

MINUTE FOR MISSION

NORTHEAST REGION (ORCHARD PARK, NEW YORK)

THE PENTECOST OFFERING—TEACHING ENGLISH, SHOWING LOVE

Keeping up in school is hard enough but for many students around the country, learning a new language while also learning other subjects can be daunting. How can children be expected to survive—let alone thrive—in such a situation?

Seeing an opportunity to help these children improve their chances of success in school and in life, Orchard Park Presbyterian Church of Orchard Park, New York, joined the ministry of the Together All Grow (TAG) tutoring program. Beginning as a summer program in 2005, it has evolved into a year-round endeavor to provide children from pre-kindergarten through high school one-on-one assistance with their homework and English skills (reading, writing, speaking, and socializing). The students, most of whom are immigrants and refugees, often don't grow up learning or speaking English at home. In fact, many of their parents are learning English themselves so they can take their U.S. citizenship tests. Language classes, then, benefit not only the children but also their families. Over the last decade several attendees have gone on to attend and complete college.

“This unique program is a true collaboration; staff, volunteers and participants from many different religious and cultural backgrounds gather weekly throughout the year to share the love of learning,” said Kathleen Johnson, who created and directs the TAG Program.

Since 2005, Orchard Park Presbyterian has supported this program with gifts to their Pentecost Offering, and hundreds have volunteered hours of time. Because of their faithfulness and ministry, vulnerable children living in the Buffalo, New York, area have the time and attention they need to grow into young adults who will thrive.

Through the Pentecost Offering, we make an impact on children, youth, and young adults in churches and communities around the country, but we also make an impact on young people right here. This church-wide offering supports children at risk, ministries with youth, and Young Adult Volunteers. Forty percent of the offering stays here to support [Local Program/s]. Please give generously, because when we all do a little, it adds up to a lot.

Let us pray,

Protecting Spirit,

*open our eyes to see your children in need,
and embolden our hearts so we might act,
so children, youth and young adults
in our community and around the world
might live and thrive,
proclaiming your glory,
and doing your good work.*

*May our gifts that we offer in your name
shape the future of your Church.*

Amen.