



"The WORD became Flesh  
and moved into our  
Neighborhood"

**Parker Street Ministries**

# Parker Street Beat

A quarterly publication of Parker Street Ministries

Volume 2 Issue 4

November 2009

Parker Street Ministries, Inc. is a Christ-centered, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization committed to individual, family and community restoration, reconciliation and revitalization in Lakeland's Parker Street community.

## Transforming the Community Through our Annual Christmas Store

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas at the office of Parker Street Ministries. Christmas gifts are beginning to arrive in anticipation of the December 11 deadline for Christmas Store.

PSM's Christmas Store allows parents in this impoverished neighborhood to purchase brand new toys for a quarter of the retail cost.

Donating unwrapped toys for a store is a change from the old way of arriving at homes of the needy and presenting gifts; however, PSM seeks to enable parents to provide for their own children in a way that builds dignity and not dependency. That is how our Annual Christmas Store, in a flurry of volunteer effort, comes alongside those with less and helps them in a rehabilitative way.

PSM is enjoying great support from the community for this year's store. As of the second week of November, ten churches, Lakeland Christian School, Midflorida Society for HR Managers, and several other organizations are helping support the Christmas



*Parker Street resident J. was happy to be shopping for her Mom at the Kid's Corner area of Christmas Store 2008.*

Store with gifts and volunteers. Learn how you can be involved by emailing Hannah at [admin@parkerstreetministries.org](mailto:admin@parkerstreetministries.org).

### Did you know...?

In 2008 the annual Christmas Store sold 1,120 gifts to benefit 187 children! Donors and a volunteer staff of 130 from several area churches and organizations made it all happen.

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

### Ongoing Events

Wednesday evenings—Neighborhood Bible Studies—volunteers needed for childcare—contact [ben@parkerstreetministries.org](mailto:ben@parkerstreetministries.org)

School days—Afterschool Academic Enrichment Program—volunteers needed—contact [christina@parkerstreetministries.org](mailto:christina@parkerstreetministries.org)

### Scheduled Events

December 5—Holiday Home Tour at Greg & Marcia Riching's with one-third of proceeds benefitting PSM

December 8—Saint Paul Lutheran School hosts a uniform buy-out day to benefit PSM

December 12, 18, 19—Christmas Store opens to benefit neighborhood children

January 23—1st Block Party in neighborhood—for Stella and Lake residents only

February 13—2nd Block Party in neighborhood—for Iowa residents only

March 20—Spring Neighborhood Party—groups needed to lead in sponsoring and organizing this event—contact [admin@parkerstreetministries.org](mailto:admin@parkerstreetministries.org)



### One Child at a Time...

A. is a five-year-old Mexican American who came to Parker Street

Ministries with limited English language skills. In the beginning A. was unable to recognize or name any of the letters of the alphabet or their sounds. After participating in the program and receiving one-on-one time with volunteers and staff, A. could recognize all of his letter sounds and name many of the letters. Letter sounds are a key component to reading. With this newly acquired knowledge along with many other skills learned, A. is a well-equipped kindergartener. A. was taught using the Litart curriculum designed for at-risk students.

Porsche Jones is a regular volunteer at Parker Street's after-school program and was a paid summer intern. She served as a wonderful, indigenous role model and received basic job skills training while developing her leadership skills and learning the importance of punctuality and time management.



## Ministries that Transform— This Issue At a Glance

### Christmas Store

*Transforming Households*

### Letter from the Executive Director

*Transforming Tim Mitchell*

### Academic Enrichment

*Transforming Children*

### Spiritual Development

*Transforming Hearts*

### Community Dinners

*Transforming the Neighborhood*

### Finance Update

*Transforming Donors*

## Letter from the Executive Director



As I planned this update, I hoped we would have news about Parker Street Ministries' future in the Wesley Memorial buildings, but every day, by God's

grace, we continue to find ourselves in a holding pattern.

Patience is a virtue I don't have. My lack of patience shows up in every part of my life. As I pray I often find myself expecting God to do things on my time table. So as I go into life I find myself very anxious always looking for God to show up and do what I want, when I want it.

This is so stupid when I think of Philippians 4:6, "Do not be *anxious* about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

If this is how we are to live, then we can face any situation with hope knowing that our Heavenly Father has us in his hand. I keep this verse in front of me as I look to the uncertain economy and all the ways the world would encourage me to despair. We as Christians have the greatest privilege to present this great hope to a watching world.

