

A Roller Coaster Ride Through Education

By Delvin Lane

Approaching the four-lane street of South Parkway was always an exciting time in my life as a kid during the early autumn days of fall break. As I walked across the street with my mother and big brother, I heard the screams of both excited kids and adults as they roared unlimited rounds on the roller coaster "The Revolution" at Liberty Land amusement park. This roller coaster went up, down, and even upside down as it caused first time riders to dig deep inside of their souls not to lose their recently eaten pronto-pup. To some, it was the greatest thrill one could have in life. To others, it was nauseating. As a young man, my personal educational path was exactly like taking a ride on "The Revolution."

Growing up in the inner-city, valuing education was not a top priority on minds of the residents from the Foote and Cleaborn Homes housing communities. The main topic at hand was survival. Finding out where the next meal would come from took precedent over learning how to conjugate verbs. Kids in the neighborhood learned how to fix bike flats, shoot jump shots, and throw left hooks to protect themselves, while kids in other places were learning how to spell and read on grade level. After all, people in other educational institutions rewarded the top student by labeling them as the valedictorian, but in my neighborhood the top honors went to the local drug dealer. He was the person with the fanciest possessions. Buying things was more important than learning things. My mom had my brother when she was just fourteen. She had me at sixteen. While she had started off being a star basketball player and honors student, things changed when she became a mother. She was forced to drop out of school in the eighth grade in order to care for us. She worked here and there to make ends meet and taught us to value education and work hard in school so that our lives would not have to be as tough as hers. She protected me and my brother from the horrors of living in poverty for as long as she could. After we started school, we interacted with kids who had been through different struggles in life. We were exposed to real life. I learned quickly that being a good student was critical to being successful in life. I also knew that you did not have to be a brain surgeon to make good grades, especially in the inner-city schools. The key to making good grades and being the top student was simple; go to class, shut your mouth, and turn in ALL of your assignments. So that is just what I did! I became the teacher's pet in most of my classes in grade school. I continued to excel because my mother would spank me if I brought home anything less than a "B" on my report card. I maintained this same mentality throughout middle and high school. I was ninth in my class senior year and had a 3+ GPA. I had scored high enough on the ACT to receive a full athletic scholarship to the University of Wyoming to play football, but trouble seemed to find me frequently. I was arrested one day before the high school football jamboree my senior year for aggravated assault, and served 5 months in jail. Being the starting quarterback, I let not only my mother down, but also my team and coaches. After I had served my time and got out of jail, I was still determined to go to college. That fall I enrolled at the University of Tennessee at Martin where I was able to maintain a 3.0 GPA... until my second child was born. I then transferred to the University of Memphis to be closer to my kids, and support them. After transferring, my grades fell and I eventually dropped out of school all together to sell drugs full-time.



Streets Ministries would like to thank Danka Office Imaging for their printing services.



This seal is our pledge that your gifts are used as you planned.
Thank you for your support of Streets Ministries.

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MEMPHIS, TN
PERMIT NO. 1872

STREETS MINISTRIES
430 Vance Avenue
Memphis, TN 38126

CELEBRATING
20
YEARS

Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and the oppressed. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

Psalms 82:3-4

Ken Bennett
Executive Director

Andreana Brown
Education Director

Carmen Coleman
Education Coordinator

John Cowherd
Middle School Coordinator

Kevin Cox
Recreation Coordinator

Paul Crump
Operations Manager

Delvin Lane
Ministry Director

Crystal Neal
Elementary Coordinator

Richard Vining
Business Director

Joyce Wilfong
Administrative Assistant

CELEBRATING
20
YEARS

STREETS MINISTRIES
(901) 525-7380
www.streetsministries.org

continued ►



Roller Coaster Ride: Delvin Lane

Continued from front

After living on the edge for three extremely fast years, I was approached by Ken Bennett at a Booker T. Washington football game. He asked how school was going for me. Feeling embarrassed, I told him that I had dropped out to work. Of course, Ken knew that I was not working a real job, but instead, selling drugs. "If I pay for you to go back to school, will you go?" he asked. I said yes. He paid, and I went back to school with a new attitude. Shortly after that I was converted into a Christian and my life was transformed. I did well in school at first, but times got tough trying to work, take care of a family, and go to school. From time to time, I had to take courses at Southwest Tennessee Community College in order to pull my grades up. I stayed focused enough to finish up strong. This past August I completed all of my course studies to receive a BA from the University of Memphis. The University tried to send me my degree in the mail, but I declined because I want to walk across the stage in the FedEx

