

News of hope for a people of mission

CITY *Alive*

WINTER 2014



What's Inside...

A New Approach Emerges for Churches Seeking to End Poverty

Making a Joyful Noise to the Lord at HymnFest 2013

Women of Many Cultures United by Christmas Candlelight Tea

First-Ever Christmas Store of Hope

Study Proves Refugees Add \$48 Million to Cleveland's Economy in 2012

Transform 216

African Refugee Birthday and New Year Celebration

New Year, New Opportunity with Christ the King Church

BHITC Announces New Ministry Opportunity for Introducing Refugee Youth to the World of Work



Our Mission

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

A NEW APPROACH EMERGES FOR CHURCHES SEEKING TO END POVERTY

Transforming lives through relationships as the 'Open Table' movement comes to Cleveland in 2014



Tracy Ensign from the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives with Jon Katov, Founder of Open Table at the exploration event in mid-January.

We all have something to give, and we can all be part of the solution that frees people from poverty. The key to doing so starts by seeing and thinking of our resources more by their intellectual and social significance, and less by what's in – or missing from – our pocketbooks.

That's one of the foundational values of **Open Table**, a national ministry model for transforming poverty through the power of relationships, which BHITC and its partners are helping bring to Northeast Ohio in 2014.

Tables are started by congregations and include 6-12 church members who commit for one year to leveraging

their networks, life skills and relationships on behalf of a brother or sister in poverty who wants to change the course of their life. Through weekly table meetings, a brother or sister in poverty shares their needs and goals, while the rest of the table shares their connections and wisdom. As a result, deep relationships are formed, resulting in Christ-like transformations for everyone involved.

"What we do every day to build our lives is exactly what's missing for people in poverty," says **Jon Katov**, founder of Open Table. "The Open Table model encourages healthy decision making for those living in poverty," he says, "and discussions around the table surface an abundance of intellectual and social capital that the poor often cannot access easily on their own."

OPEN TABLE[®]

FROM POVERTY TO WHOLENESS.[™]



"When I came to Open Table, I was surrounded by a group of church members with a lot of knowledge, life experience and Christian love," says Mike, a brother in poverty from Texas who was helped by a church in his community that started an Open Table after his wife's drug addiction cost his family everything. "I'm so grateful God put these people in my life," he says.

Several early adopters in Cleveland for this ministry include Community Service Alliance (CSA), Gateway Church West, Trinity Lutheran Church, Bay Presbyterian Church, Family Ministry Center and Grace CMA Church, which are all joining BHITC to launch tables in 2014. More partners, volunteers and churches are needed now.

The fact that Cleveland's church community was ready to receive Open Table was very apparent in mid-January when 120 people attended informational meetings over two days to learn more about the model, making Cleveland the largest turnout ever of any city for such exploratory events! That's quite telling considering Open Table has launched in dozens of cities across the country and in South Africa.

"This is one of the few efforts I've seen in my career that really addresses the issue of poverty at its root cause, which is broken relationships," says **Tim Gleason**, Executive Director of Community Service Alliance, a local organization which provides a variety of solutions to assist individuals as they transition out of homelessness and poverty. "It has so much potential and so much real opportunity for people in Cleveland," he adds.

BHITC agrees, which is why Open Table is one of its few major new initiatives in 2014, says **Brian Upton**, Executive Director: "I'm convinced Open Table's launch in our community will be a game changing moment in the church's approach to ministry among the poor," he says.

If you'd like to learn more about how to get involved with Open Table in Cleveland, either as a volunteer or a church partner, contact **Amy Mitchell**, BHITC's Director of Ministry Engagement, at 216.281.4673 or amy@buildinghopeinthecity.org.

OH COME LET US ADORE HIM!

The past Christmas season was full of cheer as people came together for urban mission in many ways!

Making a Joyful Noise to the Lord! HymnFest 2013 a Resounding Success!

The Shrine of St. Stanislaus, the picturesque, century-old house of worship in Slavic Village, proved its wonders all the more as songs of praise rang throughout its walls on December 1 at BHITC's **HymnFest 2013**. Many in attendance remarked that the sacred music concert was a great way to kickoff the Advent and Christmas seasons.

