

The Tour Really Works: continued from inside

Midway through the tour, Steve asked me, "I was just on this tour. Did I really look as young as they do?" Oh yes! I answered.

The affirmation and motivation taken away from College Tours by our students is much stronger when our kids get a chance to see people from their community doing well at a school. Here at Streets, we are blessed to have had a number of kids who at one time came on a tour and, as a result, became not only willing, but excited to share their experiences with current participants. Streets currently has over thirty students on some form of scholarship attending a four year college or university.

Please continue to pray for our ministry and its programs like College Tours as we bring this semester to a close. And as summer approaches, ask the Lord for creative ways for you to get involved.

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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

APRIL 2009

They are "Our" Kids Not "Those" Kids

Let me start by saying that the reason for the tardiness of this newsletter is me! As chaplain for the University of Memphis Tigers, I have been pretty tied up for the past couple of weeks. As you can imagine, it has been an emotional rollercoaster.

If you have ever been to the NCAA tournament, you know about the incredible hype that surrounds the event. Because of my position as chaplain, I actually get to travel with the team during the tournament. This year, when we stepped off the plane in Kansas City, we were treated like royalty. There was even a police escort to lead us through town as we headed towards the five-star hotel. The whole city gives itself away to basketball for the weekend. It is an indescribable experience!



However, as great as all that is, something occurred away from Kansas City at the same time that gave me much more satisfaction. You see, years ago, we at Streets decided that inner-city kids needed an avenue from which to visit the places we had talked about since the seventh grade with them. Those places are colleges and universities. So while I was away with the Tiger basketball team, Delvin, Carmen, Emmabeth, Kenny, Vic, and others boarded a charter bus filled with 43 kids from both sites and set off on a four day tour that, over the years, has radically changed the way of thinking for hundreds of kids. Kids from neighborhoods that see very few of their peers pursue higher education.

When I was doing Manassas Young Life in North Memphis over twenty three years ago, I had an interesting conversation with a young lady named Annie at our weekly Bible Study. She had recently heard a lady in line behind her at the grocery store refer to Annie and her friends as "those people". This confused her because Annie and the lady were both African Americans. What does "those" people mean?

I think our, or certainly my, problem is that even though I love this city, my passion is far too often just for "my" kids and not "those" kids. As long as Kristin, Matthew, and Emily are in a good situation, I am pretty satisfied. However, my heart should break everyday that I say "those" kids and not "our" kids. God's word is very clear that all are made in His image. In turn, my heart should break for every kid that struggles academically in our city and I should pray about my own engagement with a school system that self admittedly is in a crisis moment.

On the next few pages, you will read about some unique opportunities made available to "our" kids through Streets' annual College Tours programming. Please read and then tomorrow, when you watch the news or read the local paper, begin to speak in terms of "our" kids and not "those" kids. From there, please pray about how God would have you engage.

Your Brother in Christ,

Ken

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What We've Been Up To

- February 18th, Delvin spoke at **Riveroaks Presbyterian Church's** annual missions conference dinner about Streets and its mission to students in the Memphis metropolitan area.
- February 19th, the Streets Center closed for the day and took three van loads of kids to watch the Booker T. Washington boys basketball team win the City Basketball Championship. The team eventually made it all the way to the State Championship game in Murfreesboro, Tennessee later in the month.
- On February 20th, members of Streets' staff were invited by the **Lipscomb Pitts Breakfast Club** to listen to former United States Attorney General **John Ashcroft** speak. As a part of the invitation, Streets was also honored as a Lipscomb Pitts 2009 "Charity Spotlight" member.
- On March 9th, just prior to the Booker T. Washington boys sub-state basketball game, Streets hosted a school pep rally and prepared a pre-game meal for the team in the Recreation Room at the Streets Center.
- March 15th-19th, the "Navigators" from **Boston University** made a trek to Streets for a spring break service project. Once in Memphis, the group of thirteen students listened to Delvin share his testimony, took a van tour of the neighborhood, tutored students in both our Mission Graduation and elementary programs, and assisted with work projects at Vance Middle School. It was a rewarding and enriching time for all involved.
- In what has become somewhat of a regular event, a group of **Evangelical Christian School** students came to Streets on Wednesday, March 25th to give the facility a deep cleaning. After a brief orientation about Streets and its mission to the neighborhood, the students swept the floors, cleaned the windows, took out the trash, picked up the grounds, and dusted the offices. A service greatly appreciated by not only the Streets staff, but the over 1,500 students a week who come through the doors here at the 430 Vance Avenue site. If you or your group would be interested in participating in a similar volunteer opportunity, please contact whitney@streetsministries.org.



