

Hartford City Mission Fall Newsletter, 2017



THE SECOND ANNUAL HCM GALA

Empowering Transformational Leaders—Stories from the Gala

Typical galas highlight how an organization's programs are impacting the communities they serve. And in this regard, our gala was typical. It was a night of both fun and reflection.

We kicked the night off with a performance by Community Partner Ms. Kim and the Gifted Onez, joined by some of our own C.O.G.'s (Children Of God). Seventh-grader Gabi blessed us with a beautiful musical performance. And we experienced the unveiling of a stunning photography project that some of our middle-school C.O.G.s recently finished, sponsored by the Aetna.

We announced some exciting developments in HCM, one of them being a partnership we've recently formed with some local organizations. Because of this partnership we've been able to add a more substantial 'arts' portion to our programs, as well as offer new attendance incentives. Another exciting development is that, this past year, we've seen a 50% increase in Camp Noah Attendance, and a 100% increase in Nehemiah After School attendance.

HCM's vision served as an anchor for the night:

"HCM desires for people throughout the Greater Hartford region to unite, reconciling relationships with God, self, and community, while affirming the inherent value of each person. HCM seeks to empower young men and women to become strong, transformational leaders, choosing to stay in the community and take an active role in creating social, economic, and spiritual renewal. HCM affirms and recognizes the strength of North Hartford and draws people to connect, actively joining the process to build a strong vibrant community. In turn, the city becomes a place known for goodness, justice, service, joy, and peace."

Much of the night focused on a particular section of that larger version, on how we're attempting to "empower the next generation of transformational leaders." Each speaker talked about the importance of this work, and how they've seen young leaders empowered, or how they've been empowered themselves, through HCM's programs. ***And it was here that Hartford City Mission's Gala program stood out from others. Not only did the speakers share the impact HCM had on their lives, but they gave us glimpses into how they've been empowered to go out and impact other lives, continuing the cycle of influence.***



Mike Prado, VP and CPO of our Lead Sponsor, Stanley Black & Decker, told of how the work HCM was doing in Hartford was making people at their large corporation pay attention. Alex Thomas, a neighborhood resident and former Young Life participant, shared how his experience at HCM gave him the confidence and the professional skills needed for his current work at the Wilson-Gray YMCA down the road. He now serves the same community that HCM serves, but from outside of HCM's programs. Recently, Alex was able to use his connections to set up a partnership between the YMCA and HCM, offering free YMCA memberships for our C.O.G.'s as an attendance motivator.

Mary Swank shared how she and her husband decided to relocate to the neighborhood after years of volunteering and getting to know the vibrant community. She felt a transformation in herself and the desire to make North Hartford their home. She credits her new neighbors as being the best she's ever had!

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The Token, The Sacrifice, And The Things That Excite

Remember when you first realized that *you are a child of GOD? Maybe you grew up your whole life hearing that... but at some point something 'clicked.'* The lights came on, and suddenly *"I am a child of God"* took on a whole new meaning—a wonderful one. Where you realized how deeply loved you are, how secure, and how included you are in God's family and in His purposes for the world. Remember that moment, when that first 'clicked'?

Our prayer has been that our students would experience *that this year: a fundamental shift in how they understand their identity, leading to a fundamental shift in how they live. And to support that prayer, we've chosen the theme, "C.O.G's on a Mission"—which is Noah After School speak for "Children of God on a Mission."*

In line with this theme, we've been talking about two things in our Bible lessons. We've been talking about identity; *who God is, and who we are in relation to him. And we've been talking about the implications of that identity; how we're supposed to act... and the mission we're on... in light of the fact that we are "C.O.G's."* And it's been amazing to watch some of our students wrestle with these truths for the first time—like Tre'mel.

Tre'mel is a 4th grader at our Glory Chapel site. He's always been a good student. But when site leader Abbi Menear started talking about how God is a *loving God... and how we, as children of God, are called to be loving in the way that He is loving... you could see those ideas taking root in him. And one day, during the reading portion of Noah After school, Tre'mel noticed that another student was struggling with their reading assignment.*

Now to grasp what happened next, you have to

understand our reward system. If students complete certain activities, they can earn "tokens" (and reading is one of those activities). These tokens can be used to buy prizes (left over gifts from our Christmas Store) on store days. Now back to Tre'mel...

