



PowerPacks™ Bring Second Chance



Second Chance Ministries, a partner ministry of Cru® in Minneapolis, meets in an apartment building space

that can, at times, be volatile. Many residents use drugs and face difficult life circumstances. Paul Bushey, Pastor of Second Chance, lives in the apartment building, among many of the congregants.

One Sunday before the church service, a resident from the apartment building named Frieda approached Pastor Paul and unleashed at him the most profane-laced language he'd ever heard. She even called him a "fake pastor." Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Paul remained calm as he listened, at total peace, realizing she doesn't know Jesus. His

Continued inside...

A Box and a Kept Promise



There was one Box of Love® left. Nueva Creación Iglesia, a partner ministry of Cru® in the inner city of Bakersfield, California, ministers to about 60 families each Thanksgiving through the Boxes of Love® outreach. Pepe Mendoza, leader of evangelism, is passionate about reaching lost people with Christ's love and says, "Boxes of Love are a great tool for that."

Pepe and others pray about who will receive the boxes. Then they connect with a local school that has a program to help migrant people in need. Through this program, Pepe received Alex Martinez's name.

When Pepe and his wife Irma knocked on 11-year-old Alex's trailer home door on Thanksgiving four years ago, Alex was surprised. He did not know this couple. "How did you find me?" he asked. Pepe had called his home before delivering the box filled with ingredients for a Thanksgiving meal, but that was their only contact.

Alex was sad. His father had been shot three times and could barely walk. Alex was consumed with questions. "How could this happen?" "How did you know about us, about our need?" He worried about his dad, his mom, himself, and his little sister. Before that Thanksgiving, Alex's family had never heard of Jesus or the gospel. Pepe shared a little bit about Jesus with them and promised to return.

Pepe kept his promise to Alex's family the following Saturday and shared more about Jesus. But he didn't stop there — he continued meeting with the Martinez family weekly for 8 months. God showed his faithfulness to them through Pepe's consistency and eventually the entire family placed their trust in Jesus!

Alex was consumed with questions



Join volunteers like Pepe in praying for the families who receive a Box of Love® this Thanksgiving. Thank you for supporting this life-changing ministry.

It's exciting to see how Jesus has transformed the Martinez family. They are attending church, and Alex's mom regularly shares the gospel with other people in her life. Alex and his father previously fought a lot, using foul language. Now that they know Jesus, they enjoy more peace and kinder words in their relationship. Alex's dad once felt reserved and embarrassed, but now he smiles more and engages with people. Pepe and his team prayed that Alex's father would be healed, and little by little he improved. Alex's father is now walking, talking, and working! Even their housing situation has improved. The family was able to move from their tiny rented trailer into a bigger trailer with better conditions.

Alex expresses amazement that God sent Pepe and Irma to come and share the gospel with him. Years after meeting Pepe, Alex revealed that when they met, he had been feeling suicidal. He shares his story publicly now, rejoicing that, "If it wasn't for what Christ has done for me, I wouldn't be here to tell you that."

To this day Pepe and Irma still visit the family. They became family, all through just one meal friends like you provided, delivered in a Box of Love.

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response to her was not anger, but instead to kindly say, “God bless you.” At the mention of God, Frieda ran away. The church service continued as usual.

Five days after Frieda raged at him, Paul held the door open for her as she entered the apartment building. She thanked him. Then Pastor Paul offered her a PowerPack™ for her 8-year-old daughter. She accepted it and said she would come back to church — and she did! She came to church several times and heard the gospel.

Frieda no longer lives in the apartment building but she and Pastor Paul continue to keep in touch. Paul describes her as being “on the fence” spiritually, but based on her continued inquiries, he believes God is drawing her toward a saving faith in Him! She often calls Paul to ask him questions about his faith. Questions like “Where’d you come from? . . . How’d you find God? . . . Why do you put so much trust in God? . . . Why do some things happen?”

He believes God is drawing her toward a saving faith in Him

The PowerPack Pastor Paul gave to Frieda for her daughter tore down the wall of hostility she had been harboring. On the day she received it, she gently said to Paul, “No matter what people say about you, or what I say about you, keep doing what you’re doing.”

Thank you for your continued prayers and support, which enable faithful partners like Paul Bushey to keep ministering in hard places through tools like PowerPacks. Please pray with us that Frieda would come to know Christ.



Pastor Paul Bushey shares his testimony at the Twin Cities Fellowship Dinner.



Left to right: Linda Cotton, Agape Center leader; Gloria, Mahogany's younger sister; Mahogany



Making Her New

When Mahogany crosses the stage to receive her high school diploma in 2019, that's not all she'll have accomplished — she'll also be awarded an associate degree as the result of completing college-level courses during her Junior and Senior years of high school.

She's come a long way since the first year she attended the Agape Center Day Camp, a ministry of Cru®, in Chicago. She was six years old and remembers how her bad attitude got her into a lot of trouble. But, she also remembers the first time she heard in a Bible lesson that Jesus died on the cross to offer forgiveness for her sins. She put her faith in Christ that summer and began attending the S.A.Y. Yes!® Center at the Agape Center.

