

Hartford City Mission Spring Newsletter, 2019

A New Director, The Story Behind HCM's Recent Change In Leadership



HCM Executive Directors Past and Present, Victor and Dave

HCM has a new executive director. Outgoing director Dave Ambrose and his family will be moving to Florida this summer; and Victor Rush, pastor of Ebenezer Temple, will become HCM's new executive director. This article is an attempt to briefly tell the story behind this transition — and what we see God doing in and through it.

Five years ago, when Tom Kubiak was executive director of HCM, Tom's wife Joanna took a temporary job as a receptionist at the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority — an organization that helps finance affordable housing for low and middle income families. Not long after Joanna started working at CHFA, somebody told the Director of Administration there — Victor Rush — that he needed to meet this new receptionist. He was told that she was a Christian, and that the two of them had a lot in common. So Victor wandered down to the receptionist desk, introduced himself, and struck up a conversation with Joanna.

Eventually, the two of them got to talking about Joanna's husband's new job as director of HCM. This piqued Victor's interest. For years, he had been thinking about starting an afterschool program at the church he pastored in North Hartford (Ebenezer Temple). But they didn't have the resources, and so it had never happened. But after talking with Joanna, Victor decided to invite HCM to start using the space at his church to host an afterschool site.

An unexpected benefit came about from this partnership; the NAS families who attended this new afterschool site started visiting Ebenezer's Sunday morning services. And Ebenezer's congregation grew. Little by little, and month by month, God worked through this partnership to bring about change in Victor's church and the surrounding community. And so when Victor was invited to speak at HCM's 2016 Annual Brunch, to testify about what he saw God doing through HCM... he gladly accepted.

Not long after the brunch, Victor was invited to join HCM's board. That was two years ago. And now, fast-forward to this past January; Dave Ambrose has been HCM's executive director for 2 years. The organization has taken a number of important steps forward under Dave's leadership — growing its programs, attendance, and staff. But when Dave returned to the office after Christmas break in January, he realized an internal shift had taken place in him.

Without warning, and for reasons that he at first didn't understand... Dave felt a growing sense of uneasiness.

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PARENT EMPOWERMENT

United in raising our children, chasing our dreams and providing for our families

As a busy parent, it's always a gift when you get an occasional night off. It's even more refreshing when that night includes not having to worry about what's for dinner and managing multiple kid's homework assignments. Add in the opportunity to have encouraging conversation with other adults in similar life stages, and most of us instantly want to know where we can sign up!

At HCM, this kind of an evening is a reality for the parents of C.O.G.s in our programs. Once a month, families are invited to a night off or more formally, Parent Empowerment Night. The evening includes dinner donated by friends of HCM (lovingly prepared and/or purchased), intentional childcare by our After School Assistant Site Managers and faithful volunteers from Vox Church Hartford AND a chance after dinner for parents to retreat to the classroom of our Glory Chapel site, for conversation, encouragement and prayer.



"For me, the Parent Empowerment meetings were therapeutic and an opportunity to talk in community about our concerns, what we were thankful for and what we were looking forward to. It was nice to just have a space to get things off our chests sometimes."

-Brittnee (Mom of 3 C.O.G.s)

The "Parent Empowerment" part of the evening usually starts with introductions and a time of announcements. Parents are given the chance and space to ask questions

about upcoming events like Fun Friday Field Trips, retreats, Camp Noah and overnight summer camp SB2W. Conversation flows naturally and parents are encouraged to answer the questions asked with their own experiences if they can. After that, the group splits into smaller breakouts and the same two simple questions are asked each time before we gather and pray together for each other.

What is one thing that you are encouraged by or excited about right now? What is one thing we can be praying for you or your family for?"

This is the time it all comes together. Whether you worked all day at a hospital, office or school or you are in-between jobs, you rent or own your home, you are a single parent, a grandparent or a couple co-parenting... we are all united in the struggles of raising our beloved children, finding room to chase our own dreams amongst the busyness of life and providing for our families basic needs.

