

HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM PSM!



As 2012 drew to a close, many of our academic enrichment program families came together to celebrate the end of the first semester, pose for this awesome photo, make winter crafts, and learn about renters' rights and responsibilities.

This is an important topic because almost 70% of our neighborhood homes are rentals. It was quiz time for the parents instead of their children as Attorney Jennifer Vasquez presented an interactive multiple-choice quiz (groan). An example of a question was: What is the best way to have a lease?

- A. Written
- B. Oral
- C. What's a lease?

Everyone was reminded to (1) get their housing arrangements in writing, (2) pay by check and on time, and (3) seek help through Parker Street Ministries if they are having trouble with their landlord instead of letting the problem escalate to eviction.

Families were invited to fill out surveys about their current housing and financial status, so the staff at Parker Street Ministries can know and serve the neighborhood better.

Finally, it was time to celebrate the semester with food and crafts.



Snowflakes in Florida

CALENDAR

Afterschool Academic Enrichment Program (AEP) - For neighborhood students, grades kindergarten through 8, registration required. Monday through Friday, 3pm - 6pm, most school days. Snack, homework help, math and reading enrichment in a Christian environment.

High School Students - Homework help, Monday through Friday, 3pm - 4pm, then may volunteer in AEP until 6pm.

High School Nights - Tuesdays, 6:30pm - 9pm, various emphases, including basketball, creativity, movie, and cooking. Contact christina@parkerstreetministries.org for info or volunteer@parkerstreetministries.org to volunteer.

Housing and Facility Workdays - Tuesday through Friday, 9am - 5pm - Come with friends or come alone. To schedule, contact tom@parkerstreetministries.org.

Neighborhood Gathering - Easter Egg Hunt - Saturday, March 23 - Want to help? Contact Hannah for more info, at admin@parkerstreetministries.org.

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.

FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR *Tim Mitchell*



When we started the ministry we knew we needed to live among the people we were trying to reach. So we moved in. Not long after that we realized what a blessing it was to live in the Parker Street community, so we began encouraging our Christian friends to join us. Those who did became the people we call *intentional residents*. They live in the 'hood and do not work for PSM but believe in our core values of "neighboring" enough to move their families to the 'hood and see God transform us all.

Over the years, I have had the privilege of seeing the power of this model, and I can't tell you of any better way to reach a community than to live with the people. Over the past 16 years, with all the changes in the neighborhood, these people we call intentional residents are one of the ever-growing bright spots.

Recently, while Christy and I were away, our neighbors continued to care for each other. I heard stories about sharing tickets to a Bucs game, welcoming home husbands from prison, repairing broken-down cars, fixing doors and windows, and looking after each other's kids so date night could happen.

God has assembled an amazing group of people in this neighborhood. I pray that you will be challenged to apply this model to your own neighborhood. THANK YOU for your support. Please pray:

- That people inside and outside our neighborhood will act on behalf of it
- For volunteers for the academic enrichment program throughout the year
- For relationship-building fun at the Easter Egg Hunt
- For skilled and unskilled volunteers for home renovations

May God bless you.

tim@parkerstreetministries.org

AROUND THE 'HOOD



Our offices became a destination when the halls were filled with whimsical paintings that place Parker Street's student art on local landscapes. Come check out this artwork by Christy Mitchell.

- Did you hear the **somber sound of a bell** tolling from the AMJ Bell Tower on December 21? On that day we joined with the rest of the nation and remembered the 26 Sandy Hook victims **and** mourned the death of neighborhood friend Laporsche Jones. Our bells don't just chime the hours—they let us know there is cause to celebrate or reflect.
- PSM was placed on **Great Nonprofits' 2012** Top-Rated U.S. Nonprofits List.



PSM—site of holiday bounce house for termites

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You make a difference!

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BRIDGING LEARNING GAPS

by Christina Allen

Academic Enrichment Program (AEP) Director



It was a busy first semester, and I am thankful for staff who have been so adept at responding to the variety of needs we have faced this past term.



Supervised computer lab for high schoolers

In January classroom leader Marcus Ballard accepted a full-time teaching position at Jesse Keen Elementary. Our intent is to affect lives with our mission beyond this neighborhood, and it is my hope that Marcus is better prepared to manage a classroom and better equipped to speak for at-risk students because of his experience with us.

Student numbers have continued to increase. We are at or over capacity for most of our classes. The exception

was the low numbers we experienced in our seventh/eighth grade girls' class. Because of that, we have begun to use the space as a one-on-one tutoring area as well as a classroom.

We've also added a regular program for our high school students. Through AEP they are given the opportunity to work on homework each day in a dedicated classroom, to serve their younger neighbors in the K - 8 program, and to be enriched in a variety of ways on Tuesday evenings. Meaningful relationships between teens and adults are growing, and I'm delighted to be reaching these students at such a critical age.

Overall student progress is good, but one or two students in each of our nine classes need extra academic attention. In February we plan to provide those students a minimum of one hour of one-on-one tutoring per week. In January mid-term report cards will help us identify which students are in danger of retention and need extra interventions.

We had a wonderful group of high schoolers from UthMmpact's Leadership Program join us in October. They worked diligently to put together 72 learning centers for tutoring and classroom use. They also worked with our students to help them create a make-and-take activity based on needed academic skills. The UthImpact students toured the neighborhood as well. They were from high schools throughout Polk County and hopefully gained a better understanding of our students and neighborhood that they will take with them to their respective communities.



