



Stories

The Newsletter of New City Neighbors

Off to the Races - Eric Schalk

We had some rough patches at EMS this past spring. There were two groups of boys who were often in each others faces trying to provoke fights. Week after week they would get after each other during meals, singing, Bible study and free time. As leaders, we were getting frustrated by their persistent desire to fight and talk trash. During one particularly maddening van ride to bring kids home, I began talking with one of the volunteers about how we could channel the kids' energy into something positive. After all the kids had hopped out of the van, I suddenly had the idea to build Pinewood Derby cars with them.

The next week I began to pitch the idea to the leaders, then we passed it on to the kids. "Dan", who was often out of control at EMS and a major part of our problems, was stoked by the idea of making his own car. He was loud during dinner, wild during singing, inappropriate during Bible study, and aggressive during free time. (Somewhere out there, an EMS leader just read that sentence and said, "Amen".) I can't tell you how many times Dan said something that almost got him beat up or acted in such a way that I threatened to walk him home. Dan is part of the reason I shed more hair from my balding head these last months.

When it came time to work on Pinewood Derby cars, Dan was different. He was calm and focused as he designed his car, sanded the rough edges, and carefully painted the body. He wanted a Chicago Bulls logo on his car and worked with my wife to make sure it looked perfect. Not only was Dan calm while working on his car, he was chatty. I had some of the best conversations with him while he diligently worked on his car.

For once, he was not saying inappropriate things but was actually talking about his life and told me some of the difficult things he was dealing with. Dan was so focused on his car he didn't realize he was letting his guard down, and most nights I had to pry him out of the workshop so he would remember to go home.

The Pinewood Derby cars took us a while to complete. Some of the kids



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Special Thanks

We want to thank the following businesses for their generous donations to our summer ministries:

- Herbruck's Poultry Farm
- King Flour Mill
- Grand Rapids YMCA
- United Way
- ACE Bakery

Run NCN Run Update

We had 21 people run on our behalf this year!

25k Runners - Dave Gleason, Christie VanDyke, and Heather Snippe

10k Runners - Beau McDowell, and Sean Baker

5k Runners - Abbie, Eric, Joshua & Julie Schalk, Branson Parler, Jennifer Wammack, Leslie & Sidney Hawkins, Tiffany Gonzalez, and Yadira DeLeon

5k Walkers - Doug Redford, Gina Schalk, and JoAnn Liszewski

Kids Fun Run - Ellie & Megan McDowell, and Jonah Kruijs

We want to thank everyone who participated in the run and helped us raise \$8,000 for New City Neighbors. We also want to thank everyone who generously gave to this important fundraiser. With your help, we are able to fund our summer ministries and impact the lives of children living in our community!



June
2013

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

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lost focus; others, like Dan, wouldn't quit working on them. As the cars came together, all of the kids were beaming with pride.

On the last night of EMS for the school year, we held our race. We invited parents and planned a big dinner. While we didn't have too many parents come out, we had a lot of excited children. After dinner, the kids lined up by the race track and sat eagerly waiting for their cars to race. With each race the kids cheered each other on, raised their arms with excitement, and yelled loudly when their friends won. For that one night, all of the problems and differences were set aside, and kids were friends with each other. As the night went on, and racers were eliminated, all of the kids stayed by the track to see who the winner would be. I was impressed with how genuinely excited they were for the people who won.

When it came time to hand out trophies, we announced the winners of the race and Dan didn't win, but he wasn't too crushed. He was hopeful about winning best design. As I began announcing the best design awards, I saw him staring at me intensely.

A volunteer handed me the results, and I saw Dan won second place. When I called his name for his second place design trophy, he leapt out of his seat, ran forward and grabbed his trophy. He pumped his fist, did a small dance, and ran around in triumph. For a moment, hope returned to him. Dan learned he could do something good and people would notice.

Dan is on a long road to finding Christ and discovering the joy of living for him. Just yesterday I saw him walking by my office and said, "Hi." Dan glanced at his friend, shot his eyes my way, and walked on like he didn't hear me. Dan is unpredictable, but so is the Holy Spirit, and I'm more than hopeful that someday soon, Jesus will get ahold of him.

There is a chance Dan will be in the Breaktime Bakery this summer, which makes me very nervous but also gives me hope. Hope because I believe that in the kitchen, as he uses his hands for good, God will reveal himself to Dan in some way and help him to see his purpose in this world.

