



# NEIGHBORHOOD MINISTRIES

1918 Van Buren Street • Phoenix, AZ 85009 • 602-252-5225 • [www.nmaz.org](http://www.nmaz.org)

September 2007

Dear Friends,

**“Let’s do life together. I want to spend time with you.”** As a kid, you hope you hear those words from someone who cares. Too often, the people in the lives of our NM kids aren’t able to fulfill that simple intention.

At Neighborhood Ministries, we work hard at developing mentoring relationships in many of our programs. **Mentors encourage students to succeed in school and make wise decisions, despite the negative influences in the student’s life.** NM Mentors provide the love and support in a child’s life that is so often missing in their homes. We’ve learned a lot about what it takes to hang in there with a young person to meet this great need in their life. Most of our mentors have relationships with their “mentee” for over a year. Many of them stay in relationship with their young friend for 3-5 years. The following stories come from these relationships:



**If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you want to go?** Think hard...

Paris, Rome, an African Safari? Washington D.C., a quiet beach on the west coast? Many of us have the opportunity and the means to think about these possibilities. But what if you didn’t know the world was bigger than your urban community?

Many of our youths would choose Castles ‘n’ Coasters when they dream as big as they can about “anywhere in the world.” Yes, you read correctly – Castles ‘n’ Coasters, a modest amusement park with a miniature golf course here in Phoenix. This is exactly the response one of our mentors heard from his junior-high student! In a discussion on dreams and the future, 7<sup>th</sup> grader, Carlos, said if he could go anywhere in the world, it would be Castles ‘n’ Coasters; an adorable response until you understand that Carlos doesn’t see himself getting any farther than I-17 and Peoria (only 10 miles from The Neighborhood Center). Even graduating high-school seems unlikely to him. It is as much a possibility in his mind as is anything outside of Arizona. ...Step in, Carlos’ mentor.

For the past year, John has been mentoring Carlos through Neighborhood Ministries’ education program, I Can Do It (ICDI). Once a week, John visits with Carlos, takes him to eat, invites him to go to the movies or just come along wherever John has to go that day. John knows all about Carlos’ home life. They talk about the hard things. John challenges Carlos to overcome his barriers. *“I love Carlos. I wish I could shield him from some of his realities,*



*in his home, at school. I can't fix these things, though. All I can do is give him the opportunities to change his own future. ...My job is to teach Carlos to dream big!"*

Marlene (Right, center, with her son, her mentor, Nikki (left) and sister, Celene (far right)) has been a part of ICDI since she was in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. She has had the same mentor, Nikki, for over 5 years. Nikki, a full-time staff member here at NM, has walked through many hard times with Marlene. Marlene has lived in unstable homes, is a teenage mother, and has had limited resources. And yet, she graduated high-school this past May—A milestone she never thought she would reach. She says, *"I would never have been able to do what I have done without the help from I Can Do It and my mentor. Everyone here really supported me during hard times."*



As with the other programs at Neighborhood Ministries, mentoring is all about the relationship. **At NM, we believe that lives, both the student's life as well as the mentor's life, are transformed in the long-term.** All youths need trusting, caring adults who will support them throughout their lives no matter what; an innate longing that many children of this community go without. Carlos has gone without it. Perhaps that is why he expects so little from life. But now Carlos has John. Carlos' possibilities are endless. Now that Marlene is a high-school graduate, she is working, trying to save money for college...another dream of hers. **Marlene and Carlos are discovering that they hold the power to free themselves from the beliefs and values that have kept them entrenched in poverty.**

NM currently has 84 youths assigned to a mentor, with 50 more in need of one. If you would like to join Nikki, John, and other mentors in knowing some amazing kids, let us know. Children and mentors are blessed alike as they take this journey together, discovering dreams and making them a reality. For more information on mentoring, call us at 602-252-5225.

**To all of our mentors...We appreciate all you do, giving a part of your life to "do" life with a child.** We are so grateful for all the time and effort that you put into this relationship; to live out the love of Jesus through the life of a child who needs your unconditional love and attention.

Love,  
*Kit Danley*  
Kit Danley

#### Upcoming Events

- September 15<sup>th</sup> – Volunteer Training at The Neighborhood Center from 9 AM 2 PM.
- September 17<sup>th</sup> – Fall Programs Begin
- December 7, 2007 – Save the date for NM's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration!