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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.

Baptism Service on Lake Michigan



"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
—Matthew 28:19-20 HCSB

These words are the final instructions spoken by Jesus to his disciples, as recorded in the gospel of Matthew. The importance of baptism is highlighted in Jesus' choice to include this act as part of His final words to those that were closest to Him in His years of ministry. We recognize that this is in no way the finish line for those who choose to follow Christ, but it is certainly cause for celebration as people make a public profession of their choice to turn from their own way and follow God's will for their lives.

On August 25th, in a joint service with Christ Church of Albany Park, we were blessed to celebrate the baptism of six of our community members here at Family Empowerment Centers, including one household of mother and daughters. The waters of Lake Michigan were, as always, brisk on that evening, but it did not stop the celebration that included the sharing of testimonies and ended with a potluck picnic just north of the Foster Beach basketball court. Please join us as we continue to celebrate the privilege of being involved in the work of God calling people into reconciliation with Himself here in Rogers Park.

A Glimpse At How God Is Impacting Lives:

"For so long I've felt confused about many aspects of faith. Now, after spending time talking with the pastors and attending Bible study, I can say with 100% certainty that Jesus is the way."

"I felt that suicide was the answer to my problems so that I could escape the pain I felt. God stepped in and saved my life. I have chosen to change my life and follow in the path of God. I have asked him to come into my life and to guide me. I am being baptized so that I may proudly show to my friends the commitment I have already taken in my heart."

*"I want to give my heart to Jesus and let him live inside of me."
~(6 year old)*

"I grew up in many foster homes. I wasn't always treated well and was exposed to lots of religions. I believe in Jesus and He is with me."

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The Official Newsletter
of the
Family Empowerment
Centers

September 2013

Fall Programs in Action ...



ESL Classes: Welcoming Adults from Around the World!

"Hi. My name is Sefa and I am from Turkey. I want to learn English because...."

Over the past week at Family Empowerment Center, many people like 'Sefa' have come through our doors to register for the English as a Second Language program we offer. Registration for the program was on September 5, and classes began on September 10. So far, we have 23 students registered who come from many different parts of the world: Central America, South America, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Students come to the program for a variety of reasons: to get a better job, to communicate with their neighbors, to further their education, or to help their children with school work. For whatever reason they may come, the Center is here to help them improve their language skills, and to also develop community with the students. Joining the program this year is 14 Moody Bible Institute students who are completing a TESOL degree. Moody students gain hands-on experience leading instruction, as well as help with the newest addition to our program: childcare! Providing childcare gives more adults the opportunity to come to the English classes without the worry of having to find a babysitter. Plus, the kids get to hear a Bible story and enjoy games and crafts with the Moody students. Our ESL program this year is off to a great start! We are excited to watch how God is going to work through this program!



Some of the wonderful Moody Interns during a recent ESL training.

Staff Contacts

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S.A.Y. Yes! Staff:
Dania Castillo, Program Director
Danielle Alvarado, Assistant
Program Director

Schedule of Events

Bible Club (for youth)
Monday 4:30-6:00pm

**English as a Second
Language Class**
Tues. & Thurs. 6:30-8:30pm

S.A.Y. Yes! Afterschool Program
Mon. 3:45-4:30pm
Tues.-Thurs. 3:45-6:00pm

Teen Mentoring Groups
Sunday 1:00pm

Worship Service
Sunday 10:30am

S.A.Y. Yes! Afterschool Program: Off To A Great Start



Part of our “downtime” during the summer is spent re-evaluating the goals and success of our programs, as well as planning for the Fall. After a year full of transitions, S.A.Y. Yes! staff took time to assess needs, evaluate effectiveness, and reflect upon ways to enhance the program’s impact on the children in the Rogers Park community. What transpired is the restructuring of the S.A.Y. Yes! program in some pretty exciting ways.

Volunteer and staff trainings, as well as required parent meetings, are built into the calendar to offer a space for learning new insights, teaching techniques, and child safety criteria.

To manage the administrative aspects of the program and provide cohesive implementation of the various components, the Center hired Dania Castillo as the S.A.Y. Yes! Program Director. Efforts to expand volunteer partnerships enabled the program to begin with a record number of volunteers, ensuring a mentor to student ratio of 1:6.

