

SAVE THE DATE



MARCH 20 – Strike Out Low Grades and Illiteracy!

This BHITC bowl-a-thon is a benefit for our tutoring ministries located at area churches. Sponsor a student bowler for \$25 or more and you're welcome to come bowl with us! The event will be held from 3 to 5 pm at Freeway Lanes, 12859 Brookpark Road.

March 25 – New Volunteer Orientation Session

Attend this 1-hour session and learn about all the ways you, your family, small group or congregation can plug into urban mission and ministry. RSVP for this session by calling Lesa at 216.281.4673.

APRIL 17 – Going Across Cultures: What Every Volunteer Needs to Know.

This half-day training is free for all BHITC volunteers who cross cultural, religious and socio-economic differences. Come learn and

explore issues of diversity in the city and how you can best represent the Lord in all you do. The training will be held at Trinity Lutheran Church from 9 am to 12 noon.

APRIL 24 – BHITC's Annual Volunteer Appreciation Event!

We love our volunteers! Let us prove it to you with a free performance of Cleveland Cirque at the Breen Center for the Performing Arts at St. Ignatius High School, located across the street from Trinity Lutheran Church. Volunteers can save their free spot for this event (tickets are normally \$10 per person), which will feature amazing circus arts, acrobatics, dance and more. The event starts at 1 pm at Trinity Lutheran Church.

MAY 1 – CitySERVE 2010!

Come give one day of service in the city to the Lord!

BECOME A FAN OF BHITC ON FACEBOOK!

You can now find BHITC on Facebook, where ministry reports, pictures, videos and other news items are posted regularly. Sign on as a fan today!



News of hope for a people of mission

Spring 2010

Our Mission

Building Hope in the City exists to connect Christians in mission by planting new urban congregations and helping renew existing inner city ministries.

WHAT THE CITY NEEDS NOW....IS YOU

By BHITC Executive Director Rev. Jeff Johnson

It happened again this week. It happens on a regular basis, in fact. In the middle of a normal conversation someone stopped everything and asked, "So what do you think we need most to help change our city?" I give the same answer every time. We need more church planters.

We need more church planters in the city! Jesus said "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." We pray that He would send His workers. We know He will because He said He would, but then what? What do we do with the workers when they arrive?

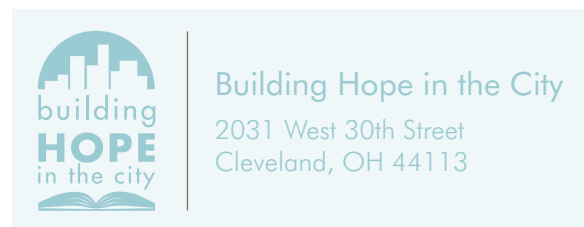
Planting new churches is at the heart of ministry here in the city. New churches are a great way to help change lives, as well as communities. New churches are a great way to reach new people and new people groups. New churches are an effective way to change our neighborhoods and our city, but new churches need new church planters and leaders.

Starting a new church can be an intimidating experience. It involves diverse ministry skills such as: selecting the area, creating a ministry proposal, gathering a core group, selecting a facility, raising support, developing outreach strategies, creating promotional material, guiding ministry systems for worship, children, youth, and small groups. Going public is hard work – even if you are "entrepreneurial." That is why at Building Hope in the City we believe this process cannot be done alone.

To send someone without oversight, a frank assessment of their skills and prayer support can be a very costly thing. Failed church plants are costly to our work in the city, to the planter and his family. It is costly to those who go with them and it's costly to the Kingdom.

We need more people who want to plant a church. We want more people who are willing to become part of teams who plant churches together. We are praying that God will raise up workers and we are preparing for them while we wait. Planting new churches is an important part of who we are at Building Hope in the City; raising up and training new leaders is even more important.

What we need in the city is you. God is calling workers into the harvest field. You don't need a special degree, but you do need a special passion – a passion to reach others with the love and Good News of Jesus... a passion for the helpless and the hopeless... a passion to watch the church grow. Come join us in the journey. Together we can make it happen.



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Vibrant city neighborhoods
Dynamic congregations
Passionate followers of Jesus
It's all possible....come and see!

