

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.

## EASTER EGG HUNT RESURRECTED

"Why was it raining and y'all didn't have Easter? Why is that? Please. Bye." That child's sad voice was waiting on the answering machine for the staff on the Monday morning after the weekend Easter Egg Hunt was rained out.



Decisions, decisions.

After setting up, staff and volunteers faced a torrential downpour and tornado warnings. Knowing most residents walk to our neighborhood gatherings and that moving indoors would not solve the problems, the staff reluctantly cancelled the event and sent volunteers home.



Go, Jakari, go!

On Monday morning the hunt was rescheduled to Wednesday evening, a school night. Our partners at St. Paul Lutheran Church and the Common Ground Connect Group from First Baptist Church at the Mall agreed to come out a second time and provided advanced egg-hiding skills, lollipop trees, and grilled hotdog meals. More than 200 Parker Street neighbors attended.

The staff is thinking this shorter, school night version in the cool of the day was perfect. Let us know what you think.



### FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Tim Mitchell



Praise God! Thank you for your prayers. We own the buildings. We are on the most amazing journey I have ever encountered. The people God allowed me to hire and the people God has given us to love here have challenged me to be a better leader, husband and friend.

This newsletter reflects a change we wanted to try. It's no longer written to just "you" but to all of us—both our residents and our friends outside the neighborhood. This flies in the face of marketing techniques that teach us to target specific groups with multiple mailings—donors, volunteers, residents, etc. We think it is healthier if we don't isolate this neighborhood and create an "us and them" divide. Instead we want to communicate that all of us are joining in the transformation of the neighborhood. Let me know what you think. Finally, please pray:

- That the hearts of people **inside and outside** our 'hood will act on behalf of it.
- That we can help the **six students in danger of retention**.
- That, in the midst of the ups and downs of urban ministry, we will **display the rare jewel of Christian contentment, operate smoothly and increase capacity** for the Glory of God and the good of all of us!

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

## CALENDAR

**Summer Bridge Camp Signup in May** - contact [christina@parkerstreetministries.org](mailto:christina@parkerstreetministries.org)

For neighborhood students, kindergarten through 8th grade  
Monday through Friday, 9am-3pm, for eight weeks of summer  
One-half day academics, then lunch, followed by extracurricular activities

**Neighborhood Bible Study** - Wednesdays, 6:30pm-8pm

**High School Nights** - Tuesdays, 6:30pm-9pm. If you're a highschooler in this neighborhood, join us!

**Housing and Facility Workdays** - Monday-Friday - Come with friends or come alone. To schedule, contact [tom@parkerstreetministries.org](mailto:tom@parkerstreetministries.org).

### Plan Ahead

*Summer Splash & Neighborhood Night Out* - Tuesday - August 7 at 6pm

*Anne MacGregor Jenkins Bell Tower Dedication* - Thursday - August 9 at 8am

**Parker Street Ministries serves residents in these boundaries:** In-Town Bypass to the south, Memorial Boulevard to the north, Florida Avenue to the west and Ingraham Avenue to the east.



Winner of April's Beautification Award from City of Lakeland. Photo by Tom Hagerty.

## HEARD AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD

- **Gilmore Apartments has a new owner**—Looks like lots of things are changing in this 330-unit complex that is integral to housing in the Parker Street neighborhood.
- Tuesday nights are **High School Nights @ PSM**. Neighborhood high school students are invited Tuesdays 6:30-9pm. There is an ongoing rotation of creative nights, basketball nights and movie nights, all offered in a safe environment led by PSM staff.
- In January, the City of Lakeland hosted a neighborhood meeting at PSM about **stormwater improvements**. Questions were answered about the ponds that are popping up throughout the neighborhood.
- Our very own Education Director **Christina Allen** was recognized as a local **Woman of Distinction** for her life and work in the neighborhood.