Since the program’s launch in 2006, the focus of S.A.Y. Yes! has been academic support and character development through Biblical formation. These vital components remain the central components of the program. In addition to homework tutoring and educational computer software to reinforce learning, students will spend 30 minutes each day focusing specifically on academic enhancement in the areas of reading, writing, and math comprehension. Below, Danielle reflects upon the opening weeks of the S.A.Y. Yes! program:

“The S.A.Y. Yes! program is in full effect! I am so excited to be part of it once again this year! I am enjoying working with many of the children who have been a part of our program in the past, but also encouraged to work with so many new kids and their families! The kids were eager to share their summer stories and adventures with the staff and volunteers! They also responded pretty well to the new set of rules this year! All of them get a chance to write in their journals, read, be a part of Rocket Math to increase their math skills and much more ... God is wonderful and I am looking forward to seeing what he has in store for us all!”



\$50,000 Match Grant Update

It is always exciting to see how God moves on the hearts of our friends to contribute financially to the work of the Center and its various programs. This past Spring we had the opportunity to raise \$50,000 through a match grant in which contributions of \$600 or more through a one-time gift and/or a regular monthly commitment of \$50 or more for 12 months would be matched dollar for dollar. We were able to see a total of \$33,545 raised during that time and it was matched dollar for dollar, totaling \$67,090. A hearty thank you to everyone who participated and we look forward to your continued support.

In addition to this past opportunity to contribute to the needs of the Center, you might want to visit our on-line donation page which has various projects and programs listed that can be supported as well. You can access that page through our website and by clicking on the Donate Now button.



Intern, Rebecca, from Wheaton in Chicago, serves as a Mentor in the S.A.Y. Yes! Program

INTERNSHIP & VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

If you are a High School, College, University, or Seminary student looking to complete volunteer hours or an internship, give us a call.

Many opportunities exist for hands-on experience!

Please contact Susan: 773.262.0760

Volunteer for the S.A.Y. Yes! Afterschool Program & Bible Club

Do you like working with children? We are accepting applications for

- 1. Mentors to help in S.A.Y. Yes! with homework tutoring and academic support,
- 2. Leaders to assist in Bible Club with songs, crafts, teaching, and games.

Please contact Dania: 773.262.0760

Recognizing Community Partners

Community partnerships and gifts-in-kind greatly enhance our ability to do what we do on a daily basis. We are so grateful to those who give of their time, resources, and supplies which enable us to have an impact in our community.

- ◆ Thank you to the following organizations for donating *backpacks and school supplies* to ensure the students in the S.A.Y. Yes! Afterschool program start the year off right: the Agape Center, Bloomingdale Church, Strength Among Numbers Foundation, Inc.
- ◆ *Interns and volunteers* play a large role in helping the Center maintain programs and deliver quality care to the community. As we continue to expand volunteer partnerships, we welcome interns this fall from the following schools: Northwestern University, Moody Bible College, and Wheaton in Chicago’s Urban Studies program.
- ◆ Through Blanchard Alliance Church the Center received two desktop monitors (which, unbeknownst to them, were desperately needed at the Center!)
- ◆ The Chicago Sky Foundation provided free tickets to the WNBA Chicago Sky season closer against the Atlanta Dream.

Recent Happenings Around the Center



40 guests of the Center cheer on the WNBA Chicago Sky during their last game before the playoffs!



Family Empowerment Center earned a highlight in the North Shore’s Make It Better magazine!



Go Team Family Empower! Staff members Rob, Susan, and Danielle still standing after the Chicago Half Marathon.



Welcome Dania Castillo, S.A.Y. Yes! Afterschool Program Director to the Center’s team!

Vision Tours: September 28 & November 9

Have you ever wondered what a typical day looks like around the Center? Are you curious about the Center’s impact on the Rogers Park community? Are you looking to get involved in a meaningful, volunteer experience?

If so, we invite you to participate in a one-hour Vision Tour, from 11:00-12:00.

Vision Tours are designed to offer a glimpse into the social, economic, and spiritual context in which we minister. A short walk in the Rogers Park neighborhood sets the tone for appreciating the benefits and challenges found within such a diverse community. Over a light brunch, conversation continues to explore the ways in which our programs and services make a difference to provide hope, encouragement, and opportunities for life impacting change.

To register, please contact Susan: 773.262.0760 or susan@familyempower.org.