

Staff Spotlight: Grace Walker

Streets welcomes Grace Walker on full time staff as the Education Coordinator. Grace has grown up in many different cities, but she now considers Memphis to be her home. She is a graduate of Crichton College and has a degree in Interdisciplinary Studies with a concentration in Humanities and Urban Studies.

Having served as a summer intern at Streets back in 2006, Grace is excited about getting to know many of the students she worked with again. This past June, she had that opportunity by serving as a chaperone for the Middle School camps at both For the Kingdom and Southwind-Florida.

This fall, Grace will be working with students from Vance Middle School both on campus and at the Streets Center. She will also be assisting Carmen with Pathways and our college prep tutoring programs. Please help us make her feel welcome.



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STREETS MINISTRIES

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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

Thanks for Not Looking at the Price Tag

I was born in 1957. I have incredibly fond memories of my childhood. We did not have much but always seemed to have plenty. We never owned a house but always had a home. I remember living in five different rental properties, two of which were on the same stretch of street, over the course of my time in elementary, junior, and senior high school. My father was a common laborer at the old Army Defense Depot. Until his passing my junior year, he worked hard five days a week and did the best he could to provide basic needs for our family of four. Life was good, but I vividly remember one question that was always in the forefront of everything we did. What is the number on the price tag?



Now I know what everyone reading this article will say about looking at the price tag. "Don't we all?" Well that is certainly true. But when you have very little or even just enough, you get tired of calculating every little penny before you spend it. Anything outside of the basic need category, such as shopping for new shoes when you really need them, becomes a luxury. So a vacation? Well, that is something you read about and often dream of but do not really include in your summer plans. For the majority of the young people and their families that we have worked with for twenty plus years now, this is their plight.

However, because of your incredible generosity year after year, our kids here at Streets have had opportunities just like every other kid in the City of Memphis. This summer they have traveled to Georgia, Florida, Chattanooga, Missouri, and Arkansas. They have met kids from different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. They have hiked mountains, navigated challenging white waters, hung out on the ocean shore, played in hot springs, and eaten foods that, while seemingly common to us, were first time treats. Most importantly, they have had the Gospel of Jesus Christ presented to them in clear terms that have been life changing for many of them. In short, they have had a summer that they will never forget, and they have had this opportunity because you did not choose to look at the price tag.

Please do not take this wrong. I know that you do not recklessly use God's resources - nor do we at Streets. We are prayerful about where we take kids and are very particular about weighing the costs involved. However, we both know that it is hard to place a price tag on life changing experiences. In this newsletter, you will read about this past summer at Streets and the eternal impact that it has had on the lives of the kids we are called by Christ to serve.

Thank you for trusting us to use your gifts in such a way that the Good News of the Gospel will continue to go forth in communities that are struggling. Let us continue to be people of faith that do not allow price tags to keep us from placing the Cross before kids in many different places in many different ways.

Your Brother in Christ,
Ken

Ken Bennett
Executive Director

Andreana Brown
Mission Graduation Director

Carmen Coleman
Education Director

John Cowherd
Middle School Coordinator

Paul Crump
Operations Manager

Whitney Hale
Development Coordinator

Delvin Lane
Assistant Director

Crystal Neal
Elementary Coordinator

Richard Vining
Business Director

Grace Walker
Education Coordinator

Joyce Wilfong
Administrative Assistant



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Discipline: Andreana Brown

I am a runner. Well, more like a part-time runner. Ok, I am a seasonal runner. I envy the people that are able bear the heat and keep the pace during these long summer months. These runners are actually one of my favorite sights on my way to and from work each day.

I really have no excuses. There is even a great gym down the street from my house. There is only one thing that I lack...discipline.

Discipline is one of the things I admired so greatly in this year's Summer Institute students. Every morning they woke up, came to Streets, and sat through four hour long classes. Each year we seek out new ways to challenge our students, and this past summer was no exception. Students read *Great Expectations*, learned to debate, polished their math skills, and were taught various public speaking techniques. All of this was not easy, and many times they were given more homework than they have ever had before, but time management became a learned lesson. The idea was not to overwhelm the students, but to have them succeed over obstacles they believed were too large to overcome.

