

The Two Sides of Success

By Lindsey Hughes

Through the Mission Graduation program, we are hoping to see a substantial increase in the academic success of our student participants. This is not a unique goal as it is one shared by many other similar plans you may have already heard about. But what makes our program different is its multi-sided approach. On the education side, our main focus will be to reinforce the fundamental math and reading skills that many of today's students lack. In order to achieve this, we have consulted several knowledgeable resources and researched a wide range of curriculum to develop a program that will help us instill these skills in a student's mind. As a result, we hope that students will see the importance of their education in light of the opportunities offered through Mission Graduation's programs.

While teaching these skills, we also place an emphasis on the gifts that we have all been given by our Lord - the giver of all wisdom. This is what will set Mission Graduation's apart and make the largest long-term impact on a student's life.

Thank you to all those who support Streets and its mission, and to God alone be the glory for this work! "For the Lord gives wisdom and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding." Proverbs 2:6

Lindsey is a graduate of MTSU and is a Mission Graduation Advisor.



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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

STREETS - BETWEEN THE LINES

SEPTEMBER 2008

Speaking Hope Into Hopelessness Unconditionally

Over last year's spring break, Debbie, the kids, and I spent a few days in New Orleans with my cousin and his wife. They live in an area called Metairie in a house rebuilt after the destruction of Katrina. He drove us around New Orleans and told the story of devastation and the concern for the future of a once vibrant river town on the Mississippi. As we spoke to friends and neighbors, a similar thread ran through each story. Where would this place be without the body of Christ speaking into the situation? Those stories rang true not only in New Orleans, but all along the Gulf Coast. Even now, churches are rallying resources, both material and human, to address the needs of Houston, Galveston, and other communities affected by Ike. This army of Christians will land in areas all along the coast to do one thing - speak hope into these crushed areas unconditionally. It will not matter whether they are appreciated, welcomed, acknowledged or rewarded. They will bring hope.



On September 12, 2008, Streets announced before the entire student body of Vance Middle School that hope was on the way in the form of a program called Mission Graduation. Four weeks ago Streets signed a memorandum of understanding with the Memphis City Schools to implement an incentive based program at the middle school campus. In order to jumpstart this program, Streets moved our own Andreana Brown into the director's position and hired six college graduates to be advisors.

This initiative is the brainchild of a local funding institution that approached us close to a year ago with the idea of an incentive based program for middle schools. After hundreds of hours of dialogue and research with community, school, and local educators, Streets' Mission Graduation program was born.

In all honesty, incentive programs are not new, but they have received a lot of attention as of late. The reviews have been mixed to say the least. Some institutions swear by them and attribute great success. Others state that they are a complete waste of time and resource. Our goal is no different from any other program out there. We all want kids to graduate at a level that provides the opportunity for educational advancement beyond high school. However, our program has a different motivation and twist. It is our relationship with Christ that drives Mission Graduation and will set it apart.

We will do all of the necessary things - from tracking to tutoring to seminars to college tours to college entrance testing and more. You see, the "more" is what will make the difference. The "more" is all about hope. These students in the program will not only see the Mission Graduation staff in the hallways and in classrooms, they will also see them leading Bible Studies at 430 Vance Avenue, singing songs and being in skits at the weekly Clubs, handing out Christmas baskets, cheering at the neighborhood athletic events, and simply walking through the neighborhood while giving a word of encouragement to anyone in their path. They will be the hands and feet of Christ and in turn speak hope into what the world perceives to be a hopeless public educational system.

In the next few pages you will hear from members of the Mission Graduation team. As you read through and get to know them better, please consider the following scripture.

