

## GIVING THE GIFT OF GIVING

by Hannah Joy Ferguson

God is a giving God, and a fruit of being created in His image is to reflect His giving nature. Most of us would agree that gifts are one of the most exciting things about Christmas. And as gift lovers, I think the majority would agree (varying results depend on age/age of heart) that it is the *giving* of the gifts that we truly look forward to. There is something special in showing your love by pouring energy, time, and hard-earned money into a gift – *from you* to them. But sometimes we become so caught up in the



*Residents and volunteer shoppers*

Thank you to all who donated time, gifts and money to our neighborhood Christmas Store for giving the gift of giving in 2011!

### Christmas Store at a Glance...

**257** children served

**1,607** gifts sold

**\$20,377** estimated retail value of gifts sold

**284** volunteers made it happen

joy of giving that we are unable to see that one of the greatest gifts we can give is an opportunity for others to give.

There are families in our neighborhood who must

choose between paying their electric bill or buying presents for their children, children with eyes as full of hope as any! How do we help these families share this sweet love of giving with each other?

Turning a gymnasium into a fully functioning store with a registration process, brand new toys, 75% off prices, assistant shoppers, wrappers and checkout procedures is a lot of work – but it results in great joy. The Christmas Store brings together people from all walks of life – both residents and volunteers – who work together to provide a way for families to cherish their children. There is also Kids' Corner, a section of the Christmas Store that exposes the children to the infectious joy of giving.



*Lots of surprises await parents because of Kids' Corner*

## CALENDAR

### Ongoing Events

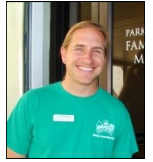
Wednesday Nights – Neighborhood Bible Study  
School Days – AEP for K-Grade 8  
Evenings – AEP for High School  
Various Days – Housing & Facility Work Days

### Other Events

Dates TBD – Classes in healthy meal prep  
Date TBD – Easter Egg Hunt—Groups needed to sponsor and organize.

Contact [admin@parkerstreetministries.org](mailto:admin@parkerstreetministries.org)

### FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



As we grow in all areas, I am seeing the fruit of God's faithfulness. One example is in our education program where reports from standardized tests reveal our students are making measurable progress. We compared the test scores of students who continued with us from the summer to fall semester and found that, in an academic down-time such as summer, our students improved an average of three months for reading and four months for math during our two month summer program!

It is exciting to have our offices relocated to the neighborhood. People are frequently visiting us for tours. That, in turn, is opening the doors for me to speak at churches, civic groups, and other organizations. Please pray that God is glorified by the things I say and that the hearts of the people will respond to God's call to act on behalf of our hood.



*Sociology students from Florida Southern College tour PSM*

I still need to know your friends and their friends so please contact Hannah or Kim with ways for me to show them the ministry. We have seen great fruit from tours, as well as the one-on-one time I get to spend with people sharing our story. Thank you for your tireless support of PSM.

God bless you,

*Tim Mitchell  
Executive Director*

## A YEAR OF FIRSTS

CELEBRATING THE RENOVATION  
OF PARKER STREET MINISTRIES

**September 2011**—For the first time in 13 years, **Tim Mitchell has his own office.**

**September 2011**—**First administrative volunteer** in the new offices...



*Thank you Celia,  
Volunteer Extraordinaire*

Since August, Celia Nicholson has volunteered at least three days a week in the 4th/5th grade classroom as well as in the office doing AEP administrative work.

**September 20, 2011**—**First Friendraiser on site.** *Parker Street Sweets*, with 334 attending, making 78 new friends.

**October 2011**—**First community-wide educational event** held in GWJ Gym: Polk's Home Weatherization Day.

**November 2011**—**First permanent sound system for gym** donated, installed and tested with Tom Gaige's favorite hits.

**December 2011**—First time providing blood pressure readings at Christmas Store

### **Parker Street Ministries, Inc.**

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## BEYOND BABYSITTING

*by Christina Allen*  
*Education Director*



From 3:00-6:00pm each school day, approximately eighty kindergarten through eighth grade students from the Parker Street neighborhood can be found at our after-school Academic Enrichment Program (AEP). This is what **AEP** means for them:

### **Academic**

Each student spends 60 to 90 minutes Monday through Thursday working on academic skills. Classroom leaders and volunteers lead children in completing their homework and in additional reading and math skill building activities. Work is individualized, according to standardized reading and math testing performed several times a year.