In a neighborhood where only 45% of the population holds a high school diploma or GED, the accomplishment of going and succeeding in high school is huge. When many of those around you have given up, it is not always easy

to summon the fortitude to move forward. It takes an enormous amount of discipline to persevere when there are nothing but challenges along the way. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, "Students who are the first in their families to go to college end poverty in their family line forever." That is huge. I cannot imagine how hard the task of being the first can be. You have the weight of your family, community, and those that are pushing for you to succeed on your shoulders. All the while, those that are expecting you to fail look on.

I am so proud to say that each senior participating in this year's Summer Institute class, along with our Pathways mentorship program this past semester, was accepted into college. If the U.S. Department of Labor's statistics hold true, that is ten students that will see the cycle of poverty stop with them.

Please pray for these students that they may have the continued discipline needed to move forward, and thank you to all of you who help make this step possible.

"Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:13-14

Close to Home: by John Cowherd

Every summer we have the opportunity to take middle school kids away from the city for a week of camp. I always enjoy being with the kids as they canoe for the first time or complete a high ropes course. It is an incredible feeling to share. This summer offered something a little different as we had the opportunity to take part in a second week of camp. The camp was different as well. It was in Florida, a place that Streets has never taken middle school kids. One day, while we were riding in the van, I asked the group of kids what was the farthest place they have been from home. A couple of them answered that they had spent time with relatives in Chicago. Another mentioned that he had spent a summer in Atlanta. More than a few had been to Arkansas or Mississippi, but several others had not

traveled out of the state. One kid did not answer, so I asked him again, thinking that he might not have been paying attention. He said he was still thinking. After a long pause, he answered that the furthest from home he had ever been was with me last year when we went to Victory Ranch. The guy beside him joined in and said, "yeah, me too."

Sometimes it takes a moment like this to remind me of why we do what we do here at Streets. I remembered these comments during the fourteen hour bus ride to and from that camp in Florida this summer. The ride is worth it...every minute of it. Thank you to all who support our mission and programming. It truly makes a difference in the lives of these youth.

turn for photo ►

It is a Big Deal: by Delvin Lane

For many of us, taking a trip these days is far from our thoughts due to record high fuel cost. But for kids living in the 38126 community, taking a trip anywhere is far from their thoughts as they rarely have the opportunity to go on a trip anyway. Going to the mall every once in a while is the equivalent to other kids traveling to the beach for the summer. Compounding the problem, the city pools have been shut down for half of the summer only to reopen with rules that prevent kids from swimming unless they travel across town with a parent and register - an impossible task for most. With Liberty Land has closed and the county fair gone, what on earth do we expect our kids to do all summer? Well, that is where you have stepped in.

Because of your generosity and obedience to the Lord, Streets kids are blessed to participate in summer travel as well. You have provided resources for our kids that have given them opportunities they would not normally have. For example, instead of them taking the frequently traveled road to gang-banging, drug dealing, and premarital sex, a group of kids from Streets recently chose to take part in a day long trip to Hot Springs, Arkansas where they went to Crystal Springs. Here, the kids were able to experience things that would have otherwise been impossible for them to experience. They rode the ten story tall water slides, bounced around in the wave pool, and laid back in the lazy pool until the sun went down. It was an awesome time enabled by your faithfulness and generosity.



Pat and Cleo, members of Streets part time staff, ride the Freedom Fall at Magic Springs with an innocent bystander.

I know some of you may be thinking, "Ok, big deal!" Well, you are exactly right, as it is a big deal for our kids to experience this kind of trip. Furthermore, it is the kind of trip that would have been impossible without your prayers and support. Your devotion to our ministry and mission here at Streets has not only given them access to great experiences, but also has allowed them to hear the Gospel in such a way that will empower them to live a life of obedience to God. Thank you!



Nicole, Kaderia, Deneisha pose with John after a "muckfest" activity at Southwind Camp in Florida.



Waihelle smiles while taking a break from one of the water rides at Magic Springs.

