

Expansion: Continued

offer and coming back again and again. Students have been so energized that we are averaging anywhere from 175 to 225 kids per week for "Club." And that's just the kids we can count! Expanding into the second floor with a new "Club" room and additional Bible Study space will free us up to spend more time recruiting new kids and improve our efforts to impact change on the life of a kid as a result of coming through our doors.

As you have some time, please continue to pray for our ministry here at Streets. We really appreciate the commitment that you continue to have with us. You are in this war with us to better our community and city even though you are in the shadows. The whispers of prayer from the shadows have brought our country many victories during wars, so please do not stop whispering.

Delvin Lane is the Assistant Director at 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

STREETS - BETWEEN THE LINES

SEPTEMBER 2009

Living in the Moment, Planning for Tomorrow

The reality of just how old I am hits when I am sitting down with my daughter Kristin, now a White Station High School senior, discussing college options for next Fall. As I look at the costs, I reflect back on my years in college. I used to rant and rave about the escalating price of tuition. I remember when I was appalled that it had skyrocketed to \$238.00 per semester. Thankfully, because of several available grants, I did not have to pay anything out of pocket.



Times have changed.

Sometimes late at night, I think about just how much more fiscally responsible I should have been in the past. If I had only scrimped and saved I might not be anguishing over the cost of a post high school education for my kids. What if I had done this or that differently along the way? Why didn't we live more frugally and invest more wisely? It is at times like this that I reach over and grab one of our many family photo albums or pop in an old Bennett VHS tape. Everything comes back into perspective.

As I sit there and thumb through the album pages or watch the TV screen, I am incredibly proud of the investments my wife, Debbie, and I have made over the years. Each one a signature moment in Bennett family history. One picture shows us all at Niagra Falls. Another frame has us hiking as a family towards Crater Lake in the mountains of Colorado. There are pictures of the kids in front of the Christmas tree atop my old Honda Passport for six straight seasons. I tear up as I see the numerous scenes of STREETS kids at our house playing with our kids, breaking bread, and opening God's Word. The birthday parties at Chuck E. Cheese, Matthew and I hopping into Antonio Burks' car on draft night, Kristin looking beautiful in her prom dress, and Emily singing her first solo at the elementary school, all take up thousands of frames of video tape. So while Debbie and I will never be asked to write any financial planning manuals, we can sure be proud of most of our investments. But what if we had had decided to forego the moment for the future? Where would things stand now?

At STREETS, we wrestle with those issues everyday. In an economy that has been less than kind recently, should we be more cautious about how we spend money? Absolutely. Should we be paralyzed? Absolutely not! In the past two years, STREETS has experienced some of the largest growth in its twenty-two year history. Over those years, we have been incredibly blessed by the generosity of those who are reading this letter right now! In turn, because of the growing number of young people served each day and the need to hold local school and community events at our site, we have decided to step out in faith and invest further into the community by expanding our current facility. The additional square footage will provide us with a "Club" and discipleship space that can more adequately meet our needs as we continue to share the hope found only in Jesus Christ.

In an economic climate where things are slowing down, shrinking, and leaving, we at STREETS feel led to press forward through expansion. Let me assure you that we are prayerful and not reckless. Today's general counsel would be to sit tight and wait for the economy to rebound. However, years from now, like the Bennett family, we want to be able to sit down and flip through pages and pages of photo albums filled with faces of kids who found the hope of the Savior at 430 Vance Avenue.

Your Brother in Christ,
Ken

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Expansion...Why Now?: by Delvin Lane

On any given night in the 38126 community, it is not unusual to hear gunfire. When it occurs, you find yourself counting the number of "pops" and then trying to guess what kind of gun it was. It is so common that the neighborhood has become numb to it. Numb until someone they know gets shot. Recently, after two people were shot in Whitehaven during a robbery, a third person was shot in retaliation just a block east of our facility. While not in itself an uncommon occurrence, a little further investigation revealed that the man was a former "Club" kid. Something that the staff at STREETS takes personally as we strive to achieve our mission in the community.