Mahogany has faced the challenges of inner-city life. Her parents split up when she was young and she stayed with her grandmother most of the time. It was her grandmother who registered her for the Agape Center Day Camp all those years ago. Mahogany remembers doing her homework at S.A.Y. Yes! because when she went home, no one would help her do it.

Through the years, Mahogany has begun to understand that receiving Christ means turning her

life over to Him. She says that 2 Corinthians 5:17 means a lot to her now because “it encourages me that the old, bad things I did became less and I started becoming new.” And the Lord is making her new!

While many kids come through the S.A.Y. Yes! program, leader Linda Cotton says Mahogany has stuck around and stayed connected. “I've seen her heart be so sensitive to the Lord and doing what's right. She really is a leader. I saw that in the way she interacted with the children this summer as she served as a leader at the Day Camp, guiding the children through daily activities.”

As any teen does, Mahogany has her ups and downs. Like many girls her age, she faces a constant pressure to fit into a certain mold. But the Agape Center leaders' prayers, that she would learn what it looks like to choose Jesus, are being answered. “She's persevered and is firm in her goals,” Linda says. “I do want to follow Jesus,” Mahogany resolves.

We are grateful for friends like you! You not only help make it possible for Mahogany to pursue her academic goals to go on to college and prepare for a career, but you have invested in her spiritual development and eternal future. Thank you!

The Agape Center leaders' prayers are being answered

A Personal Word



Milton Massie
Co-National Director

One of the highest values of the inner-city ministry of Cru® is to be Christ-

centered: to start, stay, and end with Christ in all we do.

I was recently encouraged by these thoughts from Kara Atkinson, Associate City Director in Milwaukee, by the

example Jesus gave for doing ministry. Kara says:

“I have recently been studying how Jesus lived out lovingkindness, steadfast love, and mercy in his time among us. Jesus *noticed* Zacchaeus. He *spoke* with a Samaritan woman. He *fed* thousands. He *saw* the woman wiping his feet with her tears and *granted* forgiveness. He stood before an adulterer and *turned back her accusers*.

Jesus demonstrated lovingkindness by the way he viewed and interacted with individuals. He honored people by showing high esteem and respect, even though He is equal to the Father. Jesus understands, far more than we do, the intrinsic worth and dignity of an individual made in His image.

It's no wonder that in I Timothy 5, we are given many instructions about how to treat people, and honoring fellow image bearers is the main concept. Jesus' example is what drives our ministry to pursue strategies that first introduce individuals to their Maker, but then also move people from unhealthy dependency and entitlement to Christ-dependency and employment.

We believe that honor goes beyond a meal, that seeing a soul and its worth is honoring to the Maker. As we partner with the local church, we are praying for strategies that lead to employment, education, and entrepreneurship in order to allow image bearers to live out their God-given worth. Pray with us as we seek to live out the deep and wide lovingkindness of Jesus Christ that has been shown to us!”

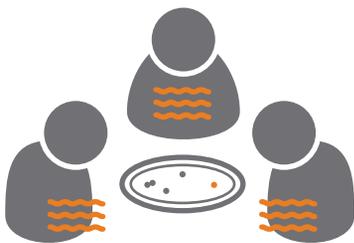
Kara's words express our mission and values well. We are grateful for your prayers and support that make our ministry possible

Grateful for your partnership,



Milton Massie
Co-National Director

A Box of Love®. A bridge of hope.



20% of American families don't have enough food over the holidays.



Thanks to your generosity, we'll deliver **25,000 Boxes of Love®** to those families for Thanksgiving.



Please pray that God uses these Boxes of Love as bridges of hope—that **5,000 people** will make a decision for Christ.



Box of Love® — The “Next Generation”



A teen named Xavier is a Christian today because a friend like you gave generously to provide a

Box of Love® to his hungry family at Thanksgiving time.

But that beautiful transformation was only the beginning of Xavier’s story.

A few months later, Xavier made a new friend, another teen, named Fernando.

Xavier could see that Fernando’s family needed help. So he asked if he could bring them a Box of Love.

Fernando agreed — and his mother was astounded. So much food! So much love! And Xavier’s gentle witness, his expression of the gospel, intrigued her.

By the time Xavier left the house, Fernando’s mother had made a life-changing decision: She would ask Xavier to visit on a regular basis, so the family could learn more about the Bible.

Fernando’s mother had made a life-changing decision

“Being a typical teenager, I thought it was going to be boring,” Fernando remembers today. “But it wasn’t!”

The good news made an impact on Fernando. “I was just an arrogant kid who didn’t really care about other people’s struggles or any of that,” he says. “I started realizing my own ways were wrong, and that I need Jesus.”

This family is following Christ today — thanks to a “second-generation” Box of Love. Please start another chain of compassion this Thanksgiving. Every \$41.40 contribution today provides another Box of Love. How generous can you be? Thank you!



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Cru is a charter member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability.

Occasionally the names of people featured in this report are changed to protect their privacy.

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