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect. 1 Peter 3:15

Your Brother in Christ,

Ken

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Executive Director

Delvin Lane
Assistant Director

Sarah Lawrence Allen
Mission Graduation Advisor

Andreana Brown
Mission Graduation Director

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Mission Graduation Advisor

Tujula Tuggle
Mission Graduation Advisor

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Making the Connection

By **Andreana Brown**

“So, let me get this straight. You’re paying kids to learn?” Anytime you mention incentive based learning, it opens a barrage of questions. And rightfully so, in our culture we believe being successful should be incentive enough to do well in school. Yet if we are honest with ourselves, how many of us could make the correlation between making an “A” in Physical Science and getting a job later in life? The idea behind incentive based programs is to give the student an outside motivating factor to do well in school, a motivation that is often lacking in low-income homes. The reality is that many of the kids we work with do not have examples of people in their lives that have used education to be successful.

With that in mind, Mission Graduation has been designed to be more than just an incentive program that will simply “pay kids to learn.” We believe that through bi-weekly group meetings with students, Bible Study, after-school tutoring, cultural enrichment activities, community service, and a summer enrichment camp, students can be prepared for future success and empowered to embrace it when it comes.

To achieve this lofty notion of a holistic approach to each child, Streets has hired six qualified men and women, two for each grade the program will serve, to have a daily presence on the campus of Vance Middle School. Their main focus is to keep kids accountable while building



Terrance Young, a Mission Graduation Advisor, spends time with Dontavious in the afternoon at a pre-program cook out.



The Mission Graduation staff are (left to right) Latoya, Kevin, Lindsey, Tujula, Terrance, Sarah Lawrence, and Andreana.

relationships and being a positive adult in their lives.

Once enrolled in the program, student participation is based on keeping good conduct, maintaining at least a 2.5 GPA, attending school regularly with a minimum amount of tardies, and a commitment to not get pregnant or father a child. In turn, students are assigned a Mission Graduation Advisor who meets with them during their free period and discusses such issues as goal setting, self-esteem, and financial literacy.

If the goals are met each six weeks, students will receive a stipend through a debit card type system. For each academic year that students stay continue on in the program, they will receive an additional scholarship which can be applied towards college upon graduation.

The ultimate goal is to increase the number of students that believe in themselves, want to do well in school, and go on to not just enroll, but complete college. We are convinced that through Streets, the positive reinforcement that Mission Graduation can provide will further an atmosphere of learning and achieve this goal.

Andreana is a graduate of Louisiana State University and is Mission Graduation Director. Formerly, she served Streets as Education Director.

Preparing for Success

By **Tujula Tuggle**

In this day and age, students are faced with many adversities that limit or hinder their ability to learn. As a result, a large number limit their desires as to what they can grow up and become. This causes us to think. What encouragement can be given to stir up the gifts that lie within students and cause them to want to do and be so much more? Part of the answer to that question is why I am a part of Streets’ new program - Mission Graduation.

Mission Graduation seeks to play a major role in the lives of students who choose to participate by providing a different outlook on life. It provides students with advisors that truly and sincerely care about the outcome of their future and are willing to invest in their lives.

It teaches young men and women how to be respectful towards others as well as themselves. It builds self-esteem, improves grades, and helps students with difficult decisions. Most of all, it rewards the students who want to do the right things by giving them the tools they need to succeed.

For example, one of the students I work with, Brandon, had a reputation for acting out and being disrespectful towards his teachers at Georgia Avenue Elementary. However during his time at Vance Middle School this year, Brandon has decided to refrain from fighting and arguing with his teachers because of his dedication to the decision to be a part of Mission Graduation. His attitude has gone from “I can’t do this” to “I will achieve better for myself.”



Terrance, a Vance Middle School 6th grader, spends time with Tujula Tuggle between classes.

Since the launch of Mission Graduation, many students who did not previously come to Streets now do so on a regular basis. This is a direct result of the program’s large presence on campus each day. This gives us the opportunity to further engage and encourage their efforts. As a result, it is our hope that Mission Graduation will prepare even more students from the community with the strength necessary to grow up and become successful.

Tujula is a graduate of the University of Memphis and is a Mission Graduation Advisor.



Mission Graduation Advisors Terrance Young and Sarah Lawrence Allen spend time with Paris at Vance.



Mission Graduation Advisors Kevin Tompkins and LaToya Dansby spend time with Essence before school.