The kids that come through the doors of STREETS everyday serve as the audience for much of the chaos that occurs in our community. This is why we have been having outreach "Clubs" at STREETS now for almost twenty-two years. Since we moved down the street to the 430 Vance site, it has been difficult for the Direct Ministry staff to recruit new kids for high school "Club." Why? Because the numbers have been so staggering! Simply put, there is no more room for growth. From the first day we opened the doors here at 430 Vance, there have been more kids than expected. 400 kids a week became 1,400 almost overnight, and "Club" attendance more than doubled. And while this is a great problem to have, it is still a problem. Just ask the Fire Marshal. Yes...the Fire Marshal.



Working the Crowd: Delvin spends some time with Michael and Jaquisha prior to a recent Monday night "Club."



Reasons to Expand: BTW students Daphane and Miranda are weekly "Club" regulars and are looking forward to the new space.

In the process of developing the architectural plans for the 430 Vance facility several years ago, we talked about the potential of this very problem arising, so we designed with the ability to expand into the second floor one day. That day is today.

Expansion? Now I know what many of you may be thinking right about now. Won't somebody hand Delvin a newspaper! With the rough run the economy has been having as of late, and with so many companies being forced to either lay employees off or shut down, why are we talking about expanding. Well here is my answer. If it takes us stepping out in faith to save the life of one kid, one kids who could be shot tonight, I think it is an easy choice to make. Expanding our "Club" and Bible Study area will give us more flexibility to recruit new kids, host bigger events, and keep kids from being entertained by gunfire.

For the past few semesters, high school "Club" has grown into being the biggest night of the week for the kids in the Foote and Cleaborn Homes communities. "Club" has provided our kids with the opportunity to be kids, be a safe haven to hang out in, and respond to the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The games and skits we do have an inner-city flavor that excites the kids in such a way that keeps them guessing about the programs we

continued on back panel

When Does "Club" Start?: by John Cowherd

The staff at STREETS always looks forward to the start of the school year. As I walk up the ramp to visit Vance Middle on the first day of school, I am filled with an excitement and anticipation that reminds me of Christmas morning as a child. I look forward to seeing all the new 6th graders and marvel at how little they are. I also look forward to seeing kids that I have not seen all summer long. It makes me smile constantly during that whole first week of school.

As I interact with kids during this week, one question constantly comes up - "When does 'Club' start?" I probably get asked at least twenty times a day. At Streets, we usually do not start any of our programs like "Club," Bible Study, Pathways, and Ready Readers until after Labor Day. So there is usually a sigh of disappointment when I tell the kids that "Club" will not start for another two weeks. Then after the brief sigh, they usually ask, "Why can't we just have a 'Club' today?"



"Thursday Thunder": John playfully wrestles with students in the Recreation Room prior to hosting a weekly "Club."



Recruiting Visit: John spends some time in the video game room after school recruiting new kids for the next "Club."

Why do our kids look forward to "Club"? Is it because we play games that are high energy and exciting? Yes. Middle school kids are so full of energy they can hardly sit still. Is it because we do wild and crazy skits and stunts? Yes. Who doesn't like watching an adult or peer catch a pie in the face every once in awhile. Is it because we sing songs that the kids love and can relate to? Yes. Of course not all kids love to sing, but for some this is their favorite part of "Club" and can be truly worshipful. Is it because we serve pizza, hot wings, and chips? Yes. Some of our kids may not have food at home, so I love it when we can send them home with a full stomach. But most of all, I think that students love "Club" because they are allowed to let down their guard and be kids all while allowing Streets to share the Good News of the Gospel in a way that is relevant and that they can understand. Most of the kids that come to STREETS do not go to church, so in a "Club" setting they are eager to connect with God and hear the message of grace and unconditional love.

As I have put together this article for the newsletter, I myself have become even more excited about this year's "Club" schedule; and like the kids I see every day, I find myself saying "I wish 'Club' started today!"

