

Organic Spiritual Growth

Kirk Craig



This year I planted a pecan tree in our front yard. My grandmother has one in her front yard that was planted when my father was just a boy. Since January, when I purchased and planted the tree, I have wondered whether this 5-foot tall, bare stick would ever bear fruit. But just this past week, several green shoots have burst forth, and I am rejoicing at the growth. The difficult part about growing a pecan tree is the amount of patience and feeding it requires long before it yields a single nut. However, organic gardeners testify that the healthiest growth is natural and slow.

Humans share this pecan tree characteristic. We grow and change slowly. Our “gardeners” must have patience and give careful attention to our development. This work can be “fruitless” for some time. But in the spring of life, visible growth does appear in healthy lives. We rejoice for this growth and tell our friends and neighbors.

I have seen our Agape family members grow this spring by facing sins of their past, taking on responsibility, and being just a little bit more alive than last year.

The Holy Spirit moves in our lives pushing out new growth and stirring up the soil of our hearts. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is taking deep root, and life is renewed and redeemed.

We may not be living in the same house when the pecan tree gives its first crop. We certainly won’t see its last crop, but someone will enjoy this gift. Some of my “gardeners” have already died, but the fruit lives on in me. I trust that God, who has begun His good work in our new community, will bring to fruition that which is now just beginning to bud.

Check out our new
website @
www.agapedevelopment.org

We now process
online gifts and
pledges!!

We also accept
credit cards and
Electronic Funds
Transfers!!

New Hire!! David Hill

We happily announce our first new hire at Agape Development Ministries. David Hill joins our staff as the part time Spiritual Growth Director. His experience with inner city ministry and his passion for making disciples of young adults suit him well in his role at Agape. David, his wife Melissa, and their 4 children live in the Third Ward Community. Their experience ranges from church pastor to juvenile parole officer, to minister of music. The Hills are an excit-

ing addition to the Agape Family, and they share values of community, discipleship, and proclaiming the Truth.

David’s primary roles will be leading the weekly Bible study and fellowship time (in his home!!), as well as meeting individually with young men and women to address personal spiritual growth. Spiritual transformation precedes personal and professional health. We excitedly take this next step trusting God to provide for David’s salary and looking forward to having a deeper more profound impact on the Third Ward in Houston.

Please keep David and Melissa in your prayers as they begin serving with Agape Development Ministries.



David & Melissa Hill
David Jr., Asni, Journey, & Grace





Mentoring & other Volunteer Opportunities

www.agapedevelopment.org

Mentorship Continues

The latest round of mentorship continues to help inner city young adults live abundantly and gain their independence. I am thankful for our new mentors: Brad Smith, Tony Mayer, Geneva Corbett, and Sue Knight. I also congratulate those Agape Family Members who successfully completed the job readiness and job placement portion as well as, made the commitment to mentorship: Ken Johnson, Nakiah Liddie, and Jerald Robinson. Professionals in the areas of personal finance, education, and ministry have taught sessions on credit, budgets, savings, funding college education, dating, and marriage.

This round of mentorship also includes former participants who want to continue learning and revisit past topics. Relationships are forming in the group, and real community exists between the members and mentors. One member said, "Being a single mom of 4, I really appreciate having a safe place to talk about the challenges at work and at home." We happily provide safe places for growth.

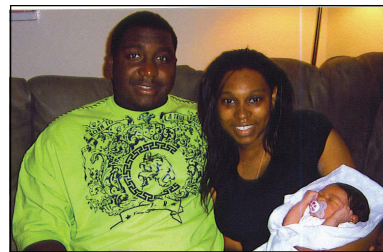


Nakiah finishes painting @ the Mad Potter

Agape Family Member Highlight

Matthew 7:13-14
 "For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."

Ken Johnson is the proud new dad of his daughter Kobe Kenya Johnson. Ken and his friend Pierre marked the event by going to Build-a-Bear for his daughter's first gift. This little bundle of joy has brought great changes into Ken's life. Being Daddy is fun when Kobe is happy or sleeping, but Daddy at 3 a.m. is a whole new world for Ken.



Ken, Tiffanee, & Kobe Kenya

Unlike so many fathers in his community and in the world, Ken is fighting to love, serve, and sacrifice for his little family.

Working full time for a furniture store, Ken provides for his family, but not without costs. Basketball, hanging out late, and answering to no one are no longer options.

When Jesus proclaimed his gift of abundant life, He did not promise a cheap or easy path to success, for Ken or anyone. Rather we must lose our very lives and deny ourselves to follow him. Fatherhood presents Ken with that choice to follow Christ yet again. While no one is perfect, we are very proud of the path that Ken attempts to take. We pray that, in the wee hours of the morning and in the hard hours of the work day, Ken will follow Christ.

Volunteers Help Ministry Live Beyond its Means

Living beyond your means is normally a very bad habit, but thanks to the hard work of many volunteers, Agape Development Ministries is able to do just that!!! These volunteers contribute their talents to Agape so that each donated dollar stretches further. We cannot thank you enough.

Visit our redesigned website (www.agapedevelopment.org), thanks to Jonathan Fricke and Doug Roberts. Enjoy this year's timely receipts thanks to Gary Pennington. Thank you Lynn Lohr, Jan Whitehead, and Peter Taaffe for keeping us at peace with the IRS. Thanks to all the guest speakers at Mentorship

Night. Thank you Anne Grizzle for advising us in ministry and personal growth. Thank you Rusty & Kristi Hawkins for livening up bible study. Our mentors past and present continue to impact lives deeply. Agape's Board of Directors has successfully led us through our first 2 years. Thank you.

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