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ENDOWMENT: HOPE FOR THE FUTURE FOR MISSION AND MINISTRY

Did you know that BHITC has an Endowment Fund? It was established in early 2009 thanks to a designated gift from **Randy and Dawn Luecke**, members at Trinity Lutheran Church.

"Dawn and I were excited to be able to initiate the Endowment Fund at BHITC," says Randy. "It is important to invest now, so that funds will be available to Building Hope in the future. Of course, there is always the need for funding current operations, but if we can keep an eye on the future, and achieve a balance of giving for current and future needs, then we ease the path of those who will 'pick up the cross' after us."

Giving to BHITC's Endowment is a great way to extend the impact of a single gift. Consider this: If your annual donation to BHITC totals \$100, you can perpetuate

that annual gift for years to come by making a \$2,000 bequest (a gift from your will or estate) or donation to the Endowment Fund. When such a one-time gift is invested in BHITC's Endowment, it yields an estimated 5% return – or \$100 each and every year for the ministry.

Building Hope in the City can accept gifts of stocks, bonds, retirement distributions, life insurance and bequests. Through such planned gifts, you can help rebuild a brighter future for urban ministry and often realize significant tax benefits. To learn more about these giving options, consult your financial advisor or call Brian Upton at 216.281.4673.



VOLUNTEER CONSIDERS HERSELF ONE THIRD OF A DYNAMIC TRIO



Ladonna Woods has plenty of experience as a volunteer – at her daughter’s school, at her church preparing and serving meals and at making handmade blankets for an agency that evaluates developmentally disabled babies and toddlers. But nowadays, Ladonna can be found in Lakewood on Tuesday nights at a youth and adult tutoring program operated by Gethsemane Lutheran Church and BHITC.

For the past two years, Ladonna has provided tutoring to one student each week, focusing especially on math and reading skills. “I expect a lot from the students I’m teaching because I know my students are smart and can do the work! ‘Lazy’ isn’t in my vocabulary,” she adds.

A member of Bethesda-on-the-Bay Lutheran Church in Bay Village, Ladonna prepares detailed lesson plans each week for her third grade student, Giana Davila-Blevins. “It’s so rewarding when the students I tutor see how their hard work is paying off through improvements in their grades and they get excited,” she says.

Darleen Koskinen, who coordinates the tutoring program at Gethsemane, notes that “Ladonna really puts her heart into her work.”

Ladonna adds that it’s her students’ parents who she thinks are often the unnoticed “heroes” in this ministry. “Transporting their children to evening tutoring classes is not always easy for many of these parents and yet, there they are every week, getting their children the help they need and teaching them how important and valuable an education is and what it means to be a family.”

Yolanda Davila-Blevins, Giana’s mother, says that she can see the difference in her daughter’s approach to school work thanks to Ladonna’s efforts. “Giana is becoming more confident in her math and reading. I’ve noticed that she is more confident in reading to her father and me.” Yolanda adds, “Mrs. Woods just seems to have a way with bringing out my daughter’s confidence and that’s helping Giana to succeed.”

It is those kinds of results that continue to inspire Ladonna to reach out and help others, as her Christian faith has taught her. “My faith reminds me that I’m responsible for my behavior. It reminds me that I only have this one life to get things right. I am also reminded every day of my blessings... and it is humbling.”

Want to join Ladonna and others in reaching families in the city?

- Become a tutor to a child or adult (literacy and GED preparation).
- Join the **Kids of the Kingdom** ministry team that teaches the faith to urban children on Saturday mornings.
- Become a coach in BHITC’s **Jobs Advantage** ministry and share your faith/work stories with others who are seeking employment.

To learn more about any of these opportunities, call BHITC at 216.281.4673.

RIGHT FOOT WHERE?

In January, refugee children from Africa gathered with the youth group from **Grace Lutheran Church in Thompson, Ohio**, for an afternoon of games and group activities, including a hilarious game of Twister, which not only resulted in a few human knots, but also taught the refugee children colors and the fine art of ‘cooperation’!



WHEN MISSION WALKS THROUGH YOUR FRONT DOOR

By Rev. Michael Wallace

Going out with God’s Word in mission is something we talk about a lot in churches. But, recently I watched as He began bringing amazing mission opportunities into our congregation, Gethsemane Lutheran Church in Lakewood. With the relocation of Lakewood Lutheran School (LLS) this past year, the tutoring program that was at LLS moved into the basement of our congregation this fall. For years, many of our members had been volunteering with BHITC in the tutoring program. They love the children and youth who take part. But the relocation now offered another opportunity – ministry to the parents of tutoring students.

