



"The WORD became Flesh
and moved into our
Neighborhood"

Parker Street Ministries

PARKER STREET BEAT

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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.

Bridging Learning Gaps Through Expanded Summer-Bridge Camp

At Summer-Bridge Camp 2010, L. (age 5), learned her "ABC's and how to write her name and be nice." D. (age 9), reports he missed out on a summer of "watching TV, eating, and finding some girls." L. (age 12), voluntarily stayed after camp and apologized to his teacher for his behavior. The 10-going-on-20 class learned they did not have to be tough all the time but could play as children.

For eight weeks of summer 2010, 55 students from this at-risk community attended summer camp. That's an **increase of two classrooms** from PSM's 2009 camp! The students,



Campers check out Florida Aquarium

grades kindergarten through middle school, enjoyed six-hour days split between academics and extracurricular enrichment.

Summer-Bridge Camp strives to close the summer learning gap that is especially devastating for impoverished students. Statistics from 2010 provide a



Summer-Bridge Campers visit Lowry Park Zoo

snapshot of these students:

- 68% Black; 19% Multiracial; 11% Hispanic; 2% White
- 93% participate in Free Lunch Program
- 72% live below the federal poverty level
- 73% lived in rented housing
- 76% of households are led by females

Parker Street Ministries is grateful for individual donors and the following organizations for underwriting camp costs: Harrell's Fertilizer Group, Publix Super Markets Charities, George Jenkins Fund within Community Foundation of Greater Lakeland, City of Lakeland's CDBG Program, and Camp Rotary Foundation.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Ongoing Events

Wednesday Evenings—Neighborhood Bible Studies—**volunteers needed for meal preparation**—contact ben@parkerstreetministries.org

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

Various School Holidays and Saturdays—Neighborhood or facility work projects **volunteers needed**—contact admin@parkerstreetministries.org

Scheduled Events

October—**Renovation begins!** Watch for details.

November 6—Fall Neighborhood Party—**groups needed to lead in sponsoring and organizing this event**—contact admin@parkerstreetministries.org

December 11, 17 and 18—Annual Christmas Store—**volunteers, gifts, and cash donations are needed**—contact admin@parkerstreetministries.org



Gospel-centered Academic Enrichment

by Ellie Grigsby
Summer-Bridge 2010 Staff

I returned to Parker Street this summer after an absence of four years. Four years ago, Christina Allen and I were the only two official summer camp staff, and we had 25 kids. Last summer I was so excited to see the program had grown to 55 kids and six classroom teachers. Little did I know just how much growing God wanted to do in my heart last summer.

There were days in my second-and-third grade classroom when I asked God, "Why exactly did you want ME here? I don't know what to do with this kid who doesn't want to do his math worksheet and is lying facedown on the floor! I don't know what to do with that kid who keeps interrupting me when I'm reading the story! I don't know why you think I have the skills or the patience to do this job!" But one day, Tim Mitchell answered these questions in a conversation we were having about working in the neighborhood. He said, "Look how much God loves you. He picked YOU to be in that classroom with those kids. He chose you to be in on the work He is doing."

As I began to see my job in that light, Christ became more and more beautiful to me. When I struggled to be patient with a child, I was reminded of how outrageously patient Christ is with me. When I started to feel inadequate, I remembered that God is perfectly satisfied with me because of Christ's work on the cross. When I started to feel hopeless about a child's home life, I remembered that Christ has not forgotten her or her family and that He holds all things together.

Before this summer, when people asked what I wanted to do after college, I never had a real answer for them. But as a direct result of God's work in my heart at Parker Street, I have decided to pursue a degree in biblical counseling at Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia this fall. There, I hope to grow in the knowledge that God has breathed into me this summer, that the gospel is sufficient to meet every kind of human need.

Letter from the Executive Director



Tim and Christy Mitchell

Summer. I can't believe it's over. As I look back, I see that there were many ways God showed up. One really amazing way was the fact that Christy and I celebrated our tenth anniversary.

Some of you may not have the privilege to know my wife. Please allow me to brag about her a little. First of all, she is married to me, and if you know me at all, you know that she is a saint. My beautiful wife has given her life for the work that God has called us to in a way that has led her to take in kids that she didn't birth and live in a neighborhood where she still can't walk outside alone. She has a husband who is on call 24/7. All of the work we do in the neighborhood is stretching beyond anything either of us could have planned. I am not saying that every day Christy is full of joy, but I have seen my wife trust God and me in a way that makes me want to be a better man. I have a wife who is a constant reminder of God's love for me.

