



"The WORD became Flesh
and moved into our
Neighborhood"

Parker Street Ministries

Parker Street Beat

A quarterly publication of Parker Street Ministries

Volume 3 Issue 1

May 2010

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

Making a Difference Through Neighborhood Easter Party

In March PSM held a neighborhood party to celebrate the Easter season. Ninety-nine children registered for an egg hunt and then joined their older siblings and adults to enjoy field games and dinner.

Neighborhood parties are scheduled quarterly, filling a need for community-building among the diverse residents who make up the Parker Street neighborhood. The parties are occasions for African-Americans, Hispanics and Whites to mingle and enjoy fun and food. They are also occasions for the staff to enjoy our



Egg hunter



*Ostrich egg relay
requires intense
concentration*

neighbors and provide light-hearted fun for residents who tend to be discouraged. Finally, they are occasions for churches to join together, underwrite costs, and volunteer to serve.

The March party was hosted by St. Paul Lutheran Church and

Access Church. These churches provided food, with Access preparing it onsite. St. Paul Lutheran hosted a great mix of field games such as beanbag tosses, egg hunts, egg relays, and sack races. Sixty-five volunteers were on the scene to make it happen.

The next neighborhood-wide party is planned for June 12, and groups are needed to lead in sponsoring and organizing this school's-out, water event. Learn how you can be involved by emailing Hannah at admin@parkerstreetministries.org.



Breaking Into the Neighborhood

*by Hannah Ferguson,
Administrative Assistant*

Most of the staff and intentional residents who live in the Parker Street neighborhood have experienced break-ins – some of them multiple times. My roommate Eina and I moved into the neighborhood in 2009. **We always knew it was coming.**

For those of you whose homes have been broken into, you know how it feels. The immediate sense of violation. The desire to wash everything – not knowing what evil intentions have been smeared onto what was touched.

And we always knew these were the people we were here to serve.

But what I never thought through was what we would do afterward. It was 5:05pm on a Monday evening, and all of a sudden we had a worthless backdoor, a broken window, and glass everywhere, and we were short an Xbox, PS2, digital camera, and laptop.

Within 120 seconds of my call, Tim Mitchell was there, followed in the next 15 minutes by intentional resident Will Yancey. After taking measurements, they left to meet up with Clint DeBoer, a man who helps out often with PSM.

They came back with a new door, window, and tools to install everything. Another item someone brought and left on the kitchen table was a brand-new laptop.

These men joyfully worked together with various neighbors, who heard the news and stopped in, until 11:30pm – literally putting our house back together. These men have families and jobs to get to in the morning.

Eina and I went from feeling violated to feeling safer than before. The immediacy of the response to our need really speaks to the community we live in – a community that so many people are losing faith in. And while our neighbor may be anyone from a thief to a helping hand, these are the people we are here to serve.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Ongoing Events

Wednesday evenings—Neighborhood Bible Studies—**volunteers needed for childcare**—contact ben@parkerstreetministries.org

School Day Afternoons & Summer—Academic Enrichment Program —**volunteers needed**—contact christina@parkerstreetministries.org

Scheduled Events

May 13-17—eAuction to benefit Parker Street Ministries. If you did not get an auction item listing by May 10, tell us at events@parkerstreetministries.org

May 14—Pics on the Promenade community showing of *The Blind Side* to raise awareness for PSM. It's free, at dusk, on the Lake Mirror Promenade

June 4—Academic Enrichment Program ends

June 12—Summer Neighborhood Party—**groups needed to lead in sponsoring and organizing this event**—contact admin@parkerstreetministries.org

June 14—The Bridge Summer Camp begins

Letter from the Executive Director



Tim gave Senator Bill Nelson a tour of the ministry in January.

As I have had the privilege to live in the neighborhood for the past 13 years, I have seen many changes, most of which I have prayed for and am delighted to see. But in the past year, I have seen a change that is very

disheartening. Over the course of time the *fist* has been replaced by the *gun* so much that it seems as if every boy over the age of 12 has a gun.

