

AGAPE DEVELOPMENT MINISTRIES

Spiritual and Financial Health in the Inner City

VOCATIONAL INITIATIVE PROGRAM (VIP)

On Sunday November 13th, several students from the first class of the Vocational Initiative Program (VIP) participated in a graduation retreat to the beach. We shared food, devotional time, stories about the class, and plans for the future over a campfire and s'mores. Since September 11th these young adults from Houston's inner city have been challenged to examine their perspective on life, explore their talents and personality, and make measurable goals for the future. Each Sunday after Church, VIP students delved into the WINGS Life Skills Curriculum as a group, and throughout the week they met individually with directors Kirk and Amanda Craig.

On the first day, the VIP Interns shared timelines of their lives, including major events and influential people from birth until the present day. If you could hear the stories of the VIP interns, you would be filled with admiration for their strength and courage in the face of life's challenges. They have experienced deep pain caused by death, war, abuse, prison, separation, and abandonment. We continued to explore how those events and people have shaped their view of life. One VIP intern commented to the whole group, "I'm so glad I'm in this class because it's helping me to see some things in my own personal life that need work."

We happily report that almost 100% of the VIP graduates demonstrate measurable change and progress toward their individually determined goals. From completing applications, to starting a devotional life, to actually getting a job, these courageous young men and women have all decided to make changes in life that will have a far reaching impact for generations to come.



THE NEXT MOVE

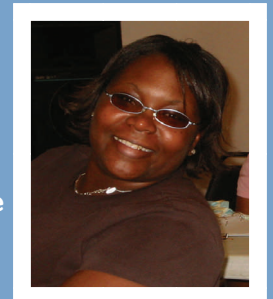
Throughout our lives, teachers, coaches, pastors and friends have encouraged and corrected us along the way. We thank God for the great mentors He placed in our lives, and these young adults need the same Christian presence in their lives. While the VIP classes provided a foundation and a kick-start, now these heroic young adults are putting their plans into action with the help of a weekly mentorship ministry. If these men and women are going to successfully overcome the obstacles to abundant life, we need your help! Please consider volunteering as mentor and make a lasting difference in the life a young adult.



INTERN HIGHLIGHT

LaQuita is an extremely bright and hard working young lady who has overcome some incredible hurdles in her life. After high school, she went on to become trained as a Medical Assistant. However, shortly after her training, her mother passed, and she took custody of her six younger brothers and sisters at the age of 21. She had to put her dreams of a medical career on hold while she worked part time and cared for her family. Throughout the classes, LaQuita was able to share her story and the difficult times of her family's journey. Through the love and support she received from the other interns, LaQuita began to dream again about the possibilities for her life. Through our network of friends, LaQuita spoke with someone about employment for certified medical assistants and learned about other careers in the medical field. She is currently studying for her certification exam, wants to eventually become an RN, and will be participating in mentorship this spring. She is truly an incredible young woman!

All of the VIP interns have wonderful stories and goals, but they need help networking. Our current graduates are pursuing careers in accounting, nursing, childcare, education, office administration, photography, and the music industry. If you have knowledge of these fields or connections to entry level positions therein, please contact us so we can expand student opportunities.



WHY YOUNG ADULTS??

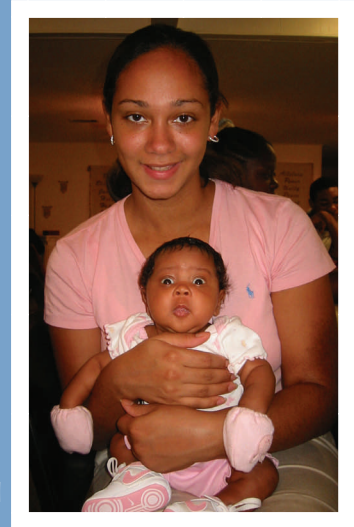
For many of the young people in our area, high school graduation is a bittersweet experience. While they are proud of the accomplishment of finishing school, they are also scared and discouraged by a future that seems so uncertain. Many hit the difficult realization that their high school education has not adequately prepared them for a meaningful job or a chance for a college scholarship. Most of these young people continue to live in their parents' homes and struggle to fill their days in positive ways. Many are tempted by the opportunities to make money in illegal ways or to turn to substance abuse to numb the boredom and despair. It is heartbreaking how many young lives with so much potential are ending up in jail or stuck in a generational welfare cycle.

At Agape Development Ministries we are so excited to be able to "catch" some of these extraordinary folks before the sad cycle repeats itself. What a privilege to encourage young people to discover their God-given talents and abilities and to explore the opportunities that are available to them with some hard work and support. We believe that the years between 18 and 25 are a strategic time in one's life. Think of all the decisions that are made during those years... Where will I live? What will I do? What was good about the way I was raised? and What do I need to change? What do I want my life to be about? In many ways, our ministry is one of poverty prevention. While the young people we work with do come from poverty, they do not need to stay in the same cycle. With some encouragement and support from the Body of Christ it is completely possible for them to break the pattern. We desire that our graduates not only find meaningful employment, but also a sense of God's love and His plan for their lives. So far, we have seen God graciously meet them just where they are. What a joy to see His love breakthrough and give new hope for the future!

We are praying for partners to help us continue this ministry. Would you prayerfully consider becoming involved? Enclosed is an envelope that details ways to partner with us financially. Our ministry is highly dependant upon individual donors, and we greatly appreciate your support. We count it an honor to be able to serve in this ministry~ Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kirk and Amanda Craig



Getting Involved Personally

Mentor: Spend 2 hours a week with several other Christians sharing a meal, fellowship, and support to a VIP Graduate.

Career Connector: Meet with VIP students to answer questions and be a resource for those interested in your field of work.

Job Scavenger: Spend a day driving a VIP student to hiring employers in their community and giving interview advice.

EMPLOYER: HIRE A QUALIFIED VIP GRADUATE!!!

Administrative Support: put your talents to work at Agape Development Ministries through brochure design, book keeping, tech support, web design, or any other relevant area of expertise.

If you are able to help with any of these needs, please contact Kirk Craig
(713) 253-9602 or kirk@agapedevelopment.org

Christmas Wish List

Vehicle to Transport
students

LCD computer monitor

Copies of The Purpose
Driven Life

Brochure design assis-
tance

Licensed Copy of Win-
dows XP

