

News of hope for a people of mission

CITY *Alive*

SUMMER 2012

CitySERVE 2012 lets loose!



What's Inside...

All in the family – meet a refugee family and their mentor

Chet Beetler is ready for his close up

Tee time – golf outing set for July 20

School supply collections need you

Summer 2012 in the city – ministry opportunities while you soak in the sun!



Our Mission

RESTORING THE CITY TO GOD BY DEVELOPING AND LINKING PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES AND CHURCHES.

ALL IN THE FAMILY

BHITC Refugee Mentors minister to immigrant families new to Northeast Ohio

Mya Thin and his wife Ree Moo, along with their five children, had been living in a Thai refugee camp for 15 years when their futures changed drastically. In August 2011, the family was chosen to resettle in Cleveland, just a few blocks away from the West Side Market.

Like hundreds of other refugees invited by the U.S. State Department to restart their lives after years of unimaginable persecution, Mya Thin's family faced a whole new set of challenges here. Even as they bring along abundant patience, resilience, and a "can-do" attitude, they also are faced with a bewildering array of obstacles. The English language, America's fast-paced culture, and a myriad of social and civil system are all things that native-born Americans consider second nature.



BHITC Volunteer Mentor **Tony Gusich** helps 7-year-old Burmese refugee **Sha Eh Bliu Wah** learn English, using his iPad

That's where the BHITC volunteer mentor team of **Tony Gusich, Sue Walker,** and **Rachel Jandecka** have committed to standing with Mya Thin and his family during the early days of their resettlement. Mentors are volunteers who work with a single refugee family on areas where the family asks for help. Most often, mentors assist with easy tasks. Assisting with going through the mail, learning Cleveland's public transportation system, banking, etc. – simple things that make the chores of daily life for refugees a little less stressful.

"Our family asked us to help them learn to speak English," explains mentor Tony Gusich.

"And they all really want to learn." While Tony's volunteer teammates help with weekend treks to the downtown Asian market for groceries, he focuses his visits on helping with English and schoolwork.

Technology, such as Tony's iPad, turns the activity into a fun family affair! On a recent visit, 7-year-old Sha Eh Bliu Wah approached the screen eagerly, pointing to pictures of vehicles, correctly naming each. The family quietly echoed his answers. A rousing game of Sudoku follows, with the family drawing closer to the screen, pointing to the rows and columns, shouting out numbers.

Looking around the room, the furnishings are sparse, but a strong sense of faith, family, and cultural pride shines through. Advent chains, Easter drawings, and the national flag of Burma hang on the living room walls. When asked what has differed most here in America, eldest son Htoo Bliu Wah answers, "It's the opportunity to go anywhere, to be free. In the camps, we would be arrested if we tried to go out."



The Mya Thin family with mentors **Rachel Jandecka** and **Tony Gusich** during a recent visit to the family's Lakewood apartment

Tony recounts a previous visit when he brought chicken strips for Ree Moo, as she had requested, but then was puzzled when she just sat quietly before them. "I thought, uh oh, she doesn't like it. I must have misunderstood." But that wasn't the case at all. Ree Moo was waiting patiently until her husband offered a prayer of thanks to Jesus. The family's Christian faith anchors their lives.

"I have so much to be thankful for," says Tony when asked why he started volunteering for BHITC as a mentor. "I wanted to do something for someone else. I really treasure the times when I can teach, they treasure the opportunity to learn, and we all enjoy each others' company."

INTERESTED IN REFUGEE AND IMMIGRANT MINISTRY?

There are many ways you can join BHITC in helping welcome immigrants and refugees. To learn about any of these, contact Amy Mitchell at 216.281.4673 or amy@buildinghopeinthecity.org.

