

The beautiful message of God's love ... Heard, felt, and seen!



David Wolfe was rapidly running out of options. From the age of 15, he bounced in and out of jail. By the time he was 40, he had given up any hope of breaking the decades-long cycle of incarceration.

David was desperate to make a change in his life. But with eight kids to care for — and the pressing need for quick cash to feed his family — his “best” source of income was selling drugs and cigarettes on neighborhood street corners.

The opportunity for change came in an unexpected way: When court-ordered community service placed him at New St. Jude Church of God in Christ, near Chicago's Oak Park neighborhood. There he found options ... if he was willing to take them.

As he watched the people of New St. Jude, David discovered there was a different way to live. The church helped him find a job and he began to provide for his family — legally. At the invitation of the church, David brought his children to a Cru[®] Inner City PowerPack[®] outreach. PowerPacks[®] are brightly colored backpacks loaded with school supplies and gospel literature ... provided for inner-city children just in time for back-to-school.

“New St. Jude had been partnering with Cru on a variety of outreaches for at least a decade,”



said Shantellas Veal, a volunteer with the church. Shantellas said the giveaways are important because they open a pathway to share God's Word. “People pay attention more,” Shantellas said. “They're more eager and open to listen when their needs are also being met.”

The Wolfe family was listening and fully engaged in the PowerPack event. “The children were so happy because we were playing games with them about the Bible,” Shantellas said. The gift of the PowerPacks was like icing on the cake!

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Along with the games, church volunteers addressed the spiritual needs of their guests by sharing the gospel during one-on-one breakout sessions. The message of God's love resonated with David and several of his older children — and they all accepted Christ as their Savior.

Over time, Shantellas noticed a huge change in David's attitude and spirit as he accepted more and more responsibility for his past actions. There was also a sense of relief and gratefulness that he was able to provide for his children without peddling goods that could land him back in jail.

Not long after the outreach, David found a home for his family and moved them to another area of Illinois, but not before stopping by New St. Jude one last time.

"He just came in and thanked us, saying if it wasn't for us, he never would have turned his life around," Shantellas said. "He would probably still be on the street selling drugs."

This is the beautiful life change you help make possible through your compassionate support of Cru serving the inner city, sharing the hope of Jesus. We're so grateful for your partnership!

Your Beautiful Impact

You can care for your spouse and children even beyond your lifetime — and make a beautiful impact for the sake of evangelism — by establishing a charitable gift annuity, or CGA.

This straightforward but powerful tool enables you to make a substantial investment in the unique ministry of Cru® in the inner city while at the same time supplementing your retirement income.

- You simply transfer cash or appreciated assets — stock, real estate or precious metals — to The Cru Foundation, the estate-planning arm of Cru.
- Then you and the Foundation sign a contract in which the Foundation guarantees an annual income payment for life for you and, after your death, a surviving beneficiary. *In more than 60 years of ministry, The Cru Foundation has never missed an annuity payment.*



Establish a CGA!

- Your CGA provides reliable **income** for life for both you and your surviving spouse or beneficiary. And it provides **savings**: You'll receive an income tax deduction for your contribution; then a portion of your income will be received income tax-free.
- When you and your beneficiary have both passed away, the money is then transferred to Cru for the benefit of its inner-city ministry.

To find out more about charitable gift annuities, please consult your financial adviser or contact Scott Mesker, Director of Development, via scott.mesker@cru.org or (501) 350-0121.



Fruit from Faithfulness

“The Agape Center? I used to go up there when I was a kid!”

We hear similar exclamations, shared over and over, whenever our staff and volunteers advertise for our after-school program, S.A.Y. Yes! Centers for Youth Development®. As we engage parents and neighbors in more than 25 inner cities it's clear that our Christian community center has a legacy. For years God has been reaching people with His love through our programs, staff, and volunteers.

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Some of our staff have lived and served in our Chicago neighborhood for 20 or 30 years. A woman named Jessica came by the Agape Center. She had participated in S.A.Y. Yes!® when she was a kid. Jessica asked for staff members by name. “Are Mr. Marc and Ms. Sandy still up here?” She recalled their love and care. And yes, Marc and Sandy are still here, still serving kids and their families!



Scan this code to watch Sarah Yetter's brief but powerful testimony of God's love at work in the inner city!

Jessica was asked if she was interested in signing up her children for our after-school program. She replied it was just what her kids needed — structure, safety, and assistance with school. “I know all about the Agape Center,” she said. “I used to go there when I was in school.” She talked about Bible studies, gym games, and snack times. Mostly she remembered an orderly, safe place where she could simply be a kid.

Thank God for the gospel seeds sewn through willing friends and partners like you ... and praise Him for the fruit we're seeing from generation to generation. Please join us in praying that God will continue to transform people and their families through faithful witness to the gospel.

A Personal Word



Milton Massie
Executive Director/
Steward

Bishop Gershon Suan relocated to Old Baytown at a time of mass exodus. There weren't many reasons to stay. Once a thriving community, nearby development siphoned many residents looking for something new.

As the established population shifted away from Old Baytown it became one of Houston's poorest communities, rich in diversity but left with little in terms of resources. Pockets of homeless residents co-exist with the mostly low-income neighbors who remained.

The transition, however, didn't catch the bishop by surprise. No, he did his homework before coming, intentionally moving to an area shunned by others. He had a passion for people who need Jesus and was particularly interested in diverse, low-option neighborhoods when he became pastor of Coat of Many Colors Ministries.

