



HIGHLIGHT

Fall 2006

***YAY* New Staff!**



Sarah, Quanesha, and Dana enjoying the summer sun.

By Sarah Hilliker

I first started volunteering at HPCO two years ago this fall. I had just moved to the east side of the state from Grand Rapids to attend Eastern Michigan University. One of my first Sundays, I visited Life Church, which just happened to be the church the Weidman's attended. I saw a brochure for HPCO and got in contact with them. For the last two years, I've worked with the teenage girls on Friday nights and worked two summers at day camp.

After day camp last summer, I realized that God was calling me to stay in Highland Park long term. I had an amazing summer and felt such a strong bond with the kids. After day camp, I attended a leadership conference at a church in Troy. Bill Hybels, the pastor of Willow Creek in Illinois spoke on finding out what God is calling us to do for Him. He asked the question, "What is (cont. page 4)

Day Camp 2006

By Melissa Scrabeck

We had another amazing summer at HPCO Day Camp. As I began to think through the most important prayers answered this summer the magnitude of prayers answered blessed me to tears.

Facilities Early summer found our building getting a radical makeover, bright orange, yellow, and blue walls, a new kitchen floor and updated appliances...we also received a grant that allowed for our computer lab to be updated and networked, so we were able to have the Internet for our summer tutoring (maintaining math skills just seems more fun on a computer).

Teens: Initially I was nervous about managing teens, but the Lord provided us with 3 teen staff and 4 other teen volunteers. Each teen blessed us as they worked with the children and supported the staff, seriously, I thank (continued page 2)



Zsaquilla, Tequila, Dominique, Ciera and Misha relaxing at our last picnic.

"This summer 3 little boys changed my life. Well, not completely..."

John Scrabek's Story
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"We are there to love them and show them Jesus"

Sarah Hilliker's Story
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Day Camp 2006 continued



Above is our summer kids and below is the summer staff, really, we were always this happy.



Sarah, John, Melissa, Mario and Cassie worked and played hard with the children this summer.

(cont. from page 1) God for their dedication and ambition.

The Twins: Gi and Joe...these boys captured the hearts (and last nerves) of each staff member in a different way. They loved to pray, but had only one prayer in their repertoire "God is good, God is great, Thank you for the food, on my plate." My prayer for them was to add another prayer. Before the summer was over, they realized they could pray using whatever words they wanted and wherever, whenever they wanted to, our God is that big!

Volunteers: Our first couple weeks we were blessed with 3 college students who were able to come in, love the children, and provided us with a little extra help while we worked out the kinks. On our special field trip days we also had people volunteer to chaperone and keep our kids safe.

Finances: Two weeks before day camp started, we got word that our annual summer grant was indeed being offered. We applied, planned for the grant, and were very happy to receive word during our first week of day camp that we were going to receive it! We also had many private donors send special gifts that kept us running throughout the summer.

Staff: Four returning staff from an amazing team last year made the entire summer run smoothly. From planning to our final days we were laughing, praying, and encouraging each other through it all. My brother, John, also joined the team for the summer bringing a dynamic that only he could bring.

These are just a few of the answered prayers that I have the space to share. Each of the staff have special memories from working with the children and experienced spiritual growth through the day to day joys and trials that we all faced.

Thank you for your prayers!



Mario has bbq and teaching skills.



Freezies were a reward for a good day.



Cassie's dancers kept it lively!

Summer Staff Stories

Personal Growth: John Scrabek's Story

This summer 3 little boys changed my life. Well, not completely, but their impact in my life, coupled with the Lord's leading, has set me in a new direction.

Before this summer I prayed that God would give me clarity in what he wanted me to major in, or how to begin planning for my future. Within a couple weeks of working with my 3 little guys, people were asking me if I had ever considered going into special education. These guys were high energy and high maintenance and though they could wear me out I was anxious to see them after a long weekend and loved the challenge of helping them be successful at day camp. I looked into a special education major at my school and made the change.

There is so much hope for these kids, all they need is someone to be a good example and share God's love with them. And that's what I believe God let me do this summer.



Above: Sarah and some of the older kids smile for the camera.