Please pray for the kids like Dan who are struggling greatly. Pray that he would come to the Bakery this summer and that God would use that to soften his heart and open his mind. Pray that Dan would be transformed by the gospel! And pray as well for me and the other leaders who seek to show these children Jesus every day.

Gardening - Pat Soddy

Hi, my name is Pat Soddy, and I am writing to you to tell you about my experience with the New City Neighbors Community Garden at 4th Reformed Church. On December 6, 2011, I had surgery on my right carotid artery. It was found to be 95% blocked, but my surgeon, Dr. John Morris, didn't let that stop him from clearing out the artery and stitching me back up. It took me three months to heal from that surgery and three other procedures. On Good Friday 2012, my church, New City Church, and 4th Reformed and Creston CRC met at 4th for a meal, then a program. I talked to Eric Schalk and asked if I could rent a plot in the garden for the summer.

He agreed and so I planted veggies in my 10' x 20' plot. Because of the heat, constant watering, weeding, and talking to, my plants really grew. In fact, the tomato

plants grew so big that they kept falling over. My dog, Curly, and I went each day and took care of the plants, mostly staying 1-1/2 to 2 hours. We would work in the garden and then sit in the shade of my car and talk to the plants and each other. We did this all summer until it was time to close the garden. By that time, October, I had frozen 85 containers of tomato soup, 10 containers of squash, 12 packages of zucchini, and 20 packages of cherry tomatoes and green peppers. It took me all of the winter to eat most of the frozen veggies.

But the most important part of my garden experience wasn't just the vegetables. It was getting outside and working, sometimes more on some days than others. I truly believe that God led me to the garden to keep me here. Breathing fresh air each day and eating the fresh veggies kept me alive. Over the course of this past winter, I passed all my medical checks and won't need to get them again until 2014. So this summer, my plot is 20' x 20' and is doing great so far. I have planted tomatoes, zucchini, broccoli, Brussel sprouts, green peppers, cucumbers, lettuce, and green beans. I expect to start freezing these veggies beginning in August. Thank you, Lord!!!

Ministry News Breaktime Bakery

We're gearing up for our eighth summer of the Breaktime Bakery. We already have ten children signed up for the Bakery and we're looking forward to another great summer. We've added some new items to the menu and can't wait to serve up some of the finest baked goods in Grand Rapids, at some of the most incredible prices.

This year we're excited to introduce Christian Smith as our Bakery manager. Christian is no stranger to the Bakery and is ready to work with middle school students and make a difference in their lives.

The Bakery Store opens June 18 and from that point on will be open every Monday-Thursday from 12:30 to 2:00. Come early to get the best selection, or place an order online at www.breaktimebakery.org.

You'll also want to watch our Breaktime Bakery Facebook page as we'll be offering two baking classes this summer for those who sign up. One class will be offered in early July, and one will be offered in late July, with one focused on bread baking.

Breaktime

This is our fourteenth summer of Breaktime and we can't wait for it to begin. Erin Meendering and Laura Horinga are coming back to lead another amazing summer of learning and fun. This summer, we are thrilled to have Nancy Lamberts who will lead us in weekly art projects, Julie Schalk who will lead us in worship, and many other people who will help us out with reading.

If you would like to be involved with Breaktime, we are always in need of reading tutors on Monday-Thursday from 12:30 to 1:30. We supply all the materials, we just need people like you to read with children. We are also looking for people to help us with picnic lunches for four Friday field trips. If you are interested, please call Eric today.

Urban Farm

The second year of the farm is already underway. Lance has been working hard, with numerous volunteers, to get the field ready. We have eight high school students working with us this summer, and share pick-ups have already begun.

We are excited to have Jess Montague, and Shaye Newman working with us on the farm this summer. Jess recently graduated from Calvin College and will be involved with the farm stand. Shaye is entering her senior year at Kuyper College and will be involved in marketing the farm.

Our farm stand will be open every Thursday, starting June 20, from 3:00 to 6:00PM. We now accept every major credit card and SNAP EBT.

Fall Auction - Save the Date!

Saturday, November 2, we will have our third annual dinner and auction.



Ministry Wish List

- Elementary-appropriate books
- Chocolate Chips
- Margarine
- Sugar
- Cocoa
- Kitchenaid Professional Mixer (\$900)