In the five or so years he's pastored there, Bishop Suan has partnered with Cru® Inner City to provide community outreach through Boxes of Love®, PowerPack® backpacks, Easter Bags, and Homeless Care Kits.

Through last year's Boxes of Love campaign, which provides Thanksgiving meals and gospel literature, Coat of Many Colors was able to reach out to 50 families, including three widows with 21 kids between them. While the food was welcome, Bishop Suan said the personal touch helped these moms through a rough period of grief and isolation. Ultimately, all three families prayed and received Christ.

The bishop's story illustrates that God can take what's broken and begin to restore the brittle pieces. But it also gives us a Christlike picture of compassion.

It's a masterful picture of being Compassion-driven, the third of our three key principles of ministry. As we previously shared in the National Reports, the first two are Christ-centered and Church-based.

The reason we have adopted Compassion-driven as one of our vital values is that the Bible is replete with instruction on why God requires compassion toward those he has made. Being compassionate mirrors the model of Jesus.

Consider John 4, which shares the story of Jesus ministering to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. In this passage, Jesus violates numerous cultural norms by speaking to a Samaritan and speaking to a woman. Ultimately, his kindness results in her conversion and, after she shares their conversation with others, many from her village also become Christ-followers.

Christ's example is the underpinning of our mission with the inner city. We are mobilized to move that compassion into action. Failing to do so leads to pity, which results in feeling bad and doing nothing. As believers, we are called to more. If we fall short, pity us.

Grateful for your partnership,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Milton Lee Massie".

Milton Massie
Executive Director/Steward

Cru Inner City's Biblical Foundations



Christ-Centered
2 Corinthians 5:14-15



Church-Based
Matthew 16:18



Compassion-Driven
James 2:14-17



Sports? Yes! *And a whole lot of Jesus ...*

There they stood — or wiggled and paced.

Eighteen middle and high schoolers, teeming with energy and a desire to return to normal after COVID-19 robbed them of a year of activities. They were gathered at an Orlando, Florida, church for a Cru® JAM™ camp, a sports outreach run by Athletes in Action® (AIA®).

They were greeted by 15 mentors and volunteers determined to invest in these young people using the key elements of sports — motivation, discipline, attitude, teamwork, and perseverance — as a holistic yardstick, with biblical principles as the units of good measure.

“We try to pour into the lives of the kids,” John, one of the leaders shared. “We’re not hiding it. This is a Christian sports camp. You’re going to get your athletics. That’s the hook. That’s the reason why most of the kids come. But along with the sports, you’re going to get a lot of Jesus.”

With coronavirus protocols still in place, AIA modified its original weeklong program for boys into a single-day, co-ed camp. Camp leaders coached the teens through sports-performance drills and leadership activities — all designed to address their physical, mental, and spiritual development.

“By going to inner-city locations, we can have lay people, pastors, and staff members, who are already connected with local churches, bring the kids from their neighborhoods to participate in camp,” John shared. “And then, you already have the discipleship and follow-up in place to build on what the kids learned.”

Complementing the athletic competitions, the teens also spend time on mental-acuity challenges, team-building exercises, and leadership development activities. “We close out camp by sharing the gospel, and talking about the great responsibility, great power that Jesus had,” John said.

Along with the sports, you’re going to get a lot of Jesus.

The ripple effect is being felt well beyond the initial gathering. A church in Winter Haven hosted its own camp with 57 Haitian students and mentors, six of them making decisions to follow Christ. Church leaders plan to start a permanent youth ministry where the kids can continue to increase their knowledge about God. Another church, which brought six kids to the outreach, is launching a youth program after determining its teens need further spiritual development, including a better understanding of the plan of salvation.

“I’m extremely excited about both churches wanting to add a youth group based on the Orlando JAM camp experience,” John said. “It’s somewhat overwhelming to see how God takes our ‘little’ and turns it into something pretty ‘big’ when we give it to Him.”

Thank you for giving as God enables you to continue this amazing outreach!

PowerPacks® open the door



As each new school year approaches, volunteers from Roseland Lighthouse of Chicago move through their Southeast Side neighborhood to share PowerPacks — colorful backpacks filled with school supplies and gospel literature — with children in need.

COVID restrictions were still in place; so when Donna arrived at the home of Chiquetta, a single mom of four, they met in the front yard.

During the visit, Donna read a Bible story tract to the children. As she stopped to ask the occasional question, she made a shocking discovery: “I was amazed that the children didn’t know who Jesus was,” Donna says.

But they were fascinated by the story they were hearing. If Donna paused, little JJ, age 4, would protest: “Keep reading!”

As Donna neared the end of the Bible story, a passing neighbor named Angela even stopped by to listen in!

Soon, Donna was leading the family of five in praying the prayer of salvation — and the neighbor Angela invited Donna to visit her. There, Donna learned that Angela’s brother had been murdered a few months earlier in another South Side neighborhood. Angela and her children were still grieving, struggling with the tragedy.



“The family’s heart was broken, yet open to hear the gospel,” Donna says.

PowerPacks set it all in motion.

In all, Donna visited nine homes, with at least three more families expressing interest in the gospel message.

“The gospel was more important than the PowerPacks!” she says. “The families just wanted to hear more about Jesus Christ! Praise God for this opportunity! It was truly a blessing!”

Today, you can offer PowerPacks — and new life through faith in Christ — to children and families of the inner city. And any gift given by midnight August 31st can be matched dollar-for-dollar, its impact DOUBLED, up to the \$50,000 total of our *God’s Love in Action* Matching Challenge. Please be as generous as possible!



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