

Testimonies from Detroit Hope

-Pastor Jacob Blakesley Reporting

(Please remember Miracle Sunday, January 17th. This is an opportunity for each congregation to

collect a special offering for Detroit Hope. All monies raised will help further the ministry of Detroit Hope. (See progress update below.) If we are able to raise an additional \$3,000 on Miracle Sunday, the window replacement in the sanctuary can become a reality!)

Because of your generosity, several major projects were accomplished at the Detroit Hope Facility this summer. Because window wells outside of the building were plugged with debris, water seeped into the basement through the windows causing mold accumulation on the walls, floors, and ceilings in several

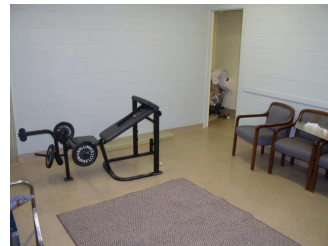


of the rooms. This created a very unsafe, unhealthy environment and, in fact, made the basement area functionally unusable.

Due to generous contributions to the “Give hope to Detroit Hope” Campaign, the basement has now been completely restored! The window wells are draining properly, mold eradicated, ceilings repaired, walls painted, and flooring redone.

Additional funds will continue to keep the building operational and more efficient as single paned windows are replaced with glass blocks that will provide security as well as protection from heat loss. If enough funds are donated, the crumbling roof will be re-shingled.

Another effect of your generosity—the neighborhood folks attending Detroit Hope are beginning to joyfully contribute to building operations through donations of their meager dimes and dollar bills in response to the gratefulness for the blessings they are experiencing because of your willingness to share.



(Help from Tough Places)

Detroit Hope physically sits in a location between two rival gangs. Literally one gang resides in what is called “7 mile” which is a mile and a half north of the church. The other, the “Brighthmoor Gang” from which most of our members come, is a mile and a half south. The fact that our church does not have “tags” of either gang on in or outside of the building, suggests it is respected as neutral territory. The green space around the church is a stark contrast to all of the cement and blight of the rest of the area in northwest Detroit.

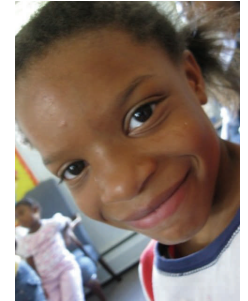
Over the years, a number of young men have taken part in activities at the church. In the last five year, several of these senior high teenagers have grown to young adulthood and become leaders in the ministry. One of these tens was a gang leader, an “enforcer” in our neighborhood. He would lurk around the church to check on his gang members and their siblings. He kept his distance, but you could tell he was really getting interested in our program. One night he surprised us. “Would you like for me to mix the cool-aid?” He asked.

The next week, he laid out the plates for pizza. Next, he volunteered to set up the chairs and wiped down tables. By the next following week, he was cleaning up and reminding people they should be cleaning up their own messes. His help relieved a huge stressor for the leaders who now had help cleaning the fellowship hall after feeding 70-80 congregants at our Wednesday night pizza church.

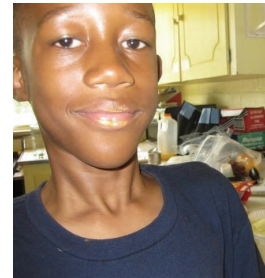
Over the last 8 months, great mentoring has happened between this young adult and Jeff Stoker. As a result of fostering this relationship this young adult is calling our movement his church and we are asking for his input and help in the formation and direction of this emerging congregation. We look for this young man to become a strong, future leader at Detroit Hope.

(Baptism Buddies)

Two now eight year olds have attended Detroit Hope for two, going on three, years. Isaac turned 8 in January, 2009. He had just completed our “new believers” class (what we call our pre-baptismal class) and was excited to be baptized. He was so excited, the prospect became his “Yo buddy” or “good news” at church and at school.



Isaac had already shared about “Yo Buddies” with his school teacher. He witnessed to her how at church, everyone shares the blessings for which they are thankful and everyone shares in praise with an out loud “Yo, buddy” in support. Then concerns and prayer needs are shared and everyone supports the petitioner by responding “Me Too!” The teacher really liked this idea and incorporated the practice in the daily “Show and Tell” time at school.



Arrionna would turn eight on June 29th. She was excited about being baptized as well but dreaded the fact that Isaac, one of her best friends, would be baptized first without her. But she didn’t share her concerns with anyone. Especially Isaac. Isaac, the spiritual person he is knew and wanted to share his baptism with someone else, and he asked me, “Could I wait to have my baptism with Arrionna?” I smiled, because I had been privy to that information Arrionna wasn’t sharing. I said great! And played it off and said, If you think you can wait that long.

I told Isaac to go tell Arrionna what he had decided to do. When he got there, I was standing back a bit, saw the reaction of the surprised and amazed Arrionna who honestly looked like Christmas had come in late January!

At their baptism, we truly felt like we gained a brother and a sister, thicker than blood into the Community of Christ at Detroit Hope. They are great disciples and additions to the body of Christ.

Visit Detroit Hope’s website at <http://www.detroithopeofchrist.org>.

Pledge cards are available at: <http://www.cofchristsgl.org/newsmgr/articlefiles/529-Detroit%20Hope%20Pledge%Card%Post%Card.pdf>

Mail donations/pledge cards to: Community of Christ, C/O Dena DeVormer, 6764 Childsdale, NE Rockford, MI 49341

