

"I'm Saved Now!"



**Jaseon Ford was like most
8-year-old boys.**

He looked forward to Easter, not just because of the sugary promise of special treats, but also the warmth of spring after a typical harsh Chicago winter.

But last year, the grade schooler discovered a more important promise thanks to a simple Easter Bag: the hope of salvation!

The bag was a gift from Cru® serving in the inner city. They partner with area churches and ministries to bless children experiencing poverty. Easter Bags include candy, toys, crayons, a gospel bead bracelet that explains the plan of salvation, and a booklet designed to introduce children to Jesus.

Elder Cora Smith, with Christian Fellowship Refuge Ministries, a partner of Cru Inner City, brought one of the Easter Bags to the home of Diane, Jaseon's grandmother. While visiting with the two, Cora gave Jaseon the simple white bag filled with goodies.

When Jaseon opened the bag, he glanced inside, pulling out the bead bracelet and the book, "4 Keys 4 Kids," a gospel presentation designed for children. As the women chatted, he soaked up every word of the booklet before his grandmother called him to the table to eat.

As they started to eat, Jaseon stopped them. "I



gotta say grace," he said.

His grandmother, known to use spicy language, responded with a curse word. "You can't say that," Jaseon declared. "I'm saved now!"

"How do you know you're saved?" Cora

Continued inside...

Continued from front...

"I'm Saved Now!"

questioned.

"I read the book and said the prayer," Jaseon said.
"I'm saved now."

Cora spent a bit more time with him making sure he understood what it meant to ask Jesus to come into his heart. She left there amazed at how God had worked so quickly.

I read the book and
said the prayer, *I'm saved now!*

The following day, Diane called to let Cora know Jaseon was being exceptionally good. She thanked her for bringing the Easter Bag ... and facilitating the change she was already seeing in her family.

"I guess he is saved like he said," the grandmother said as she began to cry. "I'm going back to church and dedicating my life back to Christ."

Thank you for supporting our annual Easter Bag outreach. You are transforming children and their families for Christ!



Make an eternal investment ... Leave a Lasting Legacy!

An excellent way for you to support Cru® serving the inner city is to leave a bequest in your will.

A bequest is written in a will or trust and directs a gift to be made to a qualified exempt charity, such as Cru Inner City, when you pass away. You can create a bequest of any dollar amount, or, as many people do, designate a percentage of your estate in your will or trust plan. You will:

- ✓ Receive an estate tax charitable deduction
- ✓ Gain peace of mind — knowing your hard-earned assets will advance the Great Commission and your loved ones will be provided for
- ✓ Reflect your life's passion to boldly further the gospel message to the lost
- ✓ Become part of the ongoing Cru Inner City legacy as we provide hope and a future to children and families in the inner city!

Please speak with your estate planning attorney to make your bequest, or feel free to contact Scott Mesker at 501.350.0121 or Scott.Mesker@cru.org with any questions you may have.

The 3 “Rs” of Inner-City Ministry: Reading, Relationship, Redemption!

Jerry and Regina were looking for answers for their two young daughters.

Despite Alyssa’s and Angel’s best efforts, they just weren’t reading at grade level.

So when the parents heard about Communion Chapel’s weekly *Feed and Read* summer program, they attended an orientation meeting to learn more. And they liked what they heard: volunteers would work with the kids each midday, Monday through Friday. And the kids would receive a free lunch.

“They would have a reading program for 30 minutes where they would read, do word recognition, sight recognition,” said Mark Vera, who with his wife, Gloria, serves as local team director for the inner-city ministry of Cru® in San Antonio. The couple decided to partner with the reading outreach to launch Cru’s new presence in the south Texas city.

The reading program uses the Bible to improve the students’ skills. “Do you read anything other than the Bible?” Jerry asked the pastor. “Because we’re not into this Jesus religious thing.”

“No, we’re a church, and that’s the book that we’re reading,” the pastor kindly responded.

Despite their concerns, the couple enrolled their girls.

They soon discovered the program was about more than just improving their daughters’ reading skills.

By the time the program ended, Jerry and Regina were involved in a mid-week Bible study and a small group. The couple decided to be obedient to Scripture and married during a Sunday service.

The girls made friends with other children enrolled in the program. They looked forward to going every day. *And Regina did too.* Although there was no cost to the six-week program, it required at least one parent attend the daily sessions.

Over the course of the summer, Regina and her girls built beautiful relationships with others in their community as their hearts were also softened toward the gospel.

By the time the program ended, Jerry and Regina were involved in a mid-week Bible study and a small group. Together for 15 years, the couple decided to be obedient to Scripture and married during a Sunday service.

“All of their extended family came and were there to witness them getting married,” Gloria said. “A lot of their family was surprised — ‘we never thought this would happen.’”

Last summer, Regina once again committed to the six-week

Feed and Read program — this time, reading to other children! She also helped with Cru’s annual PowerPack® distribution and other community outreaches.



Thank you for empowering the 3 “Rs” in San Antonio through your partnership with the inner-city ministry of Cru. A reading program with a free lunch led to more than just stronger reading. Relationships were built, the love of God shared ... and a family was redeemed!