Below: John and Mario braved field hockey one afternoon - no injuries, all fun!



The Power of Prayer: Sarah's Story

One of our six grade girls, Quaneisha, really stands out to me. Quaneisha always has a big smile on her face and a positive attitude. One day during Bible hour, I noticed she raised her hand when I gave an invitation for salvation. Later that day, I went and talked with her about why she raised her hand. As we began to talk, I realized that she already had trusted Christ as her Savior, but she felt that she needed His help in her life.

She shared about struggles in her home. She began to cry as she told me about her baby brother who needs brain surgery. She was very afraid for him and her love for him was so evident. She told me that when I talked about the love of Jesus and asked them if they would be willing to die for someone they loved, she knew she would be willing to die for her brother. We prayed together and I was able to share with her just how much God loved her, her brother and her family.

At the end of the summer her family came to our cookout and she excitedly ran me out to meet them and her little brother. I felt honored that God chose to use me to be an encouragement to her. It reminded me that even through the craziness of the summer, the planning, and even the small frustrations- ultimately we are there for kids like Quaneisha. We are there to love them and show them Jesus. I'm looking forward to spending more times working with these girls in the fall and continuing the relationships that have started this summer!

A Decision for Christ: Cassie's Story

What really excited me this summer was Katrina. One day we were all playing outside and Katrina came up to me telling me that she wanted to accept Jesus into her heart.

I remembered that one day I read to my class a book called, "A Heart for Jesus" by Juanita Bynum and it talked about a mother explaining to her daughter what it meant to accept Jesus into your heart. So I was happy to know that Katrina understood what I was reading to her.

Kristy, one of our volunteers, and I explained to her what it meant to be saved and assured her that she now had Jesus in her life forever and how He gives us a Helper to help us live our lives a better way. Katrina was so excited she told everybody that she accepted Jesus and how happy she was.

(continued from page 1) your spiritual discontent?” That made me think, what was the one thing that really made me upset...He said that most people would try to avoid that but he encouraged us to feed it, be around it. Often God will give us areas of spiritual discontent so that we will work with Him to make a change. I knew right away that the one thing that hurt me and broke my heart was the underprivileged youth I worked with at HPCO. God has given me the desire to make a difference in their lives.

Starting last fall, as I prepared to graduate from EMU, I began praying about where God would lead me after graduation. He confirmed over and over to me that He wanted me to be in Highland Park and work at HPCO. I worked at day camp for another summer and then prepared to move. Melissa was also wanting to move to the area and God provided us with a great house here in Highland Park. It’s great being in the area and living near the kids we work with.

I will continue to disciple a few high school and junior high girls and I will also be directing Thursday night kids club. My goal this year at HPCO is to continue building meaningful relationships with the girls and to guide them in their relationships with God. HPCO’s focus on mentoring and discipleship allows for these relationships to build. I am also excited to start working more with the younger kids and develop meaningful relationships while they are young. Through these relationships and the trust that is built, I pray that they will see the love of Christ and allow Him to change their lives.

I am so thankful God has lead me here to Highland Park! It’s neat to look back on how He has lead me this far and I know He will continue to lead and provide.



Overnight Camp - Jubilee Edition

This year we took our kids, along with Central Detroit Christian, to Camp Jubilee in Kingston Michigan. It was a smaller camp than we were used to but if you let the pictures tell the stories, we were able to do camp as usual.

The kids were given the opportunity to spend a lot of time on and in the water, playing outside, and getting to know their counselor’s. Our devotional focus (and the evening speaker’s focus) was on the promises of God. What a great way to end the summer, memorizing and studying the promises of God and reminding ourselves of the faithfulness of the God we serve.



Extreme Home Makeover—HPCO Version



By Sarah Hilliker

This past spring, HPCO had a makeover! A group from my home church (Forest Hills Bible Chapel) in Grand Rapids, MI came out and spent a day working at the ministry house. Around 30 people, including teens, college students and adults came to serve. The team was well prepared with tools, equipment and servants' hearts. Some of our HPCO kids even joined in.