Serving with scissors day with UthMmpact

Finally, Nicki, our volunteer coordinator, has been working diligently to improve our partnership with the parents, which is allowing them to complete their required service hours for our program. The parents are doing a great job, and we love building relationships with them.

Thank you for joining with us to bridge the gaps!

christina@parkerstreetministries.org

Bridging Learning Gaps. Volunteer at AEP.



Contact us at
volunteer@parkerstreetministries.org

REVITALIZING THE NEIGHBORHOOD

by Thomas Gaige

Housing and Facility Director



I am continually challenged and reminded that God is in control. All too often I have an agenda or a schedule, and things don't go exactly the way I planned. While at first my lack of control can leave me feeling frustrated, I have realized that when I make a plan, I need to do it with the knowledge that God is still in control. This means my plans may not line up with His plans.

This has been the case with our housing projects so far. I had a big plan and a schedule, and then things didn't quite happen the way that I anticipated. For the past few months we have been doing cleanup work, demolition, and some of the required repairs to the structures. But we could go only so far with demolition permits, and we had to finally stop working because there was a delay in receiving our building permits. Mike Green of Green Construction, our partner in these renovations, has been very patient with us as we navigated the City's permitting processes. Finally, in December, when Christmas Store had all of our attention, we received the building permits from the city. With the new year, we are back in full swing working on the houses, Tuesdays through Fridays from 9am to 5pm.



*Stabilization through renovation. Skilled and unskilled individuals and teams needed **now!***

Since I was not working on the houses every day in December, I had some extra time to evaluate the project scope, to look for subcontractors who will work for us at discounted rates, and to procure materials at discounts. Besides building new partnerships, we've been discussing new ways to work with our old partners at Habitat for Humanity and Keystone Challenge — all for the benefit of the neighborhood.

Finally, this God-engineered lag time allowed us opportunity to survey and dialogue with many of our families about their debt and overall financial situation, with an eye to helping stabilize their individual households.

Can you help us stabilize the neighborhood? Permits in hand, **I am looking for skilled and unskilled individuals and teams to help us revitalize these homes. Please contact me ASAP.** Together we can accomplish great things for our whole community!

tom@parkerstreetministries.org

NEIGHBORHOOD CHRISTMAS STORE

2012 Christmas Store at a Glance...

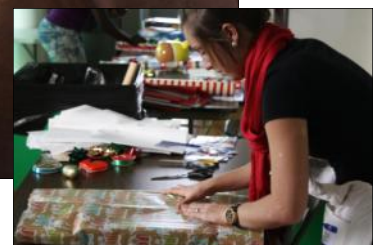
- 1,825+ gifts sold
- 276+ children received gifts
- 90+ families served
- 90+ children shopped for adults in Kids' Corner
- 222+ volunteers made it happen

THANK YOU to everyone who participated in the Neighborhood Christmas Store – from those who provided toys, to the volunteers who ran the store, to our neighbors who came out and shopped! What a wonderful occasion to bring us all together—in showing love toward our neighbors, our children, and our parents by giving! Praise God for the ultimate gift of His Son.

Please plan to join with us again for our 2013 store to be held December 14 (Saturday), 20 (Friday), and 21 (Saturday). And let us know what you'd like to see in the store next year!



Kids' Corner (left), the Neighborhood Christmas Store (above), and Wrapping Station (right).





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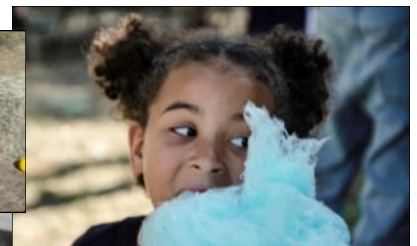
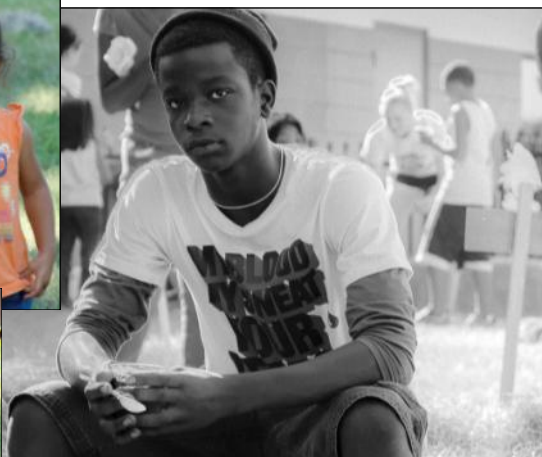
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HAY IS FOR HORSES...

and 30 bales of it can make for comfy seating, too. Thank you to the 250 people who came to Fall Festival 2012. A diverse group of volunteers, from churches and colleges far and wide, made it all happen. The kids had a hay-tossing, face-painting, three-legged-racing, good time. And it wouldn't have been Fall Festival without the cotton candy and popcorn. Pumpkin passports guided the kids to visit different games and booths. Thank you to all who came out to this fun, relaxing neighborhood event. The next neighborhood party is the Easter Egg Hunt, on Saturday, March 23.

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