

MISSION Update



Washington Street
MISSION

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FALL TUTORING BEGINS

As children head back to school, we will begin a more extensive tutoring program at the Mission than we have conducted before.

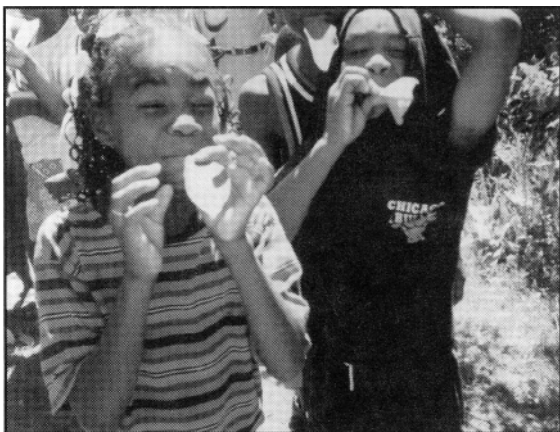
We plan to provide tutoring for about twenty children in grades one to six on two weekday evenings — Tuesday and Wednesday. The volunteer tutors will spend about an hour working with individual students on reading, math, and other homework. We will include an evening meal and a Bible study time each evening as well.

Regular opportunities for feedback from the schools and interaction with the children's parents will be included in the program. While we will be aiming to improve the academic performance of the children, we will also strive to communicate the love of Jesus to them. Many of these children are hungry for the attention and concern that a volunteer tutor can provide.

The older youth in junior and senior high school will continue to meet on Thursday evenings. Special arrangements will be made with a number of them to provide tutoring in specific subjects.

Fridays will be available for special activities with the children and youth during the school year. We want them to know that the Mission is a place where the love of Jesus flows through caring people who are willing to invest their time and their resources in them.

ACTIVITIES, FIELD TRIPS AND CLOSING PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT THE CHILDREN'S SUMMER

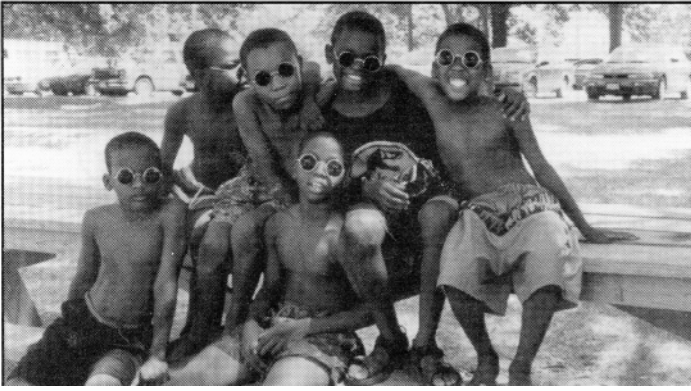


Their facial expressions make it clear that tasting a leaf of a flower at Lincoln Memorial Gardens was a rather bitter experience.

The children who participated in the Mission's program this summer will remember many of the activities here for a long time. We capped off the activities with an end of the summer closing program on a Tuesday evening.

In front of an audience composed of most of their parents, the children sang some of their favorite songs which they have learned at the Mission over the years, including This Is the Day, Happiness Is, and S-A-L-V-A-T-I-O-N. They also sang two new songs from the Veggie Tales video series, God Is Bigger and I Can Be Your Friend.

The Veggie Tales videos were a definite highlight of the summer and the children were often heard singing "God is bigger than the boogie man. He's bigger than Godzilla or the monsters on TV and He's watching out for you and me."

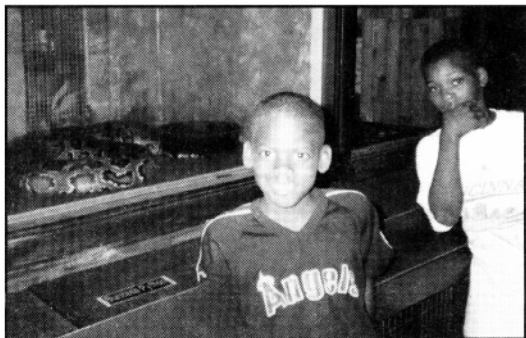


Swimming at the beach was one of the highlights of the summer. Here several of the children pose wearing sunglasses that were donated to the Mission.

The children loved the trips to the beach and the swimming pool during the hot summer days. A trip to a farm included fishing in a pond and roasting hot dogs and marshmallows over a campfire. Most of the children caught at least one fish and they all had plenty of hot dogs and marshmallows.

Each day's activities included a substantial snack and an evening meal. Teaching the children to pray before meals and to enjoy mealtimes was an important part of the summer.

Trips to the Henson-Robinson Zoo, New Salem village, Lincoln Memorial Gardens, the fire station and the police station were included in the summer program. The children appreciated the opportunity to see many of these sites for the first time.



At the zoo we took photos of each of the children with their favorite animal. The snakes were popular with many of the children.

