



## A Changed Life, A Changed City

**Billy Roberts had been a notorious chain gang member, even making the FBI's Most Wanted list.** He left his home state of Georgia for New York City in the 1930s, where he found himself addicted and homeless.

After receiving a free meal and hearing the message of salvation, Billy's life was changed. He founded Soul Saving Station, a mission outpost in the heart of Harlem, which later also served as a food pantry.

As 2020 began, Soul Saving Station, in partnership with Cru® Inner City, was serving 100 New York families each month, offering them boxes

of food, hygiene products, and gospel materials.

Then COVID-19 changed everything.

On March 9, New York City had 16 confirmed cases of COVID-19. In only two weeks, the number grew to a shocking 20,000 cases. Working-poor families, already walking a financial tightrope before the epidemic, completely lost their footing. Demand at church soup kitchens and food pantries tripled between March and April.

At the same time, many food pantries in New York City were forced to shut down due to financial

The community  
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hardship, leaving thousands of families without food and vital support. The community needed a miracle, and thanks to the seed of faith planted in Billy Roberts almost 90 years ago, a miracle emerged.

In the span of one week, Cru® Inner City partnered with Soul Saving Station's outreach program to youth in trouble, helping expand its staff, operation, and resources and meet the needs of a devastated community. A generous Cru® supporter donated masks so the city would allow Soul Saving Station to operate, and families would feel safe coming for the resources they desperately needed.

Cru Inner City also allocated food and supplies from our distribution warehouse to supplement the resources donated by other organizations to the neighborhood outreach.

Thanks to this incredible partnership, Soul Saving Station is now passing out packaged meals twice a week, distributing food and hygiene products to

families in need, and delivering groceries to shut-ins. The Soul Saving Station went from serving 100 families per month to 1,794 families per month, including 2,815 children. Alongside food and care products, Soul Saving Station is sharing the incredible power of the gospel of Christ.

Your generous gifts to Cru Inner City empower us to support organizations like Soul Saving Station, on the front lines, reaching families affected by COVID-19. By amplifying the resources of local churches, we dramatically increase the impact these churches can have in their communities.

With each meal we serve, made possible by your support, God continues to grow the legacy of evangelism that began in the 1930s, when one believer stepped out in faith and shared warm food and the love of God with Billy Roberts.



Cru® Inner City partnered with Living Redemption Youth Opportunity Hub, Soul Saving Station's outreach to youth in trouble, to staff their expanded food pantry and serve their city.



# Inner City COVID-19 Response

**Cru® Inner City serves and mobilizes the church to live out God's heart for the poor, so all can grow in Christ to build spiritual movements everywhere. Here's a quick snapshot of some ways your generous support has helped us live out this mission during the COVID-19 pandemic.**



## Protective Equipment

We've delivered more than 36,500 masks and other personal protective equipment to ministries in 14 cities in order to facilitate safe community outreach, such as passing out food and hygiene kits.



## Food and Hygiene

We've distributed more than 11 semi-trailers of food and hygiene materials so local partners can reach out to their neighborhoods and share God's love and compassion.



## Easter Bags

Many local churches found creative ways to use this important evangelistic tool. This included dropping off Easter Bags, crafts, and gospel materials at homes and creating instructional YouTube videos to accompany them so the whole family could hear the gospel!



## Adult Outreach

We are currently training more than 100 pastors and leaders as job and life skill discipleship coaches, preparing them to serve their community during the unemployment and economic crisis resulting from the pandemic.



## Youth Outreach

At our S.A.Y. Yes!® after-school centers, we're working with our partners to continue training volunteers virtually as well as finding creative ways to disciple our students and meet their physical needs — often through donations of food, hygiene supplies, and even computers so low-income students could participate in online schooling.



# A Personal Word



Milton Massie  
Executive Director/  
Steward

**I don't know about you, but I feel incarcerated by this pandemic.** Whether out of caution, fear, or law, many of us are caged in right now, separated from the ones we love and the places we usually go.

So how do we respond?

In Acts 16, Paul and Silas were jailed in the “innermost cell” with their feet “in stocks.” They had two options: They could make an individual effort to loosen the chains holding them down, or they could use the forced pause as an opportunity to prepare their hearts for what God had in store next.

They chose the latter and spent their first incarcerated hours “praying and singing hymns to God,” in a way that even pulled in the other prisoners. They used the forced pause, and their moment of complete powerlessness, to prepare their hearts by reconnecting with God, and also with their fellow prisoners.