Choirs and musicians from **Ashland University** and **Lutheran West High School** led a crowd of nearly 400 in hymns and songs to celebrate Christ's birth and benefit urban mission. The medley of songs included a Yiddish folk tune, Welsh and French hymns, traditional Christmas songs and even a Nigerian carol!



Women of Many Cultures United by Christmas Candlelight Tea

More than 130 women of diverse cultures, languages and faiths gathered for BHITC's annual **Christmas Candlelight Tea** at **Grace CMA Church** in Middleburg Heights. The night began with fellowship, song and food from many cultures, followed by a time of traditional African and Nepali dances, readings from God's Word in many languages – English, Spanish, Krio, Swahili, Slovakian, French and Arabic – and a personal story from **Sushma Rai**, a Nepali refugee.

Sushma, a Christian pastor's wife, shared a message of hope and blessings. She spoke of how she learned to pray during the 17 years she spent in a refugee camp and of the joy God brings to our lives through a close relationship with Him.

"Share this [the Gospel] with your mothers, sisters and other wives. Others will be blessed," she said. "It makes your face rejoice."

Did you miss the Tea, but are looking for a way to meet women from other cultures? Join us for our monthly Sisters of the Heart gatherings. We'd love to have women attending from as many cultures as possible! Contact **Eileen Wilson**, BHITC's Director of Refugee Resettlement Ministries at 216.281.4673 or eileen@buildinghopeinthecity.org to learn more.



Recipes from around the world filled the tables as women shared stories of holiday traditions.



Sushma Rai encourages women at the Christmas Candlelight Tea.



Sushma Rai, second from right, along with other women from Samdan Nepali Christian Church.



Hearts were touched as new friendships were formed between women.

Help us **STRIKE OUT**
poor grades and illiteracy!

Save the date
March 9, 2014

2014 Tutoring Bowl-a-Thon

An event to raise support for the BHITC tutoring programs at Gethsemane, Hope Alliance, St. Colman, St. John, The Meeting Place and Trinity Churches

Sponsorships (come bowl with us for free with a sponsorship of \$50 or more!)

\$25 — pay the cost for a student to bowl, plus provide needed tutoring supplies.

\$50 — sponsor a youth-adult tutor bowling team and purchase a “literature kit” for a tutoring site.

\$100 — purchase new math games and workbooks for a tutoring site.

\$300 — “Perfect Score Sponsors” (300 is a perfect game at bowling!) help underwrite the purchase of a refurbished computer.

OVERWHELMING RESPONSE FOR FIRST-EVER CHRISTMAS STORE OF HOPE

For many, the Christmas season is filled with much hustle and bustle – the shopping, the wrapping, the baking, decorating and parties – leaving too few quiet moments to give of ourselves and reflect on God’s love for us in Jesus. This year, on a snowy December morning, 43 volunteers gathered at BHITC because their hearts called them to do just that – give, reflect and rejoice.

At the first-ever **Christmas Store of Hope**, the morning was filled with Christmas carols and songs of praise, hot breakfast and coffee overflowing, helping hands in every corner, gifts beyond measure and the love of Christ displayed for all to see.

Families with children enrolled in the tutoring program at Trinity Lutheran Church arrived and filled shopping bags full of Christmas blessings for their loved ones. For the Christmas Store of Hope, children shopped with credits earned through tutoring, while their parents purchased brand new gifts at just a fraction of the retail price. In total, more than 75 people shopped at the store.

Ivon Gonzalez, who has two daughters in Trinity's tutoring program, was surprised at the prices offered for the Barbie, scrapbooking supplies and jewelry she bought for her daughters. "Today was exciting and fun and I couldn't believe the prices. I can't wait till Christmas morning. My oldest daughter is going to love the jewelry I bought her – I can't wait for her to see that," says Ivon. "I hope they continue to do this next year – it was really great."

