

MISSION Update



Washington Street
MISSION

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Robert John Kane, President
Larry Lipka, Vice-President
Gary Short, Secretary
David E. Beatty, Treasurer
Laura Catherwood
Ralph C. Fuhrken
Roberta Kay
Thomas O. Kay
Paul Paoni
Raven Pulliam
Brian Watkins
Stan Welch
Larry Yarrington

BOARD MEMBERS

EMERITUS

Philip Hanna
Martha Lorton
Charles H. Northrup
Marianne Stowers
Robert C. Walbaum

MISSION STAFF

Kenneth E. Mitchell
Executive Director
Mary Lynn Mitchell
Associate Director
Scott Brindley
Adult Ministries Director
George Eeten
Danny Yocum

OUR MISSION

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

HOLIDAY SEASON BRINGS OPPORTUNITIES

As the Thanksgiving season approaches, a number of unique avenues of ministry open up for us at Washington Street Mission.

More women visit the Mission's clothing hall during this time of the year. They are looking for school clothes for their children and warmer clothes for the rest of the family. We are giving away about 10,000 clothing items each month.

The afterschool tutoring program at the Mission is also in full swing. Faithful tutors come to spend time with the children and help them with their schoolwork.

These children need support and mentoring, especially during the holiday season.

The weather is turning colder and more men are coming to the Mission for warm clothing. More men are also asking about admission to the Mission's transition house.

The number of people coming into the coffee hall in the mornings has also been growing. They come for coffee and doughnuts and a quiet place to relax. The holidays are particularly important times for them. On a typical weekday morning we are serving between fifty and sixty people.



The girl's volleyball team from Calvary Academy recently prepared and served a Saturday morning breakfast at the Mission. Here they pose in the Big Room with several of the people they served. It was a good meal and a valuable experience for all of them.

The number of groups sponsoring breakfasts on Saturday morning has also been increasing as well as the number of people who are served at these breakfasts. Close to one hundred people have been coming to each of the Saturday morning breakfasts.

During this season, we also begin preparing the list of families that will be receiving Thanksgiving baskets. The baskets are distributed as part of a community-wide effort.

COFFEE HALL PERSPECTIVE

What do volunteers see when they come to Washington Street Mission? Who do they meet? What emotions do they experience?

This article by John Stahlman provides some of the answers, at least from one perspective. John has spent many mornings serving coffee and doughnuts here. He has taken the time to get to know some of the people we serve here and to understand the problems and struggles they face.

Your experience as a volunteer here may be quite different, but it will certainly involve getting to know people you might not encounter every day. John's insights in this article should help all of us open our eyes a little wider and see more clearly.

I get closest to success in doing good when I stay out of the way and do no harm. I've found a wonderful place to stay out of the way. There, I don't worry about doing harm because most of the possible harm has already been done.

Between 9:00 and 11:00 weekday mornings, the Washington Street Mission serves a free cup of coffee and a donut or sweet roll that was yesterday's "day-olds." In a fitting kind of way, the Washington Street Mission isn't where its name suggests. The mission is actually on Fourth Street, nowhere near Washington Street. Yet folks who are lost; losers in the sophisticated minds of some, have no trouble finding the Washington Street Mission.

In the back of a sometime-sanctuary, I pull up a chair and make myself at home at a table where three other men are waiting on a refill of their mugs. The youngest, maybe to impress me, stands up, wheels

a bicycle to the table, and begins to tell us how he is going to modify his means of transportation. He says he will cut the handlebars so he can raise them higher and adjust them so it will have the look of a chopper. He goes on about cutting this and bending that, hoping that we capture his vision of his grand intentions.

I'm confused by it all because I am trying to make sense of his planned alterations. I ask myself, "Where will he get the tools to cut and weld and bend to reshape the steel of this badly abused bicycle?" Doubts about his qualifications to do such remodeling creeps in on the silence of the other two men. I begin to get the picture that they know something about this artisan I don't know.

One of the apathetic souls finally interrupts the grandiose eloquence and says, "I hear you gotta ticket for ridin' on the sidewalk." The silence that followed allowed the man's dream to fade and a new project rushed in. "Yeah, I got a ticket, but it wasn't the first one I ever had. The city wants me to pay them ten dollars for riding on the sidewalk."

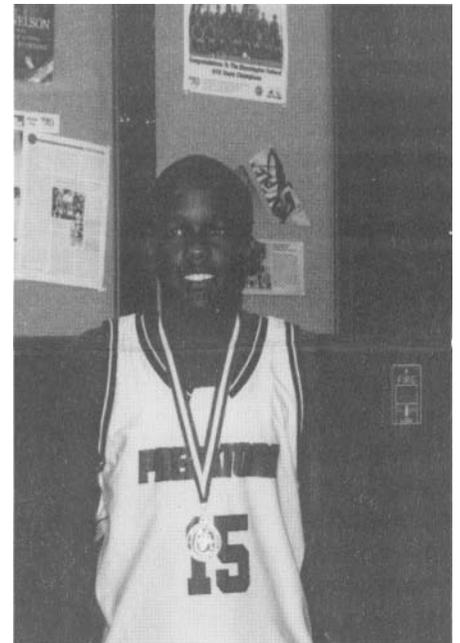
"Where you gonna get ten bucks?"

"What do you mean? I ain't paying no ten dollar fine. In a week or so they will find me and put me in jail - where I get three meals and a place to sleep."

