

Prayer Requests

- *Please pray for our interns as they begin new jobs and new patterns of living.*
- *Please pray that we will be sensitive to God's leading as we set goals for the future.*
- *Please pray for financial partners and volunteers to join in the ministry.*
- *Please pray for true community to be developed among the groups that we work with.*
- *Please pray that the Holy Spirit would give a new spirit of hope and joy to our interns as they work so hard to overcome difficult situations.*

Year in Review

So what exactly does Agape do??? If we had a dollar for every time we were asked that question, we would not need to do any fundraising! It is a great question. The truth is that the job looks a little bit different each day. We have the overarching goals of helping young adults in the third ward break the cycle of generational poverty and find a life sustaining faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The major components of our program are— life skills training seminars, job coaching, and mentorship. But what we do on a day to day basis is walk with people as they face the hurdles of their lives, and pray with them for the courage it is going to take to

make it. Some days are spent driving someone around town as we scout out entry level job openings on their bus route. Some are spent giving a listening ear to someone who has been turned down from their fifth attempt at getting a minimum wage job. Some have been spent in court helping navigate the legal situations in which they have found themselves. Others have been spent helping fill out financial aid forms and registering for classes. Still other days have been spent getting to know people in our home- watching the Astros and playing Monopoly. There is a part of us that would love for the job to be more clear cut- more quantifi-



able. But we have been reminded in the last year that what people are most hungry for and most in need of is love— knowing that someone is in their corner rooting for them. And that is what we feel called to. Yes, we are so thankful for the measurable results that are being achieved-people are getting jobs and enrolling in school. But more than that we are thankful that God is softening hearts and beginning to knit together a community of hope.

“My mentors Jason and Del have really impacted me, because I don't have any positive men in my life...they keep me on the path. I see the life I now have and the life I would have had without this program, and I am just grateful.”

Derrick

Intern Highlight



Derrick is one of the kindest, most polite young men you will ever meet. His gentle demeanor is in stark contrast to the environment in which he

was raised. Derrick grew up in a rough neighborhood. His father had 15 children and his mother struggled to provide for he and his sister. Derrick was a very strong student at Yates High School, but after graduation did not have money for college. In the year after high school Derrick fathered a son and also became sick with Crones disease. As you can imagine, he felt overwhelmed by the obstacles in his path. We were so honored to become friends with Derrick this

year. He has committed his life to Christ and has started working to help support his son. Derrick has a natural aptitude for math and dreams of being an accountant. Thanks to the help of his mentors, Del and Jason, Derrick has enrolled in an accounting program at HCC this summer. We are so proud of Derrick and his hard work. He has a bright future ahead of him. Pray for Derrick as he continues walking towards maturity and godly fatherhood.

Mentorship a Success!

“I count it such a privilege to have been a mentor these past six months. LaQuinta has been such a blessing to me and I feel that I have received much more than I have given. I have so much admiration for her and I count her as a good friend . Thank you for giving me this opportunity.”

Mary Helen Knudsen, Mentor

We are so thankful to all of the interns and mentors who made this first round such a success. Here is a quick story from one of our interns...

“It was a Sunday morning, and I had a feeling that I should go to church. I hadn't been in a really long time, so I decided to go. That morning Kirk announced the Agape program idea that he had for the adults around my age. By the time he got to the middle of the announcement, I knew that it was something I wanted to be involved in. I thank God everyday because I know it was Him telling me to go to church that day. This year has been very hard for me as far as moving out of my mom's house and moving in with my cousin. I ended up in the hospital for depression. My friends from this program have never once left my side or told me that they couldn't help me because they were too busy. That's my favorite part of the program— it's like a family. They have trusted me in a way that no one else in my life has, by helping me find a really great job a Lifeway Christian book store and helping me search and get my own apartment.



I was paired up with the best mentor ever. Her name is Susan and she has also been very patient with me. I know at times I am not always the easiest person to deal with and I don't trust easily. She was just amazing in how she started off telling me about her life and talking about her so that it would be easy for me to talk about me. I found out that we have so much in common and even though I am very stubborn at times, she has been so amazing through it all. I can not stress that enough. I have a more focused life than I did before- to tell you the truth I had no plans for after high

school. I wasn't even sure I was going to college. I love this program. I have met some amazing people and also made wonderful friends and great connections. I don't think any one who chooses to go through this program will ever regret it. I know I don't!

-Nikita (Nikki) Liddie



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What's Next???