The Christmas Store of Hope was made possible thanks to generous donations of time, money and gifts from BHITC partners and supporters. "We had an overwhelming response from donors and volunteers," says Amy Mitchell, BHITC's Director of Ministry Engagement. "Every single person that I shared the concept with said, 'How can I help?' I was blown away by the generosity and enthusiasm. Youth groups collected money to purchase sports equipment, groups of volunteers baked thousands of cookies to collect money for gifts and ladies sewed bags and bags full of hats, scarves and blankets. The response was amazing!"

For more information about how you can help with future events, contact Amy Mitchell at 216.281.4673 or amy@buildinghopeinthecity.org.



PLANNED GIVING EDUCATION LUNCHEON

(With a Beer and Whiskey Tasting)

A FREE PLANNED GIVING
EDUCATION LUNCH
UNLIKE ANY OTHER THAT
WILL SERVE UP PLENTY TO
TASTE AND EXPERIENCE!

Sponsored by Thrivent Financial

Saturday, February 22, 2014

1:00 – 4:00 pm

The Oak Barrel

Brasserie and Taphouse

5975 Canal Road, Valley View, OH



Join us for an afternoon that includes:

- Great gastropub fare with a French twist at this new Cleveland hot spot.
- Narrated tastings of your choice of craft beer or whiskey varieties.
- An engaging presentation from Thrivent Financial on the many planned giving tools available and the benefits to you and your family of charitable gift giving.
- A session from attorney Staci Lowell on estate planning – including how to easily create a healthcare power of attorney, living will and will.
- Updates on urban mission and ministry from Building Hope in the City.

RSVP by February 15 to Lesa Hess at 216.281.4673 and specify your choice of beer or whiskey tasting.



TRANSFORM 216

Urban church leaders of tomorrow join a new initiative to learn from veteran city pastors

TRANSFORM 216

**EQUIP LEADERS. PLANT CHURCHES.
RESTORE OUR CITY.**

God is in the business of transformation. That is, transforming hearts, families, homes and entire cities through the power of the Gospel.

This winter, a new initiative is underway to transform the city of Cleveland (area code 216) by equipping new and future pastors to minister effectively in the city. **Transform216 (T216)** is a collaboration between veteran urban pastors and ministry leaders from differing denominations, experiences, cultures and communities across Cleveland who are joining efforts to mentor and equip future faith leaders who are being called to the city.

Plans for T216 began over a year ago when BHITC led the way by convening a series of prayer and discussion meetings between Calvary Reformed Church, Hope Alliance Church, MetroAlliance Church, Scranton Road Bible Church, Trinity Lutheran Church and CoachNet Global. Now, the first class of 10 men are meeting regularly to learn, discuss, share experiences and receive coaching from veteran leaders with 100+ years of combined city ministry experience.

"We want to come alongside those who have a heart for the city and help them in their desire to serve God's Kingdom," says **Joe Abraham**, Senior Pastor of Scranton Road Bible Church. "There are unique challenges in the city – in culture, economics, family issues and more. This is something I wish I would've had starting my own ministry in the city to at least challenge my thinking about serving the poor," he adds.

Urban church planter **David Van Hal**, who has been accepted to T216, agrees and says, "Every neighborhood in the city is unique and filled with a diverse group of people in ethnicity, socio-economics, backgrounds, education and religious upbringing." He and his wife are currently in the initial planning phases to start a new church in the heart of downtown Cleveland in 2015.



Van Hal and the other men enrolled in T216 are eager to learn from urban pastor-mentors. Van Hal says, "I'm very excited about the diversity of these men and learning from their unique experiences and perspectives, learning from people I respect, who know and love their neighborhoods."

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

Diversity is certainly the theme God has woven together for this urban church planting initiative, and Pastor Abraham knows this to be true. “We have a good group of experience around the table with the same purpose – passing on what we’ve learned to new, younger guys coming in,” he says.

“We want to engage people to see the city differently, and to serve the city financially, physically and prayerfully,” says Abraham. “If nothing else, to encourage those young men to get their hands dirty and hearts stretched and see what God does as a result.”

