



Stories

The Newsletter of New City Neighbors

Baking with Dan - Eric Schalk

I may be biased, but I firmly believe New City Neighbors has three of the best, most creative ministries happening during the summer. Where else can you find elementary children willingly taking a break from vacation to read, write, do experiments, create art projects, sing, and learn about God? Where else can you find middle school students waking up early to spend time in a hot kitchen learning how to bake? Where else can you find high school students showing up for hard, hot, dirty work on an urban farm?

Don't get me wrong, I know there are some other amazing ministries and programs in Grand Rapids, but I get excited when I see children of all ages being holistically impacted. There are many stories from the summer that I want to tell you, but I'm going to focus on Dan.

Three months ago in this newsletter I wrote about "Dan," a child who attends EMS. If you read the article, you will recall that Dan can be a challenging child. He is disruptive, irritating, and wears all of his emotions on his sleeve. Dan had really responded to building pinewood derby cars and showed some signs of progress as he learned to do something constructive with his hands. I believed that progress could continue this summer if he joined the bakery, and yet I knew if he was in the bakery, the summer would be a challenge.

Dan never signed up for the Bakery, but he showed up on the first day. He was wild, crazy, and loud, yet I watched as the middle school students embraced him. He was different, but different has never been a problem with the Bakery.

Dan was not the quickest baker, he was not the most consistent baker, and he certainly wasn't the most focused; but Dan lit up every time something he made turned out the way it was supposed to.

At the end of the summer, when we took our bakers on their big field trip to Mackinac, we decided we wanted to emphasize our theme for the summer in a tangible way. All summer we focused on the fruit of the Spirit, so for our weekend away, we assigned kids a different fruit each day that they were responsible for living out. It was no coincidence that Dan received the fruit of self-control. For 24 hours, we watched him struggle to



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Special Thanks

We want to thank the following businesses/organizations for their generous support of our summer ministries:

- Creston Neighborhood Assoc.
- Creston CRC
- Fourth Reformed
- Graydon's Crossing
- Herbruck's Poultry Ranch
- King Flour Mill
- New Development Corp.
- Star Collision Carstar

2013 Fall Dinner & Auction

Join us for an evening of wonderful food followed by both a silent and live auction. This is our biggest fundraiser of the year, with all of the proceeds going to ministries that holistically impact at-risk children living in the Creston & Belknap communities.

The Fall Dinner & Auction is Saturday, November 3, 2013 at Kuyper College. Doors will open at 5:15PM with the dinner and silent auction beginning at 5:30. The live auction will take place at 7:00. Like last year, we will also sell balloons for \$25.00 each that will contain many different prizes. We will also have raffle baskets where you will be able to win some great items.

Dinner is \$20.00 per person, or you can purchase a table of eight for \$150.00.

Auction booklets will be available at www.newcityneighbors.org by October 1.

If you have a new item you would like to donate to the auction, please contact Eric Schalk at erics@newcityneighbors.org



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

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control his emotions, his mouth, and even his money. After blowing a significant amount of money in the arcade, Dan came out sad and said, "I just need more self-confidence!" We chuckled, reminded him he had plenty of that, but that he needed more self-control. He took the challenge seriously and while his impulses occasionally got the best of him, it was easy to see he wanted to have the Spirit of God alive in him. Dan is on a journey, and he is making baby steps towards growth. I saw him invest in his faith and learn how to be slightly more mature. Dan and I even gained new respect for each other. Before the summer began, Dan would only wave to me with his middle finger. Now, every time I see him, he waves with his entire hand and joyfully says hello. For the first time in two years, I see hope blossoming in him and the potential for a bright future.



Life Through the Farm - Shaye Newman, Intern

The students on the Urban Farm this year came from diverse backgrounds. Each brought different points of view, skills, and ideas to the table. All of them also brought their own hardships and weaknesses that they were ready to work on. One of the students had a habit of getting into trouble; in fact Bryan was in juvenile detention before working on the farm. He says that since working on the farm he hasn't had time to get into trouble like he used to. He believes he has a good chance that he will now stay out of trouble. Over the summer Bryan has developed skills that he can use to help others and take up his time instead of hanging out with people that could lead him into trouble. He has also connected with a few of the guys from the Urban Farm that are positive influences on him. Through the farm, Bryan learned how to maintain a job by committing to being on time and working hard. Even on his days off, Bryan spent much of his time on the farm. The amount of time he spent on the farm only rivaled Lance. Even though Bryan often logged extra hours, he would still ask to make up work days that he missed. It is encouraging to see Bryan's potential and how hard he is willing to work.

When asked how he's grown this summer, Bryan said: "I've grown to take initiative and believe in myself more. I have grown in my faith by becoming closer with God and having my questions answered." Seeing how the farm has helped the students grow has been an amazing experience for all of the interns and staff members. It is easy to see the way the Urban Farm is positively influencing their lives, and it encourages us when thinking about the coming years for the Urban Farm.

Metamorphosis - Erin Meendering, Breaktime Leader

While school has begun and fall is fast approaching, it has only been a month since New City Neighbor's Breaktime program ended. This summer's program was filled with great memories, fun, and God's blessings. Though there are too many to list, I thought I would share a few of the highlights from the summer.

Twice a week we had art class led by Nancy Lamberts. Nancy provided all of the materials and led the class in an art lesson each time. Some of the art projects included clay sculptures, egg-shell covered crosses, and Mod-Podge animal silhouettes. It was great for the kids to experience art over the summer, since many of them may not have art class in school.

As well, in the afternoon, Laura Horinga and I focused on reading fluency, reading comprehension, and math. We had tutors each day, which allowed us to work more intensively with small groups in the classroom. Thank you to everyone who participated with tutoring this summer, it helps to prevent learning loss throughout the summer and builds wonderful relationships. The kids asked us daily if they could go with a tutor and looked forward to it each time!

Our overall theme for this past summer for Breaktime was "Metamorphosis." Laura and I planned early on to incorporate various life cycles into the theme and even pre-ordered tadpoles and caterpillars so that our kids could experience metamorphosis first-hand. Most importantly, we wanted to emphasize how, like frogs, butterflies, and plants grow and change, we also change as we grow in Christ.

Our students at Breaktime are all at different points in their relationship with Christ. Some have been raised in wonderful Christian homes and already have a personal relationship with Christ, but others may be hearing about God for the first time. One of the ways that the kids learned about God was through praise songs. Julie Schalk led singing for 15-20 minutes each day. It was fun to watch the kids as they begged Julie to play their favorite praise songs. Regardless of which songs we sang during our singing time, Julie ended each day with the song, "How Great is our God." It was such a wonderful reminder of how great our God really is, and hearing the students pour out their hearts with praise each morning was a blessing!



Ministry Wish List

- Walk Behind Tractor (\$3,000)
- Kitchenaid Professional Mixer (\$900)
- 30 Model Rockets (\$150)
- Art Supplies (\$100)