Forum this December not only so that I can feel proud, but also to allow my family and friends, who have prayed for me and supported me in my efforts of achieving a college degree, can see.

This story is an example of God's grace, mercy, and perseverance in my life. God uses my educational roller coaster ride to show kids that come through the doors of Streets Ministries that it may take longer than you think to achieve your goals, but if you stick with it and trust in Him, all things are possible through Him. (Philippians 4:13)

Our educational programs here at Streets are based on this model from Christ Jesus, and we strive tirelessly to prove to our kids here that anything is possible. We walk closely with them from elementary, middle, high school, and even through college to give them the support that they would normally not have. Continue to pray for our ministry here, its mission, and the many kids we serve on a daily basis.

38126: A Day of Service

By Crystal Neal, Elementary Coordinator

On September 29th, Streets partnered with Second Presbyterian Church for a "38126 Day" as part of CityServe 2007. During this time, elementary kids from the Foote and Cleaborn Homes community came to Streets to participate in an "Elementary Explosion", Streets' half day VBS program where kids participate in and arts and crafts session, play parachute games outside, join in group video games, and then relax in small group bible story time. Afterwards, a lunch was shared by all involved.

While all this was going on, several other volunteers from the group built what will eventually become the stage for the elementary room so that Streets can begin hosting Elementary "Club" later this month. A Streets first, Elementary "Club" will be a time where we share the Gospel with kids in a fun and creative way on Friday afternoons. If you would like to find out more about ways to volunteer for this exciting new program, or any of the other elementary oriented volunteer opportunities we

currently have available, please contact Crystal at crystal@streetministries.org or (901) 525-7380 x211. "Club" will be open for students in 3rd-5th grade on Friday afternoons, 3:30-5:30, during the school year.



Cameron, a Georgia Avenue Elementary student, takes a break from his "Elementary Explosion" craft to smile.

Sharing Christ Through Education to Improve our Community

By Andrea Brown, Education Director

Education is a powerful thing. It changes you. It represents a level of achievement. It makes you more confident and challenges you to be more than you previously thought possible. Many of us wear our education on the backs of our cars. Others on hats and sweatshirts. We believe it says something about who we are and where we are either going, or have been, in life.

In most of our homes, college was not an option. The only dilemma was in choosing *which* school to attend, not *if*. And for that purpose, education might not have been anything more than a means of getting into the right graduate program, or obtaining the perfect job with the best benefits package, or going on to living in the right neighborhood. To others however, it is a way to get out of a life built around surviving.

I think Albert Einstein says it most appropriately. "One should guard against preaching to young people success in the customary form as the main aim in life. The most important motive for work in school and in life is pleasure in work, pleasure in its result, and the knowledge of the value of the result to the community."

At Streets we look to motivate our students to go into the world and achieve a higher education. In turn, we then encourage students to use that knowledge and change their community. But it is not just the 38126 zip code that



Georgia Avenue Elementary students working on assignments during the Streets Smarts after school program.

can benefit from more learned citizens. A better education system brings about more intelligent workers. In time, this leads to more than just "jobs", but an increase in careers that will help support our local economy. But this effort will literally takes all of us. It cannot be done alone, as we are all connected.

Lets all of us represent a small spoke in this cycle of change, and encourage others not to simply sit by when we know that there is work that still needs to be done. Begin to share a faith that touches all of our community.



Tyler, a Pathways volunteer, works with BTW sophomore Reginald on some homework.