"Three hots and a cot, huh?"

"They say they want ten dollars and I tell them I want a place to stay. I win every time."

The young bicyclist, smiling from ear to ear, walked his bike out of the mission and on to the street to begin the day's



Darren was able to play on the Predators basketball team this summer with the support of the Mission. Here he shows off the medal his team won at the national championships in Bloomington, Indiana.

version of the game he plays with "them."

With the young man gone, the attention of the other two turn toward me. "Do you work here?" one asked. Why would he think I work here?. Looking down at my cup, I notice my hands - they are clean and his are not so clean. I guess that is how he came to his conclusion.

"Nah, I just hang around here sometimes," I said.

On my way back to my ranch home in a subdivision with green, well-trimmed lawns, I think about the young man on his bicycle. How long will it be until he gets a night off the streets at the city's expense? Did

he ever run into anyone on the sidewalk?

Then my thoughts drifted to me. When was the last time I spoke eloquent nonsense? Have I paid the price for dreaming too big and expecting too little? Have I accepted being what no one else aspires to be?

Maybe the nut with a bicycle and I, a Christian loafer sipping coffee at the Washington Street Mission, have more in common with one another than my neighbor and I. He drives a beamer and never sees the guy riding his bicycle on the sidewalk. The only thing my neighbor and I have in common is that both of us stay out of the "wannabe Lance Armstrong's" way. But have we done him no harm?

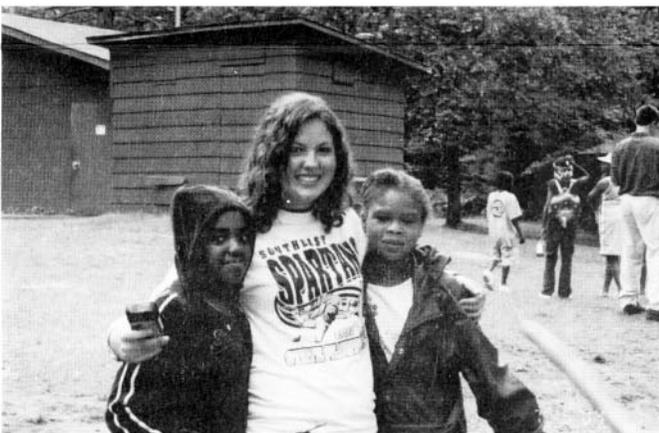
Our Photo Album



Wading in the cold water of Lake Michigan is a new experience for these children from the Mission. We stopped here, just north of Milwaukee, on our way to Lake Helen Bible Camp in northern Wisconsin.



During one of our summer field trips, Bob shows the children how to pick beans in his garden. The children enjoyed learning about the garden almost as much as they enjoyed swimming and roasting hot dogs.



Joining the Mission staff for the summer Becca Pruett was a great help with the children's program. Here she poses with two of the girls at Lake Helen Bible Camp in Wisconsin.



Several youth from the Mission pose in front of the Lake Helen Bible Camp sign with other girls from their cabin and their cabin counselor. Spending a week at camp is an experience that these youth will remember for a long time.



Laurie and Denise have served as tutors for Debeyun and Shunderika. They have built supportive, mentoring relationships as well as helped them with their schoolwork.

MEN MAKE PROGRESS AT TRANSITION HOUSE

As the two-year anniversary of the opening the Mission's transition house approaches, we are encouraged by the signs of progress we see in the lives of the men at the house.

The current residents have all been at the house for more than three months. This is a marked contrast to the high turn-over levels earlier. Many of the men who have been admitted to the house have stayed less than thirty days and left without making the kinds of significant changes they needed to make.

One of the men left earlier and has now returned. This second chance seems to be just the opportunity he needed to finally turn his life around.

We find that the current residents are all self-motivated to change, but they also realize that they will not be able to make the necessary changes or remain committed to those changes without God's help.

All three of the current residents are actively involved in church activities. One was recently baptized. Another resident is assisting in a Sunday School class. They are now willing -- even eager -- to talk about their faith without being prompted.

One of the men at the house is a little older and found it rather daunting to consider going back to school to complete his GED. As he faced that challenge, he now finds the classwork interesting and is able to keep up with the other students, while he continues working and participating in an alcohol rehabilitation program.

Another resident is firming up plans to leave after more than nine months living in the house. He has made good progress on the goals we helped him establish and should be able to live independently. We are helping him with his plans and hope he will stay in touch with us by continuing to participate in Bible studies and other activities at the house.

The men have found that fishing together is an enjoyable and relaxing way to spend some free time. They also continue to volunteer at the Mission whenever their work schedules permit.

Please continue to pray faithfully for us as we work with these men and the others who will enter the house in the days and months ahead. As the weather turns colder we anticipate more men will be seeking admission to the house. We hope to have room for each of the men God sends our way.

Remember that only God can provide the strength and grace these men need to recover from the destructive patterns of their former lives. Only God can give them a rich, full, new life.

Also remember that your prayers and support are vital. They make this ministry possible. If we wish to designate gifts specifically for the ministry of the transition house, just indicate that desire on the gift card or the memo line of your check. Your support is appreciated here.



Fritz Klein, who is nationally-known for his impersonations of Abraham Lincoln, spent an afternoon with the children at the Mission this summer. The first thing the children wanted to know when he asked if they had any questions was whether he was really Abraham Lincoln.