

HPCO Happenings

Highland Park Community Outreach
www.hpco.org

Urban Arts

Last fall, HPCO began a partnership with Urban Arts to offer a music & art program to our kids each week. Urban Arts is a non-profit organization which comes alongside already established ministries to teach their kids the arts. Our partnership with them over the years has been a blessing for all involved.



We were also able to provide a new experience for our kids this year. We partnered with Kensington Community Church (a large church in the metro Detroit area) to minister to the residents of a local nursing home in Highland Park. On a brisk Saturday morning in November, kids, parents & volunteers met to decorate pumpkins & table decorations. They also worked on some praise songs to sing to the residents.

The kids braved a chilly fall day to paint pumpkins for the nursing home residents

This was the first time we have seen our kids serve in this capacity. It was great to see not only their joy in doing this for the residents, but also to see the nursing home's response to us. They were so excited to have us there and welcomed us back anytime. As the kids were being driven home after the event, one of our boys asked if we could return at Christmas time and bring presents! How encouraging to see them catch the heart of giving and serving (we had planned on returning for Christmas, but a snow storm prevented us from going when planned). Instead, we returned late February to again interact with the residents and perform for them.



One of our boys proudly displaying his artwork

The kids involved in Urban Arts also had the opportunity to perform at a local Barnes & Noble this past December. They sang a couple of Christmas songs they had been working on throughout the year and also displayed their art projects. It's always a wonderful opportunity for them to exhibit what they have been learning and gain confidence in using the gifts God has given them. They were treated to a delicious hot cocoa after the performance.

We were blessed with a grant this winter to sponsor the Urban Arts program. Please pray for us as we continue this awesome partnership & provide these programs for our kids. We desire for our kids to see their talents as a gift from their Heavenly Father and for them to fully experience His incredible love and grace at work in their lives.



The kids performed "Jingle Bell Rock" & "Silent Night" at Barnes & Noble

Boxes of Love

HPCO was again able to provide for many of our families this holiday season. Turkeys, food boxes & presents (for Christmas) went out to families who are involved in our ministries. Over



Getting ready to deliver Boxes of Love & Christmas gifts to the families of Highland Park

175 boxes of food were donated at Thanksgiving and 60 at Christmas—almost all from Life Church of Canton. They were delivered by many volunteers who were not only able to bless our families, but be blessed as they interacted with some incredible people in Highland Park. Here is a story by Lisa Yates (also of Life Church) who has delivered with us for the past six years.

“I cannot begin to say how wonderful it is to see these families every year, to see how God is taking care of them. I would like to tell you what happened to us two years ago while we were delivering. We went to an apartment of an elderly lady who had just gotten out of the hospital after a 3 month stay. We were invited in but told she didn’t need the food. Instead she had something for us. Because she was sure the prayers sent to God by HPCO were the reasons she is here today, she gave us a money order. The dollar amount wasn’t much but looking around the apartment she could have used it. There was only had a small TV sitting on the kitchen table with one plastic (patio) chair sitting at it and no living room furniture. **Instead of using the money on herself to purchase furniture, this very special woman gave it to us to do God’s work.** That little special feeling you feel after reading that story is the feeling you get from doing God’s work delivering these boxes”.

What does HPCO’s Youth Group look like??

By Cary Cato (HPCO Volunteer)

Thursday night’s at HPCO are the middle and high school Bible study, but what exactly is the “Thursday night experience?”

Volunteers showing up. That’s the first and the most important thing, **showing up on a consistent basis to let these students know that we care and we’re going to keep coming back.** We have a great group of people that give their time on Thursday night. Some have been coming for years and some are new to HPCO. They all have a different story of how they came to volunteer at HPCO but the one thing they all have in common is they all show up to share God’s Word. Once we’re there we help pick up some of the kids in the van. We then head back to HPCO with a van full of kids. Did we mention how energetic they can be?

We get back and if there’s snow, we shovel off the basketball court and get in a game of basketball. Snow and rain do not stop basketball on Thursday night. We’ve been able to play longer into the evenings now that there are lights on the court. Life Church in Canton donated the funding and volunteer labor to make that happen. It’s been a true blessing for the Thursday night group. ***Continued on page 4***

Kids Club

On the first Sunday of every month, we hold a Kids Club for our kids ages 6-12. We are so thankful for our faithful volunteers who bring their love & energy. It's always a fun day for the kids as well as adults! The following is written by Cara Reischel who along with her family volunteers at our Sunday Kids Club.

My husband Joel and I have been coming down for years for other projects and outreach programs at HPCO. Our six year old is now old enough to come with us, so this is our first year volunteering with Kids Club. We expected it to be awesome (because HPCO always is), but we were surprised that so much could be done in two hours.

These talented kids are singing worship songs from memory, listening to a Bible story and asking questions about its meaning. They have deep, thoughtful questions like, "Why didn't Jesus just get himself down off the cross?" "Why do we have to be nice to everyone? If people are mean, shouldn't we be mean back?" Now the awesome part comes in, **God speaks through us so we can answer these honest questions with truth, care and the hope of salvation for each child there.**

Some of my favorite memories of Kids Club are: seeing the look on the kids' faces when they realize I called them by name, receiving a handmade Valentine from a special friend, and watching my daughter with her two new buddies play in the snow in the backyard during free time. My best surprise was while we were delivering Boxes of Love, we actually delivered to a family whose children we know from club!



One of our kids club's was right after a huge snow storm. The boys had fun shoveling the basketball court in order to play. They never got to play (there was over a foot of snow!) but didn't seem to mind



The kids work on a project where they had to put in I Corinthians 13 in order on a large heart. This was part of our Valentines Day Bible lesson

The experiences with these children are changing our lives in a positive way! We can't wait to come each month and be a part of such an important ministry. We are grateful and humbled for the opportunity to be the hands and feet of Christ in Highland Park. If you want to make a difference, if you believe what the Bible says about children, our neighbors and salvation, you need to make your move and volunteer. I guarantee your time will not be wasted and you will immeasurably be blessed. **I hear God speaking to me best when I'm working for Him.**

(“Youth Group” cont. from page 2)

After basketball it’s time to head in for worship. This year we’ve been fortunate enough to have volunteers that are musically inclined so we’ve added music and worship before the message portion. This has been a great addition to get us in the right frame of mind for God’s Word. This year we started rotating different volunteer leaders to teach the evening’s message. It’s been a good thing that offers a challenge to leaders to take the time beforehand to prepare to teach God’s Word to this group.

Following the message we break off into small groups. The ratio of leaders to students vary, usually it’s about 4 or 5 students to two leaders. In small group we talk about the evening’s message, try to answer questions and help them apply God’s Word to their lives. This is the time that we actually get to know the students a little more, get to know them personally and find out what’s going on in their lives and any challenges they might be facing. We end each small group session with prayer.

It’s the end of the night, time to round everyone up and get them back in the van to take them home. The whole thing takes about three hours beginning to end but what a great time it is sharing God’s Word! There is always room for more volunteer help at HPCO - either through time, talent or treasure . Thanks for all your support. Can’t wait until next week!

Asking Prayer for:

- The planning of our summer programs, which will also include Urban Arts & overnight camp.
- Upcoming Super Saturday sports clinics on April 30th & May 7th. This program includes soccer & baseball training for our kids.
- We are in need of additional finances to cover facility needs. (including a new boiler)

Praising God for:

- Ashley (who has worked as a teen staff at Day Camp the past 3 summers) was recently accepted to Spring Arbor University!
- Two new volunteers have joined our Thursday night team!
- God working through the Urban Arts Outreach (also, we received a grant for this program!)

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