



Washington Street  
**MISSION**

November 2000  
**MISSION**  
Update

408 N. FOURTH STREET • SPRINGFIELD, IL 62702 • (217) 544-9011

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**Mary Lynn Mitchell,**  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR  
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**FALL AND  
THANKSGIVING BRING  
NEW CHALLENGES**

With children back in school and families looking forward to the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, new challenges are opening up for ministry at the Mission at this time of the year. A new relationship with a local church is another challenge for us as we seek to extend the Mission's usefulness in the Lord's work.

The fall children's program is one of our biggest challenges. Afterschool tutoring is now in full swing and the children are learning much more than math and reading skills. Developing a one-on-one relationship with a tutor is important for the children we serve in the program. It provides some needed stability and is a practical way of demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ that motivates our entire ministry here.

During the Bible study times this fall we are teaching the children to memorize the names and key themes of each of the books of the New Testament, in addition to the regular memory verses. For example, the children are learning that the keyword of Matthew is King, the keyword of Mark is Servant, and the keyword for Luke is Perfect Man. Using imaginative pictures from Walk Thru the Bible Ministries, the children will remember these important concepts and be able to appreciate the message of the Bible on a deeper level. We plan to continue with the books of the Old Testament during the winter and spring.

We want to take full advantage of the opportunities to teach these children while they are open and receptive both to learning new information and to the message of the Gospel. They love to memorize and they respond to the love they feel as the Gospel is presented to them in our actions as well as in our words.



Ken and Mary Lynn Mitchell have served as Executive Director and Associate Director of the Mission since April 1999.

We have also arranged for tutoring with some of the high school youth. Several of the youth involved in the Thursday night youth program expressed their need for additional help with algebra and geometry. As a result, each Monday afternoon five or six of these high school students come to the

Mission to work on their homework assignments. A retired high school math teacher comes to work with them.

As always, our goal is more than assistance with academics. While we know that academic success is vital, we are even more concerned with their personal response to Jesus Christ. We want them to know that we care about them because of the love of Jesus.

Additional challenges for ministry are presented by the approaching holidays. Thanksgiving is traditionally an important family time of celebration. Through the community-wide Thanksgiving basket program, we will be able to help a number of families during this season. The food provided will make it possible for these families to enjoy traditional holiday meals. It is a very practical and tangible way to express the love of Jesus Christ for these families.

Another exciting challenge for ministry here comes from a developing relationship with Springfield Presbyterian Church. Beginning in mid-November the church will be utilizing the chapel at the Mission for Sunday worship services and other church activities. It has been a number of years since worship services were held in the Mission chapel and it will be an opportunity to reach out in a new way to many of the people who are served in the coffee hall or the clothing shop at the Mission.

In at least two ways this new development draws on the Mission's rich heritage. First, the early leaders of the Mission were Presbyterians. Second, the Mission nurtured a church of Italian immigrants during the 1920s and 1930s until it was able to move into its own facilities.

One more challenge of the season involves finances. Thanksgiving has traditionally been the time of one of the annual holiday appeals of the Mission. Although the traditional holiday appeal has been replaced by the more informative newsletter format, the Mission continues to rely on the faithful support of so many individuals, churches, businesses and organizations that give generously at this time of the year.

Please prayerfully consider how you can help us meet these challenges of the fall and Thanksgiving season.

*Anyone who sets himself up as "religious" by talking a good game is self-deceived. This kind of religion is hot air and only hot air. Real religion, the kind that passes muster before God the Father, is this: Reach out to the homeless and loveless in their plight, and guard against corruption from the godless world.*

*James 1:26-27 as translated by Eugene H. Peterson in **The Message** (Navpress, 1993)*

## Summer Wrap-Up

### CAMPING EXPERIENCES WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN

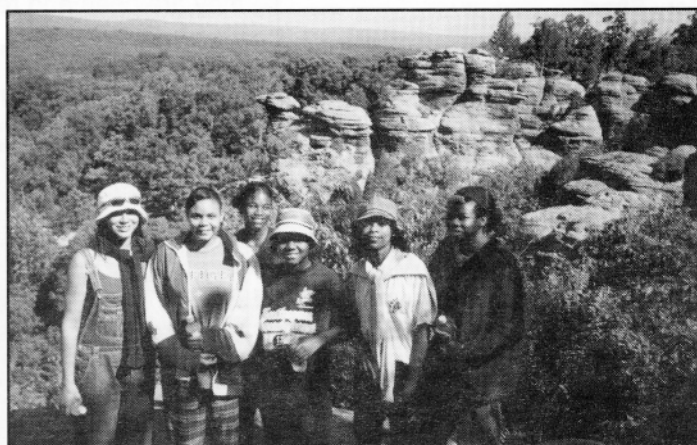
Looking back on the past summer, several camping experiences were high points for both children and youth at the Mission. Many memories were formed this summer that will last a lifetime for these children and youth.

Early in July, Ricky Fritch, coordinator of youth ministries at the Mission, led a group of eight of the high school youth on a weekend camping trip to southern Illinois. Ken and Mary Lynn Mitchell helped supervise the trip. The youth camped in tents, hiked over and around rock formations and swam at a nearby lake.