- PSM was the site of the **ALPI Energy Fair** for low-income households throughout the Lakeland area. More than 200 people were served in this two-day event.
- **Lakeland Police Chief Lisa Womack** (photo on page 4) visited each AEP classroom in April. She also brought a generous donation from LPD!
- Ben and Nicki Turner are connecting to the community through **Citizen's Academy**. Check out Ben's new uniform on page 4.

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## WRAPPING UP THE SCHOOL YEAR AND GEARING UP FOR SUMMER

by *Christina Allen*

*Education Director & Woman of Distinction*



This year we have been able to serve nearly 80 students. It is exciting to see the progress that our students have made academically. AEP staff have worked tirelessly to meet the needs of each student in their classrooms. Volunteers have shared their lives and time by providing small-group and individual academic help. This has truly meant success for our students. Students are moving from an attitude of “have to” to “want to” when it comes to schoolwork and learning.



*Extracurricular day at AEP*

In addition to academic gains, AEP students have experienced new extracurricular activities. All of our students, kindergarten-8th grade, have opportunities to create their own art masterpieces through our continued partnership with Polk Museum of Art. We are looking forward to the third publication of the *Teen Zine*, a compilation of the middle school and high school students' work. Additionally, our students have participated in dance classes, Girl Scouts, sports, and life skills.



*Learning the etiquette of pinky positioning*

In March students enjoyed an afternoon of learning to tie ties, shave, cook hotdogs over a fire, build their muscles, and hammer nails. Ms. Celia's class held a high tea.

As we plan to grow to 100 students this summer, we are looking forward to expanding our extracurricular experiences for our students. Please consider sharing your gifts and talents by volunteering this summer. See details below!

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

## Summer Bridge Camp Volunteer Needs

- **Teachers for one-week activity class**
- **Tutors once a week for eight weeks**

We need **teachers** to lead two 45-minute extracurricular classes. The slots to fill are Monday through Thursday 1pm-3pm. The commitment is for four days during one of the last four weeks of summer camp. Share your talents or hobbies (cooking, music, sports, etc.).

**Tutors** assist staff classroom leaders and should be high school age and up. We ask them to commit to a weekly schedule throughout the summer. Background checks and one-time training are required. Available times to volunteer are Monday through Thursday 9am-3pm for eight weeks. Responsibilities include providing academic help and setting a good example for the kids.

Will you join us? Contact Nicki at [volunteer@parkerstreetministries.org](mailto:volunteer@parkerstreetministries.org).

## REVITALIZING THE NEIGHBORHOOD

by Thomas Gaige  
Housing and Facility Director



With one of PSM's long-range goals being neighborhood stabilization, I am always looking for ways to plug in volunteers and motivate the neighborhood residents to action. While there is a long path ahead of us, there are two key strategies that make this goal a possibility. The first is finding volunteers who are excited to work on community projects. The second is finding ways to include and encourage residents in the projects we are doing. To sustain neighborhood change, ultimately it has to be the residents who commit to and are excited about revitalizing our neighborhood.

In March, we were blessed to work with 27 college students from His House Fellowship at Central Michigan University who dedicated three days of their spring break to Parker Street Ministries. These students tackled a number of projects around the PSM campus and out in the neighborhood. In the community we did a major deep cleaning that involved not only picking up trash but also clearing brush, cutting down



Properties cleared: 20 Dumpsters filled: 12

scrub trees and trimming low limbs off large trees. In total we revitalized 20 properties, filled a dozen 30 square yard dumpsters (the big ones) with yard waste and filled our facility dumpster twice with trash. These volunteers worked over 500 combined hours. We saw immediate results in the neighborhood. The sun is now able to shine where it has not shone in a long time, and it is easier to look down streets and see between homes.

While the work these volunteers did was amazing, what has been really fun to watch is the effect on our neighbors. They were showing up to help move yard waste, and some were jumping in to load dumpsters with debris. There was one particular house that was hardly visible from the road before we started our work. We trimmed branches off the roof and all around the side of the house. Now that it is all trimmed back, it has given the home owners new motivation to fix up their house. Within a week of the cleanup work, they painted all the siding and trim, and they are continuing to make improvements. This is just one story, and there are more like it, where excitement is growing at the prospects of making the neighborhood nicer for everyone. I have a number of new volunteers who are enthusiastic to start working with me as we tackle more projects.

