

Mission Statement

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



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From the Director's Desk

At the Lighthouse, presenting Christ takes many forms; it may be teaching a child to read, sharing the Gospel, or offering a safe place to learn and play with adults who care about them. Whatever form it takes it must include communicating a high level of respect and individual worth as part of the message. We believe this is paramount to living out our mission of *impacting youth with the love of Christ*. Failing to do this can easily lead to a mindset of fixing, saving, and other hero talk rather than seeing ourselves as part of a community working together to address the issues we face... seeing ourselves as one part of what God is doing here. Much of our programming is the result of the community's voice identifying an issue and asking us to be part of the solution. In this issue you will read about our latest efforts to listen and learn from our neighborhood as well as our efforts to impart the significance of service to the children we work with. We covet your prayers as we continue to be one source of healing and hope in our community.

Blessings!

Darin Nissley

Service Learning Opportunities

Abby Skiba

A significant ingredient in our programming here at the Lighthouse is that of service. This emphasis is reflected in several different ways, most noticeably during the summer months.

We have five service learning teams visiting the Lighthouse this year. These teams, hailing from nearby states and Canada, come for a week to work at the Lighthouse and other work sites all over Canton. It's important for us to support other organizations in Canton in this way. It contributes to the betterment of our entire city.

Throughout our programming we make sure that the children understand that they have the ability and the opportunity to serve their community. One of our summer activities is called "love our neighborhood day." During this day we focus on the beauty that is Southeast Canton and seek out different places that could use a little TLC. Whether it is cleaning up our very own community garden, or picking up trash on the street, these activities help our students understand that change starts with them.

Service Learning isn't just about physical work. It's also about creating meaningful



relationships. Another amazing part of the service learning portion of our ministry is that we put an emphasis on meeting new people. Our teams get to spend time with the Lighthouse students on two field trips. And it is through those trips that we see some of the best moments of service. We see service teams helping younger children and we see relationships forming. Relationships that foster prayer, change, convergence and awareness. It is through these relationships, through crossing into unknown territory, through relating to one another that we are able to serve each other better.

Though the service learning teams only stay for one week, several of them return year after year. We believe this is because of the establishment of relationships that can't help but last beyond one short summer session.

Discovering our community Dishon and Jordan Kamwesa

In May, Lighthouse staff members and volunteers visited more than 450 homes in our neighborhood, conducting a needs and asset assessment.

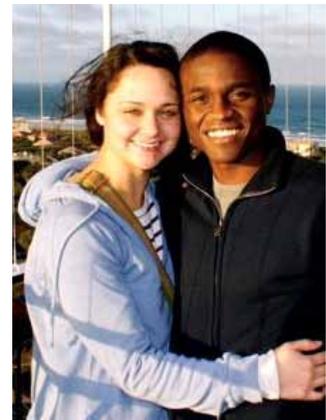
Before heading out into the neighborhood, we put on our sunscreen, laced up our shoes and made sure our clipboards were ready to go. Some days we were accompanied by the scorching sun and other days we were shrouded by storm clouds, but despite the weather, we were on a mission to find out what the community's needs were from the community members themselves. As we went from one door to another in the Southeast neighborhoods of Canton, we found that we were not just simply distributing a survey, but we were meeting beautiful people who had beautiful things to say and to contribute to their neighborhood.

As we started out, we began to wonder how many people we were going to meet. To our surprise the first response came with much enthusiasm. We met a gentleman who had been living in the neighborhood for most of his life and had much to say about life on his block. He described himself as an "activist" who looked out for his neighbors and made sure the community remained safe. From the very first question of the survey, he expressed a great deal of excitement about the neighborhood coming together and addressing key issues. His excitement was contagious and this made us want to find out what others had to say.

As we moved throughout the neighborhood and spoke to different people, we came across a house with a well-mannered garden and an inviting porch. The owner of the house was a polite, gentle and relatable elderly woman. Immediately she ushered us onto her porch and began to talk to us about her childhood in Alabama and how different it was to her life in Canton. Her honesty was refreshing; you could sense that she cared about the people around her. Apart from just asking about the needs of the community, we also were interested in what gifts and talents each individual possessed. This pleasant woman possessed a lifetime of wisdom and was willing to share it.

Continuing on, we made our way to the next house, where we met a friendly engaged couple and their son. They invited us into their home and began to share their experience of living in the neighborhood for a short period of time. They said that they had recently purchased the house and hoped to make it their home for the foreseeable future. They expressed some concerns with the neighborhood but were excited about working alongside other community members to make their neighborhood a safer place.

Looking back on our experience we see a great need for community. Each individual that we had the chance to meet had a different perspective, but they all shared a desire to be connected. God's presence was in this experience. We learned that as Christ followers, we are called to invest in others lives and to listen to what they have to say. Too often we either don't listen or we neglect those around us and because of that we miss out on the community God intended for people to share in. We hope to remember the things we have learned as we are introduced to new people every day.



Dishon and Jordan Kamwesa are Malone University graduates living in Canton who have worked or volunteered at the Lighthouse for the past 4 years.



Meet Janice

Janice is moving on to the 5th grade next school year. She has been enrolled in the after school program for 2 years.

What have you liked about being in the after school program?

They have people help us with our homework and I like all of the games we play.

What do you like most about the neighborhood you live in?

I like how people help me up when I fall.

What do you wish was different?

I wish people would stop throwing their trash on the ground.

You just got back from Camp Luz. What was your favorite part? Why?

I liked swimming and the games we played. I also liked it because I got to learn more about Jesus.

What's your favorite camp song?

Pharaoh! Pharaoh!



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