

Word on the Street

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Here's Life Inner City in New York City

Matt and Anna Shenk

Encouraging News from Matt

Anna and I regularly discuss how to make you - our prayer and financial partners - feel more of a part of the ministry. Being on the front lines, it's easy for us to see and feel the impact of this ministry. I know that it's hard to feel connected when you're not right there each day. But please know that this ministry exists not because of the ways that Anna and I serve, but because of the ways in which each and every one of us serves.

When I'm praying for someone in our neighborhood, spending time with an at-risk youth, or helping a ministry with their computer center, I'm acutely aware that the only reason it's possible is because our team (you!) is sending up prayers and enabling us to pay our bills. None of this would be happening without your support, and we're so appreciative of that.

How we all fit together in this ministry was evident earlier this month. If you read our last newsletter, I shared about some disappointments regarding a donation of computers and an intern that didn't work out. I asked for your prayers. In one week I saw those prayers answered mightily.

First, I received a call from the former intern. With a maturity I had not yet seen in him, he apologized for what happened this summer, telling me what a great experience the job was and how much he enjoyed it. He asked if I would give him another chance to work for me, assuring me that he would not let me down this time. I told him that I wanted to see him concentrate on school and to bring his grades up, but I'm definitely excited that he wants to work again, and I'm sure I'll be able to find a way this fall or winter to employ him once again. On that note, it turns out that he needs some help with his math, so I'm planning on tutoring him. I think it's pretty clear that God wants me to invest in this youth, and I'm looking forward to seeing how God works.

The other answer to prayer happened on September 13th. That Thursday, I drove a rented truck to the United Nations to pick up 50 computers, 50 monitors, mice, keyboards, and printers. Instead of the well-used and barely-hanging-on computers I'm used to getting, these are high-end and have a lot of life left in them. They are perfect for the after-school programs. Thanks to your prayers, I'll be busy this fall preparing them and helping to set up computer centers at after-school programs throughout the city. Awesome! Praise God!



An Update From Anna

As I write this, Thomas is taking a “nap.” However, from the sounds of it, he’s entertaining a few of his closest friends and having an impassioned conversation about the events of the day. He continues to be a handful – all new babies are – but he brings us immense joy. Yesterday, despite teething pain, he managed to squeak out a smile and a coo for just about everyone we passed on our walk to the grocery store. I can’t wait until he’s older and gets to converse with all the great folks in our neighborhood!

It’s such a great blessing to be able to both care for Thomas and keep my hands in community development here in Crown Heights. I am thankful to God for allowing me to use the gifts that he’s given me and for giving me confidence in my role as a wife, a mother and servant of Christ here in New York. I have been greatly encouraged by the passage in Romans 12 that exhorts us to lay down our lives each day and follow the Lord with humility.

Youth

I continue to spend time with three of the teenage girls from last year’s afterschool program. The afterschool program at the church will be focused on kids in kindergarten through sixth grade this year. I’ve decided that instead of volunteering there, I’ll continue to track with the young women God has already given me relationships with. ***Please pray for wisdom on what study/curriculum to do with the girls and for individual spiritual growth for each young woman.***

Fundraising

I’m continuing to work on fundraising for the ministries of our church, Greater Restoration. I recently helped with a massive proposal to the city regarding the provision of afterschool services. The church, in partnership with other community groups, has applied for funding for the afterschool program as well as our summer camps. This funding would have a huge impact on the services that we can provide youth and allow us to hire a part-time director, something that the church has desired to do for years. We know that it’s a long shot that an organization our size will be awarded the contract and subsequent funding, but we trust that God will make this happen if it’s in His will. ***Pray that God would continue to provide for our youth through the afterschool program, regardless of how little or how much funding we have.***

Community Organizing

Our neighborhood has seen a recent increase in violence that has been discouraging. Yet, in the midst of it all, we see God’s hand of redemption. God has used these events to challenge members of our community to pray more boldly and to become more involved in the community, ourselves included. I’ve been attending local Police Precinct and Community Board meetings to talk about what can be done to decrease violence. I’ve also been talking with neighbors about starting a Block Association. ***Please pray for an end to violence in our community and for wisdom and protection for all of us who are seeking ways to reclaim and rebuild our community.***

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