About fifteen to twenty children in grades one to six participated in most of the summer program. Three days each week — Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday — they were picked up between 1:00 and 1:30 P.M. and returned home between 5:30 and 6:00 P.M.

The older youth in junior and senior high school came to the Mission on Thursday evenings. Although they did not have as many activities as the younger children, they were able to attend a Christian music concert and a performance of The Sound of Music at the Springfield Muni. About ten youth regularly participated in the Thursday evening activities. Several of the older youth were able to serve as leaders with the younger children in some of the afternoon activities as well.

We hope to help the youth develop into effective leaders in their community and schools. The younger children really looked up to them and admired their leadership abilities.



The children enjoyed learning how to fish one afternoon. Most of them were able to catch at least one fish.

CHURCHES HELP WITH SUMMER PROGRAM

Our summer children's program could not have been as successful as it was without the help of a number of different churches throughout the summer. Their partnership with us was vitally important in reaching out to the children served by the Mission.

The youth group from Central Baptist Church came one afternoon and led the children in games and activities. They distributed Bibles to the children as part of their service here.

One afternoon a group of Senior High students attending the Nazarene camp in Mechanicsburg came to help lead the children. Several of the students commented that taking time out of their camping experience to serve others strengthened their own faith. Their witness to the love of Jesus for the children at the Mission was significant as well.

Groups from Cherry Hills and Western Oaks Baptist Churches also spend an afternoon leading the children's activities. The opportunity to develop a relationship with an older youth who cared about them was important to the children here

The children play games with some of the youth from Cherry Hills Baptist Church. The smiles were genuine.



Many of these youth were somewhat apprehensive about coming to the Mission and working with the children here. But their fears dissolved when the children met them with hugs and appreciation for the attention the youth gave them.

Special thanks need to go to the Springfield Presbyterian Church. Volunteers from the church came for four consecutive Wednesdays during July and August to prepare and serve the evening meal for the children. They

brought a variety of food for the children and served them with a smile. The children enjoyed seeing the new and different faces.

Providing opportunities for service is an important part of our ministry at the Mission. We want to facilitate churches, and especially youth, reaching out to meet the needs of others in our community. Perhaps your church group would benefit from serving at the Mission in some specific way.

PROFILES HELP FOCUS

OUR MISSION

Who are the typical people served by Washington Street Mission? What are their needs and how can we best meet those needs? Although every individual is unique, there are some typical characteristics of the Mission's customers.

The four profiles presented here are not real individuals and we are not using real names. But many of the needs and circumstances outlined in these profiles are very real. They highlight some of the challenges we face as we strive to serve these people in the name of Jesus.

We will call these four individuals Marqus, Maria, Melvin, and Martha. The Mission seeks to serve each of them in different ways.

Profile One: Marqus (pronounced MARK-us) is a ten-year-old African-American boy who will be entering the fourth grade this fall. He is not exactly sure which school he will be attending because his family moves rather frequently. He has lived at three different addresses in the past three years and attended two different schools.

The unusual spelling of his name is typical of the challenges we face in learning the names of the children. Marqus, like many of the children, also has a nickname. He goes by Dunker at school because he is tall for his age and a good basketball player.

He lives with his mother and four siblings — two brothers and two sisters. One of his brothers and one of his sisters share the same father and the same last name with him. He likes to visit his father's family, especially his grandmother, but it sometimes causes friction with his mother. He rarely sees his father.

His aunt and her children have lived with his family off and on over the past several years. He enjoys wrestling with his cousins when they are living there, but the house can get quite crowded. Marqus has little real privacy or time to himself at home.

Marqus has lots of energy and enjoys sports when he gets the opportunity to play. He gets angry at other children easily and doesn't allow anyone to mess with him or his brothers. Controlling his outbursts of anger is a real struggle for him.

Although he is an intelligent boy, Marqus does not do very well in school. He has difficulty concentrating and needs practice to improve his reading skills. He would have done better last year if he had not been suspended for three weeks for fighting on the playground.

He enjoys the activities at the Mission. He also likes the food here. There is often little food at his home and he has to compete with everyone else there for the food that is available.

Marqus enjoys the Bible stories at the Mission, even when it looks like he is not listening. He can sing the choruses along with the other children enthusiastically when he is in the right mood. Often he is not.

He has not made a decision to accept Jesus as his Savior and Lord yet, but we believe that he is on the way.

Profile Two: Melvin comes to the coffee hall weekday mornings at the Mission. He is in his early 30s, although his face looks much older. He is not in very good health.

At least three different times over the past two years, Melvin has lived on the street. Each time was only two or three days, but he is afraid that he will find himself in the same situation again.

He moves quite frequently. Various friends have taken him in and he has lived in a variety of low-rent apartments and transient hotels. He receives a government disability check, but is unable to budget the income effectively.

Melvin comes to the coffee hall for a variety of reasons. He likes the peace and quiet. He enjoys the coffee and finds that the free doughnuts are an adequate substitute for breakfast. He appreciates the clean bathroom and takes advantage of the handsoap and other personal hygiene items we make available.

