

Work in Progress Update

December 15, 2004

Dear Friends,

Hope or fate? What does the birth of Jesus mean in Phoenix this year?

In the community where we serve, many people – children, teenagers, men, and women – live a fatalistic life. Every day just happens. Whatever happens is, most of them believe, beyond their ability to change. All they can do is survive.

Yet, we are hopeful.

If you grow up in the midst of violence, hunger, neglect, move 3-4 times a year, are surrounded by unsafe people in your apartment or neighborhood, or have no job or education, you adopt a view of life that is hopeless. If you are a child, no one may have ever told you that you are loved and valuable and that you have a hopeful future.

Yesterday, for instance, a young man brought his uncle into the office for prayer. This young man has cycled in and out of our programs over the years as he hears about a God who loves him and then falls back into his hopelessness and depression.

What brought them to us was the uncle's decision that his drug usage and violent behavior were hurting many people. He didn't believe that there was anything that he could do to change, and he was afraid. His nephew had told him about the times that he had heard at Neighborhood Ministries about a loving God who could bring hope in the midst of dismal circumstances. And he told his uncle that we would accept him and be trustworthy.

Several of us listened to the uncle's story and told him about the Christmas gift of Jesus that was available to him. We told him that Jesus could actually bring hope to his life and heart and change him from the inside out. He heard that he didn't have to hurt himself or others anymore. It isn't your fate to be destructive, he heard, and there is a future for both of you.

Over 90 families participated in our Christmas Parents Store on 12/4 and well over 2,000 people joined our community Christmas party on 12/11. Thank you to everyone who volunteered or donated items!



In tears, he confessed his participation in evil and asked Jesus to come into his heart. The emotion that came out of him was overwhelming. The sheer relief of his suffering left him exhausted.

The battle for this man's life isn't over. We know that Jesus has won the battle, but this man and his nephew still have many steps to take to follow Jesus daily.

Joy to the world, the Lord has come!

Thanks for your continued prayers and support as we celebrate, proclaim, and live out in Phoenix our hope in the birth of Jesus,


Kit Danley
President


Richard Speck
Executive Director

Upcoming Events:

- ◆ "Celebrating Unity" – a city-wide gathering for urban workers/leaders January 13th, 6:30 at The Neighborhood Center
- ◆ Small Group Training on January 15, 2005 from 9-1 @ The Neighborhood Center
- ◆ Week of January 17: NM evening programs resume
- ◆ Neighborhood Ministries Golf Classic: March 21, 2005
www.NMGolfClassic.org

For more information, see
www.neighborhoodministries.org
or call 602-252-5225

