SUMMER TIME IS THE RIGHT TIME FOR TUTORING

Last year, Ambika Nepal and her family arrived in Cleveland by way of a United Nations refugee camp in Nepal, where she had lived since birth and, in that time, was given limited exposure to formal education. At age 13, she was enrolled in 8th grade at a Cleveland public school, but reading at only a 3rd grade level. Of the many challenges facing Ambika and refugee students like her, one of the greatest is reading and reading comprehension.

With BHITC’s guidance, local urban churches and Christians have been addressing the educational needs of urban families for years. The organization has helped launch many literacy/tutoring programs that currently provide weekly free tutoring services to more than 150 youth, including two ministries dedicated to supporting refugee families. Ambika has been attending BHITC’s tutoring ministry at Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church since the fall.

This summer, BHITC will expand these efforts with two Summer Reading Camps for school-aged refugee children. The camps will provide a week-long program of reading and related activities, the goal of which is to help further boost reading comprehension for participants, as well as providing mentoring friendships for the students with local residents.

BHITC’s Director of Refugee Resettlement Ministries Eileen Wilson says that volunteers will be the key to success over the summer in these programs. “For refugee school students who are far behind their peers in reading, a week spent with a new friend who helps them improve their ability to read and who makes reading fun is a gift that’s beyond price,” says Wilson, who adds that she’s particularly hopeful that high school and college students home for the summer will consider enlisting as volunteers.

PROGRAM DETAILS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church – Summer Reading Camp
(West 129th Street and Lorain Avenue in Cleveland)
June 27 to July 1
9:30 am to 1:30 pm

St. Colman Catholic Church – Summer Reading Camp
(West 65th Street just north of Lorain Avenue in Cleveland)
August 8 to 12
9:30 am to 1:30 pm

If you’re interested in volunteering at one or both of the camps as a volunteer tutor, or if your group can volunteer to prepare a lunch meal for the children and volunteers, please contact Amy Mitchell, Director of Volunteers, at 216.281.4673 or amy@buildinghopeinthecity.org.

SCHOOL SUPPLY COLLECTIONS NEED YOU!

We’ve already started collecting school supplies to provide to more than 250 students this fall. Can you, your family, group or congregation assist us by donating supplies? If so, give Lisa a call at 216.281.4673. We’ll give you a list of items. All donations are needed at BHITC by mid-July. Join us on August 5-6 for stuffing the backpacks!
On the morning of May 7, hundreds of people gathered at Lutheran West High School for one reason: to kickoff CitySERVE 2011, one of Building Hope in the City’s annual community-wide days of service, compassion and a whole lot of fun! After being energized through a time of prayers and singing, nearly 500 participants set out to make a difference by lending their hands to missions and ministries throughout the city.

With a few tools and loads of energy, CitySERVE volunteers of all ages (this year’s age range was 18 months to 80 years!) made their way to more than 40 sites around town. Teams spent the day painting, sewing, gardening, cleaning and providing ministry to inner city families, churches, schools, community centers and shelters. Once the worksite projects were done, CitySERVE participants returned to Lutheran West and walked a combined total of 325 miles to raise more than $1,800 to benefit the Hunger Network of Greater Cleveland. The miles were all sponsored by local chapters of Thrivent.

Thanks to the dedication of an army of volunteers and generous support of our sponsors, in a single day CitySERVE 2011 brought hope and breathed new vitality to many in need of physical and spiritual encouragement. Read the captions below to learn more about what went on at just a sampling of sites.

Mark Stover, a teacher at Lutheran West, coordinated the project to stain the exterior of Advent Lutheran Church, which is located on Harvard Road. Rev. Leonard Killings said that sprucing up the church’s exterior will hopefully cause neighbors to take notice of the church, which is working hard to connect to its community.

At St. John Lutheran School on Nottingham Road, Bill Fecht, Jr. and Colin Bell, both representatives with Thrivent, led 11 volunteers from Prince of Peace Lutheran Church (Medina) in repainting the school’s cafeteria.

A team of youth and adults gathered in Chinatown to finish construction of ASIA, Inc.’s (Asian Services in Action) new community garden at E. 45th Street and Payne Avenue. They helped build beds for gardening, shoveled mulch for a walking path, and painted the garden shed and fence. Charlie Parker, from ASIA, said the garden would give immigrant neighbors in the area a place to grow vegetables and bring pride to the community.
MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK

BHITC’s new Heroes of Hope campaign garners support for mission.

A very big shout out to Judi Cryzter, a member at Grace-CMA in Middleburg Heights, and her daughter, Staci Lowell, a BHITC Board member and member at Willoughby Hills Friends Church, who are among the first to jump into our Heroes of Hope program. “Heroes” take it upon themselves to raise support for BHITC. Judi and Staci presented BHITC and its various missions to the Investor’s Club, a small giving circle of other Cleveland-area women who regularly pool their charitable donations to charities that they select. The result? The mother-daughter duo led the way to a $1,500 combined gift from their whole group of friends to support the International Friends Program at Luther Memorial School.