Egg Hunt: Streets Smarts students during a recent Easter egg hunt.



VBS: Tanisha, a Treadwell Elementary student, participates in an after school activity held in the Streets Center Gym.

- On April 8th, Grace, Carmen, and Delvin hosted an after school Easter Egg hunt for elementary students in the neighborhood. As a part of the festivities, students were served hotdogs off the grill, participated in the making of their own egg baskets, ate LOTS of candy, and had a good time in general.
- On April 13th, the **Thomas W. Briggs Foundation** hosted its quarterly board meeting at Streets. In addition to the meeting, members of the board took a tour of the facility and listened to Delvin and Ken share their history as well as vision for the future of the ministry.
- On April 18th, Streets was honored by **Carnival Memphis** as one of the three selected Carnival Children's Charities for 2009 during the "Krews for Kids" fund-raiser.



What's Coming Up

- April 18th, Carmen will be hosting a lock-in for several of the high school girls. As part of the weekend, the girls will watch movies, play games, participate in a devotional, and even make a field trip to a heated swimming pool!
- From April 20th-23rd, students will be taking their TCAP Achievement Tests. During this important time, please be in prayer for alertness and concentration for the students.
- April 21st, Whitney and Carmen will be attending chapel services held at **St. Mary's Episcopal School** as part of receiving a Community Fund Grant from the school. Proceeds from the grant will be applied towards our annual **Streets Summer Institute** programming.
- May 5th, Streets will be saying "thank you" to all of this past semester's dedicated volunteers with an End of the Year Party held with students.
- On the afternoon of May 12th, members of **Carnival Memphis** will be making a stop by Streets as part of their 78 Years of Service and Celebration.
- May 21st, Booker T. Washington senior class will be walking down the aisle of the **Orpheum Theatre** in celebration of their graduation. Please pray for this class over the next few months as many of them make important decisions about their future.
- In what has become an annual event, a group of Streets Pathways mentors will be taking their students to Eads, Tennessee for a fly-fishing trip courtesy of the **Mid-South Fly Fishing Club** on May 2nd.



Saturday Morning VBS: Georgia Avenue Elementary and Downtown Elementary students enjoying activities during a recent VBS.



Streets Has Talent: Taurean, now a member of Streets' part time staff in the Elementary Department, spends some time with Whitney and Chris, his long time Pathways mentor, at the recent CBU talent show.

- From May 9th-14th, Streets' **Mission Graduation** program will be taking 30 Vance Middle School 8th Graders to Washington, D.C. While there, the group will tour the Smithsonian, Pentagon, United States Holocaust Museum, Lincoln Memorial, and the International Spy Museum. The students will also take a tour of the White House and have breakfast with Tennessee Senators Bob Corker and Lamar Alexander.
- The week of June 15th, **Sycamore View Church of Christ** will be coming to Streets to run an Elementary VBS for students in the neighborhood.



Business Plan: Arnisha (left) works with Streets staff member Richard on her business plan for a cardiology center in the neighborhood.



The Tour Really Works: by Delvin Lane

About three years ago, in one of our newsletters, you had the opportunity to read about one of "our kids" named Steve. Steve was being raised by his grandparents because his mom died after a rough life on the streets. He never really had much of a chance to meet his dad. The odds of him surviving were low, and the odds of him going to college were grim. Yet Steve chose to actively participate in many of our programs here at Streets. One of those programs was College Tours.

Steve, through football, met Antonio. Antonio was from a different area of Memphis and often feuded with kids from the 38126 community. Antonio also has a twin brother. One day, Steve invited both of them to come to Streets and get to know the staff. Because of my involvement with the BTW football team as a volunteer coach, I had the opportunity to grow a relationship with them. Over time, we became close, and as they got older, I invited both of them to come on a College Tour with us as well.

In both instances, before the tour, college was something these young men had only heard about and never imagined it could also be something they could take advantage of themselves. College Tours changed that perspective. While on tour, students see all kinds of schools. Big, small, public, private, historically black, etc. Each time, students are amazed at how beautiful the institutions are, and they leave really wanting to go to college one day. Now let us fast forward a few years to spring break 2009.



All Aboard: Forty-three students from both Streets Downtown and Highland Heights prepare to embark on College Tours 2009.



On Tour: Delvin spends a moment at The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff with former Streets kids Antonio and Steve during College Tours.