When Tre'mel noticed the struggling student, he stood up. He stepped away from his own reading assignment. Forfeiting the tokens *he would have earned. And he walked over to the other student's table. And started helping this other student with his assignment, so that he could earn his tokens.*

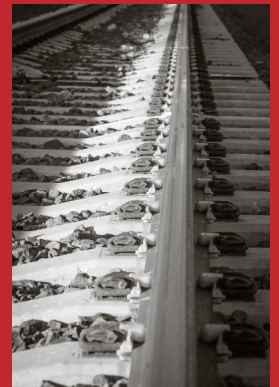
Those are the moments we labor for. Moments when our students start to see themselves differently, and God differently—and it changes how they interact with their friends.

On one perspective, it was a very small thing that Tre'mel did. He was only giving up one token to help his neighbor. *One small token. But on another perspective, what happened in that moment was more important than all the past presidential elections combined. And the invention of the personal computer. And all those other things which we from our human perspective consider to be "big" things. The things that get God excited are often different than the things that get us excited.*



Tre'mel with NAS Volunteer Rachel

Photos taken by our middle-school C.O.G.s which will soon be on exhibit at the Aetna

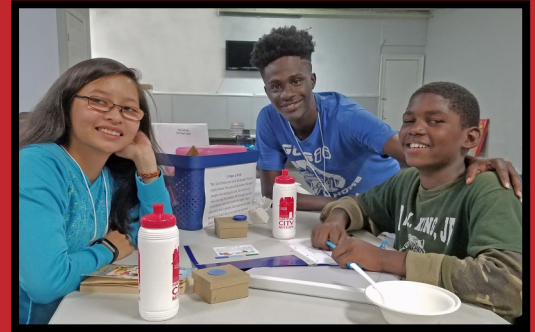


End of the Year Appeal Letter Enclosed!

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for considering an end of the year donation to HCM.

Your past gifts to Hartford City Mission helped us see the following growth over the last 12 months:

- 50% increase in Camp Noah attendance
- 100% increase in Nehemiah After School attendance
- New arts enrichment on Tuesdays
- New attendance incentive programs
- Monthly Parent Empowerment meetings



Empowering Transformational Leaders—Stories from the Gala - Continued from pg 1

Shonta' Browdy spoke as a parent and church partner from Ebenezer Temple. She shared how having the program at the church is creating opportunities for church members to serve their community. Over the three years HCM and Ebenezer have been partnering, there have been multiple Ebenezer members who have been able to faithfully serve at the after school program, as well as provide food for dinners designed to connect families, the church and staff. She also spoke of the personal empowerment she has seen in her own daughter who has attended the program over the past two years.

For Mark Ainsworth, a site assistant and participant in our Young Life program, the call to be a transformational leader was clear. At one point he remarked, *"This is my community... and Hartford City Mission helped raise me up in it. I feel as though I want for myself as a man, to be there for the organization that helped grow some of me and my friends."* Mark empowers C.O.G.'s every day after school, and the Young Life youth on Tuesday nights. Mark recognized two transformational leaders who stood out in his life as integral parts in his growth during his participant testimony. First, was his middle school English teacher Cindi Avezzie, who took the time to invest in him and to invite him to join her at the local Young Life group and for other activities in town. It was also there that he met HCM's Volunteer of the Year, Mike Schuberth. Mike's impact as a transformational leader goes far beyond just showing up Tuesday nights at Young Life. Many have been touched by Mike's example and his devoted involvement in empowering each of the young men's lives. And Mark's testimony to that was just one among many.

As the Gala drew to a close, it became clear that the call to "empower transformational leaders" is for *all of us*. Whether we live in North Hartford, Greater Hartford, or anywhere in the world.

Please join us in thanking our Lead and Secondary Sponsors for the 2017 Gala

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Noah After School Volunteer, Susan Green
and C.O.G. Mallory Thorpe



Genesis, Raiza and Pastor Willie Cordero with
HCM Executive Director, Dave Ambrose



HCM Staffer, Mark Ainsworth and HCM
Volunteer of the Year, Mike Schuberth

You are part of the HCM family!

You can support the work to empower transformational leaders and inspire vibrant community by:

- ◆ Praying regularly for our students, parents, volunteers, and staff.
- ◆ Volunteering weekly to support one of the After School Sites or Young Life.
- ◆ Making a donation - HCM is a 501c3 non-profit.
- ◆ Advertising your business in the Annual Fall Gala program.

For more information visit our website or contact Executive Director, Dave Ambrose at davea@hartfordcitymission.org



www.hartfordcitymission.org

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