I was talking with one young man who told me his first gun was an **M-16**. He was **11** when he received this from an older, drug dealer friend. Just this past month one of the older boys we have been working with was shot in the hip in a gang fight. The next day his gang retaliated and shot two of the rival gang members. All this happened in less than 24 hours. I met with the young man to try to persuade him that this life he is living is going to lead to death. After two hours of conversation, he left my office with both of us knowing that without the intervention of God, I would be going to his funeral. Please pray for him.

Every day young boys are offered the chance to deal drugs, run drugs, or just hang out with older “cool drug dealers.” This has made our job very difficult. As we are trying to communicate the value of this Christian life we have, the “coolest” guys in the ‘hood are offering another life. So **please pray that the Holy Spirit will move on the hearts of our boys and allow them to know the truth.**

God bless you.

Tim Mitchell
Executive Director

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Education Update Making a Difference One by One

by Christina Allen, Director of Education



This semester we are serving 38 students, kindergarten through grade 8, in our after-school Academic Enrichment Program (AEP). It is great to see the children progress through the years and know that **we are making a difference in their lives.**



Larenz DeShazor, AEP student and Red Ribbon Rally Winner

One of our students is Larenz Deshazor, a fifth grader. In 2006 Larenz joined our program having failed third grade and the FCAT twice. Larenz is being raised by a single father who trusted AEP would provide a safe environment along with homework help and academic support while he worked in the afternoons. **Larenz** proved to be a very hardworking student and **now maintains a B average.** He loves football and running. He currently holds the record for the fastest overall time (5:51 mile) of all elementary students from Lakeland area schools in the annual Red Ribbon Run. He dreams of playing football for Lakeland High School and college football at either Florida State or Alabama.

We are privileged to help Larenz pursue his dream while we help him progress each year by at least one grade level. Larenz encourages us by working diligently each day on his homework.

PSM has new software that helps us keep better standardized tabs on students like Larenz.

In January and February all AEP students were evaluated utilizing Star Reading diagnostics. We now have a realistic reading range for students. The software confirmed our assumptions about student reading levels, validating that **more than 60% fell into the “needs intervention” category**, which means they are a grade level or more behind. The data provided ensures we are helping students on their appropriate levels.

Having full usage of the old Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church facility will provide an opportunity for much-needed AEP expansion. With little advertising, AEP has a waiting list at the beginning of each school year. There are almost 1,000 individual addresses in the Parker Street neighborhood. Although many homes are unoccupied, others are home to several families with young children.

More than one-half of our AEP students are a grade level or more behind.

The assessments of our existing students, the waiting lists, and the potential for new students all cry out for more classroom space for AEP. **The staff has set a goal of increasing students served by two classrooms for each year in 2010, 2011, and 2012.** This summer we plan to add 20 students to The Bridge Summer Camp program. This is a very ambitious goal, but the long range repercussions of not growing AEP—in students’ failing and dropping out and in students being left to the dangerous streets—would affect these kids and the entire Lakeland community.

Please help us as we move forward in expanding AEP. We will need more staff and supplies and more volunteers for the new classrooms. If you can help us in any of these areas, please contact Christina at christina@parkerstreetministries.org.

You can make a difference May 13-17

Get your bid on. Sign up for our eAuction!

Now is the time to join the fun as you **bid on** 53 outstanding **auction items** from the comfort of your own home. If you have not received an eAnnouncement from us, then you aren't on our list. Send your email address to: events@parkerstreetministries.org and include *Sign me up for the eAuction* in the subject line. Categories are:

<i>Dining</i>	<i>His</i>	<i>Sports</i>
<i>Events</i>	<i>Hers</i>	<i>Vacations</i>

Benefit PSM
eAuction May 13—17

Come join the fun ...
downtown Lakeland ...
Friday, May 14 at dusk
Pics on the Promenade presents



Free Admission ~ bring your chair
& favorite beverage
Help raise awareness for
Parker Street Ministries!

The Blind Side is rated PG-13, and parents should research the film before bringing young children. Make it a date night, friends night, or family night.

Join us on May 14!