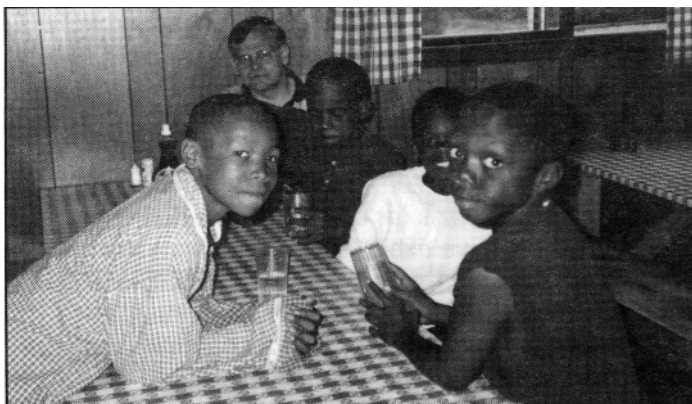
Later in July, the Mitchells took five of the younger children to Lake Helen Bible Camp in northern Wisconsin. They joined other children there for a full week of camp activities. The opportunity for these children to paddle canoes as well as swim and fish in the lake was very special for them. They enjoyed using the archery and rifle ranges, camping out in tents one night, tubing down a nearby river, and rafting behind a ski boat.

They also enjoyed the singing and Bible stories during the chapel times. Uncle Perry, the camp pastor for the week, and his dummy Danny were both popular with the children. The missionary stories and magic tricks will stay with the children for a long time.

They had the opportunity to jump on the trampoline, play tetherball, hunt for counselors hidden in the woods and participate in a peanut carnival. One of the boys commented that the most memorable activities of the week for him were the meals. "We ate three times a day every day," he exclaimed.



The high school girls who participated in the camping trip to Shawnee National Forest pose in front of a rock formation that seems to resemble a camel. A number of the youth were later able to climb up the rocks and touch the head of the camel.



Several of the boys get ready for a meal in the dining hall at Lake Helen Bible Camp. Ken Mitchell is trying his best to keep up with their energy and enthusiasm.

The high school youth will remember hiking through the awesome rock formations at the Garden of the Gods in Shawnee National Forest. They will also remember the down-to-earth talks around the campfire about the importance of following Jesus in their daily lives.

Being out of their normal environment for a few days gave these youth a unique opportunity to explore themselves and their beliefs in a new way. Few of them will be able to forget the experience of setting up a tent, building a fire, and seeing how dark the night can be without street lights and the clutter of the city all around. Nor will they be able to forget the challenge of the devotional talks.

The Mission was also able to send one of the high school students to a top-notch basketball camp this past summer. The weeklong camp in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, gave him an opportunity to demonstrate his basketball skills, an opportunity that may make a significant difference in the direction of the rest of his life. He is one of a number of the high school youth who have a very realistic chance to attend and succeed in college in a few years.

This summer's camping experiences may have created the strongest memories for the younger children. The Bible stories told in the chapel times by Uncle Perry and Danny will stick in their minds and they will recall the invitations to commit their lives to Jesus as their Savior. They will also remember the campfire on the final night when several of them spoke in front of the whole group.

One of the boys told the group around the campfire that he had learned that the Bible is full of interesting stories. "I used to think it was dull," he said, "but now I know that the Bible is fun."

Returning from their camping trip, several of the high school youth were anxious to do it again. One of the girls said, "It was scary at first, but I learned a lot. I hope we get to go back."

Creating positive memories that connect children and youth to Jesus is a primary goal of the ministries of the Mission. As they make decisions for Christ, we want to guide them and help them follow Christ in their daily lives.

## **PROGRAM MARKS THE END OF SUMMER ACTIVITIES**

To mark the end of the summer activities, the children put on a special program at the end of August in the Mission chapel. The parents of the children were invited, along with other friends of the Mission. A good audience of over fifty people was provided for the children.

The summer had been filled with contests, games and field trips. Swimming and games in the park were regular events almost every week that the children eagerly anticipated. Quieter times for crafts, reading, singing, and Bible stories were also enjoyed. It was a full summer that deserved a good celebration at the end.

The closing program included songs that the children had learned during the summer and a very special play prepared by the children based on "The Tale of the Three Trees." It was a very moving presentation as the children first acted out the part of the tree that wanted to be a king's cradle, was turned into a manger for cattle, and eventually cradled the baby Jesus. The second tree wanted to be a mighty sailing ship, was disappointed to be used as a small fishing boat, and found its destiny when Jesus calmed the storm from its deck.

Finally, the third tree wanted to simply stand on the hill and point the way to God. It was cut down and apparently discarded until it became the cross on which Jesus was crucified. The nailing of Jesus to this third tree was the highlight of the play and the children made it a solemn and significant moment.

The program also included a video of the children at Lake Helen Bible Camp. The evening ended with refreshments and a good time of talking with the parents and other friends about the activities of the summer.



