

## College Tours: Joey Collums continued

profoundly different world. For many aspiring students in Memphis, college is simply the next logical step on their journey. The typical college freshman has been conditioned to function on campus, following in the footsteps of older siblings and friends, and buoyed by a lifetime of encouragement and support from parents. Touring universities for this student, although important, more or less answers questions of preference, like shopping between similar brands.

But to a young person conditioned by the brokenness of a poverty-stricken home and community, choosing and surviving college means pursuing a drastically different life. He or she sadly has few examples to follow, and even the encouraging parents have few resources and experiences to offer. Therefore, College Tours for this kid is not like going shopping. Rather, it's exposure to an alternative reality. And it's on this foreign turf that our kids see college students who look like them and some who even share the same background.

The end result of College Tours is that many of these kids, though all the while saying they would pursue the dream of college, will for the first time believe it could become a reality in their own lives. And as we load up the bus next Spring Break for the 16<sup>th</sup> time, our hope and prayer is to bump into a backpack-toting freshman from South Memphis, an alumnus of this year's College Tour.

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Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

Colossians 3:23

# STREETS - BETWEEN THE LINES

FEBRUARY - MARCH, 2005

## An Opinion Without Engagement Is A Dangerous Thing

On January 18, Delvin and I were leaving the BTW basketball game, which had been played at Sheffield High School. There were a hundred students hanging out in the parking lot. They had traffic jammed up, but most were just celebrating a victory. While we were sitting there, some of the students surrounded a car and heated words were exchanged. Delvin and I have seen this scenario way too many times over the years. Sure enough, a figure emerged from the back seat of the vehicle, waving and then firing a gun twenty feet from our car. The bullet struck a young man in the leg and the car sped away. The next five minutes were bedlam as the police converged on the spot trying to obtain information on the shooter, get an ambulance through to the young man who was writhing on the ground from the gunshot wound (that made him feel as though his leg were on fire), and clear the parking lot before anything else could happen. Because we knew this would hit the ten o'clock news before we could make it home, we both called our wives to let them know we were okay. We've learned the drill over time.



The next day I spoke to a friend who said he had seen the story on the news. He spoke in matter of fact terms about his views on public schools and violence in the city. As we talked, I realized that none of his knowledge was first hand. He had watched the news religiously, consumed the local newspaper, and "knew somebody who knew somebody" who told him about the plight of the city, but none of his knowledge was from experience.

As I move about day to day, I am in awe of the number of people who quote someone from talk radio or the Internet. Some people even get their knowledge base from syndicated television shows. Nothing shocks us anymore because we've seen it all on cable or we know "someone who..."

Aren't you glad Jesus didn't operate like this? Aren't you glad he is not our Savior from a distance?

Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted 'Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!' The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, 'Lord Son of David, have mercy on us!' Jesus stopped and called them. 'What do you want me to do for you?' he asked. "Lord, we want our sight." Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him. **Matthew 20:30-32**

Jesus healed them that day, and he could have done it just by thinking it. But he stopped what he was doing to talk to them. The Gospel engages us, and it provides a model for engaging. We can't minister by obtaining knowledge from second hand sources. We must go to the source. We can't flesh out the unconditional and compassionate love from a distance. As trite as it sounds, we have to go the distance to those in need. I pray that you will pause for a moment and ask the One who created us all just how you can be an engaged Christian.

Your Brother in Christ,  
Ken Bennett

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## College Tours: by Joey Collums

At 6:30 A.M. on March 14, instead of waking to the blare of an alarm clock, most Memphis City Schools students will enjoy the slumber that accompanies the first morning of Spring Break. But while their peers sleep, 20 Booker T. Washington high school students will board a chartered bus bound for seven area universities as part of Streets Ministries' College Tours.

The weeklong tour, in its 15<sup>th</sup> year, has become a tradition at Booker T. Washington High School and a highlight of Streets' college prep program. Its roots reach back to 1990, when a bold Streets staff member packed 10 kids and a U-Haul trailer to visit universities in the southeast. In the process of exploring science labs, dorm rooms, and enormous libraries, these pioneers discovered a key ingredient in helping inner-city youths transition from life on the streets to life on campus.