- **Mentoring** – BHITC pairs volunteer teams with refugee families in Cleveland and Akron.
- **Teaching English** – Weekly ministries provide instruction to adults. Teachers and assistants are needed this fall for new English courses BHITC is starting. Volunteers are also needed to help guide a course for immigrants preparing to take the U.S. Citizenship test.
- **Tutor Children** – Refugee school students often arrive academically behind their American peers. BHITC's after-school literacy ministries help them catch up.
- **Ministry with Arabic Women** – BHITC's Nadia Abuamsha leads monthly sessions that bring American and Arabic women into relationship with one another.
- **Cross-Cultural Training** – See page 12 of this newsletter for our next Cross-Cultural Training session for volunteers.



CitySERVE 2012 LETS LOOSE!

On May 5, BHITC partnered with Lutheran High School West to host its 6th CitySERVE 2012. A total of 501 participants registered for the event, deployed in volunteer teams across the city. Nearly 40 urban agencies, churches and neighborhoods received some much-need assistance, physical labor and encouragement, as a result. To God be the glory!



At **Calvary-East Cleveland**, volunteers provided landscaping and painting.



It was "trash day" at **Zion-East 30th Street** as CitySERVE applied muscle to cleaning out Zion's school basement.



At **Luther Memorial School** and **Grace-Lakewood**, volunteers hosted a community carnival for the neighborhood. As a result of the carnival, LMS enrolled several new students for next school year!





Community and urban gardening was a recurring theme for CitySERVE 2012. Participants prepped gardens and planted at **Family Ministry Center, Cudell Gardens, Westown Development Corporation, Koinionia Farms** and **Redeemer Crisis Center**.



Residents at **Transitional Housing, Inc.**, a women's homeless shelter, were blessed by CitySERVE participants who helped put the finishing touches on a Mother's Day celebration.



At **Trinity-Cleveland**, CitySERVE helped sort and relocate clothing donations to the church's Clothing Ministry.

CitySERVE 2012 LETS LOOSE!



Volunteers who enjoy sewing created their own CitySERVE project: **Little Dresses of Haiti**. The crew turned donated pillowcases into dresses for girls. A local mission team heading for Haiti this fall will deliver the dresses.



CitySERVE student artists created murals and artwork for **Bridge Avenue School**.



Major painting projects were also tackled at **Garden Valley Neighborhood House, Neighborhood Family Association-Elyria, Advent-Cleveland** and **Strengthening our Sisters (SOS)**. Much of the paint and sundry items were generously donated by the **PPG retail store in Oakwood Village**.



After all work projects were completed, many of the volunteers returned to Lutheran West to raise support for the **Hunger Network of Cleveland**. A total of 330 miles were walked by CitySERVE participants, raising \$1,650 to relieve hunger in Cleveland!

Thank you to the following who provided leadership gifts to sponsor CitySERVE 2012:



David & Missy Beckman

John & Karen Blackburn

Church Extension Fund –
Ohio District

Cleveland Lutheran High
School Association

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Ehab & Abeer Farag

Donna Gahr

Leslie Gicei

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Saint Ignatius High School

Alan Steffen

Subway (Lorain and West
220th Street)

Thrivent Chapters: East
Cuyahoga, Northwest
Cuyahoga, South
Cuyahoga and Lorain
County Chapters

Michael & Amy Tubergen

Stephan & Christa Turnbull

Valley Lutheran Church

Wegman, Hessler &
Vanderburg

Lee & Carol Zannoni

CitySERVE 2012 was organized by the following crew, who did an outstanding job!

Dave Ressler

Brian Upton

Amy Mitchell

Trish Kvasnicka

Sarah Filus

Darlene Waugh

Cheryl DiNardo

Dawn Luecke

Emilie Hausmann

Sarah Olenik

Jeanne Evers

CHET, UP CLOSE



Chet Beetler joined BHITC's staff in 2011 as a church planting intern. He's been working alongside Rev. Jeff Johnson and a church planting team from Trinity to plant a worshipping community in Cleveland's Westtown neighborhood. The future congregation will be a satellite of Trinity. Who's Chet and what has he experienced thus far with BHITC? We thought we'd have him answer in his own words...

