

In a New York Minute ... *Everything can change!*



Joel felt like he was up against a brick wall. He'd been faithfully sharing his faith with Rafael and Belinda, a struggling family in New York's inner city.

Although Rafael and Belinda had invited him into their home for Bible study, they just didn't seem connected to the gospel. Despite the time

“The gift, and the love behind it, really opened the door for them to take their faith more seriously.”

—Pastor Joel

investment, the parents of four resisted Joel's gentle lead to go deeper.

Every invitation to church was met with an excuse, causing Joel to wonder if the couple was serious about growing in their faith.

Then Pastor Joel and his team showed up at Rafael and Belinda's doorstep with a Box of Love[®]. The simple gift of food changed everything.

The boxes, donated by Cru[®] Inner City and distributed by partner ministries, contain a turkey



and all the traditional sides — vegetables, potatoes, juice, yams, apple or cranberry sauce, bread, fruit, dessert, and other items. Each Box of Love also

Continued inside...

Continued from front...

In a New York Minute ... Everything can change!

includes gospel literature designed to appeal to all ages.

“They were very much in need,” Joel shared, “so they were grateful to receive the Box of Love. The gift, and the love behind it, really opened the door for them to take their faith more seriously.”

The following Sunday, the family of six attended church. And instead of waiting for Joel to arrive for their weekly Bible study, Rafael and Belinda began



calling him with questions from their daily Bible reading.

The simple gift of a cardboard box with basic food items propelled them into a deeper commitment of faith — and a closer relationship with God.

Thank you for extending the love of Christ to Rafael and Belinda — and to children and families of the inner city who are hungry for food ... and Jesus!

Maximize every dollar for Christ's Kingdom Your year-end generosity can do even more!

Today, you can make an even bigger mark for eternity as we serve with and among the “least of these” ...
because your generosity as 2023 comes to a close can be multiplied to do even more for the Kingdom!

Perhaps one of these strategic giving options is perfect for you as we near the end of the year:

1 IRA rollover. If you're 70-1/2 years or older, you can make a qualified charitable donation (QCD) of up to \$100,000 directly from your IRA without adding a penny to your taxable income. You'll also get an income deduction for your charitable gift whether or not you itemize your taxes. And, if you are 73 or older, this also counts toward your required minimum distribution.

2 Appreciated stocks or property. By donating stocks, mutual funds, or property (like rentals, vacation homes/condos, or otherwise) that you've held for over a year — rather than selling the asset and donating the proceeds — you may receive a tax deduction for the fair market value of the donated securities up to 30% of your adjusted gross income. Plus, with the stock market being up much of this year, now is a great time to give appreciated stock.

3 Donor Advised Fund distribution. Giving from your DAF can accelerate your commitment to fulfilling the Great Commission and transforming lives in the inner city. These funds are already set aside for ministry, so you can give freely without touching your other capital.

4 Cash gift. Any generous donation you give — mailed by 12/30 or given online by midnight 12/31 — may apply toward this year's taxes.



Thank you.

Your support in mobilizing the church to live out God's heart for every man, woman, and child brings lasting transformation to communities nationwide!

Yes! Jesus Cares About YOU



Carmine had faith that God would provide for his four young daughters.

They needed backpacks and school supplies for the coming school year — but the family couldn't afford it.

So Carmine told the girls to pray for new backpacks to replace the ones that had become threadbare from years of use.

The school year started — and the four young girls were still without book bags. It was particularly difficult, since most of their classmates were carrying brand-new ones.

The girls felt forgotten ... and began to wonder if this “prayer thing” wasn't real.

And then, Carmine heard an announcement on the local radio station about a PowerPack® distribution.

PowerPacks®, an outreach of Cru® Inner City and our partner ministries, are colorful backpacks, filled with school supplies and gospel literature.

He gathered up the girls without telling them where they were headed. When they arrived at the

“Their faces lit up. It was evident to see they now knew for sure that God is ‘really real’ and that Jesus knows and cares about them.”
—Pastor Willis, Nu Grace Nu Mercy Church



outreach, he escorted his daughters to a room where they spotted rows and rows of PowerPacks.

“Their faces lit up,” said Pastor Lennell Willis, of Nu Grace Nu Mercy Church, which sponsored the event. “It was evident to see they now knew for sure that God is ‘really real’ and that Jesus knows and cares about them. The long-term, deep impact will pay dividends for years to come.”

The pastor added that the well-timed gift deepened the girls' relationship and witness of the Lord Jesus.

It also was a good affirmation for their dad, who told Pastor Lennell, “I just thank God for you in this time of transition for me and my family as our resources are stretched in multiple directions.”

Similar scenes were played out across the country this summer as reports show that more than 11,500 PowerPacks were distributed by at least 235 partner ministries. Numerous cities and churches are still tallying the numbers, which means totals will continue to grow. **Thank you for your ongoing support in blessing our inner-city neighbors.**





She's a new creation ... Thanks to Jesus and YOU!

Alana loved Jesus, the church, and serving others — but a heartbreaking secret made her feel unworthy of salvation.