Fifteen years have done little to change the formula for College Tours, other than adding more kids and trading in the U-Haul for a charter bus. The typical visit begins with a walking tour of campus, led by a knowledgeable university student. Besides surveying academic buildings of interest, students get to observe dorm rooms, dining halls, and the library. Guides



Students during a walking tour of one of the seven schools on Streets' College Tours.

are also careful to show aspects of the campus that enhance the college experience, like recreational facilities, religious organizations, and sports arenas. Past groups have even bumped into former B.T.W. students and College Tour participants on campus visits. Following the tour, an admissions counselor explains the university's admissions policies, financial aid opportunities, and academic strengths. After a brief question and answer session, it's back to the bus and on to the next campus.

Although campus tours and travel consume most of the day, it just wouldn't be a Streets trip, nor nearly as popular, without plenty of fun. Last year's participants, for example, enjoyed an entire laser tag complex to themselves one night, bowling and games at Jillian's the next, followed by a night at the mall. The tour also includes visits to places of educational value, such as the Frist Center in Nashville, the Tennessee Aquarium in Chattanooga, and the Civil Rights Institute and 16<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church in Birmingham.

As 15 years of history and success stories attest, the College Tours week is essential to a student from this community believing he or she can succeed in a

continued on back >>



Students and leaders from the 2004 College Tours take a break from 'touring' to stop and play at Jillian's in Nashville.

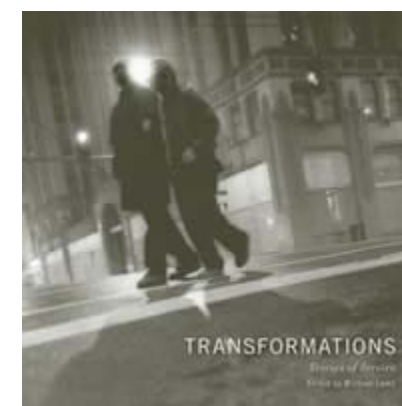
## Staff Spotlight: Jenny Fratesi

We are excited to welcome Jenny Meals Fratesi to our staff. Born and raised in Memphis, Jenny graduated from Hutchison and grew up at Independent Presbyterian. While at Auburn, she was a tutor and mentor to two students through Project Uplift in Opelika's poorest community. Compelled by her desire to serve in the inner city, Jenny continued to pursue this kind of ministry, and eventually interned with Desire Street Ministries in New Orleans during the summer after her junior year, where she taught an academic boot camp and conducted two educational research projects. Jenny graduated from Auburn with a major in English and a minor in Human Development and Family Studies, and then returned to Memphis after marrying her husband Jonathan. Jenny has come on board to work in our educational ministry, where she is responsible for our Middle School Pathways students and our elementary education programs. Jenny also works in our Middle School Club on Thursday nights, where her husband Jonathan is leading music.



Our new Education Specialist, Jenny Fratesi, working with a middle school student on reading comprehension.

## News and Notes



### Streets in Print

Streets has been featured in another book with the publishing of *Transformations: Stories of Service*, edited by Rhodes Scholar Michael Lamb. *Transformations* is a collection of stories written by Rhodes College alumni on how service experience in Memphis impacted their lives at students. Streets is mentioned twice in the collection, both by our own Ashley Diaz (c/o 2001) and former Pathways tutor Joey Sherrard (c/o 2003). The stories provide well-written snapshots of how serving others can actually make quite an impact on the server. You can purchase the book at the Rhodes College Bookstore or online at:

[www.rhodes.edu/NewsCenter/NewsArchive/Transformations-Orders.cfm](http://www.rhodes.edu/NewsCenter/NewsArchive/Transformations-Orders.cfm)

### More Frequent Updates

Want more info on Streets? Sign up for our monthly email. Just send your request to [updates@streetsministries.org](mailto:updates@streetsministries.org) and type subscribe in the subject line. Please be sure to include your name in the body of the email.

