

October 2010

Ready, Set, Go!

The Homework House staff worked diligently during the summer to plan for a great opening. The staff changed the presentation of the Parent Orientation-Registration at the Teen site since it is a large space and to use a Power Point Presentation with staff and parents presenting the materials. The staff offered ___ sessions and ___ of the ___ were offered in Spanish, the primary language of our parents. Also with parents from the Parent Committee assisting in the presentation of materials, the team members had additional assistance with registration forms. The Parent Committee members made the process more efficient and effective. (Insert pic)

The Homework House team also sought new strategies for seeking volunteers to tutor. The team has been joined by Chelsea Burdick who platformed the volunteer application and process online. What a gift; she is an excellent example of a partnership with the Ministry and Service Office at APU. (See more on Chelsea inside)The team attended Volunteer Fairs at both Citrus College and Azusa Pacific University to invite college students to join us in our work.



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Partnership was also a key part of our core of our ability to offer to our students structured summer activities.

–Glenkirk, Village Covenant and Foothill Transit were major partners for the K-5 students as they provided off site programming opportunities. Students were reminded of how precious they are by the programming offered by Glenkirk and Village Covenant. Then they learned about the local transit system and a little geography as they traveled to a theatre in another city with free bus passes provided by Foothill Transit. And more than ___volunteers also provided miles of shuttle service and their time in transporting students from their neighborhoods to Glenkirk, Village Covenant and the local Santa Fe Dam Recreation area. (Insert pics)

– The teens were not forgotten as they too had a major partner for their summer programming. Alpine Camp offers a program to urban youth and eleven of our teens chose to spend a week in the cool mountains. Also for the last five years the teens has had a partner, the Smith Family, who donates funds to allow us to provide a stipend to four teens as they have their first employment experience by becoming a Summer Intern with Homework House. Finally the teens engaged in structured 'Teen Talk' and helped design future summer programming around activities that they enjoyed this summer such as hiking the Garcia Trail and going to the movie theatre. (Insert pics of teens at camp)



From the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Partnerships are key in the nonprofit world. We are most pleased that many of you have come along side of us as we do our work. Whether you are providing key items to allow us to offer a sanitary environment or needed school items for our students, you have made the difference. So as you read this issue, the recurring theme is that it is YOU that allow us to work on behalf of underserved students and their families. Homework House is able to have relief to our budget and save hundreds of dollars because of the In Kind donations of folks like you. Thank you! Many of you understand that because we are located in apartments of the neighborhoods where our families reside, we need basic items such as hand soap, toilet paper, cleaning supplies, and such. You stepped in and brought several of these items to our sites; Glendora United Methodist Church was one of our key providers of these items. Also we struggle with more basic house-keeping issues and our appreciation is extended to the Azusa Rotarians whose members Frank Kearney and Terry Kistler made sure that rain did not seep into various work spaces. Finally, we are always blessed by those of you who as a group or individually remember our students and their school needs. Many groups and individuals have brought by school tools: paper, pencils, tape, glue and the like. We are delighted that new individuals found us such as Jack Lee who used this as a time to teach his young children about giving back.

So know that you too can contribute to our work by donating in-kind services or by doing something as simple as sharing this newsletter with a friend. You may visit our website for an extended list of items. It is us together who can ensure that our students and their families acquire academic, social and spiritual tools to empower them to become stronger students, better parents and more resourceful neighbors.



Meet More of Our Staff

Our students and their families have been already busy receiving tutoring and leadership skills! Homework House has been fortunate to have a strong core of volunteers from Azusa Pacific University, Citrus College and community members. We can only do the work that we do with their assistance. Azusa Pacific University actually allows us to be a placement site for some of their students who qualify for work study as well as students who are participants in a grant to the university. We want you to meet some of these talented youth who are using their talents in service to others. They serve in several areas but in this issue, we are highlighting the Administrative Director and his administrative team, also known as the "A Team"! So read Luke's story and meet his A Team members.

From the Board Chair

Friends,

Partnering is important with the business community as well. We have established two financial levels of partnership: the \$2000 and the \$5000 level. Bloomfield Bakers was our first Corporate Partner. They signed on at the beginning of the calendar year. Athens Services recently joined us at this level as well. At the \$5000 level, Vulcan has been a partner with us for two years.