Each week, I was amazed to see that many parents were in our building just “hanging out” for an hour during tutoring. God was causing mission to walk right into our front door... and we seized it. The hour has now become an informal small group ministry for interested parents. Together, we’ve watched videos on parenting, brought in guest educators to lead forums, such as “What every teacher wishes parents would know!” and gotten to know one another. This spring, we plan to offer a first aide / CPR course for parents. Our small group is still in its infancy, but we have developed a group of mothers who look forward to Tuesday nights. One of them noted recently how much her student has improved since attending tutoring and how “informative and interesting” the parenting classes have been.

Our parish looks forward to getting more parents involved in these Tuesday night gatherings. We want to engage and encourage them in their God-given vocation of parent. We also want to offer them a church home if they are not attending elsewhere. With God’s help, we see a bright future tutoring students and parents alike.

INTERNATIONAL MAN

Last fall, BHITC and Luther Memorial School (LMS) teamed up for a pioneering new effort: to create the city’s only private school devoting resources and staffing to educating foreign-born students. The **International Friends Program** will marry BHITC’s immigrant ministries, which touches the lives of many area refugee families, with LMS, a Christian grade school that’s redefining excellent urban education in the city.

students attend and BHITC’s ESL ministry in Lakewood at Pilgrim-St. Paul Lutheran Church that I realized what a huge blessing this would be to these families.

What I noticed on those early visits and interviews was this: The children were engaged in learning! Education is highly valued among immigrant families; their children are eager to learn and assimilate with Americans.



To spearhead this ministry’s development, BHITC is funding the work of teacher **Kevin Williams**, who will lead a “newcomers” classroom at LMS in August. Since September, Kevin has been busy getting to know refugee families and recruiting for LMS. Here are some of his reflections on the experience thus far:

“When I was first asked to put this program together I was excited...and nervous. Creating something new is energizing, but I was apprehensive about how receptive the refugee families would be to our efforts. It wasn’t until I visited the Cleveland public school where many refugee

Since then, I’ve traveled to Texas to see an established school program for refugees in action, sat down in the homes of local immigrant families and met with the agencies and professionals who oversee the resettlement of refugees in Cleveland. Through each encounter, God has confirmed for me that we’re on the right track.

My most recent ‘high point’ came in January, when I attended an African Christian cultural celebration organized by BHITC at Trinity. It was so awesome to see people celebrating by worshiping God in their own language. One of the refugee pastors spoke to the 150

people gathered and thanked God for bringing them all to the United States, where they can freely worship Jesus and raise their children in safety. When he said that, I realized the great opportunity God was giving me, LMS and BHITC to be in relationship with these families and answer their heart’s desire. I’m so thankful that I can serve in this way.

Please pray today for this effort and for me! And pray that in 2010 more Christian churches and schools will welcome these beautiful ‘strangers’ into our midst.”



As of this publication’s printing, LMS has enrolled for its fall 2010 semester 11 refugee students from Bhutan and two from Congo! Pray we reached our goal of 30 students!

How can you get involved with Kevin, BHITC and the International Friends Program?

- Become an after-school tutor to an international student.
- Become a mentor to a newly arriving refugee family.
- “Adopt” an international student at Luther Memorial School by helping to underwrite the cost of their education.

To learn more about any of these opportunities, contact Brian Upton at BHITC at 216.281.4673.

BHITC RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION

In November, Building Hope in the City was honored by the Lutheran Church Extension Fund-LCMS with its 2009 Lietz Mission Award, recognizing the strides being made by the organization in providing innovative leadership in urban mission and ministry. Ohio District LCEF Executive Director **David Bowers** (pictured far left) recommended BHITC for the award. It was presented to (left to right) **Brian Upton** and his spouse **Sarah**, and **Rev. Jeff Johnson** and his spouse **Terri**, on November 20 at LCEF’s national conference in Tampa.



GIFTS TO BUILDING HOPE IN THE CITY

The following gifts were received from October 1 to December 31, 2009.

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 GoodSearch.com
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You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.
 - || Corinthians 9:11

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