“For 30 years, this precious lady was living with the heavy burden that she didn’t deserve the love of Jesus,” said Jackie Perez, team director for Cru® Inner City Tampa.

Alana is part of a couples’ discipleship program hosted by Jackie and her husband, Rick, which they started as part of Cru’s inner-city ministry on Florida’s west coast.

Over time, Jackie noticed the women were not

connecting as deeply as the men, which led her to create “A Weekend with the King,” a healing and deliverance retreat for the women.

And that’s where Alana’s walls begin to tumble ...

In a session on the forgiveness of God, Alana shared that three decades earlier, she had a heated argument with her sister, who struggled with mental health issues. The sister responded by running upstairs to her room where she tragically took her life.

Over the course of the retreat weekend, Alana was able to release the suffocating guilt and leave her burdens at the foot of the cross.

Today, Alana continues to receive discipleship training through the inner-city ministry led by Jackie and Rick.

Lives are being transformed! Thank you for making it possible!



A vibrant women’s ministry in Florida’s inner city is evangelizing the lost and bringing hope and healing in Christ’s name!

The Fine Art of Serving and Submitting



Milton Massie
Executive Director/
Steward

Over the past three years — amid a global pandemic that limited our access to America's most vulnerable — Cru® Inner City recorded that nearly 11,000 indicated decisions for Christ. That is a God-sized number and a bold reminder that God is at work in our underserved communities!

How were we able to impact the Kingdom with so many obstacles?

First and foremost, I believe it was God's grace ... above and beyond all that we could ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20). I also believe God used one of our ministry's core principles: We "serve with and we submit with." Throughout Scripture, we are called to be servants of the Most High God and submit to one another in fear of the Lord. That is who Cru Inner City is.

In working alongside our partner pastors, I hear a common refrain: Cru Inner City's model is the best kept secret. That reputation is based on our history of learning from other experts — the pastors with boots on the ground — because God is already teaming up with them to influence their neighborhoods.

Complementing our "serve-with-and-submit-with" mindset are Cru Inner City's six major pillars:

1. We look
2. We listen
3. We learn
4. We love on
5. We leverage resources
6. We launch

So, using these pillars, what does "serving with and submitting with" look like? We can start by asking these types of questions:

- What's your passion?
- What is your vision for seeing your community reached for Christ?
- What does a community look like that is flourishing for Christ?
- How will the ministry you steward contribute to that becoming a reality?
- What idea is inspiring you to go after that reality?
- How is God already at work in and through your ministry?
- Where would you gauge yourself in needed supplies and resources?
- How might we pray together to see God meet these needs?

Each of these questions underscores Cru's passionate desire to maintain a posture of service in the inner city. We're not coming to take from other ministries. We're not coming to correct. We are here to find out where God is at work and dig in alongside. That's who we are.

We want to see people come to know Christ. We want to love people into the kingdom through felt or perceived needs and with a clear presentation of the gospel, which recognizes their first real need — to know and follow Christ.

But our commitment doesn't end there. The final piece of the framework is helping our neighbors grow in their faith, which is discipleship.

The Bible is clear: good works don't provide salvation ... but good works bring glory to our Heavenly Father. May the work of Cru Inner City continue to bring God glory!

Grateful for your partnership,

Milton Massie
Executive Director/Steward

A knock at the door

A Box of Love®

A Season of ... Surprises!



Paula had just moved to South Chicago.

Though a senior, she used her bicycle to get around, providing a more intimate way to get to know her new neighborhood.

During one of those excursions, she pedaled past Salvation Church, where she met Pastor Jerry Taylor. The two chatted a bit, and Paula provided Pastor Jerry with her contact information.

Several weeks later, as fall was making its mark on the Windy City, Pastor Jerry reached out to Paula, making arrangements for a home visit. When the pastor and his friends arrived, Paula was surprised to see them carrying a big cardboard box.

Inside the box was a turkey and all the fixings for a Thanksgiving meal! Paula couldn't believe her eyes! While the Salvation Church ministry team was there, they shared information from the gospel literature tucked inside the box.

In response to the good news about Jesus, Paula dedicated her life to Christ!

Then it was time for Paula to surprise the pastor.

"The following day she came to church and became a new member!" Pastor Jerry said.

And it all began — by God's grace — with a Box of Love®!

Every \$43.40 you give will provide a Box of Love with an abundance of holiday food, to feed a hungry family in inner-city America.

Please be the hands and feet of Jesus to another person like Paula today ... and share the transforming love of God through the gift of food. Thank you.



Cru Inner City
3433 Broadway Street NE, Suite 330
Minneapolis, MN 55413
(612) 338-0999

CRU.ORG/INNERCITY
innercity@cru.org



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.

Cru® Inner City ministry, programs, and products are provided under the trademarks: Compassionate Products™, Creating Options Together™, S.A.Y. Yes! Centers for Youth Development®, S.A.Y. Yes!®, Box of Love®, Boxes of Love®, PowerPacks®, PowerPack®, Summer in the City®, and Urban Immersion™. The Cru® Inner City ministry began as Here's Life Inner City®. The aforementioned trademarks are trademarks of Campus Crusade for Christ, Inc., aka Cru.