What We've Been Up To

- **Memphis City Schools'** fall semester has begun and Streets is seeking 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, 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.

- On August 8th, Coach Ernie Rives of **Crichton College** taught a Red Cross CPR course to the Streets staff.
- On August 12th, a group of men from **Independent Presbyterian Church** hosted a pre-season banquet for the Booker T. Washington football team. A good time was had by all as donated BBQ from the **Germantown Commissary** was served and John Sartelle Jr. delivered a message from the book of Luke to the team.
- On August 20th, Crystal and Whitney attended a **FedEx** African American Network Mentor Luncheon in order to speak about mentoring opportunities at Streets and give information about how to get involved with students.
- On August 23rd, Grace, Carmen, and Whitney participated in **First Evangelical Church's** annual Missions Conference on behalf of Streets. As part of the conference, Delvin spoke to the middle and high school youth groups about opportunities in urban ministry.
- On August 23rd, a group of twenty students from **Rhodes College** came to Streets for an overview of the community we serve, an introduction to the programming we offer, and a facility tour as a part of their freshman orientation.



Drew Gibson and Monterrio meet during a Pathways session.



Booker T. Washington students enjoying themselves during the first Monday night "Club" of the semester.

- Also on August 23rd, a group of twenty-five students from the **Agape Youth Ministry** at **Carter's Chapel Full Gospel Baptist Church** hosted an Elementary Explosion VBS at Streets.
- **Hope Presbyterian Church** operated their semi-annual "Urban Plunge" out of the Streets Center from September 11th-14th. During their stay, the group visited area ministries, participated in work projects, and worshipped in the community.
- While Booker T. Washington High School and Vance Middle were having their gym courts resurfaced, the Streets Gym served as the home court for both the Lady Warrior and Eagles volleyball teams.



What's Coming Up

- On Tuesday and Thursday afternoons this semester, Jamie McDonald of **Crichton College** is teaching an ACT Workshop at Streets. In addition to learning important testing skills, students are being presented with information on several colleges and being assisted with applications for financial aid.
- Beginning September 15th, the **Crichton College Comets** will begin their quest for a NAIA title with their first practice of the year here at the Streets Center.
- On September 23rd, Whitney, Carmen, Crystal, and Grace will be putting on the second of two volunteer orientation sessions this semester. The sessions, which were created to help better acquaint volunteers to Streets, its mission, and the neighborhood it serves, have served as an excellent way to help manage the influx of new volunteers we have been receiving due to program growth.
- September 26th, Carmen and Emmabeth will be participating in a ACT Workshop for teachers. The workshop, which will be hosted by the **University of Memphis**, will focus on training instructors how to improve student test scores.
- September 28th, **Christ the King Lutheran's** high school youth will be providing the snacks for Elementary "Club". If you or your group would be interested in this or similar volunteer opportunities, please contact Whitney at (901) 525-7380 or whitney@streetsministries.org.



Elizabeth Martin, a longtime Streets mentor, meets with Tekia, a first year Pathways student, earlier this semester.



Georgia Avenue and Downtown Elementary students await the start of the semester's first Elementary "Club".

- A group of twenty volunteers from **Second Presbyterian Church's Covenant Keepers** class will come to Streets on Saturday, September 27th as a part of **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, participate in crafts and games, and serve lunch to the students in attendance.
- On September 30th, Victor Marks of **All Things Possible Ministries** will be putting on a martial arts demonstration for students in the Streets Center Gym. Victor holds a 6th Degree Keichu-Do karate black belt and will be presenting a Gospel message as a part of his traveling demonstration.
- In what is always a memorable evening, John will be hosting his annual Middle School Fall Festival October 22nd. As a part of the evening, students will climb through a maze, run through "the scary room," and consume lots and lots of candy. If you would like to help with the candy portion of this event, please contact John at john@streetsministries.org.
- Thanks to a generous donation by **SouthernSun Asset Management**, students participating in the Pathways program will have healthy snacks to choose from all semester long.