

however, in late 1998 when he was finally charged with "manufacturing and distributing a controlled substance". In early 1999, while out on parole and awaiting trial, Delvin began to feel run down. He had grown weary of the drugs and guns and constantly running from the police, his brother had been sentenced to life in prison, and he was starting to see his life collapse around him. On the morning of May 14, Delvin woke up and knew it was over: he had nothing left to live for. He went to see a minister in the neighborhood who helped to convict him of his fallenness apart from God. Sitting there with high school sweetheart, Loretta, the two prayed to receive Christ with sincere hearts.

The next day, Delvin prayed a prayer that he would pray often through the coming weeks, "that God would just help me get through that day." He got a job in May, married Loretta on July 4 and has been in ministry ever since.

Not long after his life changed, several members of GD who noticed that Delvin hadn't been around approached him on the street. Because GD's are members for life, Delvin wondered if, at that moment, his life was in danger because of his extended absence from the gang and the recent changes in his life. Instead, his old friend asked for a favor: "Don't forget about us." He certainly hasn't.

In March of 2000, Delvin came on staff at Streets to serve the very neighborhood he once ruled with an iron fist. Today, Delvin is back in school at Memphis as a senior and he and his wife, Loretta, have three children. His vision and calling is to see this community change. He's hopeful and enthusiastic that Christ can change lives and ultimately communities. He strongly desires to raise up strong male leadership in the community to offset the lack thereof in most homes. He strives to live a life that reveals Christ to the kids to whom he ministers. And most of all, as he goes about what many outsiders see as an insurmountable task, he's ever mindful that if God can change his heart, then anything is possible.

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If you spend yourselves
in behalf of the hungry
and satisfy the needs of
the oppressed, then your
light will rise in the
darkness, and your
night will become like
the noonday.

Isaiah 58:10

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The Wolf God Called To Be A Shepherd

Delvin Lane grew up in a neighborhood at war, right here on Vance and Lauderdale in Cleaborne Homes. He attended Georgia Avenue Elementary, Vance Junior High and Booker T. Washington High School – all the schools that Streets serves today. Back then neighborhoods feuded over turfs for drug distribution, and Cleaborne Homes had a long-standing rivalry with the now-demolished Lemoyne Gardens. Delvin recalls walking into Vance one year to register with his mom and witnessing two boys, one from Lemoyne and one from Cleaborne, beating each other to a bloody pulp right outside the building. This type of behavior was the norm rather than the exception and Delvin was not immune to its effects. As he tells it, he "was always in trouble." Growing up, he split time between his Mom's apartment in Cleaborne Homes and the juvenile detention center. He started selling crack cocaine when he was 11 years old – a practice that required him to carry a pistol for protection.

In high school, all Delvin's friends hung out at Streets, but for some reason he never did, partly because his mother's strict household prevented him from being out of the house after dark. He did, however, "always notice this compassionate guy on campus named Ken Bennett." As the star quarterback as well as standout guard on the basketball team with Lorenzen Wright (current Memphis Grizzlies center) his junior year, Delvin attracted the attention of major football programs. Delvin received offers from Arkansas and Wyoming, but eventually dropped off their radar because he spent the first five months of his senior year of high school incarcerated for aggravated assault. Released in February, however, he was able to graduate on time from BTW with Honors in May of 1995.



Delvin (far right) with two fellow GDs

Shortly after graduation, though mixed up in as much trouble as ever, Delvin received a last minute invitation to go to camp with Ken and Streets when another kid was unable to go and a spot opened up. At Windy Gap, Delvin says he witnessed something he'd never experienced before, namely love and compassion from leaders who "just loved on [him]. There was no anger, accusations, guilt, shame or anything else. Just love. They were planting seeds." All this made him think about his own life and where he stood with the Lord. During the twenty minutes of quiet time at the end of the week, Delvin says that his life flashed before him, and not liking what he saw, he made some promises to himself about changing when he got home. "But like Jesus' parable of the sower in Mark four," he says, "I got home and it dried up because my heart hadn't changed."

Though he missed out on college football, Delvin went off to college at UT Martin because he had applied to school and for financial aid himself. During his first year in college he earned a 3.0, but it was the weekend trips home, and more specifically the folks he was hanging out with while back in the neighborhood that proved to be a turn for the worst. Delvin had been hanging out with a group from the gang Gangster Disciples (GD). Delvin had resisted the allure of GD for years, but through the twisted rhetoric of the organization, which espoused tenets of brotherhood, unity and love – all things that were missing from his life growing up in the neighborhood – Delvin became convinced that this seemingly fraternal organization was a positive thing. He became a member June 10, 1996 during his summer break. He never made it back to Martin as a student.