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## Calendar: What We've Been Up To

- Over the holidays, several groups of families from the Covenanter's Class at Independent Presbyterian Church 'adopted' families from the Foote and Cleaborn Community for Christmas. This was a tremendous blessing to our families, who all have several children and were worried about how they were going to provide Christmas gifts for their kids. Many thanks to all the people who helped make this possible.



Some very happy recipients of early Christmas presents receive help adjusting helmets and seats to their new bikes.

- **Outreach Clubs** started back the week of **January 24<sup>th</sup>**. Thanks to all our volunteers who've been bringing food, leading worship music and just "hanging out." Middle School Club is holding its own version of **American Idol** this semester, including in-Club auditions, judges and a year-end champion.
- John and Joey took 30 middle school students to a **Memphis Riverkings** game on Friday, January 28. The kids had a great time 'visiting' Desoto County. Many thanks to the Riverkings.



- Over 25 students from our Middle School Bible Studies joined with 25 students from **Hope Presbyterian's Middle School Youth Group** on Sunday, January 30 for a group "club" and Bible Study. Both groups enjoyed fellowship with one another, as we continued our efforts to broaden our students' cultural horizons.
- Delvin and STREETS were featured on **WMC-TV5** on Wednesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>. **Joe Birch** visited our facility as a part of his on-going series Crime Tracker. Delvin was highlighted as a sign of hope in our community. Visit our web site for a full transcript of the segment.
- **Bible Studies** also started back the week of **February 7<sup>th</sup>**, and thanks to some excellent new volunteers, we've added **nine new Bible Studies**, including boys and girls Bible Studies for 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> grade boys.
- ◀ A Hope Presbyterian youth group leader and a Streets student exchange information during a club "mixer."



## Calendar: What We've Been Up To (continued)

■ Jenny took five middle school students to the **Regions Morgan Keegan Championship Tennis Tournament** on February 13<sup>th</sup>. The kids had a great time and got a chance to get autographs from some of the players.

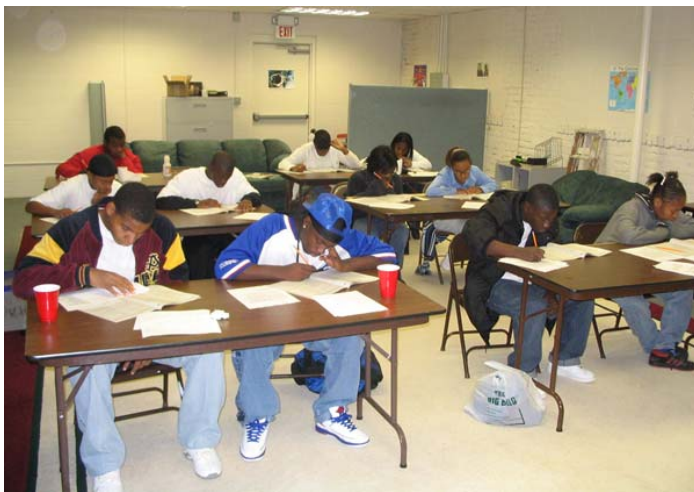
■ **Read to Succeed**, our elementary-age reading program, started back this semester with a great new group of readers, which has allowed us to double the size of the program. Thanks to our dedicated readers who come down to Streets every Tuesday.

■ The Memphis City School System recently announced Dr. Johnson's recommended **school closings** for the 2005 – 2006 school year, which included **Locke Elementary** in the Foote and Cleaborn Community. It is likely that Locke will close and students will move to Georgia Avenue Elementary, which is closer to BTW. Please pray for our students and community in this transition.

■ Just before the Christmas season, Joey held an **ACT practice test** for some of our high school **Pathways students**. After several stressful hours of test taking, Joey rewarded them by taking them on a **paintball** expedition.



Streets students pictured with professional tennis player Scoville Jenkins (center).



Students took their practice ACT exam and then blew off steam with Joey and volunteer Robert Vaughn while playing paint-ball.