If you’re interested in applying to Transform 216 or how you can support a T216 church planter, contact **Brian Upton**, BHITC’s Executive Director at 216.281.4673 or brian@buildinghopeinthecity.org.



EMPLOYMENT AS MINISTRY

BHITC introduces refugee youth to the world of work

Investing in the futures of our children, grandchildren and other adolescents we love is a natural step for most families in our society. Now, a new BHITC ministry for refugee youth ages 16-24 will offer that same opportunity to willing volunteers, starting in 2014.

The ministry, called **Youth Adult Refugee Mentoring (YARM)**, aims to help the teens and young adults of refugee families begin exploring career paths and job training programs. As a result, these budding adults will find assistance in understanding the American approach to work and be better able to help provide for their families.

Volunteers are needed now for a highly-relational ministry that includes working with refugee youth to find job shadowing opportunities, internships and seasonal employment. Willing volunteers will also share their own work and life experiences so that refugee young adults can more clearly see a future for themselves in the workforce. BHITC will develop necessary training and materials for volunteers.

If you’re interested in being a part of this brand new mentoring ministry, contact Eileen Wilson at 216.281.4673 or eileen@buildinghopeinthecity.org.

See what a difference one day can make!

**Save the date
May 3, 2014**

CitySERVE 2014



- Join with BHITC, Lutheran High School West, Thrivent Financial and hundreds of local volunteers as together we impact the city.
- You'll give one day of service at a local urban church, agency or neighborhood, serving as the hands and feet of Christ.
- Learn more at: www.buildinghopeinthecity.org and www.lutheranwest.com.

AFRICAN REFUGEE BIRTHDAY AND NEW YEAR CELEBRATION

On January 4, BHITC hosted a large-scale birthday party with plenty of cake, a piñata, food and dancing for the African refugees who are part of the family of faith at Trinity Lutheran Church.

In most cases, African refugees from countries such as Somalia, Laos and Bhutan do not know their birth dates because it's not often documented nor celebrated as part of their cultural traditions. As a result, when they arrive in the United States, many are assigned the same birth date – January 1! This calls for our annual African Refugee Birthday and New Year Celebration!



Thank You!

This newsletter was produced at a very low cost to BHITC, thanks to the generosity **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 this organization www.remay.com.

STUDY PROVES REFUGEES ADD \$48 MILLION TO CLEVELAND'S ECONOMY IN 2012

BHITC joins with other area nonprofits to commission first-of-its-kind study



Kafaya Muhammed, a refugee from Somalia, gladly prepares an authentic meal from her home country in the new family restaurant she opened with her son on West 117th Street.

Refugees are hard-working, loyal, entrepreneurial...and, oh by the way, they added \$48 million to Cleveland's economy last year; according to recent research that involved BHITC.

This past fall, a first-of-its-kind study was released proving refugees are positively impacting the economy in Northeast Ohio and added an estimated \$48 million and 650 jobs in 2012! The study, released by the **Refugee Services Collaborative of Greater Cleveland (RSC)**, of

which BHITC is a founding member; demonstrates what many who work with refugees have long believed to be true.

One of its findings showed refugees are more likely to be entrepreneurs and start small businesses. Kafaya Muhammed and her son Akhmed Galeb are a perfect example. Just seven short years ago, Kafaya, a widow and refugee from Somalia, arrived in Cleveland with her seven children and dreams of a new start. With support from Eileen Wilson, BHITC's Director of Refugee Resettlement Ministry, the family finalized business plans last year that helped them secure a special loan for refugee entrepreneurs and opened an authentic Somali restaurant on West 117th Street in Cleveland.

It was their hard work, willing spirit and a reputation for great food that opened the doors of 'Kafaya's Kitchen,' the family's restaurant, which features many dishes made famous in Kafaya's home in Cleveland, where she welcomed many Somalis living in the area.

The economic study, conducted by Chmura Economics & Analytics and funded by a generous grant from **Cleveland Foundation**, also revealed that refugees resettled in the Cleveland area typically find employment within five months of their arrival despite the fact that many know little to no English.