Delvin quickly climbed the ranks of GD because he could read and memorize the literature quickly – an essential skill for recruiting other members. He was formally made a leader of the gang that fall while enrolled as a sophomore at Memphis, but he soon dropped out and started selling drugs and robbing fulltime. As a result of his lifestyle and influence, he was picked up by police every week for two years but never charged. That changed,

continued on back >>

- Ken Bennett**
Executive Director
- Joey Collums**
Education Specialist
- John Cowherd**
Middle School Coordinator
- Grace Halliday**
Education Specialist
- Delvin Lane**
High School Coordinator
- Rob Thompson**
Director of Development
- Quinhon Turner**
Recreation and Facilities Specialist



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A Kid's Story: by Delvin Lane

About thirteen-years ago, I met a family through two brothers that were in my class at Vance Junior High. They lived nearby the school, and I eventually learned that there were six siblings living in their small house. Of these six siblings, four graduated from high school (two with honors). I got to know their mom, and I was soon treated like one of her own sons.

The youngest of the six just graduated in May of this year. Even though my relationship with the family began with the two older brothers, it has since shifted to the youngest child, Keith. I work with Keith everyday at Streets. God established this relationship when we were kids, and while I was like a big brother to him, he saw all of my sin up close and personally. My life eventually took a turn for the worse, and we lost touch with each other. As a kid, Keith was always in church with John Cowherd (now Streets Middle School Coordinator). Despite not having much to speak of materially, Keith always seemed to hold things together by trusting in Christ. And after God saved me, He placed Keith back in my life.

Keith struggled early on in high school because he had a big pride problem. He was expelled from school for fighting with the school police officer. After we reconnected, we sat down together with a Bible and read verses that specifically addressed pride. Keith made a commitment to work on his pride as a result. He was eventually allowed to come back to BTW the next school year, and he managed to pull things together and graduate.

Summer Institute: A Huge Success

From **June 30 – August 1**, five of BTW's top Juniors and Seniors were enrolled in **Streets Summer Institute**. During the five-week program, students studied public speaking and writing. In their writing course, they read works by authors such as C.S. Lewis, Viktor Frankl, Juan Rulfo, and Henrietta Gant. They also completed substantial research, response, and autobiographical papers, giving them the opportunity to experience the intensity of a small classroom environment as they improved their writing and grammar skills. The class was privileged to have guest instruction on the use of poetic devices in hip hop from Treasure Williams, local poet, and the Holocaust from Steve



Delvin and Keith at BTW prom this year

Today, Keith is an integral part of my Bible studies and is one of our leaders in club. When he graduated this year from BTW, Keith told me, "Man, my mom is so happy that I graduated from high school, but I cannot wait to see her face when I bring home my college degree. I'll be her first child to graduate from college." He is now enrolled in college and is looking forward to starting this fall. Through sharing the love of Christ with this kid, both of our lives have been changed both spiritually and educationally.

Haynes, Professor of Religious Studies at Rhodes College. In their oral communications course, students wrote, performed, and produced their own radio and television commercials with the assistance of WDIA. They also explored and practiced persuasive and informative speaking.

Streets would like to extend special appreciation to **Back Yard Burger, Charlie Cleaves** and the 7th Inning, **Chuck and Nancy Fisher, Gus's Fried Chicken, Huey's Restaurant, Lifetime Industries, Tri-State Theatre Supply** and **Rick Webb** for their contributions to lunches for Summer Institute students and staff.

News and Notes

Email updates are now available

In an effort to keep our friends better informed of the goings-on at Streets, we are now sending out regular email updates. These updates include more information on what is happening at the ministry each month, as well as important prayer requests. If you would like to receive these email updates, please send an email to updates@streetsministries.org and type subscribe in the subject line. Please be sure to include your name in the body of the email.

Special Request

Transportation is an integral part of Streets' daily ministry. Streets staff take kids home from club each week, drive athletic teams to away games and use the vans just to spend time with kids. Some of the deepest conversations between staff and students happen in the 'sanctuary' of our three fifteen-passenger vans.

As many of you know, recent changes in state law have made it nearly impossible to continue operating these vans. For a number of reasons, the annual cost to insure fifteen-passenger vans is now actually higher than the value of the vans themselves. As a result, we are in the process of trying to replace them with smaller minivans and/or Suburbans, a strategy that many ministries across the country are employing to reduce insurance costs. While this will prevent us from being able to transmit as many kids at once, we are hopeful that it will result in lower costs and increased safety for our kids.

This abrupt change in insurance laws has flooded the market with used fifteen-passenger vans and rendered our vans fairly valueless for trade-in or resale. As a result, we ask that you would keep Streets in mind, if you find yourself in a position to gift an older minivan or Suburban-style SUV. Your prayerful consideration of Streets is greatly appreciated.

Job Opportunities

We are searching for missions-minded individuals to fill some important positions at Streets this fall. Please contact Ken Bennett at (901) 525-7380 or ken@streetsministries.org, if you or someone you know might be interested.

■ Middle School Girls Coordinator

This is a part-time position (approximately 30 hours per week) and is mostly comprised of assisting with Middle School programming and developing new programs aimed specifically at Middle School girls.

■ Elementary Outreach Coordinator

This fulltime position includes developing relationships with faculty and staff at Georgia and possibly Locke Elementary Schools, and developing and coordinating our daily and weekly educational and outreach after school programming for young students.



"Gwen (far left) and Joey (back left) with several of our middle schoolers at For The Kingdom"