Melvin has significant substance abuse problems, primarily with alcohol. His mental health problems are not severe when he takes his medication, but he has delusional episodes when he fails to follow the prescribed drug regimen. He usually keeps his regular appointments at the community mental health center.

One day Melvin came into the coffee hall very agitated. He had been watching television and had become convinced that he was related to the Brady family. He told everyone who would listen that he was positive that he had run away from the Brady family home when he was a child and that they must be desperate to have him return. He asked to use the telephone to call the television station.

Melvin is one of the most religious people we serve at the Mission. He frequently reads a Bible while he sits in the coffee hall and tells other people to pray for him. When he is asked if he wants a doughnut, he's likely to reply, "If the Lord leads you to bring me one." He often takes a Bible with him when he leaves and says that he has given away all of his other Bibles.

It's hard to tell how deeply the message of the love of Jesus has really penetrated into his life. He knows the words, but has he really responded to Jesus?

Profile Three: Maria is just turning thirty. She has five children ranging in age from three to eleven. Her mother lives with her and her family. She has been married and divorced once, but does not receive any child support from her former husband.

She is working afternoons and evenings on the house-keeping staff at a local motel. She receives food stamps to supplement her income and is also eligible for medical assistance. She finds it difficult to stretch her paycheck to meet all of the family's expenses.

Maria comes to the Mission for clothing once a month. She knows that the clothing hall is open for women on Tuesday and Friday mornings and knows when she is eligible to return each month.

She is usually able to find clothing for her children as well as items for herself and her mother when she comes. Sometimes she will also find some children's books or toys or some household items she can use. She often takes bread or other bakery goods as well when they are available.

Maria is always polite and thankful when she visits the clothing hall, even when it is crowded. She appreciates the welcoming atmosphere of the Mission and the helpful volunteers who assist her. She sometimes shops at thrift stores and garage sales, but finds it difficult to locate the items she needs at a price she can afford. The quality of the clothing at the Mission attracts her, but she especially appreciates the fact that the items are always free.

Maria asked about having her children attend our children's program this summer, but we were unable to add any new children. Perhaps her children will be able to participate in the tutoring program in the fall.

The tangible expression of Christian love that Maria sees at the Mission is inviting to her. Although she made a decision for Jesus as a child, she is thinking about finding a church and getting back on track with her faith.

Profile Four: Martha lives near the Mission in housing designed for senior citizens. She started coming to the Mission three years ago when her children took her car keys away from her and insisted that she no longer drive. For several years she had been driving only in the daylight, but was finding it increasingly difficult and dangerous.

For a woman in her mid-80s with a variety of minor health problems, she's actually doing better than we'd expect. Using the walker that she received from the Mission, she gets around fairly well.

Members of her family — two daughters and several grandchildren — come to visit her regularly, although not as often as she would like. She has brought them over to the Mission to introduce them to us. They take her to doctors' appointments and occasionally out for special family events.

Martha likes to come to the Mission to volunteer in various ways. She helps prepare mailings and sometimes sorts clothing donations in the clothing hall. She watches for donations of furniture and household items and informs people in her apartment building who might need them.

She comes to the coffee hall occasionally and picks up a few items from the clothing hall every now and then. Her most consistent contact with the Mission is the Women's Bible Fellowship which meets here twice a month. She loves the discussion of the Bible and the opportunity to talk with people who will listen.

Martha is a dear Christian woman who wishes that she could be more useful. Although she tries to stay involved in a local church, she finds her best opportunity for fellowship and service here at the Mission.

We want to serve Marqus, Melvin, Maria and Martha. Each of these individuals is important to us and important to the God we serve. Our focus is people and meeting their specific individual needs, not just maintaining programs.

CLOTHING DISTRIBUTION PICKS UP

Fall can be a difficult time for some parents. As their children head back to school, many parents are concerned about providing adequate clothing for them and they look to the Mission to help meet some of their needs at this time. Many of the women we serve have five or six children that they need to get ready for the new school year.

The distribution of children's clothing picks up in the fall and we also start to meet requests for winter coats, sweaters, and warmer clothes as the weather begins to turn cooler.

That's not to say that clothing distribution during the summer months is slow. During June, July and August we averaged about 250 people coming to the Mission for clothes and gave away about 5000 items each month.

Providing clothing for people who are unable to afford to purchase it is a continuing ministry throughout the year.

You can help us in several ways. When you clean out your closets or have clothing left over after a garage sale, think about donating those items to the Mission.

When your church or community service group has a yard sale, mention the ministry of the Mission. Suggest donations of clothing or household items to businesses or other groups you come into contact with.

Consider volunteering to sort clothes or help in the clothing distribution. We are always looking for people who can help in this ministry.

Finally, remember to pray for this ministry. Pray especially that the clothing will meet real needs and that we will have an opportunity to present the Gospel to people who visit the clothing hall.

OUR MISSION

To share the love of Jesus Christ with the people of Springfield by providing opportunities that meet their spiritual and physical needs.