

Good Samaritan
Ministries and
AmeriCorps



THE LITTLE BOOK OF
GREAT
STORIES 07~08

OUR PARTNERS

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Ministries
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Central Holland

Maple Avenue
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Montello Park/ South Shore
Youth Impact
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Holland North

Rose Park Reformed Church
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Harderwyk Ministries/
Neighbors Plus
Ph. 399-9190

Zeeland

The Bridge Youth
Ministries Center
Ph. 772-3843

A Word from the Program Director

The Faith in Youth Partnership is now entering its fifth consecutive year. A year where positive influence collides with youthful energy and role models become friends and mentors.

We've captured these moments from our fourth year - birthed into a thousand great stories- and now have the privilege of sharing some of them with you. As you read these stories, study them. Feel them. They are the purest form of impact.

As this impacts our world, let it motivate us to continue keeping Faith In Youth alive!

Robyn Afrik
Program Director



The Bridge Youth Ministries Center

Blake moved to Zeeland just in time for seventh grade to begin. Blake struggled with his behavior in school. He acted out violently and eventually was suspended for fighting. That's when Blake came to the Suspending Bridge alternative school suspension program.

Blake first went out for lunch with Faith In Youth AmeriCorps member Matt. They immediately hit it off and began spending time together. Blake loved playing basketball and talking about sports. Matt convinced him to play for the Bridge's basketball team, *I Am Third*, even though the season had already begun.

Blake's love of basketball and the structure and idea of putting others on the team before himself stuck with him. His personality began to really come out. He is now very active at the Bridge, participating in the after-school drop-in program, the after-school tutoring program *Bridge to Excellence*, and excelling on the basketball team.

It has been months since Matt has seen the kind of anger and aggression that Blake displayed early in the year. Without a father figure in his life, Blake depends on the Bridge Youth Ministry Center and the relationships he has developed with Matt and others to continue to move in a positive direction.



Calvary Reformed Church

Iesha had been asked many times if she wanted a mentor and always replied, “no,” until she met Lisa. Lisa was scheduled to meet another student in need of mentor, but when Iesha asked, “*Would you be my mentor?*” Lisa couldn’t resist.

Lisa was nervous about their first one-on-one meeting because she had never been a mentor before. However, after she found out that Iesha told all her friends how excited she was about her new mentor Lisa knew that everything would be alright. They ended up talking for hours that night and came up with a long list of activities they’d like to do together.

Lisa took Iesha to *Michigan Works!* to help her job search and they plan to volunteer at the *Harbor Humane Society* in the near future. There is a significant bond between them, despite Iesha’s resistance to having a mentor. Now, both Lisa and Iesha are excited about their friendship.

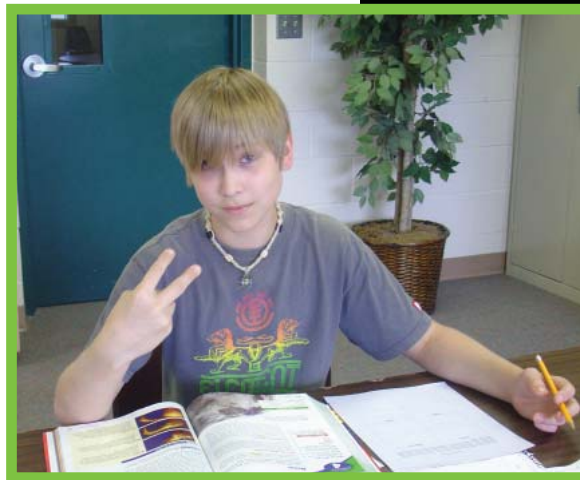


Harderwyk Ministries/ Neighbors Plus

“It’s better than sitting at home doing nothing. I’m actually doing something so I can now pass to the 9th grade,” said eighth grader Seth from Macatawa Bay Middle School. Seth is talking about the Alternative Suspension Program that runs through *Neighbors Plus* at Harderwyk Church. It provides a long term tutoring service to students who have been suspended.

Not only is Seth getting his work done, but he also enjoys volunteering in the community service program. Twice a week students and staff wash dishes at *Evergreen Commons*, a community activity center for senior adults. Seth has also helped out with local projects at the church, the *Outdoor Discovery Center*, and the *American Cancer Society*.

Community service is a valuable part of the program because it provides an opportunity to help others. Community service is the highlight experience in this program. As Seth put it, *“It feels good to help others out.”*



MAP IT OUT

Hannah has gone through some very rough transitions. Her family was once homeless and received housing through Good Samaritan Ministries. Faith in Youth AmeriCorps member Raquel is not only a mentor for Hannah but she is also a role model and provides much stability in this child's life. Hannah is benefiting from their relationship, but Raquel is also.

