



# DECEMBER 2009

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## Donors, Friends and Family Gather for Dessert Event

A warm and heartfelt thank you to all our guests, donors, participants, and board members for coming to and helping with this year's Dessert Event. This is the second year St. John the Divine has graciously hosted our event, and again, it was a huge success. Over 90 of our friends and family members came to hear testimonies and stories about how lives are changing everyday in Houston's Third Ward.



For instance, Nikki, who's now finishing up her first semester at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, sent us a video update on college life. She's enjoying her Bible classes and her new life in the dorm. She's majoring in Communications and she even likes the Chicago winter weather – so far. We'll look forward to more updates on her success in college.

We also heard from Kortnie, who joined our Gateway House family in early 2007. She's currently teaching Pre-K at the Yellowstone Academy in Houston, and plans a career in teaching.

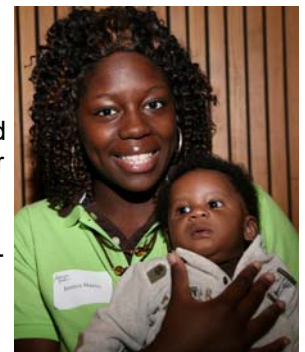


Overall, it was a time to sample delicious desserts, catch up with friends and family, listen to inspiring music from

Gateway House residents, and to share in the success of our program participants over the past year. All of them have started from tough personal and financial situations, but are in the process of achieving solid career development and empowering spiritual growth

And, with a growing faith in Jesus Christ and support and encouragement from our supporters, we know that anything is possible in 2010.

For their continuing help and support, and for making this year's event possible, a special thanks to Ann Cochran and Rebecca Llenos from St. John the Divine.



## Christmas at the Craig's



During the Christmas Season, our family prepares for the coming of Christ by lighting candles, singing carols, reading scripture, and asking questions that point us to Jesus.

We really want our kids to learn that Christmas is all about Jesus, and our 1 ½ year old daughter has grasped this concept completely and humorously. Whenever we drive past lights, a Christmas tree, or any holiday decoration, Chloe exclaims "Jeezusss, Jeezusss!" She won't stop shouting until we acknowledge her by saying, "Yes. Jesus!," to which she replies in satisfaction, "Jesus."

Her proclamation has been a fun reminder that all good gifts are from above, including the greatest gift of all, Jesus Christ. I pray that we will have the eyes to see all His gifts this season, and that we thank the Great Gift Giver with as much enthusiasm as a child at Christmas.

Merry Christmas,

## Retreat 2009

Whenever life became hectic for Jesus and the disciples, they would set time apart to get in a boat, climb a mountain or pray in a garden.

Life in the inner-city carries a constant stress over the threat of violence, the



challenge of survival, the despair of poverty, and the loneliness of broken relationships.

Agape's fall retreat to Carolina Creek Christian Camp provided young adults the chance to quiet their lives and reconnect with God.

Like any retreat, we included lots of time for ropes courses, sports games, s'mores, and good food, but we also had some appointed times for worship, Bible study, teaching, prayer, and confession.



During our last teaching time, David Hill invited the group to respond. Several people said, "You're like a family to me." Others said, "I'm tired of living with this struggle. I want to change."

Nearly every person shared the connection they made with Jesus that weekend, either through a talk, a friend, a game, or worship time. I don't know if Jesus created retreats, but He sure does seem to work through them powerfully. We would appreciate your continued prayers for those who made decisions to follow Christ for the first time or return to Him, and we look forward to sharing how these lives continue to transform.

## Agape Member Highlight



Tiffany joined Gateway House in early 2008. She graduated from Jones High School in Houston, but her life was drifting aimlessly, without any real direction. She was living at her mother's home, and didn't have regular employment.

That's when her older sister, Tina, also an Agape member, encouraged her to join the Gateway House family.

About her Gateway experience she says, "I can come home with peace of mind, not a lot of drama. I can just relax and talk with my roommates. And I am learning so much from the program that I can apply to my daily life."

She's working now full time at a clothing store and her longer term goal is to get her cosmetology license. From there she plans to open her own beauty salon.

Through all of her experiences, faith has played a major role. "God has given me peace, and I haven't had that in a while. I see a lot of changes coming in me, and I'm looking forward to them."

# *Our Family and Friends at our 2009 Dessert Event*



*Thank you for your support in 2009 and your prayers in 2010.*





*Agape brings hope and transformation to the Third Ward through economic, emotional and spiritual empowerment.*

*Derives power and direction Jesus Christ.  
Listens to the community first.  
Creates opportunity for individuals.  
Empowers communi-*

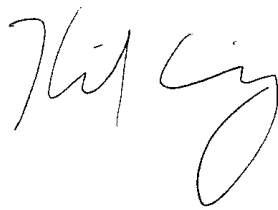
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## Donation Opportunities

God provides for the mission of Agape through your generous donations. Simply put, your gifts make our ministry possible. Please consider making your first donation donate to Agape. If you already give to Agape, please know how impactful your partnership is. As 2009 comes to an end, please continue your faithful and generous support.

The enclosed pledge card shows a few examples of how we steward your gift.



Kirk Craig  
Executive Director & Co-Founder

*All donations to Agape are tax deductible through our non-profit status as a 501(c)(3) corporation*

## Prayer Requests

We find the right property for offices and a community center  
Members would continue to have courage to be honest about sin and struggles  
Nikki would succeed at Moody Bible Institute  
God would transform our neighborhood economically, emotionally, spiritually  
For favorable promotions for Agape members at work

## Volunteer Needs

**Backyard Bible Club:** serve food, play games, Tuesday, Thursdays  
**Academic Tutoring:** elementary, G.E.D., entry level college  
**Gateway House:** Mentors, driving, workday projects, community outreach  
**Artist** to create a rendering of a building project for the Neighborhood

*For periodic volunteer updates sign up at [www.agapedevelopment.org](http://www.agapedevelopment.org) for our email list.*

## Wish List

- |                     |                       |                          |
|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Backyard Bible Club | A digital camera      | multifunction printer    |
| craft supplies      | Reward gift cards     | Football and flags (20)  |
| Gingerbread houses  | Pocketed folders (50) | 1 Tb external hard drive |
| Folding chairs (20) | A commercial grade,   |                          |