### **Enrichment**

I am excited about growing our extracurricular activities this school year. Currently, Polk Museum of Art provides weekly art classes. Beginning in January, Girl Scouts of America will provide a weekly program for our elementary students. We



*Kindergarten room is  
sure to make you smile*

will also have a dance group provided by Southeastern University students. Each week students engage in age-appropriate Bible study. My desire is to provide an extracurricular activity each week. In order to provide these activities, **we need volunteers** to share their skills. Please think about how you can help and contact Nicki at [volunteer@parkerstreetministries.org](mailto:volunteer@parkerstreetministries.org).

### **Program**

Each afternoon, our students are met by the smiling faces of our wonderful classroom leaders. Walking or riding from their bus stops to our program, students can anticipate a healthy snack and opportunities to get exercise, fresh air, and a chance to "blow off steam" at the playground. After playground and snack, newly-renovated classrooms await the students, filled with opportunities and loving volunteers. It is a huge blessing each day to know these students whom I greatly love have a safe, nurturing environment in which to "hang-out" after school.

**Besides classroom leaders and a beautiful facility, I am thankful for:**

**Polk County school teachers** who go above and beyond for our students and are willing to communicate student needs as we partner to help our children achieve.

**Parents** who volunteer their time to help our program grow.

**Volunteers** who share their lives and talents with our students. We have many this year who have gone way above and beyond.

**Donors** who provide financial support that enables our program to operate and grow.

And **beautiful children**, whose lives are being steadily transformed by the love of Christ and the work of His people.

**Thank you** for your support. I know that none of this would be possible without **YOUR** prayers, time and support.



*Students complete homework,  
then extra reading and math*



*After-school tutors needed*

## REVITALIZING THE NEIGHBORHOOD

by Thomas Gaige  
Housing and Facility Director

In case we haven't met, I'm Tom Gaige, the new Housing and Facility Director for PSM. My family and I relocated here from South Carolina and have moved into a home in the Parker Street neighborhood. With my background in residential construction, I am excited to be a part of the expanding neighborhood revitalization programs of PSM.

A few months ago we finished the renovation work at PSM. There were little projects to be completed or adjusted to make the buildings better meet our needs, as is typical for any large project. Thankfully, we are quickly closing in on the facility projects which frees up more time to devote to neighborhood projects. An anonymous donor provided a quality fence around the perimeter of the office lot creating a safe, defined area for our students and for neighborhood gatherings.



*New fence protects property and children*

were able to complete the work in two days at a very minimal cost.

The second big neighborhood project we tackled was re-roofing a home on Magnolia Street. This home had a leaking roof, a few layers of bad shingles, a sagging front roof line, and numerous other issues. Over the course of three days we stripped the roof, made all the repairs, and re-roofed the house. We relied heavily on volunteer labor and skill.

One thing that quickly became evident is that when there is a neighborhood project, we need the right mix of individuals and talents to come forward to help. In the coming months, as we continue to identify projects and get better organized in our approach, we will definitely need more volunteers. These volunteers are essential to our mission, and you do not necessarily need to be skilled in a trade to lend a helping hand. If you are a tradesman or contractor looking for a charitable outlet with both materials and skills, let's grab a coffee to discuss some ideas!



*Peachtree home after repairs*



*Welcome to Tom and Leo Gaige and daughters Kendra and Melanie*

Recently we have completed a few neighborhood projects with both homeowner and volunteer help.

The first project addressed major code violation repairs to a home on Peachtree Street. These repairs included repainting a porch metal roof to form a seal, installing new flashing, siding and trim on the front of the house, and painting portions of the exterior. For this particular resident we

I am exciting about what is in store for our neighborhood in the coming months. It is my hope that as we help folks with their homes, we can also show them that if their foundation is in Christ they will not be easily shaken.

