



# Skylines

MARCH 2010 THE HOPE CENTER NEWSLETTER

## MISSION

To honor God by developing healthy communities where the vulnerable flourish.

## VISION

We envision a safe, vibrant neighborhood where people of all types flourish. Our east-side community will transform from a violent, hopeless and declining one into a safe, pleasant place to live. Those in need will have the hope and support they need to improve their quality of life. Our community seeks to become an excellent place for families to raise great kids.

## VALUES

We believe...

...In the power of God to change lives...

...That the love of Christ, as expressed through loving relationships is a powerful force for change.

...In the leadership potential of urban youth.

...In responding to the whole person.

## A Common Life, Shared in Common Grace

The concept of Christian community has been at the core of The Hope Center's mission to Kansas City urban youth for over a decade. A critical next step is to extend that concept to the entire neighborhood it serves - to adults as well as the youth.

"As we've met families in our community, one of the things over the years they've always asked about is a 'Hope Center for adults'," said Tammi Jehle, executive advisor. "For us, that's meant a church."

A neighborhood bible study that began almost 2 years ago will become a more formal ministry, with the goal of opening publicly as Common Grace Community Church. While Common Grace will be a legally separate entity, it has long been part of the vision of The Hope Center.

"As we think about transforming our neighborhood from one in decline to one that is flourishing, especially for the vulnerable, a church is essential," said Chris Jehle, The Hope Center's chief executive officer.

Common Grace will look little like suburban churches or even neighboring churches in the inner city. "Over the years of doing urban ministry, my idea of what a church is and what it looks like has changed," said Chris. "It's the people of God seeking God, and being committed to loving the people they are seeking God with. That will transform them to be more like Christ. That is what will bear witness to the people in the neighborhood."

The families who currently comprise

the core of what will become Common Grace now meet weekly in homes and are regularly joined by Hope Center youth that are currently involved in the Teenage Bible Study.

The plan is for Common Grace to begin meeting in The Hope Center's main building, and, with future renovations, the hope is that the former Catholic church building on



Common Grace Community Church will be a neighborhood church where all residents can worship and seek God together in community.

the property will someday become Common Grace's permanent home.

Common Grace will have an emphasis on the traditional model of a parish - a geographic area with defined boundaries. Initially, Common Grace's parish will be a three-by-three square block area of the neighborhood that The Hope Center serves.

The people who will attend and call Common Grace their church home will live within those boundaries. Others may visit, but the church will be specifically for its neighborhood.

The Hope Center has found the focus on parish to be an excellent way to develop

# A Common Life, