

Donations: Personal Hygiene Month

During the month of March, Vance Middle School is putting an emphasis on personal hygiene through a series of educational talks and promotions. As part of the event, Streets has volunteered to serve as a collection point for donations of new and unopened bottles of shampoo, bars of soap, deodorant, mouthwash, toothpaste, hair brushes, etc. Once collected, the items will be sorted into boxes and distributed directly to the students as a reward for their participation in the program.

If you would like to help, please contact Richard at either richard@streetsministries.org or (901) 525-7380 x201. Any donations will be greatly appreciated and put to good use. Thank you.



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.

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Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

Colossians 3:23

STREETS - BETWEEN THE LINES

FEBRUARY 2008

Words for the Refrigerator Door

The Bennett family recently moved and because of the extreme kindness of one of our dear friends, we had a new refrigerator installed. It is big with all the bells and whistles. You can get cubed ice, crushed ice and cold water at any measure you need without opening the door. At fifty years of age, I can remember two distinct things about our refrigerator when I was a child. One, our ice box was small and in order to have ice we poured water into plastic trays. Two, there were no pictures, calendars or important events attached to the front of it.



A few months ago I received a call from Memphis Theological Seminary. The caller on the other end informed me that I had been named this year's recipient of the President's Humanitarian Award to be presented at the annual Henry Logan Starks Scholarship Dinner. Dr. Starks was the first African American professor at MTS and was a key leader of the 1968 Memphis Sanitation Worker's Strike. Without really knowing much about the award, I accepted it and immediately went to the website to find more information. As I read, I began to sweat bullets. What started out as an honor turned into a panic attack. The key phrase in the description that hit me was "a demonstration of faith, compassion, peace and justice for all humankind." I am honored that some folks view me that way, but what does that really mean? All I could think of is that those are great refrigerator words.

Yes, there are some things that you just cannot live without. You cannot live without your Blackberry, Treo, iPhone or perhaps most importantly, your refrigerator door. That door serves to remind you of important appointments, faces of friends and families on Christmas cards and ballgame schedules. Many people place words or verses or quotes that remind them of what is important or how they should live. The Starks Award has four words that may need to find their way onto our refrigerator doors in order to remind us of how God expects us to engage with the world around us daily. Take a quick look at the following.

Hebrews 11:1 - Now **faith** is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

1 Peter 3:8 - Finally, all of you live in harmony with one another, be sympathetic, love as brothers, be **compassionate** and humble.

Romans 14:19 - Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to **peace** and mutual edification.

Zechariah 7:9 - Administer true **justice**, show mercy and compassion to one another.

I do not know if you feel led to place these scriptures on your refrigerator door. However, I do hope that you and your family can find a place amid all of the other important happenings in your lives to place God's words in a prominent place on that door so you can be reminded daily of God's call on your lives.

As you read through the following stories, all written by Streets staff members highlighting each of the award's four characteristics, reflect on how you can make that refrigerator door more than you could have ever perceived possible!

Your Brother in Christ,
Ken

Ken Bennett
Executive Director

Andreana Brown
Education Director

Carmen Coleman
Education Coordinator

John Cowherd
Middle School Coordinator

Kevin Cox
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Faith: By Delvin Lane

It was third-down and five on the Hillcrest's 25 yard-line and we were down four points in the fourth quarter with only three minutes to go. On the previous play, Dexter, our starting senior quarterback, was ejected from the game and I was the sophomore backup. As coach called me off the bench and into the game, everyone could sense the defense gearing up to stop the run. Problem is, coach called a pass play. The offensive line, consisting mostly of seniors, was accustomed to blocking for Dexter, but not me. As a result, my faith in them was minimal at best, and with good reason. As I took the snap, Hillcrest's nose guard made an exceptional swim move on our center and collided with me seemingly out of nowhere. It was a hit that made me timid for the rest of the game and we lost.

Being a Christian leader is similar to playing quarterback. The playbook has been given to us in the Holy Bible, and the plays have been called in God's commandments. The defense that is seeking to stop us is the devil and his army, while the offense on the move is the Church. But unlike a game, we can have faith that God will lead us to victory.

As we grow in our faith, be reminded of God's promise to never leave or forsake us. I pray that we as the body of Christ will meet with Him regularly as we strive to live as He has instructed. With this in mind, have faith that the only unforeseen collision in our path is one that all Christians look forward to - eternity with our Lord.

Delvin Lane, Ministry Director
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Peace: by John Cowherd

Recently, Streets hosted a group of seventh grade girls for "Fight Free Friday". The event, which was developed by the administration at Vance Middle School as a way to help reduce the number of fights at school, is a reward program for students that can go fight free. In it, students are encouraged to be instruments of peace by trying to prevent their peers from fighting. On this Friday, a group of over eighty girls came to Streets where plenty of food and fun awaited them. Things got started with a series of skits performed by Streets staff members Delvin, Kevin and myself, followed by a series of group games and song. It was a great day and a pleasure to see these girls enjoy having fun, something their circumstances do not always allow room for.

For one day, Streets was a part of bringing peace to the violence and chaos by helping to reward this group of deserving girls.

"Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification." Romans 14:19

John Cowherd, Middle School Coordinator
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Vance Middle School students and teachers enjoying a few "Fight Free Friday" festivities at the Streets Center.

Compassion: by Kevin Cox

Streets currently has three youth basketball teams that participate in Memphis Athletic Ministries' winter league. This league gives our kids the opportunity to play other teams throughout the city in a Christian atmosphere. Coaches Cleo Baggett and Patrick Roberson, who also work as part-time staff here at Streets, serve as coaches along with myself to teach our kids fundamentals and strategies about the game of basketball. Many of our young people are extremely talented but, for various reasons, do not play for the local schools. As a result, we become the alternative that provides them with an outlet to participate in a sport they love to play.

