

It's not too late to support the Books, Bibles, and Basketball D.C. trip!

February 7, 2008

engage † expose † mentor † tutor † reward

Dear Friends.

Thank you for your support of the Books, Bibles, and Basketball program at **Broadmeadow United Methodist Church**. We are strengthened by your generosity and encouragement as we take this journey with our church to outreach to the at-risk youth of our community. The program is gaining momentum this year – we have a number of new volunteers coming from the church, the community, and Millsaps College – and we have a number of new young men ranging from 6th to 12th grades who are engaged in our tutoring, mentoring, and leadership development activities.

Although our tutoring activities remain the bedrock of our program, we have also strived to develop the whole person and to build a sense of civic responsibility in these young men. Based on Dr. Martin Luther King's famous sermon, "The Drum Major Instinct," this year's theme for our program is to "Build Communities of Justice" among our youth and in our neighborhood.

Yes, if you want to say that I was a drum major, say that I was a drum major for justice. Say that I was a drum major for peace. I was a drum major for righteousness. And all of the other shallow things will not matter. I won't have any money to leave behind. I won't have the fine and luxurious things of life to leave behind. But I just want to leave a committed life behind. And that's all I want to say.

With Dr. King's inspirational words in mind, each youth crafted his own honor code for participating in the program and identified how they would work towards leading a committed life and becoming a drum major for peace and justice in the program and in our community. We had several special speakers come and talk to the group about justice and injustice in Mississippi, and how we can work together across racial and economic lines to inspire change. All of the youth have also participated in reading age-appropriate books about the Holocaust to gain a better understanding of injustice and hatred at its extreme.

Drum roll, please...

Our plans are to cap off this year of study with a **Spring Break trip to Washington, D.C.**, March 17-21, **so that the youth can experience first-hand the history of this great nation, our system of justice and legislation, and the role that individual citizens play in shaping our freedoms and ensuring justice for all.**

We have an outstanding group of young men in the program this year – 15 high school and 11 middle school youth. At the beginning of the year, we set forth guidelines to earn eligibility for going on the Spring Break trip. We are excited (and a little overwhelmed) that 19 of the youth have qualified for this year's trip.

As usual, our plans are made on a wing and a prayer! We rely solely on donations from our friends and family to help provide this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for these youth.

We're back to ask for your help once again. Please give generously. We only took 15 people to New York City last year. This year's group is larger, and the trip will be more expensive. Rest assured, we are working around the clock to get meals donated and to put together an exciting itinerary using our friends and contacts.

The following are just some examples of what we have committed for the trip to date:

- Tour of the U.S. Capitol by Senator Thad Cochran's staff;
- Tour of the White House (*also thanks to Senator Cochran*);
- National Holocaust Museum;
- Tour of the monuments – including the marker where Martin Luther King made his famous, "I Have a Dream" speech in August 1963;
- Dinner and presentation at Asbury United Methodist Church – a significant member of the Underground Railroad and one of the oldest African American congregations in the country;
- Corporate box seats donated by Winston and Strawn, LLP to the Washington Wizards NBA game;
- And more!

Your support will help transform a life. We know from last year's New York trip that the youth were changed by the experience. We have seen their renewed interest in school and a positive shift in their dreams and plans. You can check out photos from our New York trip at <http://www.broadmeadow.org/Basketball.htm>.



This trip defines one of the major differences between the privileged and the underprivileged. Privileged children have opportunities to travel, exposure to business and government leaders, and a diverse and rich education which includes visits to important museums and historical sites. Our underprivileged children rarely, if ever, have these opportunities. We believe there is a link between academic performance and exposure to these types of opportunities. Our goal is to help create a more level playing field for all the children in our community.

We are a 100 percent, volunteer-led organization, and our small congregation provides any operating or incidental costs. ALL of your donation will go directly towards a life-changing experience for an underprivileged youth in our community. Your support is a good investment! Last year, we were able to raise in-kind donations in New York to help supplement the trip's costs. We used leftover donations to send youth to New Stage Summer Theatre Camp and to help 20 youth with their summer reading projects. We also used leftover funds to purchase each youth participant a book about the Holocaust as well as some math and English workbooks that are used in the tutoring program.

Thank you again for your support and your friendship. We couldn't do this important work without you!

Sincerely,

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Please send your tax-deductible contribution to:
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