



October 2011

Dear Friends:

"...WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR THE FAITH COMMUNITY TO TAKE THE LEAD."

Imagine hearing this quote come out of a community leader's mouth as you cautiously share what is on your heart for a neighborhood! It's exactly what happened earlier this month when those interested in turning things around in the Bruce St area of south county came together to compare notes. Some groups and organizations had already invested significant time and resource gathering information about that neighborhood, finding out who wants to be part of the solution there and looking at what to do next. We were hoping they would be favorable to the plans being laid for Manter House near Bruce St and WOW, they are not only OPEN, but WAITING for our arrival.

So take a deep breath and receive faith! Your area is being prepared by God, now. People there are looking for movement and hope. Deep down they know it can't come from government. *For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed.* Romans 8:19

As you read this, God is continuing to bring pieces together for South County Transformation: Our board approved them to officially come under our non-profit status, a Christian gal who loves to teach appropriate hip-hop dance to young people wants to make that available to the Manter Hope Zone, and ESYAC is working with us to explore the possibility of duplicating their model in the house. Our local public health director met with me and mentioned that plans in the works for potential funding to be applied to this zone as 're-development' lines are being re-drawn at the moment.

GET THE PARTY STARTED WITH MENTORING TEENS

We are so excited to introduce our new Mentor Coordinator, Courtney Hess, hired with the CDBG grant funds. She is already revamping, contacting, putting things in order, and even jumped right into the action with our mentor training/orientation at the Library the day after we hired her. She was a big help in putting together our first "matching party" of the season on Sept 29 where we match up more youth.

Probation met with us and opened the calendar way more than last season. They will even screen the most likely youths for mentoring and help us meet more one-on-one with them while they're in custody by allowing us to have a whole unit to ourselves during our visits.

An outdoor education arm is being added to Project 18's mentoring family this year as well, through Twin View Bethel. Two energetic outdoor-adventurers are planning outings (such as hikes, snowboarding, surf camp, rock climbing and trips to sports games) for youths and mentors to choose into voluntarily. This will kick off on October 16th with an afternoon BBQ at Whiskeytown Lake. If you want to jump in and become a part of what God



Karen leaving city hall with our CDBG grant



Jon with our new group of mentors at Sept. 22 Orientation



Welcome Courtney Hess! Our newly hired Mentor Coordinator



Anderson Church with its eyes on the city.

(over please)

is doing with transforming the at-risk population, the future leaders of Redding, come to the BBQ! We need about 10 more male mentors RIGHT NOW. We also want to add life and dream coaching, service teams and event teams, but all in due time. God knows and He will move on the right hearts and supply to finances and protected needed to make it all happen.

CHANGE IN THE REGION

Cities throughout the Northstate are kindling the fires of transformation. Chico is interested in connecting to cross-fertilize ideas, Shasta Lake city being targeted by area church groups who will lead relationally with a coffeehouse space, and Whitmore and Anderson continue to keep their cities on the front burner.

In Anderson this month, in spite of a rainy Sunday morning and competition from the Airshow, 30 people returned to the streets they'd adopted to bring God's presence to those neighborhoods. They were sent out with simple instructions: ask God how to pray and to see through His eyes. Those who walked in the Bruce/Manter neighborhood observed toys around houses, and the Lord showed them parents who care for their children. People came back with reports of opportunities to pray for people, of changes noticed since last month's prayers, and encouragement to go through every day of the week with the same perspective. *Lord, show me my fellow workers through your eyes, and show me how to pray for them....*

MOBILIZING THE UNIVERSITY ENGINE

162 Simpson undergrads are reading about prayer evangelism and transformation. These Ministry Practicum students also volunteer weekly in the community. RT has partnered with Simpson launch a project that will contact agencies, churches and non-profits to help us update the picture on what's actually being done in our area. Many have willing hearts to serve, but few know where the service opportunities are. I find that when believers know how to assist and where to go, they will choose to go for it! The relationships that develop open the door to positive impact in the city.

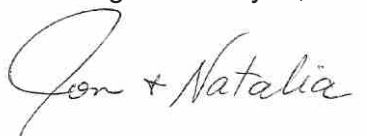
One such opening: a local continuation school is willing to have men come shoot hoops during the lunch hour. Just down the street, the Y has many men showing up for lunchtime basketball. If some of these men spent their lunch hour shooting hoops just a mile away, they could get their recreation, sweat a bit, and EVEN change lives by doing what they love to do. Just one problem; they NEED TO KNOW of the opportunity! Now they will.

SUBTLE BUT DEADLY

As I go about my day, sometimes I hear talk radio. When I hear it I detect quite a critical undertone. They are up in arms about the government, crime, the economy, etc. I believe this negative tone is spiritual in origin and it can "disciple a region" in negative thought and expression if given place long enough. Would you agree with me that this subtle spirit is far too embedded at this point in our region if not our own lives? I believe it is a stronghold and it needs to be brought down by BLESSING instead!

A lady came into my Simpson office this week and shared an idea to send blessing teams (by invitation) to the homes of military families to speak "a good word" over them. Blessing beats cursing every time. If we fill the region with blessings and chop out the root of critical (in us, in the conversations, in our churches, schools and workplaces...) what could happen? So, I propose a blessing campaign. Not sure what yours will look like, but get creative and let's compare notes in a month. Think about where you've been critical and toward whom and ask God for a grace to get out from under that spirit and apply blessing instead. You will notice the HEAVY leave....

Blessings to all of you,


Jon and Natalia Thompson