

May, 2019

I have known Paul Thiebaut III and his team at Thiebaut Method Tutoring (Formally, 10 Books A Home) since I had the great fortune of meeting one of Thiebaut Method's enthusiastic board members who purchased one of my daughter's rainbow brownies at her very first bake sale. When we got to talking about the innovative early learning model based on intrinsic learning motivations offered by volunteers to low income students in East Palo Alto, I just had to make a visit to the little pink house in EPA.

There I met Paul for the first time, who shared with me his personal journey in discovering his love of learning, a passion he discovered long after he was a student. As an adult, learning took on a whole new meaning for Paul, when he began to see learning was a means to ignite his personal passion.

I had always believed that learning comes naturally when someone is motivated by personal interest to *want* to learn something. Paul and I were on the same page! Paul explained the teaching ILM method he developed after his researching educational theory learning motivation. Not only was his office filled with pictures of the proud kids and families learning together, Paul had his proprietary method and the strategy to deliver this method at scale.

Paul walked me to the back of the little pink shack and showed me the "kits" volunteers make up based on common learning themes that interest young people, and each kit included not only books, but words, puzzles, games, and objects, such as small toys, to reinforce the learning. I was intrigued. But my choice to support Thiebaut Method was not based just on the adorable boxes or the heartwarming stories of success Paul told me.

I asked to see a business plan and a donor list to better understand how Thiebaut Method and their ILM method would grow to be the educational institution that founder, Paul Thiebaut III dreamed it to be. And Paul had that plan, highly detailed, and major donors had already joined Paul in that vision. For a small nonprofit to have names such as Packard Foundation, Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, 49ers Foundation amongst others, encouraged me that multi-year general operating support would help build on that foundation.

Paul and his team have done everything they said they would with that donation, and more. I like over-achievers! So, when Paul was telling me they were planning their very first fundraiser days after we had just moved into a new home, I jumped at the chance to host. What an opportunity to share my excitement for what Paul was doing with my colleagues, while at the same time, having the chance to meet others supporting Thiebaut Method and the families they serve.

I encourage anyone with the means to support Thiebaut Method to encourage philanthropic investment. If you have time to volunteer, consider becoming a tutor. But I warn you—Paul and his entire team have an infectious enthusiasm for what they do, so, like me, there may be no turning back! My hope for Thiebaut Method is that they realize all the dreams I heard about on my first visit to the little Pink House.

Sheri Sobrato Brisson
Trustee, Sobrato Family Foundation