What We've Been Up To

- On May 15th, Crystal, along with twenty students from Georgia Avenue Elementary, went on a Wolf River conservation tour with representatives from the **International Paper Corporation**. During the tour, students learned about the importance of taking care of the environment while hiking trails and canoeing down the river. A good time was had by all as students were able to enjoy God's creation right here in their own city.
- On two separate occasions this past summer, the direct ministry staff at Streets loaded up the vans and took students from the neighborhood on a day trip to **Lamber's Cafe** in Sikeston, Missouri. Here, students were able throw rolls at one another without getting into trouble and enjoy a great lunch.
- All summer long, Monday and Tuesday nights have been "Movie Night" at Streets. Students from both the Foote and Cleaborn Homes as well as the Highland Heights community have come to the Rec Room to enjoy a movie, some snacks, and a much needed break from the summer heat.
- As a creative way to help beat the afternoon sun, Streets has hosted several **Madden 2008** video game tournaments in the Rec Room. As much fun to play in as they were to watch, the tournaments included trophies and prizes for the winners as well as snacks and drinks for the rather vocal audience in attendance.
- On June 6th, Streets hosted a community softball game. It was a great time for kids and adults from the neighborhood to catch up with the staff and find out what is going on at Streets.
- Streets Elementary Vacation Bible School hit the beach this year with a theme of "Surf's Up with Jesus!". Each day, Students from the Foote and Cleaborn Homes Community as well as the **Highland Heights** area participated in games, crafts, and Bible Studies. A special thank you to all who participated and helped put on the VBS!



Leader Trek volunteers spend time with elementary students from both Georgia and Treadwell during a recent VBS.



Students from Treadwell enjoy time in the Rec Room.

- While we are not quite ready to start our own league just yet, Streets has been frequenting Billy Hardwick's All-Star Lanes this summer with groups of kids looking to have a good time with the staff.
- From July 20-25th, Streets served as home for sixteen middle school youth and six leaders from **Hope Presbyterian Church** as they held their annual Youth Urban Plunge. During their stay in the neighborhood, the youth group members ate and slept at Streets, participated in an area work project, and led a Vacation Bible School in the community at the **Emmanuel Episcopal Center**.



What's Coming Up

- Hard to believe, but **Memphis City Schools** begin classes Monday, August 11th. So, with the fall semester upon us, Streets is currently seeking out volunteers for its rapidly expanding programming. Opportunities are currently available in our **Pathways** mentorship and elementary **Ready Readers** programming as well as for **Room Adopters**, **Street Smarts**, and both middle and high school **Bible Study** groups. Dates for groups to provide **Club Food** on Monday and Thursday nights are also available.

If you are interested in any of these opportunities, or would like to know more about other ways in which you or your group can get involved this coming semester, please contact Whitney at either (901) 525-7380 x209 or whitney@streetsministries.org. Programming is set to begin September 8th, so please contact her today!

- On August 12th, a group of men from **Independent Presbyterian Church** will be hosting a banquet for the Booker T. Washington football team. The event, which is now in its seventh year, will be full of food and fellowship as the men and their families show their appreciation to the team for their hard work this summer in preparation for this year's season.
- Saturday, August 23rd at 1:00 pm, the Booker T. Washington Warriors will be taking on the **St. George's Gryphons** as a part of the **Bridges Kickoff Classic** held at the Liberty Bowl Memorial Stadium.



Brittany and a volunteer leader from CUMC participate in a game in the gym as part of an Elementary Explosion.



Fondarius and Whitney enjoy a story and a healthy snack during Streets' Elementary VBS this summer.

- Beginning August 23rd, Grace, Carmen, Crystal, and Whitney will be participating in **First Evangelical Church's** annual Missions Conference on behalf of Streets. As part of the conference, Delvin will also be speaking to several Sunday School Classes. If you would like more information as to the time and date, please contact Delvin at delvin@streetsministries.org.
- August 23rd, a group of twenty students from **Rhodes College** are coming to Streets for a tour as a part of their freshman orientation.
- Also on August 23rd, a group of twenty-five students from the **Agape Youth Ministry** at **Carter's Chapel Full Gospel Baptist Church** will be hosting an Elementary Explosion VBS at Streets.
- A group of 40 volunteers from **Second Presbyterian Church** will come to Streets Saturday, September 27th, as a part of their "CityServe 2008" missions emphasis weekend. During their time here, the group will host a 38126 Day short term missions project where they will run an elementary VBS and assist with various yard maintenance projects on site.
- Be sure to tune in to *The Josh Davis Show* on 990 KWAM, Monday-Thursday between 12:00-1:00 pm for a *Streets Minute* with both Delvin and Ken.