While we value the financial support which allows us to provide the services to our students and their families and we also value and appreciate how these partners are giving back in other ways. Bloomfield Bakers and Waste Management have expressed interest in a new program placing our students in the workforce after we have given them the on the job experience as a Summer Intern for Homework House. Athens is interested in using some of our teens to help with specific projects which Athens sponsors. Finally, Vulcan encourages and supports their employees to serve as tutors for our students. Other financial partners with us for this fiscal year have been: (Insert list of foundations, civic or businesses that were not mentioned.)

We are grateful and look forward to other partnerships which allow us to serve our students and their families.

Sincerely,

Jan Wickersham, Board President

The A-Team Strikes Again

Well folks, there is no black and red striped van, acrobatic feats, or machine guns, but this Homework House A-team is for real. Made up of a staff, volunteer, and student intern triage, the Admin "A" team is a ragtag group of action-ready heroes ready to type letters, tackle mail, and untangle tech support like it was going out of style.

The A-team was created by Administrative Director Luke Spink to create cohesion, synergy, and team support around tasks that aren't typically as popular as others (such as data entry) but that contribute significantly to the administrative backbone of the organization. In the short time the team has been operating, their effort has not only helped HH to reach several of its administrative goals, but it has also helped to create efficiency, clarity, and momentum in programmatic areas as well. Meet the team:

Chelsea Burdick is a senior graphic design major at Azusa Pacific University. Since being employed as a Student Ministry Coordinator through APU's MAS office, Chelsea has created an online enrollment process for new volunteers, launched several other volunteer recruitment ventures, and even volunteers herself with the Neighborhood Teen Project twice a week. Needless to say, it's hard to put her in a box.



Clement Tam is a 2010 graduate of Azusa High School, with a long history of volunteer community involvement. Clement is on his way to UC Berkeley in the Spring (Political Science) but wanted to make the best use of the extra time before he starts. In the three days a week he volunteers, Clement has contributed significantly to several projects, including a tech inventory/overhaul of all three HH sites and a restructuring of HH's data management process.



Jaime Munoz is also a 2010 graduate of Azusa High School and is also a former Homework House student! Jaime is in his freshman year at Azusa Pacific University, is studying biochemistry, and plans to become an M.D. Jaime is employed as an Administrative Assistant through APU's Federal Work Study program, offered in conjunction with APU's Office of Service Learning and Research. For Jaime, working at the Homework House is an opportunity to serve the community and round out his professional future.



Lizzet Reyes also plans to become an M.D. and is in her sophomore year of a biology major at Azusa Pacific University. With a passion to serve underprivileged factions of the Latino community, Lizzet plans to capitalize on the opportunity to learn the administrative processes that underpin the operation of an organization. Lizzet's participation is made possible through APU's Lily Grant program, offered in conjunction with its Career Services Office.



Morgan McNerlin recently relocated to the Azusa area with her husband. While settling in, Morgan wanted an opportunity to connect with the community and stay active before jumping back into full time employment. With several degrees and a diverse work experience (including nonprofit management), Morgan has been able to lend strategic insight into several key areas of information management as well as heading a relatively daunting project of her own.



Janette Diaz is working to coordinate special events for Homework House, including a Jamba Fund-raiser, assisting with HH's March auction, and several neighborhood events. Janette is a Junior pre-nursing major at APU, is enabled to participate through APU's Career Services Lily Grant internship, and enjoys being at Homework House because it allows her to participate in something bigger than herself.



Meet Luke!

If I knew when I was five that in 2010, my daily routine would involve a different profession every day, I probably would have studied one of them. Working at the Homework House has stretched me into more roles, brought me more diverse challenges, and taught me more lessons than I ever thought possible.

It has been the best time of my life.

It all started in 2003 when a project for a class I was taking at Azusa Pacific University required a service component. I tutored for three semesters and thought my work at Homework House was done. Little did I know that an unexpected turn of events in late 2008 would bring me back in a completely different capacity.

I've worked in a few different environments, yet I've never seen people more committed, service more authentic, families more persistent, impact more genuine, and supporters more committed, than those in the scenes that play out before me on a daily basis. Every minute keeps me on my toes, my head in check, and my heart in my throat.

One thing I have studied is the way businesses and nonprofits are supposed to work, how they usually don't, and the complex intricacies of adapting to the rapidly changing social and economic conditions of our today. Suffice it to say I can't live without a challenge, but the staff, board, volunteers, and the growing list of supporters make being at the Homework House – now - irresistible.

Thank-you for giving me the opportunity to strive for something so true, in an environment so dynamic, and with people so real. I am definitely looking forward to our times ahead.



*This newsletter was created as a donation courtesy of America's Christian Credit Union.