If you claim Christ, let me encourage you to go out and live boldly, loving much and giving much so that when people see you they might say "I want what they have."

I believe God will amaze you with his love as you seek to love those around you. Please know that every Monday the staff prays for you. We consider it a joy to bring you before our God. Thank you for your prayers and support. We look forward to hearing how God has used you in his work.

God bless you.

Tim Mitchell  
Executive Director

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## Education Update by the Numbers

by Christina Allen



This semester I have the privilege of working with **five wonderful, young adult staff members** who are receiving meaningful teaching opportunities as well as a better understanding of the effects of poverty on children's education. **Three** of these staff members **are future teachers**.

AEP seeks to share the love of Jesus in many ways:

1. We partner with parents and schools to ensure academic progress is being made;
2. We provide nutritious snacks for each student where **93% of our AEP families reported being eligible for the federal lunch program and 75% reported living below the federal poverty level**;
3. We provide a nurturing refuge from the dangers and temptations of a high crime neighborhood;
4. We provide students with enrichment activities that would otherwise be unavailable to them; and
5. We provide students with meaningful interactions with classroom leaders and volunteers serving as role models.



So, how are we progressing?

### Academic and Enrichment Activities

AEP is structured so that on Monday through Thursday there is homework help, **20 minutes of reading** with a comprehension check, and daily math practice. On Fridays the focus is Bible study, relationship building, and fun! The Polk Museum of Art continues to partner with PSM to provide **twice monthly art instruction** for K-3 as well as a middle school and high school program.

PSM has received a **\$4,000 grant** from the City of Lakeland to purchase new software that will help us keep accurate, standardized tabs on academic progress. The \$4,000 did not quite cover the costs of this software, so the balance of this technology purchase will be financed through a uniform buy-out day at St. Paul Lutheran School.

### Volunteers

#### Students are divided into four groups:

K-1st grade, 2nd-3rd grade, 4th-8th grade girls and 4th-8th grade boys. Volunteers come in each afternoon to help. It is vital that **AEP students receive a minimum of 30 minutes a day of one-on-one time with a volunteer**. We are at a point where we need to add more volunteers before new students are added. Volunteers can be all sorts of people—high school students, retirees, or working adults. Some corporations allow their employees time off to volunteer. We require a **semester-long commitment of one day per week** and a background check. Please come check out our program. We welcome new volunteers. If you are interested, please contact me at [christina@parkerstreetministries.org](mailto:christina@parkerstreetministries.org). **Thank you for all your support!**



## Financial Update—As of October 31, 2009

Still Needed in 2009

- Rebuild Emergency Reserves **\$37,176**
  - Repay Line of Credit **\$10,000**
  - Budget Deficit **\$25,503**
- Total Needed: **\$72,679**

2009 Budget **\$397,000**  
 Received by Oct 31: **\$371,497**

Received in  
 2009  
 Thank you!

*Donors, residents, volunteers, staff—  
 We are all transformed as together we seek to  
 alleviate poverty in a developmental way, little by  
 little, slowly making our community a better place.*

Please make checks out and send to  
 Parker Street Ministries • PO Box 433 • Lakeland, FL 33802  
 On memo line write Year-End Gift.  
 Or give securely through our Web site at  
[www.parkerstreetministries.org](http://www.parkerstreetministries.org)

## Prayer Requests

- That God will provide wisdom and funding as we consider an opportunity to move further into the neighborhood through permanent and/or increased use of the Wesley Memorial facility
- That the AEP staff will continue to faithfully communicate the Gospel to students and families and that the staff will be effective in partnering with schools to improve the academics of the students
- For safety for families intentionally living in the neighborhood

## Current Needs

- Reliable Internet service for the Wesley Memorial facility
- Volunteers to help with afterschool Academic Enrichment Program and neighborhood Bible study
- Volunteer groups to help with small repairs and neighborhood revitalization efforts
- Commercial grade chainsaw and tree trimmer
- Graphic design services

## Organizations Benefit PSM

Several organizations and businesses have come forward this fall and designated PSM as beneficiary of their fund raising events.

**To Give**, a coffee take-out serving salads and wraps, is now open and located off South Florida Avenue in a small building in the Alamo Plaza parking lot. **To Give** is donating 5% of sales to three charities. The customer chooses which charity to support and one of the choices is PSM! Check it out when you are out that way.

