

A Few Needs

As the semester rolls along, and we continue to learn how to live in the new facility, a few wants/needs have come up. For your convenience, we have listed them below. If you can help, please contact Richard at either Richard@StreetsMinistries.org or (901) 525-7380 extension 201.

- **Bike Rack** - Our new location makes it much easier for kids to reach us on their own. So while van traffic is down, bike traffic is up and the kids need a place to park.
- **Copy Paper** - We mostly need white for our printer and copier, but a few reams of multi-color would be nice for arts and crafts as well.
- **Trailer** - Our bigger building = bigger stuff. We need a 6 to 8 foot long trailer with ramp to move things that do not currently fit into our vans.
- **Snacks** - Single serving snack food bags are always a hit with the kids and are currently in short supply.
- **Book Shelves** - A couple of our staff offices are in need of some nice file cabinets and book shelves. We would even be willing to come pick them up... if somebody happens to donate a trailer as well.



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No one lights a lamp and hides it in a jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, he puts it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light.

Luke 8:16

Wide Open or Fences... Where do You Live?

It is often said that the key to ministry is figuring out just how wide your front door can be without compromising your mission. I know that we have not figured it all out in the new facility, but we feel pretty good about the start.

When we sat down and started planning out our new home two years ago, we decided on one thing immediately. There would not be a fence in front. As we started to build, everyone asked where the fence was located on the south side of the building. When we told them that there would not be one, they asked why. Our explanation was simple. We want everyone to feel welcome. That is exactly what has been happening, since we opened in May 2006, and the numbers have been staggering, to say the least.

Over 1,000 adolescents and adults per week have come through our doors to shoot ball, participate in educational enrichment and hear the Good News of Jesus Christ. For the most part, things have gone fairly smoothly. However, we are still learning the best way to operate this new space.

This is what I mean when I speak to no fences and the front doors being wide open. Streets staff is very intentional about still being a part of the fabric of the community. We could easily stay in the building all day and serve only those who only walk through the doors. It would certainly be safe and much easier. However, is that the Gospel? Luke 8:16 says, "No one lights a lamp and hides it in a jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, he puts it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light."

For me personally, I know that is a daily struggle and I think it is for our culture in general. Our propensity is to engage with like minded folks at work, at home, at school, at recreational places and even at church. This comfort zone becomes our fence from the world. I naturally avoid places that make me vulnerable. The majority of my waking hours are spent with folks who look like me and will generally be in agreement with every thing I say about most areas of life, whether it be theological or political.

Figuratively speaking, most Christians live in a gated community. The fence around us can be our racism, classism, denominationalism or just plain fear of the unknown. We have become an educated community that readily says "I read" instead of "I experienced". I think that we quickly turn the phrase "the Light of Christ" but shy away from opportunities to truly be that beacon of hope in darkness.

What are the fences in our lives today, that keep us from being the Light that God has called us to be? My hope and prayer is that we take time to reflect on what hampers our ministry to a world that struggles. I pray that fences begin to be torn down for the sake of the Gospel.

Let's start living wide open!

Your Brother in Christ,

Ken



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38126: Streets' Newest Program

Since opening the new Streets Center this past summer, Streets has seen an unprecedented number of students come through its doors. With an average of 959 visits per week by students during the first two months of school, a 74% increase over our 2005 average, Streets' presence in the community has never been greater. Seeing a need to offer more opportunities for these students, as well as to develop new volunteer relationships, Streets' has created a series of short-term missions programs called "38126".

What does 38126 mean? This is the zip code in which Streets is located, and where 8,100+ people live in Tennessee's poorest area, with an average household income last noted as \$10,734 per year. This 1.9 mile radius represents the poverty of inner city Memphis, where businesses have fled, jobs are sparse and the majority of residents live in government housing.



Students enjoy an afternoon of fun and games in the gym as a part of a recent "38126 Weekend".



RUF Alabama assist with a recent "Elementary Explosion" VBS as part of their "38126 Weekend" missions trip.

The "38126 Weekend" is a 3-day missions weekend where groups of 35 or less to inhabit the Streets facility, in order that they might catch a glimpse of what life is like in this community.

On September 27th, a group of 37 RUF students from the University of Alabama made the drive up highway 78 to participate in the first ever "38126 Weekend". Over the next two days, the group ran an "Elementary Explosion" VBS for 85 kids in the community, visited the National Civil Rights Museum and participated in various work projects. They even ate at the Four Way Restaurant, which is a local favorite and "soul-food" paradise. On Sunday morning, the group was dismissed and concluded their "38126 Weekend" experience by worshipping at a neighborhood church.

Streets is currently accepting groups for the few remaining "38126 Weekend" spots we have left next spring. If you know of a Sunday school class or group interested in taking part, please contact Mary-Wilkes, our Volunteer Coordinator, at either MaryWilkes@StreetsMinistries.org or 525-7380 ext. 208 for more information about our "38126" series programming.

Staff Spotlight: Mary Wilkes Harris

Streets is excited to have Mary-Wilkes Harris on our full time staff as Volunteer Coordinator. She was born and raised in Memphis, graduated from ECS and was a history major at Samford University.

Mary-Wilkes is a member at Second Presbyterian Church, where she was a part of the 2PC Fellows Program her first year out of college. Through the Fellows' Program internship with Young Life Urban, she spent last year jumpstarting a tutoring program and found that volunteer coordinating was her favorite part of the job. While some of her responsibilities include recruiting groups and volunteers to serve through our programs at Streets, she has also displayed an uncanny ability to quote mindless movies to help keep the rest of the staff thoroughly entertained.