There is no doubt it is going to take many more volunteers and enthusiastic neighborhood residents to continue the good work that has been started. Recently this verse stood out to me. It really seems to sum up what is happening:

*Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works...encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.* Hebrews 10:24



Wall raising for Shawn and Carole Cook's Habitat for Humanity home, built in honor of Steve Baylis

Stay tuned and feel free to check in to see what kind of projects are being planned. We have some very exciting big projects in the works, and we will need plenty of help!

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

## OUR DIVERSE COMMUNITY

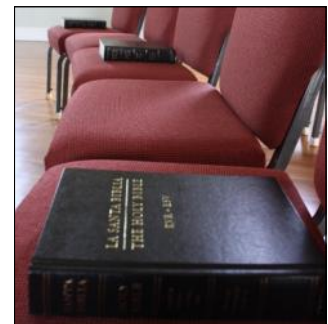
by Ben Turner  
Spiritual Development



I'm really excited to report I recently sold all of the Bibles we use for our neighborhood Bible study. *What? Did the Spiritual Development Director just say he's excited he got rid of Bibles?* Yes, but the only reason I'm excited is because we used the money to purchase new Spanish/English Parallel Bibles! These new Bibles have a Spanish translation next to an English translation on the same page.

Some might ask why this would be necessary in the Parker Street neighborhood. That's a great question, and the answer comes from data in the 2010 U.S. Census that proves what we have known to be true for a long time through our personal relationships: the Parker Street area is one of the most racially diverse areas in our city. The census reports that our area is 44% black, 37% white, 15% Hispanic, and 4% other. Our own academic enrichment families reflect greater diversity, with many multi-racial families represented.

If our mission is to make and mature disciples of Jesus in the Parker Street area, then that would certainly include our Hispanic neighbors. I view these new Bibles as a small step that does two things—it reminds our non-Hispanic people that we want Spanish-speaking people to be there, and it communicates that our Hispanic friends are valued in our community. I'm eager to see how God will use this small change to continue reaching our neighbors for the Gospel.



Spanish/English Bibles for neighborhood Bible study

Bible study is for residents of the Parker Street neighborhood, Wednesdays 6:30-8:00 pm. We are currently looking at love redefined through the book of Ruth. If you wish to provide dinner for this group, contact [ben@parkerstreetministries.org](mailto:ben@parkerstreetministries.org).



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## HIGHLIGHTS—JANUARY-APRIL



*Citizen Ben*



*Staff and Friends at Barnyard Bash*



*LPD Chief Womack visit*

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### BRIDGE BUILDING

PSM faces **exciting opportunities** for growth and the **expanding operating budget** this growth brings. We seek to build a bridge between Parker Street residents and the Lakeland community that spans differences in race, income, education, and housing. The goal is to raise \$130,000 to assist with our \$610,000 operations budget. Bridge Builder combined with Sustaining Partner funding supplants the need for a large-scale fundraiser, enabling staff to focus on impacting the neighborhood. Bridge Builder sponsorships are available at \$5,000, \$3,000 and \$1,000 levels. Please join us in God's transformation of this neighborhood. Find out more by calling Kim at 863.682.4544.

### THANK YOU

Thank you to Lakeland Christina Rotary for naming PSM as a beneficiary of Barnyard BBQ Bash (middle photo above) and to Lakeland Rotary Club for naming PSM as a primary beneficiary of the recent Child of the Sun Triathlon and Jazz Festival.

Also thank you for the interest reflected in onsite visits from many individuals and groups, including Downtown Kiwanis, Trinity Presbyterian Women's Group, Desire Street Ministries' Golf Tournament with Danny Wuerffel, Dr. Plowman's FSC Sociology classes, and Leadership Lakeland Class XXIX.

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