

Stories

The Newsletter of New City Neighbors

Transformation - Eric Schalk, Executive Director

Two weeks ago I was sitting at my desk going over the lesson for our high school ministry when Madison walked into my office. Since Madison was twenty minutes early for High School group, and at least thirty minutes early for her normal arrival time, I knew something was up. She sat down in a chair across from my desk, took a deep breath, and said, "I have something I need to tell you, and I'm afraid you're going to be upset."

I've been trained in counseling classes to refrain from expressing emotions when someone says something like this, but I couldn't help it, I cringed. I have heard words like this before, from others, and they generally don't end well. I also cringed because I've know Madison for a really long time.

Madison started attending our ministries when she was in fourth grade: that was seven years ago. Over that time I've had the privilege of watching her grow up from a goofy little kid to become a volunteer and leader in our ministries. Madison was a Leader In Training for Breaktime and the Bakery two years ago, and last year she volunteered the entire summer just because she loves the program and the children. For the last two years, Madison has also regularly attended EMS where she helps kids with homework and assists with a



Winter
2012

Seeking to be a diverse, welcoming ministry that works with Northeast Grand Rapids neighbors to restore and develop their community.

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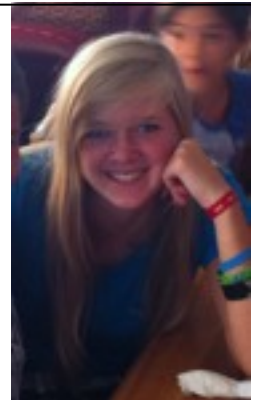
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EMS
2006



Bakery
2009

Run
2011



Breaktime
2011

small group. She has been around for so long, that for a few of us leaders, she's become like a little sister. That's why, when she said those words, I cringed. I also cringed because I know that there are intense pressures on kids these days to do things that do not honor Christ.

I think I stuttered out something like, "Okay, whats going on?" She then looked me in the eye and said, "I'm getting baptized in a couple weeks at Calvary Church."

I was ecstatic! If I could dance, I would have danced a dance of joy. Because I attend Fourth Reformed, she thought I would be upset about her not being baptized there, which I quickly explained would never be true. It also made sense for her to get baptized at Calvary Church because that is where her family attends. I told her that there was nothing better for me then to hear that someone I know and care about is publicly giving their life to Christ. To be honest, I'm still filled with joy at this great news.

As people who support New City Neighbors, you need to know that you helped make Madison's story possible. Because you have given to our ministries over the last four years, we have been able to continue ministering to Madison. Your generosity has helped us provide job and life skills, homework help, Bible study, and time to build relationships with children like Madison. For your financial support, prayers, and time spent volunteering we say, "thank you." You have joined us, and many others, in making a profound difference in Madison's life.

We know that with your help there will be many more stories of hope and transformation to come, and we look forward to sharing them with you in the months ahead.

Bakery + Garden = Farm

As a faithful donor to New City Neighbors, you know that one of our most successful ministries is the Breaktime Bakery. Through that one-of-a-kind program, we teach job and life skills to twelve middle-school students each

summer. Two years ago we added a Leader In Training component that allowed high school students to also acquire job training, with the perk of an actual pay check.

The Bakery has grown leaps and bounds over the last five years, and during that time we have labored to figure out how to expand our programming to impact more high school students. At a recent Christian Community Development Conference I began brainstorming with members of Creston Christian Reformed about a potential social enterprise for high school students. In our conversations we dreamed of a way to use the field at Fourth Reformed in a new and profound way, building on the work of the community garden.

What came out of that discussion was the decision to pilot a new ministry, the New City Urban Farm. I want to stress that this is a pilot ministry. We are simply testing the waters at this time to find out if it provides us with the means to have significant impact in the lives of students. The farm will sell shares of produce with additional produce sold at local farmers' markets and the Breaktime Bakery Store. By piloting this new ministry we hope to contribute to urban renewal by transforming unused green space into something productive. More importantly, we will use this ministry to provide employment to high school students in our community. This first year, we will employ four students, but if the ministry is successful and we expand, we could employ many more students and extend our ability to connect with students from 3rd grade all the way through high school.

Please pray that God would give us wisdom to know how best to develop this ministry and make a lasting impact in the lives of students.



Here We Go Again...

We are getting ready for our second annual *Run Eric Run* Fundraiser. Like last year, we are preparing to run so we can raise funds, help kids become healthy, and rally people for a good cause. Here is how it will work:

Level 1 - Youth Running Group. Starting in March we will begin working with neighborhood kids to prepare them for the Fifth Third Jr. 5k. Our goal is to get kids in better shape and help them take part in raising money for the programs that benefit them. Kids will be soliciting pledges for their race in hope of raising \$300 each to sponsor a child in Breaktime.

Level 2 - Run for NCN. Instead of pledging funds, run in the Fifth Third Riverbank Run and find people to pledge money to NCN.

Level 3 - Make a pledge to sponsor Eric in the Fifth Third Riverbank Run. The amount of money pledged from the three combined levels will determine how far he runs. Last year, with your help, we smashed our goal of \$10,000 to make him run the 25K, so this year we set the bar at \$15,000. We'll track the pledges on the NCN website with a thermometer. The race is May 12, and the training has already begun. Join us today by pledging online or through the mail.

Ministry Wish List

The items listed below are things that will enhance our ability to do ministry. If you are not able to purchase the item; but would like to make a donation toward it, simply make out a check to NCN and include the item description in the memo line.

- Lawn Mower - \$250
- Scale - \$50
- Water Hoses - \$200
- Compost to improve soil quality for the farm - \$500



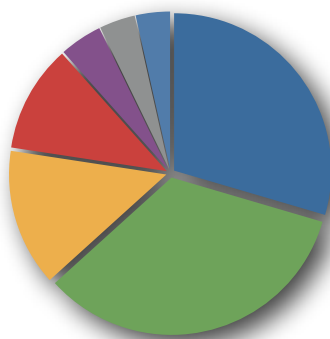
newcityneighbors

2011 Annual Report

Financial Numbers

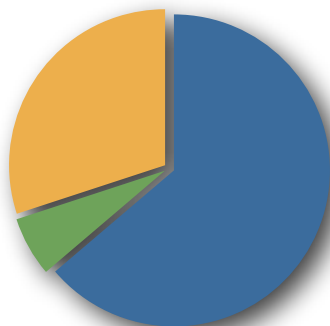
Sources of NCN Support:

2011 Total Income:	\$114,414
■ Cash Donations:	\$33,803
■ Fundraisers:	\$38,613
■ Churches:	\$16,150
■ Businesses:	\$12,600
■ Foundations:	\$5,000
■ TRIP:	\$4,223
■ Garden/Bakery:	\$4,025



Where Does the Support Go?

■ Programs	\$57,880
■ Administration	\$27,259
■ Development	\$5,619



Impact by the Numbers

We had 66 adults and high school students regularly volunteer at our ministries this year. That number does not include the many people who also prepared meals for EMS and Breaktime.

Those 66 volunteers put in over 2,000 hours of time with children.

We were able to serve 1,600 meals to over 120 children in our community, all of whom participated in our ministries.

29 families grew produce and made new connections in the Community Garden. We're proud to say that a group of gardeners even dedicated extra time to grow produce for local food pantries.

Through the Breaktime Bakery program, we were able to provide over 1,500 hours of job and lifeskill training. We made over 3,000 cookies, 2,250 bars, and 150 loaves of bread.

God was at work in 2011, and we can't wait to see how he uses NCN in 2012!