

# Summerhill Community Ministries



August 2011

Serving Inner-City Youth & Families in the Downtown Atlanta Area



## Summer Camp Update 2011

This past summer, one of our focus points was on our youth job training program. We had a mix of college and high school students.

After talking with our high school students during the school year, we found that many of them are faced with major choices and negative influences each day. These choices weren't whether or not to do their homework, or should they play basketball or football, or even if they should ask a particular girl for a number. But the choices were whether or not to join (or get out of) a gang, smoke marijuana, have sex, and drink.

These topics seem to be the conversation of "choice" among our middle, high school and college age kids.

I knew that we had to meet these kids "where they are". This summer we were able to tap into some these areas.

When hired, the youth signed an agreement that stated they must attend mandatory life skill classes. Each week we were able to talk to the youth workers about controlling their anger, distractions, gang awareness, drug use, and other addictions that could affect their lives in a major way.

A couple of the speakers that made a great impact were a young minister and local business owner, Dwight Buckner, who has a heart for the youth, and James Calhoun, a Christian member of Narcotics Anonymous, and a

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member of a local Christian-led NA group. These 2 men shared their own personal experience and struggles as young boys and teens who made some really bad choices in their lives that landed them in horrible, regretful situations. But God, in His mercy, allowed them to find their way to Him. The teens were totally engrossed as they shared. They openly asked questions and engaged with our speakers, and felt comfortable enough to share about their struggles.

We will keep in contact with our youth workers as they all start a new school year. They will also be a part of our monthly teen sessions, where we can continue to encourage them.



## Happy Campers!

We served 55 happy campers this summer. Our campers eagerly came each morning, ready for whatever the camp day would hold for them. What made them happy? Well, they ate well, learned, went swimming, read, sky hiked, sang, fished, canoed, treasure hunted, and danced. They attended drama, karate, art, wood working, fabric painting, sports, and sewing classes. They went on fun trips to Stone Mountain, God's Farm, skating, the movies, Chuckie Cheese's, Dixie Land, and more!!

During all of these fun activities and enrichments, our wonderful staff purposely engaged these kids and challenged them to have fun, but also to exhibit good character like showing respect, being kind, controlling anger, sharing with one another, waiting



patiently, being a good helper, and making good choices.

We also taught an age appropriate curriculum that helped the kids to build character, to not give in to negative peer pressure, and to make them aware of what to do when they are approached to join a gang, which many of them have already encountered. Thanks for your prayer support. Please continue to pray for the children.



## Can I be Transparent for a Minute?

After summer camp, we evaluate the progress and successfulness of our summer programs.

I look at all of the children and teens and hope the best for them as I would want the best for my children. I find myself teaching and encouraging the kids with as much passion as I can give. As time passes, you see the ones that really take in what is being taught and shared and then there are some that just are not ready to make positive changes or choices, **but they keep coming.**

Let's look at our relationship with our own kids. We as parents, teach, train, instill good values, support, sacrifice, and pray for our children with the hope that our kids will turn out to be wise, strong minded, independent, successful, kind hearted, hard working, giving and caring citizens in this world. We want them to do better, and go farther than we did... I can go on and on, but you get my point.

Well, what happens when we find out our child has made a bad decision or choice? Especially when we know it will alter or compromise what we have taught them. It can be very devastating, but we don't stop teaching them and supporting them. We hope that they will learn from their mistakes and not repeat them. We pray that they will not be so discouraged that they give up on themselves or more importantly, give up on God. We remind them that there is forgiveness of sins.

After hearing the confession of a bad choice that was made from one of my kids this past summer, I found myself very downhearted. We talked through a lot.

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After mixed emotions, tears, and much praying, we went to church a few Sundays ago. We had a guest speaker that day. He gave an illustration of sin and forgiveness.

He told us to imagine a huge Wal-Mart warehouse that was full of boxes. And in these boxes were our sins. God asked us to repent and bring Him all of our sins. We bring boxes of sins of all kinds. One fourth of the warehouse is cleared. God says to keep coming... and don't leave any behind. Now, three quarters of the warehouse is cleared.

We feel that we have sinned so much that God is tired of us and wouldn't forgive any more sin. God says "come." Not feeling worthy, but wanting forgiveness, we continue to take all of the boxes to God until the warehouse is cleared. And then God says, "what is in that back door, way in the back?" We say, "Oh Lord, there is something back there that is horrible! It is too shameful to expose or mention, and it stinks with a fervent odor. I could not possibly bring this huge, ugly sin before you."

There was a moment of silence and brokenness that you could sense in the atmosphere. We all have had or still have that "back door sin" that

we think is too terrible to reveal. But God, in His love and mercy says "I will forgive you of this, too".

The congregation clapped and some were moved to tears. My family was there, and I knew that we needed to hear this message of forgiveness. We went home and talked more about what we heard that morning, and how we need to move forward as we handle and live with choices that have changed our lives. We prayed that we would strive very hard to not make the same mistakes.

*"We must continue to teach, train, share, empower, impact and pour into the lives of our children and the people that God puts in our path."*



After working with children and teens for years, I have found out that they learn by repetition. Remember how long it took you and me to "get it"? And if we are totally honest, we still struggle with "getting" quite a few things even now.

We must continue to teach, train, share, empower, impact and pour into the lives of our children and the people that God puts in our path. Please join the Summerhill staff as we press on to impact as many children and teens as we can.

Sincerely,

Justina Dix  
Director

## After School Program

Despite the Atlanta Public School cheating scandal, SCM will continue to do our part with helping the kids that come to our programs by offering homework and tutoring help.

The After School Program starts September 19th. During the first few weeks, we need time to prepare the kids and to see where they are academically. **We are currently looking for volunteers to help beginning in October.** Volunteers are needed from 3:30pm-5:30pm, Monday -Thursday. It's important for the kids to receive one on one attention to insure they understand the lessons.

Please call or email Justina to schedule a day or week to volunteer at 404-964-4604 or [justinascm@juno.com](mailto:justinascm@juno.com).



*"... he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."*

Philippians 1:15