kids) serves elementary students four days a week providing activities such as horticultural science and literature arts!



## Summer Reading!

### Who?

The S.P.A.R.K. program is an initiative of the Urban Mission, created with the vision of providing constructive afterschool activities to low-income families. With the support of the Second Presbyterian Church, private donors and grants, S.P.A.R.K. has served the Oklahoma City community for over thirty years. S.P.A.R.K. strives to operate as a community superstore by providing food assistance, clothing assistance and afterschool care.

### What?

S.P.A.R.K. Director Peggy Garrett comments that, participants are able to experience various activities not available in traditional school curricula, "We try to engage students in fun learning activities to excite them about learning new things, while maintaining a daily schedule." S.P.A.R.K. students begin their day being chauffeured to the Urban Mission from school and enjoy a hearty snack upon arrival. Students are then ushered into their reading groups to begin their lessons, "We like to keep our groups small so that students can have the opportunity to enjoy a one-on-one lesson," comments Garrett. Students are then rewarded with a fun activity involving arts and crafts, recreational activity or computer fun!

## FOCUS:

To provide a safe and positive place for low-income children to learn and grow through tutoring, music, art and recreational activities.

## How?

**SPARKING Curiosity-** As a part of their core curriculum students are able to participate in exciting group activities such as arts and crafts projects and greenhouse gardening once a week. Garrett comments, "Our students love the greenhouse, I love seeing them make the connection between the things they have learned in school about plant life and seeing it firsthand." Students are also taught the importance of recycling and are given lessons on how to make their own compost.

**SPARKING Connections-** S.P.A.R.K.'s main focus is to provide inner city, low-income families with opportunities to expose their youth to new activities otherwise not available in school. Using a daily curriculum that encourages critical thinking, positive decision making and creativity, S.P.A.R.K. is able to ignite the fire within hundreds of students a year!

**SPARKING Tradition-** Garrett has served the S.P.A.R.K. students tirelessly since the inception of the program by providing constructive afterschool activities for the Oklahoma City Youth!

## Win!

S.P.A.R.K. students benefit tremendously from the program, "Our main goal is that students are able to grow into positive individuals and leave S.P.A.R.K. better prepared for middle school," comments Garrett.



Lunch Café!



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*OKAN is a statewide initiative coordinated by the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy.*



Brought to you by Marissa Lightsey,  
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## The Million Dollar Question...

Although Garrett has found much success in serving the Oklahoma City community, S.P.A.R.K. still faces obstacles in meeting the needs of families. Similar to much of Oklahoma's non-profit programs S.P.A.R.K. relies heavily on donations and volunteers "I would love to be able to have the means to pay my staff for their hard work," comments Garrett. Garrett also comments that she would love to offer S.P.A.R.K. through the junior high and high school years "I regret not being able to continue my curriculum to older students." To find out more about S.P.A.R.K. contact:

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