I have seen God carry this ministry over many obstacles over the past 13 years. **We are about to embark on an amazing journey with the renovation of the buildings and the expanded work we will be able to do at the completion.** We will be able to do things we have dreamed of doing for many years, such as opening our program up to high school students and young adults for everything from basketball to tutoring. We will have staff on site all day, every day.

Please continue to give, to volunteer, and to be an advocate for Parker Street Ministries. We are making a difference in this neighborhood through God's grace.

God bless you.

Tim Mitchell
Executive Director

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Education Update: Developing Students and Leaders

by Christina Allen, Director of Education



Glory to God for all the successes of our fifth Summer-Bridge Camp. At the end of each summer, I am always in awe at the work that was done in the hearts of our staff, the experiences that the children received, and the support of the volunteers and donors. Summer-Bridge 2010 was no different; God's provision and care were evident.

Last summer we had **55 students**, kindergarten-eighth grade, participate. Each day they received Bible teaching, were challenged with reading and math instruction, and enjoyed a variety of extracurricular activities including field trips. I am so thankful for continued **partnerships** with the **Polk Museum of Art** for providing daily art instruction for the first four weeks of camp; for **Florida Southern's Volleyball** team and Lynn Andersen for a volleyball clinic; for **Church of the Meadows** for hands-on science lessons; and for new partnerships with the **Women's Choice I Wait program**.

Students were enriched academically through the LitART curriculum that is designed for urban academic enrichment programs. The students also enjoyed extracurricular enrichment through movies, bowling, swimming, and trips to parks, museums, Florida Aquarium, and Lowry Park Zoo. Many volunteers enriched the lives of our students by sharing their talents and time.



Five former students came back to assist teachers. D. Hazzard, M. Stephens, J. Smith, S. Rushing and T. Sadlers

Developing leadership from within the neighborhood is an ongoing goal of Parker Street Ministries. Last summer, **five of our volunteers were high school neighborhood residents** who have completed our program! Each of these five attended daily and acted as teacher assistants for our staff.

D. Hazzard, in particular, was such an encouragement to me. D. has been in our program since fifth grade. He is currently a freshman at Tenoroc High School. Last summer he was indispensable in the first-grade classroom. During the academic portion of each day, D. could be found at the math center in his classroom, encouraging and challenging the students who

rotated through. With the help of volunteers like D. and the support of a great staff, our students' lives were greatly enriched.

J. Everett, 5, is a great example of the difference summer camp can make. Born at one pound and extremely premature, this tiny amazing child has faced many challenges. His loving mother was excited about the opportunity to have help in preparing J. for school. At the beginning of our eight-week program, J. was unable to grip a pencil. Now in kindergarten, J. is able to trace his alphabet and is working toward writing his name as well as employing many other basic skills.

Thank you for your support and prayers as we continued to do the work of Christ with the children and families in the Parker Street neighborhood this summer!

Please help us in our expanded AEP. We need more volunteers for the new classrooms. Orientations are held regularly. If you can help us in any of these areas, please contact Christina at christina@parkerstreetministries.org.



J. Everett learned to grip crayons too

For the third consecutive year, 100% of our after-school academic enrichment students progressed to the next grade level!

Neighborhood Revitalization

by Clint DeBoer,
Revitalization Volunteer

The flexibility of my full-time job enables me to work as a volunteer with PSM to help, in particular, with work projects that serve to revitalize the neighborhood. In essence this means we take on tasks such as landscaping, clean-up, and minor housing repair for homeowners. The goals are to make the neighborhood more beautiful, to help those in need, and to issue a tangible statement that says we truly care about making the neighborhood a nicer place to live. It's a way for PSM to reach out and touch the community right where it is.

In working with this ministry I've seen volunteers come out of their sheltered lives and participate in something that is bigger than they are. In a sense, they are able to see what it's like to selflessly give of themselves to



Heritage Baptist youth revitalize homes cited for blight

others, to bring beauty out of something that isn't very attractive, and to experience joy in the undertaking. There is a satisfaction God gives us in volunteering, and it comes out in every one of these projects. For my own part, God is taking me on a journey, changing my own heart to be more like His in how I look at people who are different from me. As I continue to serve, I realize that what makes me different isn't my own self, but who He is.