Ken Mitchell leads the children in "Our God Is an Awesome God" during the closing program. He's still on the hand motions for "power" while most of the children are ahead of him with the hand motions for "love."

## TUTORING PROGRAM MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Whenever we wonder whether the afterschool tutoring program is worth the effort and whether it is really making any difference in the lives of the children, we take a few minutes to look back at the comments they have written. Over and over the children have written that they appreciate the effort the tutors put into working with them. "Thank you" and "Let's do it again" are the most common phrases in their notes.

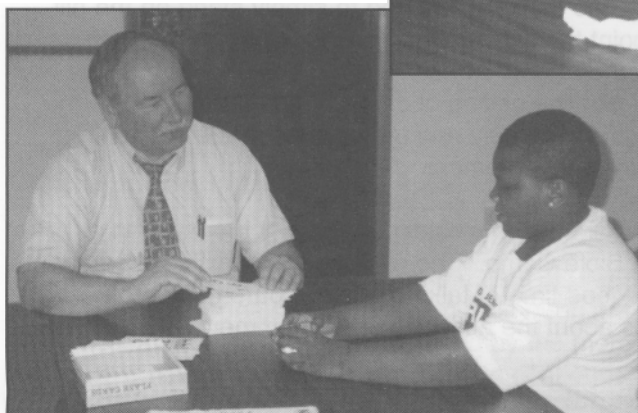
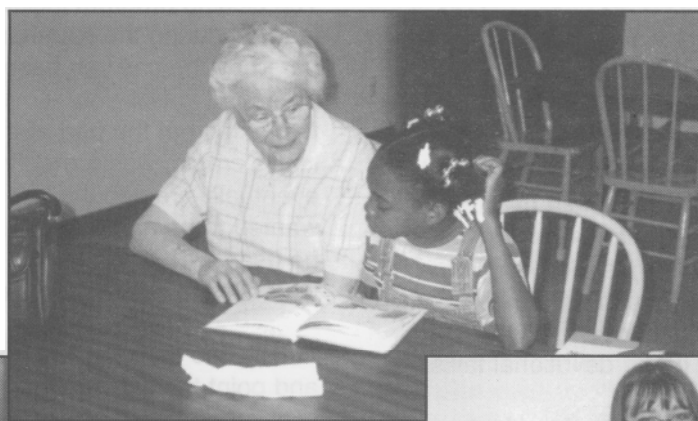
But we also look at the progress that the children have made. Some of them have made significant progress with behavioral problems at school. Some of the tough attitudes that the children often exhibit have been soft-

ened. Negative attitudes toward other people and toward school have become more positive. Attendance at school has improved for a number of the children. These are often very tangible and visible differences.

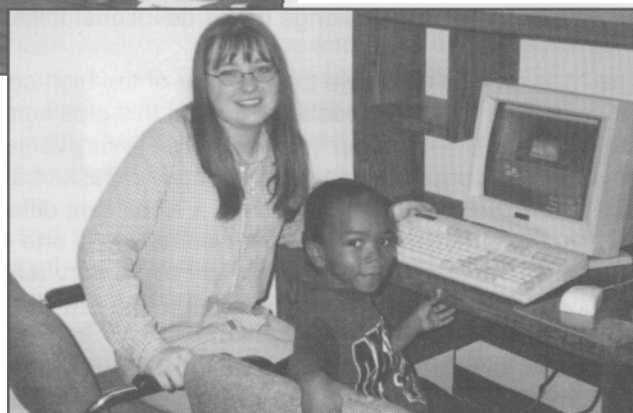
We have also seen spiritual changes. A number of the children made decisions for Christ at camp during the summer. Others have exhibited a new openness and readiness to hear the Gospel message. Since we know that children can too easily be manipulated into a false response to the Gospel, we try to work carefully and personally with each child. We see the difference.

The tutoring program at the Mission does make a difference in their lives and provides an opportunity to reach them with the most important message they will ever hear.

(right) Mary West, a longtime volunteer tutor at the Mission, works with Oquita on developing her reading skills.



(above) Multiplication flash cards are the serious business for tutor Ernie Stone and Demario. Playing a game together will be the reward for a good tutoring session.



(above) Computers are available to help with the tutoring. Here Kendra Blalock works with Richard on a simple math program.

## REGULARLY SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES AT THE MISSION

**Coffee Hall:** each weekday morning from 9:00 to 11:00 A.M.

**Afterschool Children's Ministry:** tutoring, activities, Bible studies, and meal on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 4:00 to 7:00 P.M.

**Youth Ministry:** activities, snack, and Bible study on Thursdays from 6:00 to 8:00 P.M.

**Women's Bible Fellowship:** Bible study and luncheon on first and third Tuesdays of the month from 10:00 A.M. to noon

**Clothing Shop:** open for men on Mondays and Thursdays from 10:00 to 11:00 A.M., open for women on Tuesdays and Fridays from 10:00 to 11:00 A.M.

**Drop-Off of Clothing and Household Items:** each weekday from 9:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. and Saturdays from 9:00 A.M. to noon

### OUR MISSION

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