Follow their lead and become a Hero of Hope! Summitimes is a great time to gather friends for a fun event that also supports urban mission. Consider hosting a BBQ, Cornhole Tournament, Ice Cream Social or an event that you invent as a way to introduce others to what God is doing in the City. Call BHITC at 216.281.4673 and we’ll help you organize your Heroes of Hope effort so that the funds you raise go to a ministry that’s important to you.

BUILDING UP THE BODY OF CHRIST

“Never question the value of volunteers. Noah’s Ark was built by volunteers, the Titanic was built by professionals.” — Unknown

Imagine you had a dream. And that dream was to restore a city troubled spiritually, bringing it back into relationship with God by developing and linking people, communities and churches. To accomplish this task, you would need to marshal many resources — educational, emotional, spiritual, as well as practical.

Help would be required to raise money, teach and mentor those lacking certain life skills, build spiritual bridges for those who are unfamiliar with the gospel, and establish a Christian food bank, assist with substance abuse treatment, coordinate jobs and youth programs, and provide administrative support to keep the organization running smoothly. Now imagine that God did something amazing. He specialized in that, after all, by causing scores of dedicated individuals who shared this same dream to get involved, as well.

Well, it happened. The year was 2003, the year BHITC began ministry through the efforts of about 100 volunteers. By 2010, however, God exploded that to more than 800 volunteers, who invested a total of 23,000 hours to city mission and ministry in just the last 12 months! “Every day of the year, people from all walks of life donate their time and energy to BHITC,” said Amy Mitchell, Director of Volunteers. “Many of our volunteers are experienced professionals, some are students, retirees and others who help with after-school tutoring, preparing hot meals or providing assistance with physical labor. Their ages range from young children to those in their eighties.”

Brian Upton, BHITC’s Assistant Director and co-founder, says that volunteers are so important to the organization that the goal is to treat them like employees, each deserving of training, annual feedback sessions and access to professional development. “People are the crowning achievement of God’s creation,” says Upton. “That’s why BHITC’s top priority is to pour ourselves into them, developing people to become more of what God intends. In a way, we see ourselves as ‘God’s HR Managers’ as we develop the biggest asset of all: people.”

Some of the skill-building workshops and orientation programs that Building Hope in the City offers include:

- Urban Ministry Leadership Institute — A coaching ministry led by Rev. Johnson for urban pastors and church planters.
- Building Hope’s “101 Class” — Required for new and potential volunteers, this orientation gives an overview of BHITC’s history, mission, purpose, and values. Opportunities and roles are also explained so attendees may choose activities that best fit their interests and schedules.
- Ministry Among the Poor — In this workshop, participants learn to create a mental model of poverty, examine theories of change, and analyze hidden class rules. It also examines strategies to improve ministry outcomes when partnering with people living in poverty.
- Cross-Cultural Training — A half-day training course for anyone interested in working with people from different cultures.
- Virtus Training — Volunteers and staff who work with children and refugees are required to complete this class, which provides important information about safe-guarding youth and church programs from predators. Virtus is Latin for excellence or character.
- Teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) — Periodic training for new ESL teachers, which includes an overview of effective curriculum, methods and structure for church-based ministries to immigrants.
- Refugee Mentor Training — A collaborative effort with Cleveland Catholic Charities, this session equips volunteers to join mentoring teams that befriend newly-arriving refugee families.
- Leadership Retreats — Held three times a year for volunteers who are in roles of leading ministry teams, these retreats are a time of encouragement, vision casting and fellowship.

This article was written by Tammi Davis, a BHITC volunteer and member at St. Christopher Catholic Church.

FINDING WHOLENESS IN CHRIST: ONE WOMAN’S STORY

My name is Jean P. I am a believer in Jesus Christ. I suffered from childhood sexual abuse including several incidents of sexual assault. I became a sex and love addict at a very young age. My addiction began with obsessive and sexual fantasies to compulsive and promiscuous sexual behaviors.

My sex and love addiction was out of control for many years. I lived a secretive, double life. I was miserable and spiritually bankrupt. I tried to control my addiction on my own, but I could not. When I got involved in a five-year abusive relationship with a very dangerous man, I had hit rock bottom.

By the grace of God, I escaped that relationship and began to look for answers to my addiction problem. I joined Sex Addicts Anonymous to begin my recovery work. I attended phone meetings and I got a long distance sponsor to help me with my step work. However, a chance meeting with Pastor Jeff Johnson led me to Building Hope in the City’s Celebrate Recovery ministry that meets at Zion Lutheran Church on East 30th Street.