On Tuesday, December 1, **Fish City Grill** at Lakeland's Town Center is donating 15% of their day's revenue to PSM. Fish sounds good for the first of December.

On December 5, Marcia Riching has designated PSM to receive one-third of the proceeds from the **United Women's Club of Lakeland Annual Holiday Home Tour**. The Riching home is part of the tour this year. Watch the Web site for more details.

**Lakeland Christian School, St. Paul Lutheran School, and MidFlorida Society for HR Managers** are all designating PSM for Christmas Store or December fundraisers. PSM has already benefited from fundraisers organized by **Woodman of the World, Southeastern University Theatre Department** and **Delta Sigma Theta at Florida Southern College**.

As your group plans charity events, please ask for PSM to benefit! Find out more by contacting Kim Schell at [development@parkerstreetministries.org](mailto:development@parkerstreetministries.org).

## Transforming Hearts through Bible Study by Ben Turner

We are seeing incredible progress in the lives of people who are coming to the weekly Bible study. In everything he has been a part of, C., an 18 year old, has shown extreme commitment and ownership. Our Bible study begins at 6:30 every week, but at 3:00 C. is faithfully waiting in the park for the Bible study to start! He wants to have an excuse to not get distracted by other things and miss the Bible study, so he says that he is helping us watch the kids for the Academic Enrichment Program. Sometimes, just to joke with him, I'll ask him if he is coming to Bible study and his response is, "Of course I'm coming to Bible study, when have I ever missed?" Now that's the kind of commitment I'm looking for! I believe God is doing a great work in C.'s heart as this man, who has been given little hope in life, is being transformed by the hope of the Gospel every week.



*Ben Turner teaches during neighborhood Bible study.*

Recently I have asked C. to help me finish the community listening survey I am doing in our neighborhood. With his typical enthusiasm, he jumped right in and was willing to help in any way possible. The goal of the survey is to hear what our neighbors consider the main issues in our neighborhood and then hear how they think they can help to solve them. It has been an incredibly thought-provoking, eye-opening adventure, while at the same time a great way to meet more people and tell them about Parker Street Ministries. My hope is that, when the survey is finished, we can better serve this neighborhood that we care so much about through our various ministries.



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## Parker Street Ministries

P.O. Box 433  
Lakeland, FL 33802-0433

PH 863.682.4544

FAX 863.603.7779

**E-mail:**

[news@parkerstreetministries.org](mailto:news@parkerstreetministries.org)

Visit our Web site

[www.parkerstreetministries.org](http://www.parkerstreetministries.org)

## Community Dinners Move into Our Neighborhood

The staff evaluated the community dinner outreaches at Wesley and decided in November to discontinue them. Over time they attracted people other than neighborhood residents such that the residents were not comfortable attending. Another factor in the decision to discontinue the community dinners was that they were not building independence but instead were perceived as "free feeds" for those who attended.

In place of community dinners, the staff is planning to move further into the streets of the neighborhood by hosting block parties. Four locations have been identified to host two parties in 2010. PSM is providing meat, and the residents are expected to bring sides. We hope to use this time to build relationships and to listen and enjoy our neighbors.



*Groups are needed to sponsor quarterly neighborhood parties.*

There will not be a large need for volunteers for the block parties. PSM staff prefers they be indigenous events.

However, in March, June, and November we would like to have large, themed neighborhood parties. These will require volunteers from organizations, student groups, and churches. The tasks will be divided up and groups will be needed to lead, plan, and sponsor portions of the quarterly neighborhood parties.

The first scheduled neighborhood party is March 20. If you can help with this or any of the other neighborhood parties, please contact Hannah at [admin@parkerstreetministries.org](mailto:admin@parkerstreetministries.org).

## Save Money-Go Green

Parker Street Ministries is making an effort to be eco-friendly and save money at the same time. Please opt to receive our quarterly newsletter via e-mail instead of through the postal service. You will help save paper, ink and postage!

If you received this newsletter via the postal service but would like to begin receiving it electronically, please send an e-mail to [news@parkerstreetministries.org](mailto:news@parkerstreetministries.org) and we will add you to our eNewsletter distribution list. On the subject line type Save Money or Go Green!

An added benefit to being on the eNewsletter distribution list is the ability to receive last minute updates like for the VIP Gator tickets that were auctioned off in a day in September or the names of businesses that have designated PSM as their beneficiary on a particular day. Please stay INFORMED and keep in touch!