A person in the congregation became aware of a child who was beginning to have academic trouble in school; falling behind in assignments and becoming disengaged in class. With conversation with those concerned, the problem was identified; with both parents working, the home with siblings and no adults was not conducive to study after school. The disruptive and noisy environment made concentrating difficult.

Once the problem for this child came to light, the parishioner wondered if there were more children dealing with this situation or for a variety of issues, needed a place to study. She began to ask others, children and adults, and through networking determined that there was, in fact, a need.

When the facts were gathered, she brought the information to the vestry and together, through prayer and conversation, they talked of how this ministry could be addressed by their church or if it should be. When the vestry agreed that this was a ministry need, they researched insurance and liability issues, city permits, state requirements such as food handler’s licenses and church codes (Safeguarding God’s Children) and brought it before the congregation. Those who were interested in helping were invited to a meeting to formulate a plan of action.

Using the developed guidelines and the people who had volunteered, they opened their after-school study hall with snacks, in the church hall on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

After a two-week period, the leaders gathered again to evaluate how it was working and to identify any problems to be discussed or changes to be made. A suggestion was made that the last half-hour be a time for board games and socializing.

Because of the success of the ministry and the small size of the congregation, it was agreed that more help was needed. They formed a plan to recruit people outside of their church, making contact with other churches and individuals. Through this process they were able to find grandparents, retired teachers and others who welcomed a chance to help.

Those who are involved continue to meet on a monthly basis and prayerfully evaluate the ministry and be watchful for new opportunities to serve.