A personal word from Milton Massie

Laying Preferences at the Cross



Milton Massie
Executive Director/
Steward

There is a position in boxing called the corner man, which is described as a counselor, strategist, nutritionist, and medic.

His sole job is to keep the boxer moving, so at the sound of the bell he can make it back to the middle of the ring for more action.

There ought to be a high demand for corner men in all aspects of life. We seem to spend most of our lives hanging out in our own corners, unwilling to migrate to the middle.

My daughter recently broached a question with me as we were talking about objective truth, and its opposite, subjective truth.

“Dad, what happens when ‘me doing me’ and ‘you doing you’ clash? When we are all following our own ‘truth,’ whose truth gets to trump the other?”

I’ve been pondering this since she brought it up. It’s a powerful question. In the end, they both cancel each other out. If we don’t believe there is an objective truth that transcends how we posture ourselves, then we reach a stalemate.

It is a hopeless scenario.



The Truth is this: Jesus is an excellent corner man. He keeps us moving forward, toward the middle of the ring of life. His life and deity offer a strong example for us to follow.

In those moments when we are nice and toasty in the safety of our corners, what if we rely on Him, and ask, “*Jesus, what would you have me to do?*”

Do I live and die on my truth? Forsake community and relationship to stand firm on what I believe?

Jesus would say, “Move to the middle! Treat the other person with kindness and love, follow the Golden Rule.”

Such a response prevents us from being so caught up in “me doing me” that we can’t see how that negatively impacts others.

When “you do you” — to the expense and eradication of community — a lot of people get hurt. Everyone ends up isolated. Community is the higher value. Community only works when we all lay our preferences at the Cross, not because everyone thinks the same, but because we make the effort to be like Jesus.

So, how do we experience unity in being diverse? The answer is found in Philippians 2:1-7, where Paul calls us to prioritize others first.

This a good Word for us, because it calls us out of our corner, our comfort zone, and into the middle of the ring. The goal? Showing love amid diversity. Forsaking our “me doing me” to foster unity, empowering us to share the message of John 14:6, *Jesus as the way, the truth, and the life*.

Join me in the middle?

Grateful for your partnership,

Milton Lee Massie

Milton Massie
Executive Director/Steward

It All Started with a Box of Love® ...



Shavuita and Stacy, a wife and husband living with their children in the poorest ZIP code in Florida, were in urgent need of help — and hope — when you blessed them with a Box of Love® last fall.

The Box of Love contained a complete Thanksgiving meal ... enough food to feed a hungry family of six ... plus Scripture and the gospel message to feed their soul.

And feed them it did! Today, the entire family is hooked on the Bible.

“We have been reading the Bible stories of the bookmark you left us,” one of them said. The Bible Story Bookmark was in their Box of Love® from Cru® Inner City and Incarnation Tallahassee, a diverse congregation headquartered near the government-operated Springfield Apartments where they live. “They are really good!”

The couple enjoyed the stories so much, they



participated in the Discovery Bible Study, an eight-week disciple-making course. It was a major commitment for Stacy — who works several jobs while his wife is home with their three children — but it was worth it! The couple were enthralled by the simple stories and were able to retell them to their children. The family grew closer as a result. They have committed to continue exploring Scripture and digging deeper into God’s Word when the next study is launched.

Today, the Bible study outreach continues to impact this family ... and many others in their struggling community ... with hope and the Good News. *And it all started with a Box of Love!*

Thanks to friends like you, inner-city families are finding hope, learning of faith ... and turning to God! It starts with a Box of Love and grows from there. Your outreach is touching and transforming children and their families in urban neighborhoods across the nation.

Thank you for making a difference in the name of Jesus!



This summer ... You'll be making an eternal difference!

He didn't go to the beach, hang out with friends, catch up on sleep, or get a job.

Instead, Milo committed his summer to serving Christ. And what a difference it made!

He says, "I have had so many opportunities to share the gospel and the depth of Christ's love with people. I have gotten to hear new perspectives, but also experienced the joy and hunger of someone wanting to know Christ." And Milo's biggest revelation of the summer ...

"God taught me practical ways to love people who are different from me," he says, "God also taught me more about my own pride, teaching me to exercise humility through conversations with staff and students."

Every summer, we send volunteer college students like Milo into inner-city neighborhoods to minister alongside our partner churches and ministries. Through Summer Missions in the inner city, college students receive in-depth training in evangelism and cross-cultural ministry, and then are given real-time exposure to put their new skills to

God taught me practical ways to love people who are different from me ...



work by serving alongside immigrants, at-risk youth, and those without stable housing.

As a result, the lives of inner-city children and their families, our college volunteers and partners are transformed!

Jeff Hoffman, the Team Director in Milwaukee, can personally testify to it. He was moved by his 10-year-old daughter Kenya's scribbled note after she interacted with a team of college students participating in Cru® Inner City's Summer Missions program in Milwaukee last summer.

"God was there for my heart!" Kenya wrote. "The students came to Milwaukee to serve God and tell about God ..."

"Her experience was life-changing," Jeff says.

We warmly invite you to be a part of this amazing outreach. Your generous gift of support for Summer Missions today will empower a college student to share Jesus with inner-city children and families ... making an impact that will last for years to come. *Thank you!*



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