“Never in my life have I been given the great responsibility of helping to instill the many teachings of life in a child. I have never before had the feelings that I get from Hannah. It seems as though her little eyes are watching my every move, her ears are listening to my every word, and her heart is feeling my every action. What an awesome obligation to ensure that what I do, say, and show can be making all the difference in the way she will one day grow... It has given me such joy to be a part of her life, and such power to know that I can help in showing her the way she should go.”

-Raquel Balderas



Montello Park/ South Shore Youth Impact

TUFL (the Ultimate Frisbee League) was the connecting idea of South Shore Youth Impact last summer. What began as only a few students showing up has become groups of people coming out to play. Middle school-aged students came as well as a group of great Hope College students who love kids and mentoring. It is now a beautifully diverse group of many ages, backgrounds, ethnicities, and skill levels.

TUFL meets weekly and kids appear from all over, eager to play and interact with their new friends.

This year, the season has just begun with 40 people playing at the kick-off, including many mentors and mentees. Kids are learning to play Ultimate Frisbee and to encourage others around them.



Rose Park Reformed Church

Valentine's Day was a very special evening for seven West Ottawa middle-school girls involved in the Faith In Youth program at Rose Park Reformed. They were reminded how beautiful they truly are during the *"You are Beautiful"* weekend. This began with a few hours of well-deserved pampering.

The goal was to show the girls that with a few tricks they could amplify their natural beauty. With the help of some of the Profiles Hair Salon employees, each girl had her own personal make-over. The girls loved getting manicures and having their hair done. It was incredible to see how their shoulders picked up after their appointments.

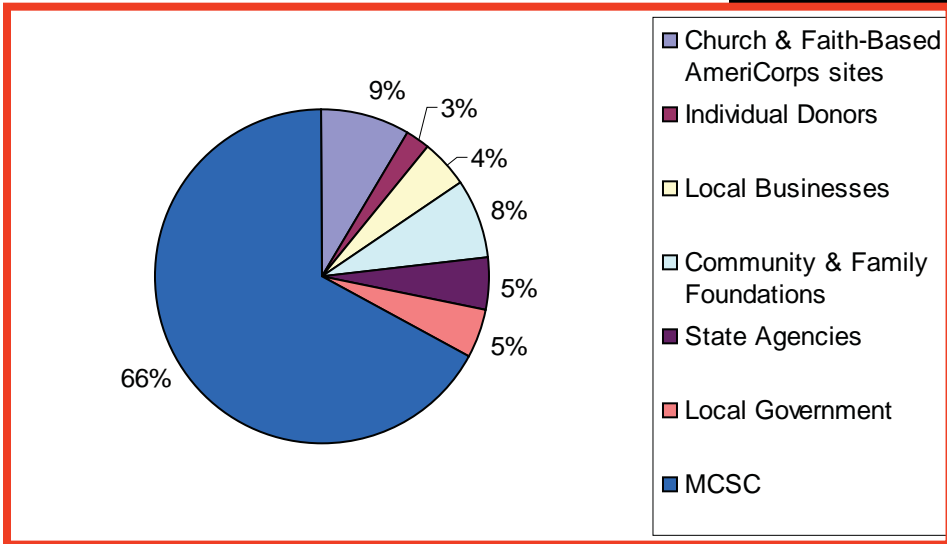
After the beauty makeover, the girls went to a wonderful lodge where the rest of the weekend was spent. They had dinner with sparkling grape juice and little note cards reading *"You are special"* and *"You are loved"*

Throughout the night, the girls not only saw that they were beautiful but they also had a chance to reflect on why our culture doesn't make girls feel that way very often. The discussions were wonderful and the girls shared much wisdom on the subject. They were able to see both inner and outer beauty in not only themselves, but in each other.



Financial Information

In the 2007-2008 fiscal year, the Faith In Youth Partnership was supported by a grant from the Michigan Community Service Commission (MCSC) in the amount of \$132,000. Private matching support was raised in the amount of \$65,000, or 33% of the total grant amount. The matching funds came from the Faith In Youth sites, local government, family and community foundations, churches and businesses, and the generosity of individual donors.








Faith in Youth Partnership




Quick Facts

During the 2007-2008 school year,

Faith In Youth has:

-  Served over 460 youths in mentoring and recreation programs
-  Offered over 8,000 hours of mentoring
-  Offered over 5,500 hours of after-school programs
-  Mobilized over 125 volunteers to work with area youth
-  Coordinated over 4,700 hours of volunteer activity

Each year, the Faith In Youth Partnership surveys the youth we serve about their perceptions of where they stand in relation to having developmental assets such as having adults who care about them, their attitude and performance in school, and their ability to avoid dangerous behaviors. These results of the most recent survey demonstrate:

-  87% of youth surveyed reported they had experienced a positive internal behavior change, as measured by improved school attitude, ability to resist at risk behaviors and better self-image
-  Nearly 95% felt that they had an adult who cared about them
-  More than 85% felt they had options for their future

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FAITH IN YOUTH