Takila, a Vance Middle School 8th grader, studies for an upcoming math test in the homework lab.

What We've Been Up To

■ Streets' 20th Anniversary Celebration was held on September 7th in Central Station's Hudson Hall. With over 300 volunteers, donors, and members of the community on hand, it was an exciting evening. A special thanks to Central BBQ, Grisanti's and Steak Out for providing the food as well as Pat Register for the entertainment. A good time was had by all as Streets' mission was celebrated and God glorified.

A few copies of the DVD that told the story of Streets that evening are still available. If you would like a copy to share, please contact richard@streetsministries.org.

■ This past season, the Streets Center served as the home gym for several Lady Warrior Volleyball games as Booker T. Washington High School was in the process of resurfacing their gym floor.

■ On August 31st, a party was held in recognition of the Streets Summer Institute Class of 2007. The twelve graduates enjoyed a lunch and watched a DVD compilation of their trip to St. Andrews at Sewanee.

■ For almost a full month, Streets was able to provide after school snacks to the hundreds of kids who came through the facility each day thanks to the generosity of Lynn Knox and her donation of thousands of snack cakes.

■ **Hope Presbyterian Church** operated their semi-annual "Urban Plunge" out of our facility from September 13th-16th. During their stay, the group visited area ministries, participated in work projects, and worshiped in the community.

■ A group of 40 volunteers from **Second Presbyterian Church** came to Streets Saturday, September 29th, as a part of their "CityServe 2007" missions emphasis weekend. During their time here, the group hosted a "38126 Day" short term missions project where they ran an elementary VBS and built a "Club" stage for the elementary room.



Talesha, a Georgia Avenue Elementary student, enjoys a cool treat after a recent "38126 Day" missions project.



BTW Freshmen enjoy a snack shortly after their induction into the "9th Grade Adacemy" hosted at Streets.

■ Booker T. Washington graduate and former Streets Summer Institute participant, Veronica, was awarded the **Little Rock Nine Foundation Scholarship and Mentorship Award**. The award was the result of a nationwide essay competition and came with \$10,000 in college scholarship money.

■ On October 3rd, Streets hosted Booker T. Washington's annual "9th Grade Academy". As a part of the induction, students choose a future profession based on their skills, interests, and web research.

■ October 10th, Streets held an ACT Workshop. In addition to learning important testing skills, students were presented with information on several colleges and were assisted with applications for financial aid.



What's Coming Up

- This upcoming season, the **Crichton College Comets** will once again 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.
- For the second year in a row, a group from **RUF Alabama** will be hosting a "38126 Weekend" short term missions project from October 26-28.
- Starting this month, Streets will be hosting its first ever Elementary "Club" night. Organized by Crystal Neal, Streets' Elementary Coordinator, the "Club" will consist of praise and worship songs, some entertaining games for the kids, and a Gospel presentation.



Jerrika and Christopher enjoy a rare slow song during a recent High School "Club" dance.



Georgia Avenue Elementary students enjoy playing under the parachute during a recent "38126 Weekend" VBS.

- On October 25th, **RUF Memphis** will be coming to Streets to put on a Fall Festival for Vance Elementary "Club" students. Activities will include a candy walk, a balloon burst race, 3D box maze, and "scary room".
- Streets is currently in need of more of middle and high school "Club" volunteers. If you are interested, or would like to learn more about the opportunities that remain, please contact richard@streetsministries.org. Participation can range from simply dropping food off to actually taking part in the "Club" experience.
- October 29th, Delvin will be breaking out the disco ball as Streets hosts a High School "Club" Fall Dance. A crowd of close to 300 students is expected for this much anticipated annual event, which will include decorations, food, and some very loud music.
- After just a year and a half in our new facility, Streets has seen an incredible increase in not only the number of kids that come from the doors, but volunteers as well. As a result, we have upgraded our database system and are currently inputting new information. If you would like to make sure your record is correct, please send your most current contact information including name, address, phone, and email to us at info@streetsministries.org.