



STREETS MINISTRIES

General Overview

OVERVIEW

Streets is a Christian ministry dedicated to serving the core needs of the people who call the inner city of Memphis home. Streets recently moved into a 34,500 square foot outreach center strategically located in the heart of a neighborhood where nine out of ten live at or below the poverty level and a staggering ninety-nine percent live in single parent households.

Streets provides a safe haven and much more: a place to hang out, meet a friend, and be welcomed with an unconditional love based in Jesus Christ. Streets provides educational, mentoring and recreational programming as well as outreach clubs and Bible studies for the youth of inner city South Memphis. These programs aim to instill children with a sense of confidence, empowerment and belonging in one of Memphis' toughest neighborhoods.

History

In 1987, God called Ken Bennett to a life of service in the most desperate neighborhoods of Memphis, with the firm conviction that the only path to true and enduring change for this area was through the hope found in Jesus Christ. What began with a van, a basketball and a heart to trust God on a daily basis is now a thriving, dynamic outreach to hundreds of kids who deserve the same chance to succeed as those born to more fortunate circumstances.

Mission Statement

The mission of Streets Ministries is to serve impoverished youth in the Memphis metropolitan area by unconditionally representing the Good News of Jesus Christ in word and deed in such a way that underserved adolescents have the opportunity to see, hear, and respond to the Good News of the Gospel, and to be empowered to live a life of obedience to God.

PROGRAMS

Streets has developed a wide variety of educational, mentoring and athletic programming, designed to meet both the immediate as well as the long term needs of the kids we work with. The list below highlights our major initiatives:

Pathways College Prep Program

This program was founded in 1988 and is Streets' oldest formal program. It provides intentional educational enrichment through a mentor system. Students who have the potential to attend college are targeted starting in the seventh grade and are paired with a mentor through the twelfth grade. Each student is tutored once a week using our own curriculum, focusing on reading and writing skills and ACT/SAT preparation.

College Tours

Because of limited resources, most of our kids cannot visit colleges and universities to make an educated decision about their educational futures. During spring break, we take our top students on a five-day trip through the south to visit between nine and twelve colleges and universities, including historically black institutions.

Streets Summer Institute

Started four summers ago, Summer Institute was created to help liberal arts-caliber high school honor students who struggled with college entrance essays and interviews. Participants go through an intense writing and oral communications curriculum and are in class forty hours a week with a considerable homework load as well. So that missed summer employment opportunities do not prevent students from attending the Institute, each student is paid minimum wage. The program culminates with a week-in-residence at Sewanee.

College Scholarships

Streets provides assistance with books, tuition and meal plans for our college bound students on the basis of need. Annually, Streets contributes between \$20,000 and \$35,000 to the collegiate education of students from this community.

Recreation

Our after-school recreation center is open Monday through Friday to provide a safe haven for young people. There is no membership, which allows kids to come and go freely. We have ping-pong, foosball, air hockey, a game room, a 13,000 square foot gymnasium, a state-of-the-art homework lab equipped with 14 computers, and a staff that is ready to meet the various needs of kids who walk through the door.

Outreach Clubs and Bible Studies

We have weekly outreach clubs for neighborhood middle school and high school youth. Combined, clubs average over 300 young people in attendance each week who sing, play games, and are presented with the Gospel. There are also six different Bible studies, segmented by grade level and gender, which are available to students on a weekly basis.

Summer Camps

Camps are an important part of the ministry as we try to develop lasting relationships with kids and effect change in their lives. Each summer we take over 100 kids to one of five different weeklong camps. For many kids, this represents their first time outside their neighborhood. All of the kids attend camp on full or partial scholarships.

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430 Vance Avenue · Memphis, TN 38126

901.525.7380 · 901.525.9628 FAX · www.streetsministries.org