As we approach a new ministry year, we are excited to take some time to deepen the relationships that have begun. We have come to see that one of the biggest struggles facing our interns is loneliness and isolation. In today's fragmented society, it is hard to find true community— a place where you feel known and loved. With that in mind, we are going to

spend some more of our time this year focusing on fellowship and spiritual growth. We will continue doing the career development side of the program, but for those who are not ready for that tall challenge, we would like to have something less intimidating. We will begin by having some fun activities like pool parties and bowling nights. And then small group share/

prayer times in our home. Please pray with us that God would guide our times together and would minister to the needs of our community.

New Group Finishes WINGS.

As the first group of interns finished up the program, a new group started. We have some wonderful new men and women who committed to the WINGS life skills training program and completed their life plans. We are excited to see them paired up with their mentors and start taking steps towards their goals. This group has interests in the following career fields: nursing, veterinary assistance, elder care,

business administration, prison ministry, security, and coaching. If you have connections to entry level jobs in any of these arenas or could provide an internship (paid or unpaid) to any of our students, please let us know. They are ready to get to work!



*"What do you think?
If a man owns a
hundred sheep, and
one of them wanders
away, will he not leave
the ninety-nine on the
hills and go to look
for the one that
wandered off? And if
he finds it, I tell you
the truth, he is
happier about that
one sheep than about
the ninety-nine that
did not wander off. In
the same way your
Father in heaven is
not willing that any
of these little ones
should be lost."*

Matthew 18:12-14

Get Involved

Become a mentor- commit to 6 months of meeting every Tuesday night from 6:30-8:30 for dinner, a group discussion, and individual time with your intern.

Job Scavenger- commit to one day of driving an intern to look for job openings, give guidance, encouragement, and help filling out applications.

Provide a Meal- prepare or buy a meal for the Tuesday night mentorship group. Approx. 10-15 people. (we can give more specifics for the actual night)

Shop!- Treat an intern to a shopping spree to buy clothes appropriate for an interview.

Career Connection- Have lunch with an intern and let them tell you what it's like to do your job, how you got into the field, and what education you needed.

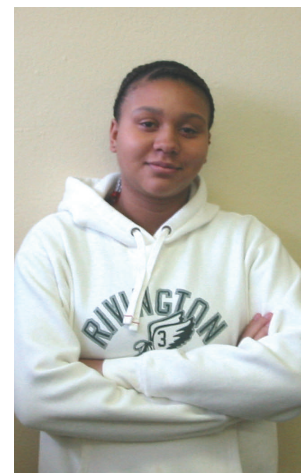
Pray- We desperately need your prayers. Please pray that God would intervene in a powerful way in the lives of those in our ministry.

Give- We need and appreciate all financial gifts and diligently seek to put every dollar to good use.

Party- Host a dessert party for your friends or Sunday School class, where we can come share ways to get involved.

Call to get more information and sign up! (713)253-9602

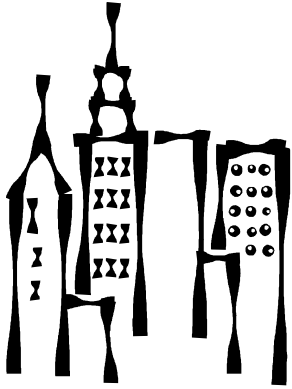
Feel free to sign up for an event as a Sunday School Class or a Small Group.



SUMMER 2006

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SPIRITUAL AND FINANCIAL
HEALTH IN THE INNER CITY



Agape Development Ministries was established in response to the despair of the inner city caused greatly by lack of opportunity and connections to meaningful work. We believe that reaching young adults between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five is a strategic move to prevent the cycle of poverty from continuing to the next generation. We strive to aid our interns in gaining not only financial health, but also a sustaining faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thank You's

- Thanks so much to all of the mentors who gave of their time and talents to minister to our young people. Christine Cummings, Chris Toronjo, Carole Sotier, Jason and Susan Mercer, Del Blom, Mary Helen Knudsen, and Yolanda Kizzine What a huge blessing you are!
- Thanks to City of Refuge Church for the use of office and meeting space; and for providing food on Tuesday nights.
- Thanks to each of the speakers who inspired us with their wisdom and kindness.
- Thanks to all who opened their homes to us for dessert parties and fundraising.
- Thank you to our board who took a chance on us and stuck by us through all the hurdles of starting a new ministry.



Mentorship group having a fun night out at the Mad Potter