Underwritten by: **TEAM HAMMER**
SCREENPRINTING & EMBROIDERY

Lasting Change through Bible Study

by Ben Turner, Director of
Spiritual Development



One of the most urgent needs in the Parker Street neighborhood is leadership development. The need for quality leaders is a key reason our neighborhood has experienced its tragic overall decline. When every positive leader in the neighborhood moves out of the neighborhood, the rest of the people are left with drug dealers, gang members, and absentee fathers as their role models for leadership. **Parker Street Ministries is committed to reversing this trend and developing leaders in our neighborhood.**



L. DeShazor, from PSM's Leadership Class of 2010!

This past January, seven residents attended small group leadership training to learn how to effectively teach *The Person of Jesus Study* from SeeJesus.net. We have been using this material in our adult Bible study on Wednesday nights for the last year and have seen incredible growth in our people. My goal in training these people was that they be equipped to teach our adult Bible study on a regular rotation as a way of developing them into spiritual leaders of our neighborhood. They all thoroughly enjoyed the training time and came back excited to put into practice what they had learned. So far four out of the seven have taught lessons, and the lessons have all been tremendous experiences of growth for them and inspiring to everyone else involved! **We are truly seeing men of God being developed right in our midst** so that they can be instrumental in transforming our neighborhood.

I'm looking forward excitedly to what God is going to do next through these new leaders on the horizon!

Prayer Requests

- That God will provide wisdom and funding as we finalize plans to purchase and renovate the Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church building
- 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

- Staff for The Bridge Summer Camp and Fall AEP. Find out more by emailing christina@parkerstreetministries.org
- Volunteers to help with afterschool Academic Enrichment Program and to provide childcare during neighborhood Bible study
- Volunteer groups to help with small repairs and neighborhood revitalization efforts
- Commercial grill for block parties

Organizations Benefit PSM

Many new organizations and businesses have come forward since December to donate funds to PSM outright or through fundraisers. In 2009, through the support of 315 donors, 28 organizations, and 691 volunteers, PSM completed 2009 with no debt and above budget. We thank God and welcome the following **new** donor organizations as of March 31, 2010:

Atlantic Philanthropies	St. Paul Lutheran Church & School PTO	Florida Citrus Mutual, Inc.
CFGL Impact Lakeland 2010	Highland Park Church of Nazarene	Victory Assembly
City of Lakeland Neighborhood Services Matching Grant	Rhema Family Fellowship	United Methodist Temple Men
Lakeland Rotary Club	Geneva Classical Academy	Christ Community Presbyterian
Camp Rotary Foundation		

CFGL donors provided \$78,000 in 2009!



As your group plans charity events, please ask for PSM to benefit! Find out more by contacting Kim at development@parkerstreetministries.org.



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Parker Street Ministries

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Visit our Web site:

www.parkerstreetministries.org

While You're in the Neighborhood...PSM Odds and Ends

"It's the best thing Parker Street Ministries has ever done with food."

"I liked the way the residents took ownership of the party—they were happy to contribute food. It gave us a chance to receive from them."

Those are staff comments made after our Zone 1 block party in January attended by more than 60 residents. Since January there has been a block party in each of the four zones as well as an Easter neighborhood party that was enjoyed by more 250 people. During block parties, PSM donors provide meat, and the residents bring

sides. We hope to use this time to build relationships and to listen and enjoy our neighbors.

Save \$ ~ Go Green!

Please opt to receive this newsletter via e-mail instead of through the postal service. You will help save paper, ink and postage!

Send an e-mail request to news@parkerstreetministries.org and we will add you to our eNewsletter distribution list. Please stay INFORMED and keep in touch!

1 Minute = \$1 for PSM

Want to support Parker Street Ministries, but don't have cash? Now you can support us with someone else's money! *SixSeeds.tv* is a new place for parents looking for the good in movies, television, sports, books, and fun family service opportunities. **For every person who subscribes to this free e-zine, Six Seeds will donate \$1 to PSM, up to \$2,500!** New articles come to your inbox every Friday, and you can unsubscribe at any time. To benefit PSM, you must sign up through the link below. [Click here to sign up.](#)



Hannah Ferguson and Willow Glen friend S. enjoy lunch at block party



PSM welcomed Leadership Lakeland Class of XXVII in March

Christmas Store Impact

1,521 gifts sold
192 children served
92 families served
160 volunteers made it happen!



T. checks out at Kid's Corner