This season, I am coaching a talented 14-and-under boys basketball team named the Streets' Eagles. We are approaching the end of the season and are currently undefeated. The team plays a "University of Memphis" style of game that presses, runs, rebounds and defends very well. Because of this, we have won every game by 20 points or more. In the MAM league, once you are leading by 20, you must play defense inside the three-point line to give the opposing team a chance to decrease the lead. Furthermore, you cannot press or steal the ball once possession has been established. So while the Eagles play with heart and effort, they frequently display anger and aggression towards each other because they all want to win by as many points as possible. In practice and pregame devotions, I often talk about being compassionate towards one another, as well as others, as we compete on the court.

Colossians 3:12-14 states, "As God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity".

I use this passage to remind the Eagles to be mindful of loving each other and not just try to pile up points. Mastery of this biblical point will cause us to become a truly dominant unit that serves God through our play.

Kevin Cox, Recreation Coordinator
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Justice: By Andreana Brown

Each Monday morning, our staff meets to discuss the weeks' events. Recently, after a short devotion, Ken closed the meeting by urging us to step out of our comfort zones as we interact with kids during the week. That statement made me cringe. As an adult, I have become pretty good about doing only what is comfortable. Then I am reminded of Jesus. His entire life on earth was uncomfortable; born in a barn, deserted by his friends, and then killed for a crime he did not commit. All in the pursuit of justice (righteousness) for us.

Jesus was the ultimate activist, speaking out for those that otherwise would not have had a voice. He saw wrong being committed and did something about it. But we forget about that Jesus. Instead we pray that he end our personal suffering and make peace on earth without us having to do anything.

It is hard standing up for what is right. Right can cause us to lose our friends, job, or even cause our kids not speak to us. But this is what justice does. It puts us in uncomfortable positions and asks us to look beyond ourselves while being willing to make justice our cause.

Look for ways to step out of your comfort zone; you never know how God will use you. Some of the biggest blessings come out of the most uncomfortable situations.

Andreana Brown, Education Director
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Streets' Eagles teammates Allantate, James, Darion enjoy some time together prior to practice.

What We've Been Up To

- On January 28th and February 4th, members of **Independent Presbyterian Church's** Covenanters Class served food for students attending Delvin's high school "Club". Several open dates for elementary, middle and high school "Club" still remain, so please contact Richard at richard@streetsministries.org if you or your group would be interested in volunteering to serve.
- On January 30th, members of the Streets staff were invited by the **Memphis Grizzlies** to participate in their TEAM UP Leadership Lunch. The event, which featured NBA Hall-of-Famer and national mentoring spokesperson, **Bill Russell**, offered tools and resources for area businesses interested in making positive changes in their community.
- This past Valentine's, both middle and high school "Club" hosted a banquet style dance in the Recreation Room. Students dressed up in their finest and enjoyed a full buffet, decorations and a festive background for photos.
- On Sunday, February 17th, **New Beginnings Community Church** installed Sam Murrell as their new pastor in the Recreation Room at Streets.
- As a part of keeping in touch with our scholarship students, Carmen, Kevin and Crystal took a group of former Streets students currently enrolled in college out to dinner. A good time was had by all as the students spent time catching up with each other over a meal.



BTW students Jasmine and Derrica take a break from the dance floor to pose for a photo.



Vance Middle School teammates Baye, Travious and Kenroy pose with John after winning the City Championship.

- The Vance Middle School basketball team finished the season at 23-3 and won the City Championship. For the first round of the state tournament, Streets took a van-load of students, teachers and parents to Martin, Tennessee for the game.
- This past semester, Pathways students have been able to enjoy a healthy after school snack compliments of **SoutherSun Asset Management**.
- Thanks to a group of generous fans, Streets has been able to take 98 kids to every **University of Memphis** basketball game this year.



Dressed in their Valentine's finest, a good time was had by all during the themed High School "Club".



What's Coming Up

- On February 29th, Andreaana will be hosting a "Leap Year Lock-In" for the middle school girls here at Streets.
- On Sunday evening March 2nd, Delvin will be speaking to the youth group at **Emmanuel United Methodist Church** about Streets approach to ministry in the 38126.
- From March 6-9th, adult members from **Hope Presbyterian Church** will host their annual "Urban Plunge" at the Streets Center. During this time, the group will eat and sleep at Streets, tour other ministries in the neighborhood and participate in various service and work projects throughout the community.
- Beginning March 12th, Streets will be taking 28 sophomores and juniors from Booker T. Washington on the 2008 edition of "College Tours". This year's tour will include trips to nine colleges and universities throughout Tennessee, Alabama and Mississippi and promises, as always, to be a motivating trip for the participating students. Please pray for their safety during this trip.
- On March 14th, **Mississippi State RUF** will be participating in a "38126 Weekend" short-term missions trip. As part of the experience, the group will run an "Elementary Explosion" VBS for students in the neighborhood, participate in a light work project, and then eat dinner at the Four Way Restaurant, a local soul-food paradise.



A group of 2007 Street Smart students show off the new books they chose from Borders with the First Books grant.

- On April 12th, Streets, along with several other area organizations, will be assisting **St. Patrick's Church** with a "Foote Homes Community Day". The event will feature various volunteer clean up projects throughout the neighborhood, games for the kids, and a Health Fair for area residents.
- Thanks to a grant from **First Books of the Mid-South**, all enrolled Street Smart, Pathways and Streets Summer Institute students will be able to purchase a book at Borders' book store free of charge.



Taurean, center, rallies interest in the neighborhood prior to an "Elementary Explosion" VBS this past year.



Georgia Avenue Elementary students arrive early for a recent Elementary Explosion VBS.