A lot of work was done throughout the day. Dirt was laid around the basketball court along with the installation of a new backboard and rim. Grass was planted and the alley cleaned out. A part of the group spent their time cleaning and organizing the house. The rest of the team painted the living room, dining room and bathroom. The beige walls were transformed into bright yellows and oranges. In the midst of all this hard work, the team also took time to spend in worship and Bible Study.

At the end of the day, we all enjoyed a wonderful meal prepared by one of our Kids Club parents. It was so great to have the team come out and to see their excitement to serve the Lord. Because of their willingness to serve and help out, we were able to get projects done at HPCO which otherwise, would not have been able to happen. We are so thankful for God's family and the way that they served Him by serving the ministry!

Building of a New Team

By John Weidman

When Jacky and I resurrected our youth ministry 5 years ago we were always in hopes that God would eventually send some people to be on staff with us. Yes, volunteers are great and we wouldn't get anything done without them, but there's just something extra special when someone decides that doing ministry with inner city kids is what they really want to do with their career. All of the ministries we have seen be truly effective have been those who have people working with them full or part time.

The involvement of Melissa these past two years has been energizing and we would love to have her long term, but she has already indicated to us that her dream is to be in full time teaching in a school when she finishes her degree next year. Thus she will only be with us a little while longer. We will miss her greatly when that happens. Sarah, on the other hand, is joining our staff with a goal to be involved "long term". Though we are starting with her as a "one year" intern, we know that she has the potential to stay and work here successfully for many years to come. This makes us very excited and more hopeful for what can happen in the future here.

Though Sarah is new to our staff she is no "rookie"

to inner city work, (2 years in Grand Rapids as a volunteer) nor to working with HPCO (2 years volunteering and 2 summers on staff). Not only is she experienced and trained, but she has the most important ingredient an inner city worker has—love for the children and a passion to see them become strong in their faith in Christ.

Because of her background and experience we have decided not to wait on giving her a significant position with HPCO. She will be our "Program Director" and will be responsible to plan and organize all of the youth and children's programs this Fall. Of course we are actively working with her behind the scenes to train, consult, and assist her in any way she may need but we are looking for her to lead the other staff in a successful season of ministry.

There is, however, a need for many more team members to join Sarah. For one, she has no male leaders for our high school boys. Beyond that there is a host of administrative tasks that we must find people to do. It will take time before we have everyone we need but with Sarah in the drivers seat, we are confident that HPCO will be very effective in ministry this Fall in reaching Children and Youth by putting loving, caring adults in their lives to share God's love in an incarnational way.

Prayer Corner

PRAISES

- 1) **Our summer staff** worked hard, cared for, loved and taught the children in a way that was a means of great transformation in their lives.
- 2) **God provided** “just enough” money to pay for all of our summer programs (through many of you as well as through several unexpected sources —that’s usually how God does it)
- 3) **There were** a number of kids who made first time commitments to the Lord as well as those who took another step of growth in their faith.
- 4) **We had a great conference** here in Detroit at Wayne State where all of the Here’s Life Inner City Staff from around the country came to be refreshed as well as to get retooled for the next year of ministry.
- 5) **We had 9 college students** from around the country get involved in various aspects of inner city ministry for 8 weeks this summer.
- 6) **For God’s blessing** on our overnight camp where kids and counselors encountered God and had a very safe and fun week.
- 7) **Sarah Hilliker coming on staff** this Fall part time.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- 1) **For the planning and preparation for the Children and Youth Ministry programs this Fall.**
- 2) **For God to send** the right leaders who can work with Sarah and Melissa and help form a team of leaders who can work with the children.
- 3) **That not only** will we get volunteers to work with the children but also that God would provide a very needed administrative team to work with Sarah and Melissa to help keep track of funds, do fundraising, help maintain the facilities and vehicles, work with the board, etc.
- 4) **Though adequate funding** came in for the summer program, we need to raise funds this Fall to end the year in the black and to give us a boost for next year.
- 5) **For Sarah as she finishes raising her support** so that she can come on Full time staff as soon as possible.
- 6) **For planning and preparation of HLIC this Fall.** Coming up this Fall will be Boxes of Love and the initiation of a Urban Youth Leaders Support and Training Program.

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