



CGM Life

common ground montgomery

P.O. Box 1866
Montgomery, Alabama 36102

334.593.5803

cgmlife.org
facebook.com/cgmlife
instagram.com/cgmlife
twitter.com/cgmlife

May-June 2013

newsletter



our high school student dilemma



Kevin King

Indigenous leadership development has always been a core value for us. The need for discipling and raising up leaders in a community is vital for a long term vision, transformation and sustainability of an under-resourced community.

The Fall 2011 school year was our first time having a significant amount of high school students in our After School Program. Why? Because our kids are growing up! As these kids are growing older, we've realized the need for different and fresh developmental strategies.

As we've continued to disciple them and attempted to motivate and encourage them to honor God with their whole life including the area of academics, one of the biggest challenges we've encountered is that many of them aren't motivated to discipline themselves to do the work that is required.

This lack of motivation prompted us to add an incentive based component to our After School Program in an attempt to encourage them. As a result of them meeting certain academic, attendance and behavior criteria, students were rewarded with a few out-of-town college vision trips to the University of Alabama and the Georgia Institute

of Technology (also known as Georgia Tech).

Part of the attendance criterion during the After School Program was to attend a financial literacy class designed for at-risk youth. This curriculum taught practical and relevant financial concepts including: understanding predatory lending schemes; how money circulates in urban communities; race, class and power structures in our society; how goal setting and decisions can affect their future; and the benefits of delayed versus instant gratification. Another element of the attendance criterion was the opportunity to visit an independent living home weekly to serve the elderly, whether playing games, doing activities, or just talking.

What could be considered the culmination of the new incentive component is that, for the summer, high school students that maintained their academic, attendance and behavior requirements will be functioning as paid junior interns working along side of our college interns in the summer camp that serves our community. These high school students get a summer job and we get the opportunity to continue to invest in them to help bring to fruition indigenous leadership cultivated in a place of love, grace, biblical study and Christian fellowship.

summer interns



Some of the interns and staff touring Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church during orientation week



Summer Camp small group



Interns just hanging out

The first week of summer camp was an exciting week for the 1st-5th graders of Common Ground Montgomery. They were invited to go, free of charge, to Camp Winshape. This camp, started by Truett Cathy, the founder of Chick-fil-A, was developed for children to have fun, build relationships with others, and to strengthen their relationship with God. Our kids were so privileged to be involved and had a blast! A special appreciation to Deet Scott and Hunter Hills Church for raising the money to allow us to attend.

Another big thank you goes out to Daniel Grier, owner of the Prattville Chick-fil-A, for his support for our kids during Camp Winshape. He provided all of the CGM campers free Chick-fil-A lunch for all five days they were in attendance! I greatly appreciate this thoughtfulness and generosity to make this week extra special for our kids.



Leslie Cowell



Bryan Kelly

While pondering Paul's prayer for the church in Ephesus I have been struck by a few things. First, Paul prayed for power and strength in the "inner man" for this community of God's children: that they would be rooted in love, that they would know deep inside the boundless love of God for them, and that they would experience the fullness of God.

As I consider the community we live in and serve, the powerful and destructive influences and patterns, and the plight that so many face growing up here, I can not help but to pray for this kind of change in my life and the lives of the

rooted and grounded in love

families and kids we walk with. Three of the recent murders in our city have happened within a few blocks in each direction of my house. Four more houses have burned within eight houses of mine and violence continues to escalate.

I am convinced that the gospel of Jesus, His Kingdom, and the work of God's Spirit, is the hope for our community. People are turning to Him more and more. Jesus is showing amazing power, love, and the fullness of God, in experiential ways that are truly changing lives. It is literally miraculous to watch. There is war happening in our streets, but God is doing a work of His Spirit deep within many in our community.

Thank you so much for praying for, partnering with, and loving our neighborhood!

The summer schedule is now in full swing and so many amazing things are happening in the life of Common Ground in the Washington Park Community.

- 12 college interns have moved into the neighborhood to help us love and invest academically and spiritually in 100 urban youth for the summer. We train them every morning and most evenings in theology, devotionals, practical ministry, and various other ministry perspectives, and they invest in our kids all day.

- 13 high school students from our neighborhood have actually been 'hired' for the summer as junior interns to serve alongside the college interns in a mentored relationship. They are learning leadership skills, taking a 'Jobs for Life' preparedness class all summer (led by Strong Tower Church pastors Terrance Jones and Alonzo Brown), helping lead academics and bible studies with elementary kids, and are intentionally disciplined by

our staff. Some also went on a mission trip to Oklahoma to help with disaster relief. Some of these kids have been with us for 6 years or more. Consider this against what most of their 16-year old and 17-year old peers are doing this summer...

- 90 elementary and middle school kids are participating all day, from 9 A.M. - 4 P.M., in a summer camp centered on Christ and loving relationships as a context for intense academics, bible study, relationship training, and all kinds of fun and adventure.

- Hundreds of volunteers are scheduled to come serve both our summer camp and with our community development ministry, House to House, to help build and renovate homes for the families involved in our housing program. Many of these groups will stay a week with us in our bunk house, be trained by our staff in ministry and gospel perspective, and go home to serve their communities with what they have learned and experienced. Groups that have come in past years have gone home and started urban and mercy ministries, they have sent us interns, one wife, and have even returned to move into our community become our full-time staff!

- Josh Conley has returned to our ministry family on the staff of Urban SEED Xchange to invest in youth through, and in, the context of entrepreneurship, marketing, and life skills training. We are thankful to Dan Scott for helping develop the T-shirt screen design company and business investment with our youth and are excited to see where God leads Josh in the next step of this ministry. Dan has been an amazing blessing and will continue to be as he moves from a staff role back to a volunteer one. Josh and his wife, Ava, led the team of high schoolers from our ministry to Oklahoma for the disaster relief mission, and they will be enlisting the next group of USX kids to be trained this summer and readied for the fall program.

Psalm 34:3,

Bryan Kelly

