

Summerhill Community Ministries, Inc. (December 2004)

SERVING INNER-CITY YOUTH AND FAMILIES

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"Home For the Holidays"

I met Arlene Howard at the school bus stop one morning. She overheard me talking to one of the After School parents about when the program would start. She asked me if there was room for her children. Arlene was looking for work, but knew that if hired, she would not have child-care for her children. She couldn't afford other programs, and did not have transportation to make it home early enough to be there for her kids after school. We accepted her children and she got a job, but her troubles were not over. The family

was living in an abusive situation and often had to leave the house to stay with family & friends.

Jennifer & I prayed for Arlene and her children many times and tried to be there for them as best as we could. The kids often spent the night in our homes. As we learned more about the mental and physical scars of the family, we wondered if we could really help. Then God reminded us that we are merely the vessels; He is the one that transforms lives. So, we kept praying.

Last Christmas, Arlene showed up at my door in tears. She told me that she did not want her family to continue to live this way. She knew she needed to leave the abusive relationship, but she had no place to go. She expressed how tired she was of moving her kids each week and how it was affecting them emotionally. Her kids were quiet, but angry. I referred her to some agencies and spent time counseling her about the abusive relationship. Her kids, LaPorsha, Indasha, & Quentavious, participated in our After School Program, Summer Camp, and soccer team. During this time they started to pray for their mom and their circumstances. Last year they also began attending a Wednesday night children's program at Jennifer's church. Through all of this, they flourished and became happier children.

After a few months, her male companion was arrested on unrelated charges and incarcerated. Arlene was put on a waiting list for low-income housing and was accepted. The Howard family still has many challenges to face, as do all of us. However, this Christmas, she and her family can spend Christmas together in a safe place they call HOME. To God be the Glory!!

P.S.- LaPorsha made the Principal's list this year, Quentavious' test scores have gone up and Indasha's reading & math skills have greatly improved. All of them love being helpers and leaders.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

December 11- CONGRADULATIONS TO ESHEKA HOPPER AS SHE GRADUATES FROM ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY!

December 16- Christmas Gift Wrapping Party: The children will wrap the gifts for their loved ones that they have worked for. A HUGE Thanks to all our supporters who sponsored a child! The response was outstanding.

January 8- Basketball Season Begins- All Games will be played at the Grant Park Gym. If you want a schedule, please call or email us. Our Basketball Players need new uniforms. The old ones have definitely served their time. We want our players to look good and feel confident. We also want to get uniforms for our cheerleaders. If you would like to make this happen, please send an extra gift with your regular donation and designate basketball or cheerleader uniforms in the memo line.

*Please remember that starting January 1st all donations must be made out to Summerhill Community Ministries (and mailed to the above address). They can no longer be received at Redemption Fellowship Church.

YOU MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR THE MINISTRY TO CONTINUE IN THE LIVES OF SO MANY!

**MAY GOD BLESS YOU AND YOUR FAMILY THIS CHRISTMAS AND ALWAYS,
JUSTINA DIX & JENNIFER BRUMFIELD**