Wally Senney, Owner and President of Met-Chem, Inc., a manufacturer of waste water treatment equipment on the city's east side, has hired eight refugees over the past ten years and says, "It's working out very well. They are so appreciative of the opportunity to work, and they're hard-working employees."

Not only are refugees opening businesses, finding employment and working hard, the study also found refugees are buying houses – another fact BHITC has seen through its ministries. According to the study, 248 homes were purchased in Cuyahoga County by refugees over the past ten years. This is true for the Acharyas, a family featured in BHITC's last print newsletter. The two brothers and their families, all refugees from Nepal in Southeast Asia, purchased two homes on the same street last year with guidance from their BHITC volunteer mentors.

"They [refugees] are willing to live in the city, work in the city, buy houses here and pay taxes. They want to be in the city, which is good for everyone," says Senney, who echoes another finding of the study – that refugees are thriving in Cleveland, often at rates above national norms.

While refugees face many obstacles when they arrive in the United States, the study proves that once they have adjusted to their new life, refugees can provide substantial contributions to the local workforce, economy and culture.

To learn more about serving as a volunteer refugee mentor or if you're interested in potentially hiring a refugee for your organization, contact Eileen Wilson at 216.281.4673 or eileen@buildinghopeinthecity.org.



Kafaya and her son Akhmed turned the family's dreams of owning a restaurant into a reality with some help from BHITC.



Saleh, a refugee from Sudan, is employed at Met-Chem, Inc.

NEW YEAR, NEW OPPORTUNITY WITH CHRIST THE KING CHURCH

Many partners come together to offer English classes to Cleveland's Arabic community



Positioned in community with a large Arabic population, **Christ the King (CTK) Church** in North Olmsted has long felt called to reach this people group. The church first became aware of the many Egyptian and Palestinian families in their neighborhood when several of these Arabic-speaking families started attending their services nearly five years ago.

Since then, it's been on the hearts of the church's staff and members to love and serve the Arabic population around them in a practical way.

Meanwhile, BHITC's **Nadia Abuamsha**, Community Worker to Arabic Women, has been looking to grow her ministry by offering another English as a Second Language (ESL) class to the Arabic women she serves at a church more conveniently located to where so many of them live – North Olmsted.

Soon, the two had a divine appointment. CTK responded with a “unanimous ‘YES!’” says Senior Pastor **Dwight Seletzky**, when BHITC asked if the church would partner to offer an ESL class.

“Our people have an exceptional heart for service. We're most excited about a tangible way to connect people in our community to God's love in Christ,” says Seletzky.

ESL classes, which began mid-January, provide a life-changing skill for newly arriving refugees and immigrants. BHITC and CTK plan to grow the class, which already has a handful of women attending weekly, over time as more relationships are formed and more people in the community become aware of the class. “I know a lot of women in North Olmsted who need ESL. This is the perfect location. The Arabic women I know have already been telling their friends about this class, and I know it will continue to grow each week,” says Nadia.

Both BHITC and CTK see the huge potential for how God will use them to grow this ministry and impact lives in this neighborhood. “I am thankful for the partnership with BHITC because they have been down this road before,” says Seletzky. “They know the Arabic community and have experience teaching ESL. Now we can partner to love and serve people, and ultimately, multiply the impact for the Kingdom.”

If you're interested in teaching or assisting with any of BHITC's ESL classes, contact Eileen Wilson at 216.281.4673 or eileen@buildinghopeinthecity.org.

WINTER 2014

The City

A BIBLICAL STUDY OF URBAN
MISSION AND MINISTRY.



Thursdays at 7:00 pm
February 20 through April 3

The Family Ministry Center
3389 Fulton Road, Cleveland

Registration fee:
\$30 per person

This seven-week study – led by Dr. Juri Ammari and a collaboration of other urban pastors from Transform216 – will lead participants into the Word of God to discover the deeper meaning of the city from a Kingdom perspective.