Before Celebrate Recovery, I struggled to maintain my sobriety. My relationship with God was a giant question mark. After I began participating in Celebrate Recovery, my relationship with God became an exclamation point with the anointing of the Holy Spirit passing into my life.

The Word of God has the power to heal and to restore life to anyone who hears it or reads it. Celebrate Recovery taught me Biblical principles that linked the “Twelve Steps” from Alcoholics Anonymous to the Word of God. Jesus Christ is my Higher Power. My relationship with Jesus Christ has given me the power I needed to become sober and to maintain my sobriety.

Celebrate Recovery is not a “quick fix,” nor a temporary solution. Celebrate Recovery is a lifelong change that led to my deliverance from my addiction. It has helped restore my relationship with Jesus. I have friends now! I have a life! I am becoming whole! Jesus is my Peace and my Healer!

BHITC partners with Christians and local congregations to operate Celebrate Recovery ministries at Zion-East 30th and in North Khypton. It plans to use them as needed in future (yet-to-be) plants, as well. To learn more, call Rev. Jeff Johnson at 216.281.4673 or visit www.celebraterecovery.com.

This article was written by Tammi Davis, a BHITC volunteer and member at St. Christopher Catholic Church.
News of hope for a people of mission

THE WORDS MANY PEOPLE LONG TO HEAR: YOU’RE HIRED!

If you’ve ever been unemployed, you know how frustrating the experience can be. Now, imagine yourself with little to no professional or personal network upon which to draw. Perhaps you’re also weighed down by a long period of unemployment due to personal health issues, or you’ve got a conviction on your record from when you were younger and not as smart. The past haunts you; worse yet, it scares potential employers.

For some people in the city, this is more than just an exercise in imagination – it’s reality. What can the people of God and the Gospel offer in these situations? Plenty. That’s the promise behind Building Hope in the City’s JobsAdvantage ministry, which equips urban churches and BHITC’s staff with an effective tool for ministry to under- and unemployed people.

In April, JobsAdvantage completed its latest 10-week course at Trinity Lutheran Church, which leveraged the ministry as an opportunity to enter into deeper relationships with local residents who access the church’s food pantry and community meal programs.

Robert Schnur was among the participants each week. Members of his family attend at Trinity. “For me, this course ended up being more about my faith than my work,” says Schnur, who has also begun worshipping weekly at Trinity since the course started. “I came into this looking for a single job. But instead of just ‘seeking employment’, I’m now thinking of my work as something I can do for God.”

The JobsAdvantage program uniquely blends one-on-one mentoring, Bible studies on the role of work and skills-building sessions with local Christian employers and human resource managers. BHITC volunteers and church members staff the program, providing everything from the donuts to accountability, prayer and hard-skills sessions on resume building, interviewing techniques and networking tips.

“I know I will be a more effective employee at my next job,” say Schnur with a newfound confidence.

BHITC plans to offer its JobsAdvantage course again this coming fall. If you’re interested in joining the volunteer crew as a mentor or want to be part of a growing Employer’s Network being formed around this ministry, call Brian Upton at 216.281.4673.

CAFÉ EVENTS PROVIDE CRITICAL HEALTH INFORMATION TO REFUGEES

They were opportunities to receive free health advice in a relaxed setting, while mingling with neighbors from Burundi, Liberia, Rwanda, Tanzania, Congo, Mexico, and Puerto Rico. In April, Building Hope in the City hosted two New American Health Cafés that brought together medical and health professionals with parents in Building Hope’s refugee tutoring program, families who attend church with our partner congregations, and walk-ins from the surrounding neighborhood.

Funded, in part, by the Ohio Commission on Minority Health, the cafés included a wide range of topics, from skin and joint care to hypertension, healthy eating, and dental hygiene. Participants—both adults and children—took part in one-on-one screenings with nurses. Adults received blood pressure checks and asked questions about rashes and various diseases. Children were matched to growth charts, while teens talked with a health professional about developmental changes.

The Cafés took place at West Park Christian Reformed Church and St. Colman Catholic Church, linking BHITC, those congregations and dozens of volunteers to the many diverse people who are new members of Cleveland’s community.

Special thanks to Sanford-Brown College, Liz Castellano, BHITC’s John Carroll University intern, the medical staff from Neighborhood Family Practice and Asian Services in Action (ASIA, Inc.) for their collaboration on this ministry.
In the morning, volunteers planted flowers at the Norma Herr Women’s Shelter, located near downtown Cleveland. After lunch, the crew gave manicures to the women staying at the shelter. Pat Massey, from Grace-CMA Church in Middleburg Heights said she was there to “share the love of Jesus.”

