

Word on the Street

Volume II, Issue VIII, August 2007

Here's Life Inner City in New York City

Matt and Anna Shenk

Pushing forward: Matt

My summer began with two of the most excited things on the horizon for me and ministry. The first was the hiring of an intern, one of the youth from our church's after school program. The second was a huge donation of computers that was close to certain. My summer might be ending in disappointment, if it weren't for a quote that's been stuck in my head recently:

"God doesn't call us to be successful. He calls us to be faithful."

I had to fire my intern, and the large donation hasn't happened. I expected that I would receive the computers (which still isn't definite) by August, so that I could work hard and fast to have new computer centers set up for the new school year. That's not going to happen. I had high hopes for my intern. Not that my expectations of him as an intern were that high, but I was so looking forward to mentoring him, training him, and building him up. I have hated to see him squander such a great opportunity. I'm hoping that he'll have learned from this, and I want to try to rehire him in 6 months or so if he's ready and willing to handle the basic responsibilities of a job.

Maybe it will work out. Maybe it won't. I've been able to talk with other folks in urban ministry who have had experience in hiring inner-city youth and young adults. "You'll have to get used to it," is what I've been gently and somberly told. Actually, that quote, "you'll have to get used to it [disappointments and setbacks]" is similar to one I've heard over and over in regards to urban ministry as a whole.

"God doesn't call us to be successful. He calls us to be faithful."

I'm going to hold tight to this quote. It's not only kept me afloat this past week, but it's given me a lot of freedom. Can I call my summer successful? No, and I'm okay with that. I'm not going to let my lack of success define me, and I'm not going to let it hold me back. I choose to be faithful in God, and I know without a doubt in my mind that God is for me. I know without a doubt that God wants me and my family to be living in Crown Heights. I know without a doubt that God wants me to be building Tech Bridges.

As a matter of fact I'm excited. I'm as excited as I ever have been. I'm going to keep pushing forward. I know that along the way I'm not only going to be hitting a couple of roadblocks, but that I'm likely to hit a lot of roadblocks. I know what my path is, and I'm going to keep pushing forward.

Please pray that by the next newsletter that the large computer donation will have come in. Please pray for my intern that I had hired. Please pray that my relationship with him continues. There are more things on the horizon, and I'm looking forward to telling you more about them in the future newsletters.

TONS Happening This Summer: Matt

I'm so excited about all that God has done during our first year of ministry. There's too much on deck this summer to go into detail, but we're looking forward to sharing more in the next few months. Here's a quick list of some plans:

- I'm in the final stage of discussions with the United Nations for a potential donation of about 75-100 computers, 75-100 monitors and some other equipment. These computers are on the higher end of donated equipment that I've seen. This could be a real jackpot for Tech Bridges.
- I'm in the process of hiring an intern for about six weeks this summer. The intern is a youth from our neighborhood that we took to summer camp last year. He's a 15 year-old high school student interested in computers. The long-term vision is to hire one youth this summer, then two youth next summer with the more experienced one helping to train the new intern. The internship will not only provide me with some much needed help, but provide the intern with technical skills, job-training/workplace experience, mentoring, and discipleship. The goal is to prepare them for their third summer, where I hope to work with corporations in Manhattan to hire these youth. From Crown Heights to Wall Street...let's pray big!
- We will be heading to Fort Collins, CO for the last two weeks in July for Campus Crusade for Christ's bi-annual summer conference. All Campus Crusade staff in the US attend this conference, so we've heard it's quite a time with thousands of folks converging on Colorado State University. We're looking forward to being with other staffers for a time of encouragement, fellowship, learning, rest, and more.

As we mark the close of our first year in ministry, we are also aware of the challenges that we have faced. We are keenly aware of our need for your continued prayers. There are so many frustrations we run into in our ministry... frustrations that we never had in the corporate world. I can't tell you the number of times that I've started a project for Tech Bridges, only to run into stumbling block, reduce the scope of the project, run into another stumbling block and have to reduce the scope again, until the project is only a fraction of what it could have been. I have to remind myself that a scaled-back project is still better than none at all. I suppose "one step forward, two steps back," is better than "no steps forward, and still two steps back."

I wanted to share that with you all to hopefully give you a more accurate picture of both the triumphs and challenges we face in our ministry. God is absolutely working, and things are wonderful. I just want to make sure that we don't paint an unrealistic picture of urban ministry. Fortunately, we have a God who can overcome any hurdle and who redeems!

Praise and Prayer

- Thank you so much for all the prayers for the healthy delivery of Thomas. Please join us in thanking God for a healthy and wonderful baby boy! Please pray for us as we adjust to being parents. Oh, the joys of sleep deprivation!
- Our church, Greater Restoration, just celebrated its 10th anniversary with a great celebration of God's faithfulness and the faithful service of Pastor Ken Bogan and his wife Bettye. Please be praying for the church as we are working with a volunteer who is helping us explore the possibility of purchasing a building in our community. The ministries of our church outgrew our physical space long ago and we are praying that God would provide a more suitable space.

Thanks for your partnership and prayers!

Matt and Anna Shenk • 932 St. Marks Ave. #3E, Brooklyn, NY 11213

Anna (347) 276-4419 or annashenk@yahoo.com • Matt (646) 287-4197 or mattshenk@yahoo.com

Please make checks payable to Campus Crusade for Christ, account #0572439

www.theshenks.org