It's easy for people to view the neighborhood as a run-down place, somewhere that doesn't "deserve" our attention, our time, or our efforts. But that's a scary thought if we apply that to our Christian lives. Were we any less "run-down" when Jesus turned His face toward us? Did we "deserve" an effort that involved his torture, humiliation and death? The more we see this, the less separation we'll find between ourselves and those we have an opportunity to serve. We *are* God's community revitalization project.



Learn how your group can make the Parker Street neighborhood a more desirable place to live, by contacting admin@parkerstreetministries.org.



Clint, ready to lead new projects

Moving into Willow Glen

by Ben Turner,
Director of Spiritual Development

As most of you know already, I got married this summer, which means I also moved into a new apartment with my wife, Nicki. We are now living in the Willow Glen Apartments, which is the largest apartment complex in the Parker Street neighborhood. It's very exciting for us because it has largely been under-reached by our ministry since we have few relationships in the complex and had no staff living there.



Mr. & Mrs. Ben Turner at Willow Glen

This past week, we have had rain almost every day, just like usual this time of year. One day we came home in the rain and as we got out of my truck, we noticed that something was wrong. Everyone, including the staff of the complex, was outside sweeping the sidewalks and pouring buckets of water out into the parking lot. We got out, and our neighbor told us the rain came so hard and fast that it flooded all the apartments on the bottom floor of two buildings! Our apartment is on the second floor, but about 10 families had a lot of their stuff ruined from the flooding.

I believe God used this as an opportunity for us to meet everyone who lives around us and help serve them as we cleaned the mess. I had a long conversation with the man who lives below us and was able to meet his wife and daughter. I spent a good amount of time making sure they were taken care of by the apartment complex managers. Their carpet was eventually replaced at no charge! We praise God that He is already beginning to open doors into the lives of people we had previously not known so that the gospel can be spread in the Willow Glen Apartments of the Parker Street neighborhood!

Parker Street Ministries is on the Move!

We have **exciting news!** After months of planning and negotiating, PSM has been provided an incredible opportunity to combine its resources at one site and impact the whole community. To accommodate PSM's expanding program vision and to update aging facilities, there is a need to **renovate the former Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church buildings** at 719 Massachusetts Avenue North. Renovation components include:

- **Youth Center**—gymnasium, classrooms, service kitchen;
- **Community Center**—former sanctuary to accommodate large group ministries, students activities and neighborhood meetings; and
- **Client Services Center**—support offices and meeting room.

The much-needed rehab of the 22,000-square-foot facility will result in **expanded services** for the spiritual and physical well-being of the residents of the impoverished neighborhood. To support this effort, PSM's plan is to raise \$1.95 million.

The Board of Trustees of PSM has selected Rodda Construction to rehab the buildings and expand the Client Services Center. Renovations begin this fall and will conclude in summer 2011.

Please consider how you can participate with PSM in the healing of this historic neighborhood. Marsha Vass at marshacvass@aol.com is leading the funding effort.



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Neighborhood Splash Party and Other News



Summer Splash Neighborhood Party

More than 200 people attended the Summer splash Party held on July 10. Oasis Church and The Rock spent time planning and serving at this fun event. Check out the photos above. If you would like to organize our November neighborhood event, contact Hannah at admin@parkerstreetministries.org.

Save \$ ~ Go Green!

Send your email address to news@parkerstreetministries.org to receive this newsletter via email.

MattE and Leslee Diaz Facebook Challenge

When he's not tripping Phillies fans, serving on our advisory committee or outfielding for the Braves, MattE and his wife Leslee have been forming a family foundation to benefit PSM and similar ministries. Through the end of baseball season, they are donating \$5 for everyone who "likes" their Facebook page. One-half of the funds raised will go toward PSM's renovation project. Please become a fan of the [MattE and Leslee Diaz Family Foundation](#).

Amazing Donors

We are thankful for John Stoia's generous match to our cash call during our eAuction. This gift was made in loving memory of John's sister, Peggy Stephens, a downtown business leader with a passion to revitalize downtown Lakeland. We are also thankful to God for and welcome the following **new corporate donors** from April to August 31, 2010:

Bank of America Matching Funds
Camp Rotary Foundation
CDBG Program from City of Lakeland
DSM.NET, Inc.
Desire Street Ministries
Florida Citrus Mutual
Lakeland Rotary Club



Over 1000 people attended PSM's showing of The Blind Side at Pics on the Promenade