

Word on the Street

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Here's Life Inner City in New York City

Matt and Anna Shenk

Looking Forward

The most commonly asked question of us these days is, "When will you be able to go back to New York City and start your ministry?" The answer is that we hope to be back in New York City by late June and we need you to join us in praying for that bold goal.

We are so thankful for your partnership and we are excited to report that God has been faithful to provide 84% of the monthly/annual financial support we need to report to our ministry full-time. We are praying that when we travel back to New York City on June 20th for Matt's planning days with the Here's Life Inner City national team that we will be able to return to the city for good. In order for us to return, we need God to provide the remaining 16% of our monthly/annual budget.

Prayer: Ask God boldly with us to provide our remaining support need by June 20th! Please continue to pray for new doors to be opened for us and that we would be introduced to more people whom we can share our ministry with.

Matt: Technology and Ministry

Developing Tech Bridges, the technology program I'll be starting for Here's Life, is a dream of mine that started out as a small idea six years ago. As we've been raising support for the past year, I often think of Tech Bridges as something that is sitting up in New York City in a box, just waiting for me to get back to it. During this time away, I've spent countless hours pondering Tech Bridges. I've read hundreds of articles, newsletters, and Internet discussions about technology as it relates to underserved communities. I've also had many lengthy discussions with various technology professionals about the challenges of bringing technology into the inner city.

When I think about getting back to the city and "opening" that box, fear sometimes starts to set in because I still don't have the answers I want. I don't know exactly how Tech Bridges is going to work, and that's a bit unsettling. Different people have different theories on the best way to get computers into after-school programs. My pride can start to set in, and I worry about failure. I worry about taking one path only to learn that there was a better way. I feel a lot of pressure to make sure that Tech Bridges is nothing less than an absolute success.

Praise God for the fact that I can rely on Him, and do not have to rely on myself. With Tech Bridges, I'm about to enter into uncharted waters. I'm excited about the adventure, and with God as my captain, I'm thrilled at the idea of getting to share those adventures with you down the road. Thanks for your prayers and support.

Prayer: Please pray that when I return to Tech Bridges full-time that I can work joyously knowing that God was the one that gave me the vision for Tech Bridges. Pray that I would remember that I can rely on God to lead me in whatever direction will be best for Tech Bridges and Here's Life. Please pray that I will work each day for God's glory and not my own.

Anna: Casting Vision and Making Plans

In April, I had the privilege of joining Here's Life Inner City's local New York City team for four days of team building and a review of our vision and strategy. (Matt serves on Here's Life's national team, also based in New York). As a team, our long-term vision is to see wildly successful churches throughout every needy area of New York.

What does a "wildly successful" church look like? We've agreed on some basic internal characteristics: healthy church leadership, care for one another and the steady building of disciples of Jesus Christ. Externally, successful churches would consistently reach out to meet physical, spiritual and emotional needs in their neighborhoods and they would work with other churches and leaders in their community with the goal of transforming their neighborhoods.

Our hope is to see this vision realized through three key strategies: by helping build up authentic, vibrant pastors; by facilitating meaningful relationships and networks throughout the city; and by providing relevant programs and services to the churches.

It is your prayerful and financial support that enabled me to spend this time growing in the vision God has given us to reach those in need and getting to know my team. It is my hope that you, too, will be excited about this vision and see it as your own!

Prayer: Please join us in thanking God for this vision and pray that He would continue to refine this vision/strategy in both members of the Here's Life team and our 150+ church partners in New York.

The Theology of the City

Tim Keller, the Senior Pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City, recently spoke in Richmond. Keller, who is highly regarded for his teaching on the role of the church in cities and who has had a tremendous influence on us, spoke on the biblical significance of cities and how much of our culture is shaped by large cities such as New York. When the apostles went to spread the Gospel in Acts, they went to the largest cities in each region they went to and then the Gospel spread from there. Keller also talked about how the largest concentrations of Christians are outside of our cities and how in order to affect the prevailing culture and have a large impact on our society, Christians must live in and be actively engaged in these influential cities. If you'd like to hear his talk along with the Q&A that followed, you can download the MP3 here: http://www.thirdpres.org/new/learn_adult_faith.html.

Prayer: Thank God for the increasing number of Christian families who are choosing to stay in the city and for the number of new churches that are being started. Join us in praying that as God transforms individual lives that He will start transforming the culture and our communities.