

Hartford City Mission Spring Newsletter, 2018

A CHAIN OF MENTORING

Young Life's Impact Continues

Laughter, basketball, friendship. These three things attracted Jose, three years ago to join in on a basketball game at the Salvation Army (where Young Life meets weekly), after finishing one of his work shifts there. The other players welcoming him to join that day were Mark (past YL participant, current HCM After-School Site Assistant), Kenny (longtime YL volunteer) and Kedron (past YL participant). Fast forward a few years and Jose still attends Young Life, but now as a vital part of the volunteer team as a Junior Leader.



Jose, Ivan and Carl

Reflecting back, Jose can see how that game was just the beginning, "God has been helping me grow in my faith and started helping me with relationships and meeting more people. The leaders here took the time to help me grow in my faith." One of the YL leaders Mike, has been challenging Jose's role as a mentor to the younger youth, sharing "once you get to solid ground, you need to bring along a loved one".

For Jose, this meant inviting his younger cousin Ivan to Young Life in September, and walking even more intentionally alongside him. Both signed up to go to Camp Berea's Deep Freeze weekend with the YL and Nehemiah After-School groups this past March, Jose as a Junior Leader and Ivan as a camper. Not knowing fully what to expect, Ivan looked forward to the trip and spending time with friends, while learning more about the gospel message he had been hearing about on Tuesday nights at YL.

Always open to hearing about the gospel, interested, but filtering the message through his own struggles and life experiences, Ivan had many questions about God and what a relationship with Him would look like. At Berea, the speaker Lucas, presented God's covenant with His people going all the way back to Abraham, sharing a complete view of the Bible and answering many of Ivan's questions along the way. The unique presentation of Jesus' redemption clicked for him and it was there at Berea that Ivan made the decision to accept Christ.

Carl Felton, Director of HCM's Young Life program has seen the difference firsthand, "Ivan now has the desire to grow and be in community, but is also starting to think of ways he can introduce friends and family to Jesus". Ivan shared, "God has shown me I am never alone and he'll always be there no matter what happened in the past. Relying on God has gotten me through a lot of problems and helped me to see that he has a plan for me". As a senior, Ivan will be graduating from Young Life in a few weeks, but we can be sure that this is just the beginning of how his impact and love for Christ will be felt in North Hartford in the future!

Did you know HCM Turns 20 This Year?

Check out these pictures from our early years!

Do you recognize Urban Alliance's Russell Jarvis and First Church Wethersfield's Todd Willard?



Healthy Living, Keney Park Project, Black History Ball and More!

Walking into the classrooms at Simpson-Waverly or Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) Elementary Schools, the HCM staff feels immediately at home and welcomed by the principals, teachers and students. Facial expressions and demeanors change, with a sense of expectation! What will we learn this unit? Where will we “go”?

“Adding the Solomon In-School Program to the HCM organization has truly been an empowering, transforming and exciting experience”, shared April Jefferson, HCM After-School Site Manager and In-School Program Coordinator. “It is empowering, (as a HCM team member) we are building relationships with schools in our community that we serve. It’s a great reminder that even though we are doing work different than our after-school program, “we are still doing God’s work and building his kingdom one way or the other.”

This community and kingdom-minded idea is the foundation of the Solomon In-School program. Former HCM Executive Director and current Executive Director of In-School partner Community First School (CFS), Tim Goodwin, championed HCM as the initiator of significant support for these neighborhood children and others. “HCM staff wrote the grant to fund the work, wrote the standards-aligned curriculum for purposeful and engaging work, and sought out community partners to support a deeper connection for students.”



Carl Felton (HCM), Tim Goodwin (CFS), Heather Dionne (City of Hartford) & Nicola Allen (Knox) with MLK’s 5th graders at Keney Park

The connection with the schools and community partners have given HCM the opportunity to reach around 100 additional local children in grades 2, 4 and 5 this school year, beyond those already attending our After-School and Young Life programs weekly. Projects and units have

included the creation of informational texts for residents and parents (Keney Park Guide, and Healthy Recipe Book), a raised bed garden at Simpson-Waverly, the annual Black History Ball and the revitalized nature trail at Keney Park. Most recently, our staff has been invited to join Martin Luther King Jr. School for their Field Day on May 30th, including a fun run through Keney Park, on the recently cleared and cleaned Nature Trail.