Where did you grow up?

I've lived most of my life in Strongsville.

How old are you?

26

Where is your home congregation?

Christ Church in Columbia Station. It's where I first came to Christ and worked as a pastor for seven years.

What were you doing in ministry prior to BHITC?

Prior to BHITC, I was a staff pastor at Christ Church. For several years, I led a young adult ministry, performed various pastoral duties and preached at the church's Sunday night service. My last year at Christ Church I assumed responsibility for its discipleship processes.

What's your experience at BHITC been like so far? Tell us what the organization is like on the inside?

My experience has been really good at BHITC. I am very impressed with the leadership here. BHITC does a tremendous amount of God-honoring work in Cleveland. I am also impressed with the willingness of BHITC to collaborate and keep their eye on the big picture – that we are all working for Christ's glory and not our own little kingdom.

The internship at BHITC was a quarter-time job position. What else have you been doing during this time?

I've been very busy working two jobs while being at BHITC. One was a sales job and the other is a part-time bookkeeping position. I'm also finishing my degree at Cleveland State University. In this season of my life, I have been spread very thin.

How have you grown in your faith and calling during this internship?

My love for Jesus Christ has grown tremendously. One of the things I struggled with previously was my motivation. I was sometimes more motivated to be "successful in ministry" instead of being driven by my love for Jesus Christ. Even though my heart still needs to grow quite a bit more, I can honestly say that this experience has helped me to be freed from much of that struggle. I have found my heart to be more fixed on the glory of Jesus than it ever has been and for that I am very grateful to BHITC.



Describe the Westtown neighborhood and its ministry opportunities?

Westtown is full of opportunity! Jesus said the harvest is plentiful. There are about 25,000 people in that neighborhood and many of them have are not actively connected to a local church. For planters, this means that there is plenty of work for us to do. I believe that if ten churches were planted in that neighborhood tomorrow, there would still be plenty of gospel work to go around!

TEE UP FOR HOPE! GOLF SCRAMBLE

Friday, July 20, 2012

12:30 Shot Gun Start /
Arrive at 12 noon

Bob O'Link Golf Course
4141 Center Road, Avon

\$75.00
per person

18-hole scramble with cart
Steak dinner after 18 holes

Foursomes and Individuals
are Welcome!



Send checks c/o Bob Janke,
16709 Woodbury Avenue,
Cleveland, 44135

Or register online at
www.buildinghopeinthecity.org.

BUILDING HOPE'S 2012 Backpack and School Supply CHALLENGE

We need your help to send 250+ kids back to school in August!

Our goal is to provide all school students in our tutoring and refugee ministries with a fully-stuffed new backpack and school supplies. Are you up for the challenge? We're seeking donors and volunteers who like to shop for bargains over the summer because our list of needed paper, pens, pencils, notebooks, etc., goes on and on! Here's how you can get involved:

Shop for a Student in Need

We'll give you the name and grade of a student, plus an approved shopping list. You sponsor that child by buying all the supplies and a new backpack. To receive the name of your student and the shopping list, contact Connie Abood at doobac@roadrunner.com.

Sponsor a Backpack

Donate \$30 to BHITC and leave the shopping to us. We'll provide all needed supplies, a backpack, plus a \$10 gift card for a new pair of shoes! Mail your sponsorship check to BHITC, or visit us online to give easily.

Donate Items

All donations of miscellaneous school supplies are welcome and appreciated!

Help Us Prep Backpacks

On Friday, August 10, we're stuffing 250 backpacks so they can be distributed through BHITC's ministries in time for the beginning of school. Come and help us prepare!