Mary-Wilkes (center) takes a break from her Volunteer Coordinator duties to hang out with some kids.

Volunteer Opportunities

As we evaluate the beginning of the school year, and the programs that have kicked off, a couple of current volunteer needs stand out.

First, we are in need of "Room Adopters" at Georgia Avenue Elementary. Georgia Avenue has started a program which best resembles the description of a "Room Mom." Here, one or two people typically join up to adopt a classroom to give the teachers a break one morning/afternoon a month. Adopters typically throw a seasonal party or plan an activity



Ann Howell reads to Jemarcus, a 5th grader at Georgia Avenue Elementary School.

for their adopted room. Whether it's reading a book, making crafts, bringing cupcakes or acting out a skit, room adopters have an opportunity to spend time with kids who need their attention. Days and times for volunteering are determined between you and your assigned classroom teacher, so volunteers have some freedom to plan with the time they have available.

Also at Georgia Avenue, there is an immediate need for more "Ready Readers" volunteers. In this program, adults are paired with students who are just below reading proficiency for their grade to work on reading skills and comprehension. Last semester, "Ready Readers" had 15 students enrolled and, after only one semester, 13 of those 15 have moved up to proficient on the TCAP exam.

Each adult has the same two children each week in 30 minute increments. "Ready Readers" meets Monday through Friday with hours available from 12:30-2:30. This is an ideal program for one willing to take their lunch break, once a week, to read to a child!

If you are interested, or would just like to know more, contact Mary-Wilkes at MaryWilkes@StreetsMinistries.org or 525-7380 ext. 208 for information concerning involvement in one or both of these programs.

What We've Been Up To

- This past August, Brandi Bayles, a former paramedic now with Crichton College, volunteered to train ten members of Streets' staff in CPR and First Aid. As a result, we are now American Red Cross certified in adult, child and infant CPR as well as standard first aid.
- Just before school started, staff members Delvin, Carmen and Paul gave free hair cuts to students in the community.
- Each Wednesday night at Streets, adults from the community have taken part in open gym sessions hosted by Delvin and Paul.
- Delvin's work with the Booker T. Washington football team was part of a feature on the 38126 zip code in the September edition of Memphis Magazine.
- From August 23-27, over twenty 8th and 9th graders from **Hope Presbyterian Church** participated in the annual Urban Plunge. During this time, the students ate and slept at Streets, worshiped at New Beginnings, taught a VBS at Creative Life, sampled local cuisine, toured the National Civil Rights Museum and Slave Haven as well as participated in several work projects in the community.
- From September 14-16, staff members Miriam Avery and Mary-Wilkes Harris represented Streets at the **International Women In the Church Conference** held in Atlanta.
- From September 15-17, Streets took part in **Second Presbyterian Church's** annual **MissionUSA** conference.
- October 6th, Carmen held a lock-in for the high school girls at Streets. While the girls watched movies and played board games, the highlight of the weekend was the massive "hide and seek" game held in the pitch black gym.



Delvin Lane gives a student a fresh "back to school" style.



Streets Education Director Andreana Brown spends time with Georgia Avenue Students during Elementary Honors Day

- On September 29th, 35 members of the Vance Middle School staff came to Streets for some Central BBQ, ping-pong, air hockey and video games. A good time was had by all as the group learned more about where a large portion of their students spend their time.
- October 5th, Streets hosted Elementary Honors Day for Georgia Avenue 1st-5th graders. Students played games, ate a picnic style lunch and ran through an obstacle course in the gym. It was a great way to reward these students for all their hard work.
- Sunday, October 8th, Ken filled the pulpit at **CUMC** as he spoke on God's call to the poor. An on-line version of that sermon is available for download at www.StreetsMinistries.org/downloads/CUMC.mp3.



What's Coming Up

- The Genesis class from **First Evangelical Church** will be hosting a Fall Carnival at Streets. Hot dogs, games, crafts, prizes and an Elementary Explosion VBS will all be a part of the event.
- From October 18-22, Streets will be participating in the **Grace Evangelical Church** Fall Missions Conference.
- The Senior High from **Independent Presbyterian Church** will be participating in a "38126 Weekend" at Streets from November 17-19. If you or your group would like to find out more about how to participate in your own "38126 Weekend" mission project, please contact MaryWilkes@StreetsMinistries.org.
- October 30th, Delvin will be breaking out the disco ball as Streets hosts a High School "Club" Dance.



The parachute was a hit on Elementary Honors Day.



RUF Alabama eats dinner at the Four Way Restaurant as a part of the "38126 Weekend" experience.

- This upcoming season, the **Crichton College** Comets will be playing all of their home games in the Streets Center gymnasium. The atmosphere should be lively as students from the Foote and Cleaborn Homes community will be allowed to attend each game free of charge. For a complete schedule of games and times, please visit www.crichton.edu/athletics.
- With the weather turning a bit cooler, Streets is taking part in a Coat Drive benefiting the students of Georgia Avenue Elementary. If you have any new or used coats, sweaters or sweatshirts that you would like to donate, please contact Jenny@StreetsMinistries.org.
- With help from Assistant Coaches Delvin Lane and Paul Crump, the Booker T. Washington football team is off to its best start in years at 8-0. The Warriors have two more games before the playoffs begin, so if you are interested in attending, please contact Delvin at Delvin@StreetsMinistries.org.
- Not to be outdone, the Vance Middle School Eagles are 8-1 on the year and will be playing for the City Championship later this month.
- This upcoming season, Streets has six lower bowl tickets to 22 **Memphis Grizzlies** games and ten upper level tickets to every regular season game.