



The Lighthouse Beacon

A quarterly publication of the Lighthouse, an urban youth outreach center started by First Mennonite Church, Canton, Oh.

Vol. 14 Issue 1

1939 3rd St SE Canton, Oh 44707

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Mission Statement

To impact the youth of our neighborhood with the love of Christ.

What We Offer

After school programs
Evening clubs
Summer activities projects
Service learning

Letter From The Director

When I look at the life of Jesus I am fascinated by the way He speaks into people's lives. I see God placing Himself among the ones He created in an effort to communicate how He sees them and what He calls them to. Whether it be healing the leper, protecting the woman caught in adultery, or interacting with the Samaritan woman Jesus ignores the labels and stereotypes and chooses to speak hope into their lives. Hope that comes from God and His people speak to spiritual, physical, emotional, and even intellectual needs.

In this newsletter you will find examples of how the Lighthouse chooses to communicate hope to the children we serve. You will read about the academic support we offer the young students in our community, as well as the emotional and spiritual support offered in our growing Jr High ministry. Our goal is to be present in the lives of these children in a way that communicates their worth from a Kingdom perspective.

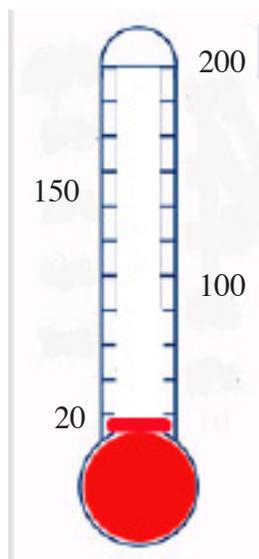
We are also inviting you to partner with us to make a difference in the lives of these children. With a budget shortfall in 2009, and planned budget cuts in after-school funding scheduled for late 2010, we are introducing a new campaign to meet this need. **We need 200 people willing to commit to give \$20 each month to the Lighthouse and its work in southeast Canton.** Donations can be made by credit card via our website or by mail.

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about our ministry and to consider how you can impact others with the love and hope found in Jesus Christ.

Peace,
Darin Nissley

\$20/month giving Challenge!

Our Goal: 200 donors



For more information about giving call:
330-453-1044
or visit
www.cantonlighthouse.org

Nurturing Hope

The Lighthouse's mission is to *impact youth of the community with the love of Christ*. One of the ways we live this out is by creating environments which nurture hope. Many of the children we work with struggle with academics, peer relationships, and/or issues within the home. The Lighthouse's after school program is an example of our efforts at nurturing hope.

Domanique has been attending our after school program for 2 years now. She initially started attending two days a week as part of our literacy program for 2nd graders. When 3rd grade started back up again, Domanique begged her mom to let her come back to the Lighthouse.

"Mom, please fill out the paperwork! I want to go back to the Lighthouse," she would say. So her mom filled everything out, and when Domanique entered the 3rd grade, she came back to our program full time.



The Lighthouse's after-school program typically starts 7 weeks into the school year. By this point, Domanique was struggling somewhat as evidenced by her first report card of all C's. On her second report card, Domanique's grades improved: all B's and one C. Both Domanique and her mother feel that it was through the help of the Lighthouse that changes have been made.

The day that Domanique received her report card, her mother Shawanna expressed her gratitude to the Lighthouse and the excitement she felt for her daughter's hard work. As she was picking up Domanique, Shawanna leaned out of her car window and shouted, "This is what I'm talking about!"

"Domanique is eager to share new things with me and she has opened up a lot," said Shawanna. "Her older sister even says that she's seen a great change of attitude."

These small transformations in a child's life are perfect examples of the impact the Lighthouse wants to make in our community. Nurturing this hope is something that we continue to pursue, and we are excited about the improvements and strengths that keep emerging from the young people we work with.

Providing safety • Fighting prejudice • Nurturing hope • Offering spiritual care • Emphasizing service

Jr High Club

Abby Skiba

Jr. High Club is one of the programs we offer the 7th and 8th graders in our community. When we started the club in September, we prayed that God would unify us, and bring us students who would really benefit from what we have to offer. As the students came through our door, we really felt that God sent each one of them to us for a reason. They were slightly shy in the beginning, perhaps a bit apprehensive, but as time went by, they really started to open up and allow us to be a part of their lives.

Jr. High Club is very diverse. We have leaders and students from all different backgrounds and upbringings. Half of our students go to Hartford Middle School, while the other half attend First Mennonite. Our leadership team is made up of our Program Director Hannah Ramsburg, along with Communications Director Abby Skiba, interns Doug Ryder and David Kamwesa, and volunteer Nate Netti.

We have about 10-12 students who come to the Lighthouse each Tuesday night for games, dinner, and Bible study. Each week, we explore

Bible stories that have helped start numerous discussions and have evoked countless theological and personal questions. We believe that because of our diversity we are able to discuss a wide variety of issues. Topics that come up during Tuesday nights include things like racism, parenting, dating, and the characteristics of God. We are really enjoying getting to know the students and have been amazed at how they are opening up about everything from their faith to their home lives.

A key ingredient in our programming this

year has been special activities outside of normal club time. So far this year we have participated in winter camp at Camp Luz, gone to see the Harlem Globetrotters, and made s'mores around the camp fire together (most of the students had never done this

before!) We truly enjoy these special times to hang out with the kids and it's our hope and plan to do special events like these every month.

Camp Luz was a wonderful time for learning, worship, and fun. A highlight of the weekend was listening to guest speaker Dr. Don Bartlette

tell his incredible life story about the struggles of being a Native American with a disability. Because our group is so diverse, Don's story and message, allowed us to talk openly about our differences, and challenged us to

treat people who are different than us in new ways. Through our time at camp, we saw a lot of growth in our students. Their wheels are definitely turning.

As our students begin to make the transition into young adulthood we ask that you will pray for us as we seek to show God's love and give wise counsel to our students. They are truly remarkable young people.



Human dog-sledding at Camp Luz

Meet Domanique

Why do you like coming to the Lighthouse?

It can help you get to college and get a good education, there are nice teachers, and it's fun!

What is your favorite subject?

Science. This year I learned about earthquakes and owl pellets.

What does "hope" mean to you?

For me it meant bringing my grades up. It means wanting something or wishing for something.

What is your favorite food?

Pizza. Ice cream for dessert.

What do you hope to be when you grow up?

A teacher. I want to help kids learn.