To save your seat for this study, call [Lesa Hess at 216.281.4673](tel:216.281.4673)

FOR YOUR CALENDAR

*Make a date with urban ministry!***Feb 20****The City Bible Study**

Family Ministry Center
3389 Fulton Road, Cleveland
February 20 – April 3

Thursdays at 7:00 pm

\$30 Per Person
RSVPs Required

Feb 22**Planned Giving Education Luncheon**
(With a Beer and Whiskey Tasting!)

Free event sponsored by Thrivent Financial

1:00 – 4:00 pm

The Oak Barrel
5975 Canal Road, Valley View
RSVPs required

Feb 24**Building Hope: 101 Class**

Building Hope in the City School Building
Come learn about current volunteer
opportunities

5:30 - 6:30 pm**Mar 1****Volunteer Bootcamp with
Mentor Training**

Building Hope in the City School Building
9:00 am – 2:30 pm (Registration 8:30 am)
RSVPs Required

Mar 9**Tutoring Ministry Bowl-A-Thon**

Help us strike out poor grades
and illiteracy!

2:30 – 5:00 pm

Freeway Lanes
12859 Brookpark Road, Cleveland
\$10.50 Per Person

Mar 19**Building Hope: 101 Class**

Building Hope in the City School Building

5:30 - 6:30 pm**Apr 24****Building Hope: 101 Class**

Building Hope in the City School Building

5:30 - 6:30 pm**Apr 26****Understanding Poverty Seminar**

Grace CMA Church
7393 Pearl Rd., Middleburg Heights
9:00 am – 2:30 pm (Registration 8:30 am)
\$10 Registration Fee
(Lunch provided for a suggested
offering of \$5)
RSVPs Required

May 3rd**CitySERVE****Save the Date!**

More details to come.

For more information or to register
for any of the above, contact Lesa
Hess at 216.281.4673 or
lesa@buildinghopeinthecity.org or
visit www.buildinghopeinthecity.org
and click on the volunteer page.

GIFTS TO BUILDING HOPE IN THE CITY

The following gifts were received from July 1 to December 31, 2013

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

ORGANIZATIONS AND CHURCHES

Abington Foundation
Acroment Technologies
Akhia Public Relations
Bay Presbyterian Church (Bay Village)
Bethany English Lutheran Church (Cleveland)
Bethany Women in God's Service (Parma)
Bethlehem Lutheran Church (Euclid)
Bethlehem Lutheran Church (Parma)
Brecksville Laser Eye Center
Christ Lutheran Church - Women's Guild (Mantua)
Church Extension Fund - Ohio District, LCMS
Cleveland Lutheran Veterans Club
Community West Foundation
East Cuyahoga Chapter; Thrivent Financial
Edward & Barbara Bell Family Foundation
Grace CMA Church (Middleburg Heights)
Grace Lutheran Church (Lakewood)
Grace Lutheran Mission Society (Lakewood)
In His Steps Foundation
Lutheran High School West
Lutheran Home at Concord Reserve
LWML / Trinity Lutheran Church (Willoughby)
Lyndhurst Community Presbyterian Church (Lyndhurst)
Medina Chapter; Thrivent Financial
Northwest Cuyahoga Chapter; Thrivent Financial
Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation
Ohio District Mission Support Center; LCMS
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church (Solon)
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church (Medina)
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RE May
Royal Redeemer Lutheran Church (North Royalton)
Saint Ignatius High School
Scranton Road Bible Church (Cleveland)
Shore Haven Lutheran Church (Euclid)
Solon Spine & Wellness Center
South Cuyahoga Chapter; Thrivent Financial
The Jochum-Moll Foundation
Thrivent Financial
Truline Industries

Wegman, Hessler & Vanderburg
Zion Lutheran Church (Akron)
Zion Lutheran Church (Sandusky)

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Anonymous
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ENDOWMENT: CREATE A STRONGER FUTURE FOR HOPE

Building Hope in the City's Endowment Fund can accept gifts of stocks, bonds, retirement distributions, life insurance and bequests. Through such planned gifts, you can help rebuild a brighter future for urban ministry and often realize significant tax benefits. To learn more about these giving options, consult your financial advisor or call Brian Upton at 216.281.4673.

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