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Electronic Funds Transfer

We accept credit cards and electronic fund transfers directly from your account to ours. The process is fast and secure. Visit our website and follow the instructions on our donation page to get started today.

Prayer Support

We believe that our ability to do what we do comes from the grace of God, providing our team with wisdom in making decisions and guiding our daily activities. Praying for us daily would be a great encouragement to our team.

9th Annual Family Fest Celebration



On June 22, 2013, Family Empowerment Centers held its 9th Annual Family Fest. With the support of Alderman Patrick O'Connor and the Chicago Park District, Family Fest has evolved from a gathering in Schreiber Park to a full block party over the years. With multiple bounce houses, face-painting, a Pinewood Derby, waterslides, live entertainment, and free hotdogs & beverages, Family Fest offers a space for residents of Rogers Park to celebrate the blessings of family, friendship, and community.

"It has become financially burdensome for parents to treat their children to a day of fun," says Executive Director, Scott Manke. "It can cost a family of four almost \$60 just to go to a movie. Family Fest is one way we provide an opportunity to allow families to engage in a day of entertainment that is safe, fun, and free."

Roughly 1,000 people attended Family Fest, providing a great way to meet new neighbors and make friends. Over 60 volunteers and staff spent the day filling various roles to ensure the day went smoothly. From announcing the Derby Races to grilling hotdogs, to overseeing the Hot Dog Eating Contest, to picking up trash and selling raffle tickets, all shared the joy of providing guests with a wonderful experience.

Family Empowerment Centers wishes to thank the following agencies for their contribution toward Family Fest 2013:

- ◆ Deluxe Diner and Vince's Pizza & Taqueria for donating a variety of pizzas to the Food Tent.
- ◆ Eagle Alliance Church and Blanchard Alliance Church for volunteer support.
- ◆ Roger & Chris Hanna for providing live entertainment that kept many guests tapping their toes and singing along to all those great "flash-back" hits.

VOLUNTEER & INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

If you are a High School, College or Seminary student looking to complete volunteer hours or an internship, give us a call. Many options exist for hands-on experience!

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The Official Newsletter
of the
Family Empowerment
Centers

July 2013

10 Youth Attend Chicago Alive Youth Camp - by Brandie

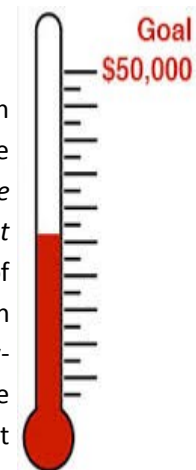


I arrived in Chicago to begin working with Family Empowerment Centers less than one week prior to Chicago Alive Youth Camp (CAY Camp). My first assignment: attend a four-day sleep-away camp designed to offer urban youth, ages 9-18, a chance to step outside their context for a few days, learn about God, and escape the pressures associated with urban living. This year the Center enrolled 10 youth and 4 adult counselors in CAY Camp. My time as a counselor was one I will never forget! God provided countless opportunities for connections to be made and relationships to be built with the campers in my group. Whether we were playing games, eating a meal together, struggling through the ropes course, going down the river in a canoe (and then getting tipped out!), or having deep conversations after our worship service, each activity was used to invest in these teenagers, and pour out love, kindness, and acceptance upon them.

As they began opening up, many shared of coming from broken homes in which they deal with depression, loneliness, anger, identity issues, and in extreme cases, thoughts of suicide. It brought joy to me to see them smiling, laughing, making friendships, singing songs of worship to God, and drawing closer to God. I truly believe that God changed many lives over the four days of camp, and I pray that the truth they heard, the friendships they made, and the love they felt will stay with them as they go back to their routine of daily life.

\$50,000 Match Grant Update: We've Reached 50% of Our Goal!

Most of you are aware of a \$50,000 match grant challenge we've been trying to reach. We're happy to report that the Center has crossed the \$25,000 mark! We are half-way toward reaching our goal! *Let's keep the momentum going! Our goal is to fulfill this challenge by the end of August when the match grant deadline closes!* Will you help us reach our goal of raising \$100,000 through this \$50,000 match grant challenge? It is with heartfelt gratitude that we extend a meaningful "THANK YOU!" to everyone who has contributed toward this challenge. This year has posed some significant financial challenges for the Center. But, God is faithful; we trust in His provision. With the BEST circle of friends and supporters, we are confident we can achieve the financial blessing this wonderful opportunity offers. To qualify for the match, donations must be \$50+ a month (for 12 months) or \$600+ in one-time gifts. Visit our website to make an online payment today. (www.familyempower.org, click "Make a Donation". Be sure to select "2013 Match Grant \$50,000" from the Category & Funds dropdown menu.)