At the meeting in January, one parent answered the question of "What are you excited for right now?" with the answer that their family was in the process of looking to buy a house. The response from the rest of the group was so encouraging, as one parent after another suggested programs they knew about throughout the city for first-home buyers, renovation grants that they or someone else they knew had previously used and we learned more about each other as stories were shared.

The prayer that evening like all the meetings, was heartfelt as we lifted each other up for physical "homes" and as always for our children, the common link we all share and love.

At HCM, much of our staff's time is spent on intentionally planning Christ centered lessons and offerings for Noah and Nehemiah After School, Camp Noah and Young Life. Unintentionally, it is easy to slip into business mode on a daily basis, speaking about details and expectations of program, and things like permission slips. The gift of the Parent Empowerment evenings for all of us, staff and parents, is so much more than just dinner and a meeting, it's a chance to slow down, fellowship over a relaxed dinner together and to find community.

TRANSITION ARTICLE CONTINUED

Through prayer, internal searching, and conversations with local pastors and trusted friends, Dave began to realize that God was asking him to move on from HCM. It wasn't very clear why God was asking this of him; but it was clear that God was asking this of him. So Dave resolved to inform the HCM board that they should start searching for a new director at the next board meeting.

Victor almost missed that meeting. He had told the board that he wouldn't be able to make it, due to an important prior commitment...

but right at the last minute the commitment was, perhaps not so coincidentally, cancelled.

So Victor attended the meeting.

And heard Dave's big announcement.

Immediately, according to Victor, he got that uneasy feeling that you get when you suspect God might be asking you to do something that you don't want to do. He knew that taking the job would mean giving up his position at CHFA — a job which afforded him and his family a good and secure life. But at the same time, he knew that being HCM's new director would allow him to pursue more purposeful living... in a way that he couldn't do at CHFA. For the whole meeting, and for the whole ride home, Victor felt conflicted.

When he got home, he told his family that Dave would be stepping down, and that HCM was now looking for a

new director. His wife immediately responded by asking him if he was going to apply. And then his daughter remarked that she saw God moving in these events. From experiences like these, Victor's sense that God was asking him to apply for the director position deepened. And to shorten a much longer story, Victor eventually *did* apply, asking God to give him the job if God actually wanted him to be the new director.

God gave him the job. Which brings us to today; Dave, Danielle, and their family will be moving to Florida to be near Danielle's family. They all will be sorely missed; by HCM, by all the families HCM has impacted, and by the larger community of North Hartford. Their faithful presence and relentless service to the community have left, quite literally, an eternal impact on this city.

At the same time, HCM is overjoyed to see Victor become our new executive director. His heart, his experience, his vibrant faith, and his personal history as one who was born and raised in Hartford... are just what we need in our next director.

It's clear that God is and has been at the heart of these recent changes. It's unclear where this all is leading. But judging by how God has cared for and led our organization in the past... HCM has a bright future ahead of it. So lead onward, Lord Jesus. We're thrilled to see where you will take us next.



- Volunteer at our End of Camp Party, August 2nd
- Sponsor Fun Friday Field Trip bus costs
- Purchase snacks: bit.ly.com/CampSnacks2019
- Cook, donate a meal or gift card for Camp Staff Trainings
- Sponsor a Camper! Camp Noah is free of expense to the families.
 - * \$100 covers 1 C.O.G. for a week
 - * \$600 covers the C.O.G for the summer
 - * \$250 covers a week of overnight Camp

Interested? Please call our office 860.246.0132!



You are part of the HCM family!

Please support us by:

- Praying regularly for our students, parents, volunteers, and staff.
- Providing a healthy snack for Camp Noah.
<http://bit.ly/CampSnacks2019>
- Making a donation - HCM is a 501c3 non-profit.
- Sponsoring the cost of the bus ride to one of the Fun Friday Field Trips (hosted by volunteers and Church Partners)

For more information, visit our website or contact
Executive Director Victor Rush at
victorr@hartfordcitymission.org

www.hartfordcitymission.org

- Meet HCM's new Executive Director, Victor Rush!
- Glimpse inside Parent Empowerment Meetings
- Ways to support Camp Noah this summer!

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