After the volunteers at 2100 Lakeside Men’s Shelter painted the front hallway, they served lunch to the residents of Ohio’s largest homeless shelter. Carl Cook, a former resident who is now a facilitator at the shelter, said, “We need to feed the men’s bodies. Then we can begin to feed their spirits.” Following lunch, the team worked outside in the garden. Most of the volunteers, who were students from Lutheran West, were amazed. “You wouldn’t even guess that many of these people are homeless. They look no different than anyone else,” said Rachel McClain, a junior at LW.

Luther Memorial School partnered with CitySERVE to host a free family carnival for the families in their community. LMS Teacher Missy Beckman said, “Events like these are a great way to reach out to the neighborhood. People come for the fun, then later return to attend church.” Volunteers had as much fun as those who attended. They painted faces, helped with games, served food, and played with the children.

Volunteers at St. Colman Catholic Church undertook two ambitious projects to improve conditions in classrooms at the church’s school that are used weekly by BHITC. Lynn Merriman, a teacher at Lutheran West, brought a team of students and many sewing machines with her to create curtains that were specially designed to provide insulation (and beauty) to a particularly drafty room. Another group of volunteers painted the walls of the computer room.

Volunteers cleaned storage areas and the food pantry at West Park Christian Reformed Church. The “Bread Basket” ministry serves approximately 500 people a month. Pastor Dave Daley was very grateful and wrote, “Thank you so much for the help. It is a joy to see our partnership with BHITC and other local churches coming to fruition. God bless you!”

A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THESE SUPPORTERS OF CitySERVE 2011:

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This article was written by Tammi Davis, a BHITC volunteer and member at St. Christopher Catholic Church.
News of hope for a people of mission

The following gifts were received from January 1 to April 30, 2011.

GIFTS TO BUILDING HOPE IN THE CITY

You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.
– II Corinthians 9:11

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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 216.281.4679.

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Bob & Anne Wendel
Brian Wentzal
Harry & Mary Westik
Bryan & Peggy West
Geathshy & Susan Wiedmann
Sally Wilber
Kimberly Williams
Judy Williams
Richard & Mary Luczyn
Kim Wimer
Barbara Wilson
In honor of Nancy Ramsbush
Janel Wifker
Earl & Barbara Wkosir
Gayl & Gayle Wiley
John & Stan Wiygol
Sandy Wood
Mark & Lisa Woodford
George & Anne Morlana Youde
Jean Yogl
Fred & Carol Yoko
John & Carol Yurchak
David & Virginia Zakowski
Dale & Laurie Zielinski
Bob & Diane Zimmerman
Arie Zemars
James & Betty Gayle Ziefchasek
George & Martha Zilisa
Doree Zundrel
Jokensa Zundrel

ARE YOU A THRIVENT MEMBER?

It’s so, consider designating your Thrivent Choice Dollars to urban ministry! It’s a gift that costs you absolutely nothing. All you need to do is instruct Thrivent how much of your Thrivent Choice Dollars you want to give to Building Hope in the City. You can do this by calling Thrivent at 800-THRVENT (800.847.4836) or visiting Thrivent online at www.thrivent.com/thriventchoice to send a gift to BHITC.

Summer 2011

Thank you to Akhia Public Relations and RE Menu for their donations of graphic design and printing, which lowered the cost of printing this newsletter.
PENCIL US IN! Dates to Remember

June 18 - BHITC Golf Outing
(see advertisement to the right)

July 9 - Understanding Poverty Workshop
9 am to 3 pm, Salvation Army-Painesville, 69 Pearl Street
$10 per person | Preregistration is required by calling 216.281.4673.

July 17 - Go Back to School with BHITC,
Wine School, That Is!
A planned giving education event that includes a fun-Allad tutorial
by sommeliers from The Cleveland Wine School. To learn more, call
Brian Upton at 216.281.4673.

August 5-6 - Stuffing Backpacks!
Trinity Lutheran Church | Help us prepare 250+ backpacks for urban students!

August 13 - Brunch with Miss America Katie Stam
A benefit for Hope! | Grace OMA Church, Middleburg Heights | $20 per person

September 17-18 - Be the Church 2011
A two-day service event happening simultaneously in Cleveland and Akron. Work day at various churches
and agencies on September 17. Join us for a 5K Walk for Hope on the 18th!

August 18 - BHITC Golf Outing
Saturday, June 18, 2011
12:30 pm Shotgun Start / Arrive at 12 noon
Bob O’Link Golf Course
4141 Center Rd, Avon, 44011
$75.00 per person
18-Hole Scramble and Steak Dinner
Foursomes and Individuals are Welcome

For more information or to register, call 216.281.4673

Vibrant city neighborhoods
Dynamic congregations
Passionate followers of Jesus
It’s all possible….come and see!