**All backpacks and supplies are due to
BHITC by July 23!**

**To learn more, contact Lesa Hess at
216.281.4673.**



MISSION AND MINISTRY HEAT UP THE CITY THIS SUMMER



Summer is a great time for ministry in the city. Neighborhoods come alive. City parks and pools bustle with families. Everyone is outside enjoying Cleveland's finest months of the year. That means it's also a perfect opportunity for mission and ministry. Several of BHITC's missionaries and efforts are gearing up now for activities. We'd welcome your participation in any of the following:

Summer Literacy Programs

These two-week programs will help urban youth keep up their academics and support the outreach efforts of our partnering congregations/ministries. Volunteers are needed to tutor, help with sports and arts activities, and provide administrative assistance.

June 18-22 and 25-29 – Gethsemane Lutheran Church, Lakewood

July 19-13, 16-20 – Family Ministry Center, Cleveland

To learn more about the summer literacy programs, contact BHITC AmeriCorps member Stephanie Sorg at stephanie@buildinghopeinthecity.org.

Children's Ministry in Westown



Thursday evenings will be jumping this summer in **Westown**, the westside Cleveland neighborhood where Trinity-Cleveland is in the process of planting a satellite congregation.

Starting in June, outreach teams from Trinity and BHITC will lead weekly children's ministry in neighborhood parks throughout Westown. The sessions – part VBS, arts and sports activities – will take place early in the evenings on Thursdays.

Volunteers are needed to assist with ministry and who enjoy interacting with neighborhood families. Come experience the seeding of a brand new church in the city! To learn more, contact BHITC's Amy Mitchell at 216.281.4673.

Arabic Women's Health Fair



On July 14, BHITC Missionary **Nadia Abuamsha** will host a Health Fair for Arabic women at Family Ministry Center (FMC). The cross-cultural event will provide important health and wellness information to Arabic women and build relationships between immigrant and American women. Nadia's Sisters of the Heart ministry will continue meeting monthly through the remainder of the year. If you're interested in volunteering for any of these activities, contact Amy Mitchell at 216.281.4673 or amy@buildinghopeinthecity.org.

MISSION AND MINISTRY HEAT UP THE CITY THIS SUMMER

Refugee Ministry: American Culture In Film

BHITC's English and Citizenship courses will take a hiatus over the summer, but ministry continues through a new and entertaining means – movies!

BHITC's Director of Refugee Ministry, Eileen Wilson, has planned a monthly series of informal and fun gatherings where various movies will be shown that highlight aspects of American culture. Refugees and immigrants will be invited to the "movie nights," which will include discussion sessions after each flick with volunteers.

The first movie and discussion session, based on the film *Heidi*, will be held at 6 pm on July 10 at Trinity-Cleveland. If you're interested in volunteering for this session or other refugee ministries, call Eileen Wilson at 216.281.4673.

Get Trained for Summer Ministry

BHITC's next Volunteer Bootcamp is Saturday, June 30. The following sessions will be offered for free to anyone interested in getting better equipped for ministry:

Refugee Mentor Training

9:00 – 11:30 am

Teaching English to Immigrants

12:00 – 2:00 pm

Virtus Training

11:30 am – 12:30 pm

To RSVP for any of these sessions, contact Lesa Hess at 216.281.4673.

August 25: Don't Just Go to Church, Be the Church!



Like CitySERVE in Cleveland, **Be the Church** is a "done in a day" service event held in Akron and Massillon. Teams of adult and youth volunteers will serve at a variety of urban churches and agencies, providing needed support and assistance with a variety of ministries.

Cost is \$15 per person, which includes a t-shirt and boxed lunch. To learn more or register, contact BHITC's Jeanne Evers at 216.281.4673 or Jeanne@buildinghopeinthecity.org.

Thank You!

This newsletter was produced at a very low cost to BHITC, thanks to the generosity of **Akhia Public Relations**, which donates all the graphic design services, and **RE May**, which donates printing expenses.

The result is a newsletter publication that looks far nicer than BHITC could afford otherwise. To learn more about either of these organizations, visit www.akhia.com or www.remay.com.

GIFTS TO BUILDING HOPE IN THE CITY

The following gifts were received from January 1 to April 30, 2012.

You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

– II Corinthians 9:11

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Berghaus' 40th

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