For more information about work projects, contact [tom@parkerstreetministries.org](mailto:tom@parkerstreetministries.org)

## SERVING OTHERS

by Ben Turner,  
Spiritual Development

Every year Parker Street Ministries hosts a Fall Festival celebrating the season and providing opportunities to meet new people from our neighborhood. Many of our supporting churches and volunteers have helped with this event in the past and have done a wonderful job. This past Fall Festival was a new experience in that our very own Wednesday Bible Study crew hosted the event!

Our Bible study family is made up entirely of neighborhood residents—some who are originally from the neighborhood and others who have intentionally moved in to live as Christians sharing the Gospel of Jesus through their lives. Everyone in our group had a blast running the games, helping set up, talking to neighbors, and eating some good snow cones! Being innately competitive, I had a great time competing against some of our guys in the “corn hole” game. And just for the record (and of course, not bragging!) I didn't lose a game.



*Adult Bible study members manned festival booths*

On a more serious note, Our group's hosting of the Fall Festival is crucial for the formation of our community. It's powerful to see men and women who study the Bible together every week and come from a very wide range of backgrounds and experiences fellowshiping and serving side-by-side. It can be so subtle and seem so insignificant, but God uses these opportunities to break down barriers and build His people. Praise God for the work He is doing! Please pray that we would all continue to open our eyes to the grace He is giving.

Ben can be reached at [ben@parkerstreetministries.org](mailto:ben@parkerstreetministries.org).



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Parker Street Beat  
Winter 2011

## BELLS WILL BE RINGING THE GLAD, GLAD NEWS

By Kim Schell

Development and Communications Director

Oh, what a Christmas this has been. Parker Street Ministries is pleased to announce the naming of the community center bell tower through gifts from within the Community Foundation of Greater Lakeland. Over the next few months we will install a digital carillon system and present to the neighborhood the **Anne M. Jenkins Bell Tower** at Parker Street Ministries.

The **pealing of bells** is a call to community that directly aligns with our mission — something that will **publicly** celebrate ongoing revitalization and reconciliation in the lives of children and adults in the Parker Street community. The ringing of bells will signify:

- **Academic milestones for students**  
(expanding to serve 115 in 2012)
- **Stabilization milestones for adults**  
(GED, job placements, housing)
- **Special neighborhood occasions**  
(weddings, funerals, calls to worship)

There will be a community celebration when we first ring the bells, so **watch for the details later in 2012**. Meanwhile, share our excitement that this beautiful architectural feature will have a bell system and will serve as a community-building tool—all because of a donor's **legacy of care** for children and this neighborhood.



Carillon system coming soon

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM FALL FESTIVAL



### CELEBRATING SEASONS

More than 200 attended PSM's Fall Festival in November. Popcorn, snow cones, carnival booths, and three-legged races all made for a fun day to put aside our struggles and enjoy each other. The Candy Walk was a highlight. The SPCA was on hand to educate about pit bulls and low cost spaying and neutering. Thank you to the volunteers and organizations that loaned us games and to Snowie for going way past his snow cone limit. Would you like to be part of our Easter Egg Hunt or another neighborhood event? Contact Hannah at [admin@parkerstreetministries.org](mailto:admin@parkerstreetministries.org).

### HOLD THE DATE(S)

Two organizations will benefit Parker Street Ministries with their fundraisers over the next few months.

Lakeland Christina Rotary hosts its *Barnyard BBQ Bash* on February 25 from 6-10pm. Think great food and great fun for a great cause. For tickets contact **Kim** at PSM's office.

PSM's academic enrichment program will be one of the beneficiaries at Lakeland Rotary Club's *Child of the Sun Urban Triathlon and Jazz Festival*. It was a great event last year. Please plan to enjoy it on Saturday, April 21.

### Like us on Facebook!

Join the conversation.  
Learn about our at-risk communities and how you can help.



## THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR DONORS AND TO OUR SUSTAINING PARTNERS

as of 12/15/2011

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For more information about becoming a sustaining partner call Tim or Kim at 863.682.4544.