The results were clear. God loosened their chains and broke down the prison walls in the most unexpected ways. And the man who had locked them up, and his entire family, became believers.

As we all waded through these uncertain times together, we must rest in the fact that God is in control. Neither prisons, chains, nor the tomb could stop His message. In fact, He turned those catastrophes into catapults for His good news.

At Cru® Inner City, we've been reminded throughout this pandemic to stop and connect to God, and then with our fellow prisoners. As we have done so, the Lord has created exciting and unforeseen opportunities to share His good news and compassion.

Thank you for seeking God with us during this time. And thank you for all the ways you are supporting these new missional opportunities.

Grateful for your partnership,

*Milton Lee Massie*

Milton Massie  
Executive Director/Steward

## It's time ... *your* time!

As the world reels, our thoughts turn to the future, and eternity.

Today you can create a legacy that will actually *outlive* you ... through estate and gift planning.

Yes, this is a subject people tend to put off; we don't like to think we won't live forever.

But you will live forever. And because you want to hear the joyful welcome of the Savior, “Well done, good and faithful servant,” as your new life begins ... this is the perfect time to discover the

benefits of estate planning for you, your family, and the ministries you love.

Cru® has partnered with The Cru Foundation to help you embrace this most important time of your life, and establish your legacy.

Please contact Dan Howe today at [dan.howe@cru.org](mailto:dan.howe@cru.org), or (612) 338-0999, to talk about setting up a charitable gift annuity, a donor advised fund, or whatever vehicles best suit your needs.

Keep touching lives in the inner city. Even after a lifetime. **It's time.**





This year, church partners across the country found creative ways to share the gospel with thousands of children and their families through Easter Bag outreaches.

## The Gospel Finds A Way



**The Crossing Church, a partner ministry of Cru Inner City in Tampa, Florida, used Easter Bags for the first time in 2019.**

They held a meet-your-neighbor event featuring a food truck, a bouncy house, and Easter Bags filled with treats and gospel materials for the kids. The event was a huge success, and hundreds of people came to the church and heard the gospel as a result.

This year, they had assembled twice as many Easter Bags with the hopes of reaching even more families for Christ. But when COVID-19 struck, the church had to get resourceful. What could they do with hundreds of Easter Bags, but no event?

If families couldn't come to the church, they decided to bring the church to the families.

Since March, when schools closed due to the virus, the church has been delivering boxes of food and cooked meals to the families of local elementary school students. Every Friday, they drive through a nearby trailer park and leave a box of food in the front yards of families who need it most.

On Good Friday, they added a twist. A group of church members gathered together in a

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caravan of cars. They made their way through the neighborhood on their normal route, but also included Easter Bags stuffed with candy, toys, and gospel materials in their delivery. At each home that received a box, the church members got out of their cars and met the family in the front yard, all while maintaining appropriate distancing.

They delivered the food and Easter Bags, while sharing the hope and meaning behind the beaded gospel bracelet for the kids. Before leaving, they invited the families to attend their online Easter service and prayed, hands extended, for each of them.

A week later, they heard from a mother for whom they had prayed. Her infant has an inoperable condition, for which they were out of treatment options. When the mother contacted the church, she was overjoyed to share that her child had gotten into a clinical trial! And she's been connecting with the church ever since.

It's your continued support of Cru Inner City that helps us empower local churches to reach out to their communities in creative ways and share the good news of the God who has conquered the grave. Thank you for your partnership!

# Something Good...

## **It's been a hard year. Your Cru® team in the inner city is praying for you!**

And we thank God for you. Your generosity is still making an impact. Your ministry in America's inner cities is going forward.

The fact is, in this crisis, the need in the inner city is even more pronounced.

Millions have been laid off. The poor are poorer. And there are millions of "new poor."

Multitudes are struggling desperately. And after the crisis passes, they will take longer to recover.

But we are trusting God to make something good out of this (Romans 8:28). In times of trouble, people are more open to the gospel. We are strategically positioned "for such a time as this" (Esther 4:14), with our teams already living and

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serving in the hardest-hit neighborhoods. We've been in tough neighborhoods for a long time. And we're staying, by God's grace, and with your faithful support.

We are grateful for you, and for your continued prayers and giving. Please partner in prayer with us for those in the inner city in most need of help.

*Together, we will continue helping to meet their most pressing practical needs — while always, always pointing them to Jesus.*

Many of our friends and partners are hurting financially. But the need is so urgent, please prayerfully consider how you can participate in serving the poor in these unprecedented times.

Thank you in advance for whatever gift of compassion you can give today. God bless you!



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