This year’s second annual Black History Ball at MLK, was attended by Simone Biles, Rosa Parks, Rihanna, Tupac Shakur, James Weldon Johnson, Serena Williams, and Billie Holiday (represented left to right in picture above).

The Ball included the entire 4th grade and was funded through a Barnes Foundation grant, supporting the collaboration between HCM and Community First School. “Students took on the roles of famous individuals in Black History and were graded on their ability to stay in character, dress as the character, and their ability to display knowledge of the other great individuals in Black History, and lastly, to understand why each individual’s chosen character was inspirational,” Goodwin shared.

Community Activist Denise Best championed the collaborations, especially the Keney Park Brochure, hoping that the student’s hard work would be shared beyond the school walls. “What a great job,” she excitedly responded, “I can’t wait to share it. We need to send it to the Hartford News.” Imagine a student’s excitement if they opened the local newspaper someday and saw their work!

Simpson-Waverly School Principal Leonardo Watson has seen firsthand the impact of the partnership between the
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Solomon In-School team and his school. Calling the recipe book “awesome and a true enrichment project”, Principal Watson celebrated the partnership, noting the “work, care and compassion shown to our students and teachers.”

On HCM’s side, we have loved being in the schools for so many reasons, but have been encouraged and inspired by how the many dedicated teachers and administrators like Principal Watson and Principal Doreen Crawford of MLK are making a difference there in those areas of “work, care and compassion” everyday.

As a former MLK student, back now as a teacher for the Solomon In-School program, April Jefferson is energized and empowered by how their lessons are leading to inspiring conversations with the students. “I am just in awe to be able to serve and give back to my community especially when I never thought I would be doing what I am doing.”

Just last week, the curriculum written in partnership between HCM and Community First School, introduced the students to the idea of Mindfulness in Leadership, and the 2nd grade students initiated the idea of how this topic connected to God and angels, all on their own.

Working as a faith-based organization in a public school it is important to respect the diverse beliefs of all



Ms. April working with the 4th graders at MLK

students, so “it was beautiful to experience the students making a connection to God through our work”, April excitedly shared, “it confirms His Spirit is in the midst and working through us.”

Tim has high expectations for the future of the Solomon In-School Program and HCM’s partnership with the schools, “The work HCM has initiated has had a lasting impact within the North Hartford Community, in the lives of children, families, and the spaces in which they live, work, and play.”

Celebrate HCM’s 20th Birthday with us!

Please join us in late October for our annual Gala as we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the program that started it all, Noah Sideway Sunday School, and the 10th anniversary of the Noah After-School Program! Stay tuned for the date and location coming soon!



Former NAS Site Manager Amy Jarvis

How Can I Get Involved?

Send us pictures (like the ones on pg 1) with a testimony about how HCM’s mission to Share, Develop, Connect, Transform has personally impacted you and/or your family:

- **Share:** Did HCM share the good News of Jesus with you?
- **Develop:** Was HCM an important part of your spiritual growth?
- **Connect:** Did HCM help you connect with other Christians?
- **Transform:** How has God transformed you as a result of your relationship with HCM?

Join the 20th Anniversary Celebration planning team. We are looking for friends to help out on one or more of the following Planning Team Sub-committees:

- **Program**—Format, Speakers, Performances and Honorees
- **Registration, Table Hosts and Sponsorships**
- **Tech**—Sound, Projection, and Lighting
- **Venue**—Selection, Layout, Decorations and Menu

Please contact Danielle at 860.246.0132 or daniellea@hartfordcitymission.org with any interest or questions! We look forward to celebrating with you all!



You are part of the HCM family!

Please support us by:

- Praying regularly for our students, parents, volunteers, and staff.
- Provide a healthy snack for Camp Noah. Sign up:
- Making a donation - HCM is a 501c3 non-profit.
- Host or sponsor a group of up to 36 campers at your church, local park or activity center for one of our Camp Noah Fun Friday field trips.
- Share info on Camp Noah w/ friends and family bit.ly/registercn

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

www.hartfordcitymission.org

- HCM is turning 20!
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