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Schedule of Events

Worship Service
Sunday 10:30am

Teen Mentoring Groups:
"Kick-it!" for boys
"I.M.A.G.E." for girls
Sunday 1:00pm

The following programs are
on Summer break:
E.S.L. Class
S.A.Y. Yes! Afterschool &
AWANA Programs
Wednesday Night Bible Study

First Annual Benefit Features Judge Robert R. Thomas, IL Supreme Court



Keynote Speaker:
Judge Robert Thomas

Hosted by Blanchard Alliance Church, Family Empowerment Centers recently held its first Annual Benefit. We couldn't be more pleased with the evening. Filled with great food, good conversations, and positive feedback all around, this year's Banquet style event featured cuisine from a variety of ethnic restaurants in the Rogers Park neighborhood—a hit with guests! Students from the S.A.Y. Yes! Afterschool Program offered the opening blessing, while Board members Joe Denner, Eric Field, and Tony Moore shared their commitment to the vision of FEC and offered practical ways guests can make a tangible and meaningful impact in the lives of the families served by the Center's programs and services. Several families from our community shared the many ways the Center provides support and encouragement, and the positive changes happening in their lives as a result. Keynote speaker, Judge Robert R. Thomas (Illinois Supreme Court, 2nd District), offered a reflective address in which he challenged the audience to welcome growth through difficult transitions, allowing these experiences to become a springboard for helping others. We are so grateful to have the best team of volunteers and supporters who enabled this event to occur so seamlessly. *We wish to thank the following sponsors for helping to underwrite the Center's first annual benefit:*

Gold Sponsor	Silver Sponsor
Blanchard Alliance Church	1 Anonymous Partner
Donell & Felicia Bullock	Rob & Susan DeLano
Eric & Janelle Field	Joe & Andrea Denner
Tony & Cindy Moore	Bob & Kathy Laureto
	Ron & Beth Mangin

Children's Programs Come to a Close - by Daniella, S.A.Y. Yes! Mentor



In May the S.A.Y. Yes! Afterschool and AWANA Programs came to a close for the year, wrapping up with a great party for the wonderful children. The students received awards recognizing their best traits, were treated to a pizza party, and made their own sundaes for dessert! Their parents were also welcomed and encouraged to share their favorite parts of the program and ways in which they have seen their children grow over the past year. This was my first year working in the Afterschool & AWANA programs. Working with the kids was truly a great learning experience and very rewarding. One of the best parts of living in the neighborhood is that I am able to see the kids around town: at the park, the market, or the Laundromat. I am looking forward to keeping in touch with the students during the various sports camps and events we'll host this summer. One of the most rewarding parts of my job as a S.A.Y. Yes! Mentor is taking the students who make it on the Honor Roll out for a reward. Sometimes we take them for pizza, sometimes for ice-cream. In May, fellow S.A.Y. Yes! Mentor, Will, and I treated 6 students from the Afterschool Program to ice-cream as a reward for their hard-work in maintaining an Honor Roll status. They were so happy to receive this recognition—and we are so proud of their commitment to education and academic success!

"Since attending the afterschool program, I notice my child is more respectful, is doing better in school, and helps more around the house. Thank you!"

Emergency Response Training Open to the Community

During the week of August 19-23, the International Fellowship of Chaplains will host a 45-hour training in Chicago at Family Empowerment Centers. Participants can enroll for personal or professional betterment or certification/credentials. Training sessions include: crisis response, domestic violence response, suicidology, stress management, among others. This training is perfect for law enforcement officials, first responders, or church lay leaders/pastoral staff, or anyone serving in a community care role.

Brenda Kulowiya, a member of Family Empowerment Centers' church, completed the Chaplaincy training program in 2012, earning a certificate. Brenda shares her thoughts about IFOC's training: "I highly recommend this training. I wish I had the opportunity to take this class earlier in my life. If so, I would have been able to identify symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, which I experienced as a child. This course would have helped me identify negative influences in my life and seek out resources to support me. This class also helped me in my parenting role to my son as I learned that brain functionality is different in men and women, in terms of how we process information differently. This enabled me to adapt my communication style with my son." For more information or to register, please Visit: <http://ifoc.org>, Email: Chaplain Les Winnick chaplainles@gmail.com, or Call: 989.753.3211

Envision Teams: Building Bridges into the Community - by Rob

Registered as a national Envision site, Family Empowerment Centers welcomes volunteer teams throughout the year through the Christian & Missionary Alliance's Envision program. It has been a great year so far with Envision teams coming in March, June, and July to serve the Rogers Park community. Some teams helped us prepare (and run) our annual Family Fest block party. Others hosted sports camps focused on teaching the children basic soccer skills. An important aspect of all sports camps is providing creative themes to help children learn about God. Through fun and energetic ways, Envision teams have taught dozens of children about the armor of God, fruits of the Spirit, and the importance of developing good character traits. It is always a tremendous blessing to watch the children grow in their understanding of God as they have fun at our sports camps. These events prove to be a valued connection point between Envision teams and the families we regularly serve throughout the year.

With three teams coming during the summer months this year, the blessing of a less hectic schedule enabled me to travel to both General Council in Tampa, FL and the LIFE/Envision conference in St. Louis, MO to promote the Center's role as the Envision: Chicago site. While at both conferences, I was overwhelmed by the number of people who came up to speak with me about past teams that have visited Chicago. Past participants, parents of participants, and people from churches that sent teams shared how moved they were to see how God moved in the youth while serving with us. It was a true blessing to hear testimonies of how excited team members were about how God has taken deeper root in peoples' lives through experiences here in Rogers Park.

I was also blessed to stand before our congregation recently and share with them of the many people who had enquired about their well being and have committed to consistently pray for them. The opportunity to serve as an Envision site has blessed us with the opportunity to serve and be served, but it has also helped our church and community feel connected to the Kingdom of God throughout the denomination. Thank you, Lord.