John Cowherd is Streets' the Middle School Coordinator. john@streetsministries.org

Building a Bigger Door: by Richard Vining

Happy New Year! What am I talking about? Well, beginning September 1, Streets entered its new fiscal year for 2010. What does that mean? It means that, thanks to you, despite the strained conditions of our recent economy, Streets is currently operating fully staffed and has a complete year of educational, mentorship, and athletic programming planned. But in FY2010, we are not stopping there.

When I give facility tours to prospective donors and volunteers, I often talk about something I have coined as being "catastrophic success." What I mean by this is when we moved from our old facility at 769 Vance Avenue, the stated goal was to double weekly attendance in the first year from 400 to 800 students. Week one at the new site we had over 1,200 students come through the door. Three years later, that average has grown to over 1,500 per week. As you can imagine, this sort of growth has had all sorts of implications as far as budgeting is concerned. Granting all this, come October, Streets will be opening up a brand new "Club" room. This 6,000 square foot expansion into the second floor will greatly improve our ability to reach new students in the community and, most expectedly, grow those weekly numbers even more. What a wonderful problem to have! Yes, it will continue to be expensive, but as Ken mentioned in his article on the front page, we need to look at this as an investment. An investment that everyone who contributes to Streets can be proud of.



On Tour: Terrance gives a few students a tour of the new "Club" room.

As the guy who enters and deposits all the checks around here, it is humbling to see the faithfulness of God's people month after month. The staff at Streets understands that we completely operate off the generosity of people like you; people who prayerfully choose to give of their time and resources. Thank you for that support. Know that it has empowered us to not only change lives as a result of having students come through our doors, but it has also helped make that door a little bigger beginning this fall.

Richard Vining is the Business Director at Streets Ministries.
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2002 : Delvin speaks to students during a "Club" at 769 Vance Avenue.



1988: Ken participates in a Bubblegum Olympics skit during "Club."



What's Coming Up

- Thanks to a generous donation from **Konica Minolta Danka Imaging**, Streets' Mission Graduation program now has a high volume scanner/copier/printer on site at Vance Middle School.
- September 10th-14th, adult members from **Hope Presbyterian Church** will host their annual "Urban Plunge" at the Streets Center.
- On the evening of September 10th, Streets students, staff, and volunteers are invited to attend "Achieving Your Perfect 10" featuring Olympic Gold Medalist, Peter Vidmar, at **Kirby Woods Baptist Church**.
- Volunteers from **Second Presbyterian Church** will come to Streets on Saturday, September 26th, as a part of "CityServe 2009" missions emphasis weekend.
- Beginning October 8th, and running all through Fall Break, Streets' Mission Graduation program will be taking forty enrolled students to Dallas, Texas for a tour of area colleges and universities including **Southern Methodist, Texas Christian, and Paul Quinn University**.
- In what has become an annual event, a group of Streets Pathways students be going on a fly-fishing trip courtesy of the **Mid-South Fly Fishing Club** on October 17th.
- Beginning the week of September 14th, Streets will be hosting a full schedule of outreach "Clubs" for this school year. If you are interested in providing "Club" food on a Thursday evening or Friday afternoon, please contact Whitney Hale at whitney@streetsministries.org or (901) 525-7380 x209.
- On September 15, Streets will host a Volunteer Orientation for all **Ready Readers, Room Adopters, and Pathways** volunteers. Please consider helping a child learn to read, throwing monthly parties for an elementary classroom, or becoming a mentor for a middle school student. If you are interested in any of these opportunities, or would like to learn more, please contact Whitney Hale at whitney@streetsministries.org or (901) 525-7380 x209.



Afternoon Rec: Lakeshia and Jasmine having a good time together.



Volunteer Reunion: Katie Hobson, now a Mission Graduation Advisor, meets with Sylvia, her former Pathways student.

- As a part of their orientation into Booker T. Washington High School, incoming freshman will be participating in a "9th Grade Academy" day. A portion of the annual event will be held at the Streets Center and feature games, a lunch, and general introduction to everything Streets has to offer for students.
- In what is always a memorable evening, John will be hosting his annual Middle School Fall Festival on October 29th. 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.