The weeks of anticipation and build up leading to the tour are finally over. It is time to go! As we prepare to load onto the bus, my cell phone rings. On the other end is Antonio. "Hey Big Dee, what time are yall getting here?" he asks. I tell him that if all goes according to schedule, we should be there in about two hours. As we wrap up our conversation, he assures me that Steve would be with him when we get there even though he had just finished a 5:00 am track workout. With that, we were on our way. Several hours, and a set of bad bus driver directions later, we finally arrive at The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. As we are pulling onto campus, two good looking muscular guys begin approaching us from a distance. Every girl on the bus stares intently in their direction only to be disappointed when it becomes clear who the young men are - Steve and Antonio. Still, they were still excited to see two guys they knew from Streets on the campus of a college as students. Over the next few hours, the College Tours students have the privilege of being escorted through campus by one of their peers acting as a tour guide. It adds a layer of unique perspective to the whole trip.

When it comes to the subject of going to college, it is one thing to hear a staff member speak about how important of a decision it can be to make, but it is a completely different thing to hear and see that message when it comes from current students who were once their peers.

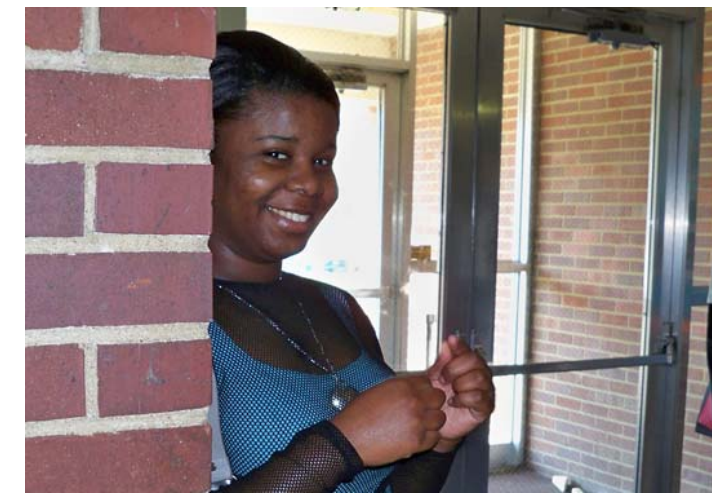
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My College Story: by Nesha Anderson

Everybody knows that Streets is a great place for youth looking for a safe place to be that also provides a lot of opportunity to grow and succeed. I know because I have been blessed to have been a part of this wonderful ministry for more than ten years now. Not only did Streets prepare me academically to succeed, but it reinforced my faith along the way. As a result, today I am a sophomore in college at The University of Tennessee at Martin and owe much of that to my friends at Streets. Here is my story.

One spring break while I was in the tenth grade, Streets provided me with the opportunity to participate on its annual College Tours program. While College Tours was a lot of fun, what it really did was motivate me toward wanting to go to college. Shortly after the tour, and after seeing seven different schools I could really see myself attending, my only questions were "which school do I choose?" and "what do I need to do to get there?". The answers would come beginning the following summer in the form of Streets' Summer Institute.

Summer Institute is where I learned how to write persuasive and informative essays, confidently give an oral presentation, and sharpen my algebra and calculus skills. But that is only part of what Summer Institute is about. Summer Institute also gave me the chance to leave the neighborhood and see a part of the world that I did not even know existed. During one trip, we were able travel to The University of the South and St. Andrews at Sewanee. It was the most beautiful place I had ever seen. On another



Dorm Life: A former College Tour participant herself, Nesha is now a resident of Ellington Hall on the campus of UT-Martin.



Tour Guide: Nesha, a UT-Martin sophomore and former Streets student, shows 2009 College Tour participants around campus.

trip we even went whitewater rafting! When we were not studying or traveling, we would work on community service projects in our own neighborhood and spend time learning first hand about the experiences other African Americans went through during the civil rights movement. All of these experiences contributed to my thinking about the future and what that future could hold for me if I included college in it.

University of Tennessee at Martin is the perfect school for me. The student to teacher ratio is low, there are a lot of campus activities, and the student body is diverse. The real world is not just one race. It is a pool of colors, and UT Martin reflects that in its pool. So why not start getting ready for that diversity in college?

Every day I go to class, I am thankful for the opportunities Streets provided for me. Thank you to all who have supported Streets and its programming. Your prayers for me and my peers while we were on College Tours, in the Summer Institute program, and now in college are deeply meaningful.

Nesha is a Sophomore at The University of Tennessee at Martin where she is pursuing a degree in Health Science.

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