

Work in Progress Update

May 1, 2005

Response To Our Time At The Neighborhood Center

Some months back, Becky and I asked Kit Danley and the staff of Neighborhood Ministries if we could experience two weeks of being completely immersed in the ministry on Van Buren. They were so gracious in providing us with a wonderful introduction to what it means to minister among the poor.

Upon reflection, perhaps the thing that stands out most to us is the marvelous expression of the love of Jesus. We have visited and participated in ministries all over the world, but we have rarely seen the depth of Jesus' love that we have observed here.



From ministry to children through to "Mom's Place" and everything in between the presence of Jesus is evident in those who offer a "cup of water" to all in need. It is the love that everyone receives that profoundly characterizes this ministry.

Another thing that stands out to us is that lives are being transformed. We were so privileged to sit in on virtually every dimension of Neighborhood Ministries. What we observed was genuinely changed lives at every point of the ministry. Our hearts and minds are filled with names of individuals and families that have been profoundly changed because of what is happening at 19th and Van Buren.

We had the privilege of spending a considerable amount of time with Victor Lopez. He is a young Native American who has been involved in Neighborhood Ministries for much of his life. He has also made a number of excursions into gang involvement. Now Victor is twenty-four and gaining strength and maturity in his walk with God. We had the privilege of being led by Victor on a prayer walk through the community. When Victor prays for his neighborhood his passion for Jesus and the people around him is so evident. He profoundly touched our hearts. When we reflected on where Victor could be today versus where he is, we were overwhelmed with what God is doing in this ministry.

At the core of this ministry, relationships with Jesus and one another make it flourish. Yes there are wonderful programs, but it's the intense personal relationships that make everything abound with the love of Jesus. What a blessing it was to observe a ministry that is willing to prioritize relationships over programs. So often ministries are driven by

the need to quantify result and in the process lose sight of relationships. This is not the case at Neighborhood Ministries.

From Juanita who lives with Wayne and Kit, to Arturo and his family, who live in a small neighborhood house, people are part of a network of valued relationships. Everyone is treated with dignity and worth. Respect for everyone's personhood is so powerfully evident with virtually every encounter.

God's Kingdom is characterized by a culture of grace. What we were privileged to observe at Neighborhood Ministries was how God's Kingdom culture can be substantially expressed on this earth. Is Neighborhood Ministries a perfect ministry? No, but it's about as good as ministry gets on this fallen earth. Becky and I have been deeply challenged and changed by our time here.

We deeply thank Kit and Wayne Danley, all of the staff and the volunteers for the marvelous hospitality they have shown to us. We are profoundly grateful. May God in His grace continue to mightily use Neighborhood Ministries.

In His Grace,

Alan and Becky Andrews
U. S. Director, The Navigators

We appreciate the Andrews' kind words and their reflections. They were a joy to our whole community during their visit and we look forward to a continuing relationship with the Andrews and The Navigators.

For more of Alan's thoughts on the ministry at The Neighborhood Center, visit our web site: www.neighborhoodministries.org.

Upcoming Events:

- May 1-5 Last week of Spring semester youth programming
- May 7 Kids Club Workcrew Training 10am-4pm
- May 20-21 Urban Youth Ministries Institute – Azusa, CA
- May 22 Moms' Place Graduation 5-8 pm
- May 26 Summer Interns start
- June 13 Jr High Kids Club begins
- June 27 Kids Club begins

For details: 602-252-5225 or
www.neighborhoodministries.org

Blessings,



Kit Danley
President



Richard Speck
Executive Director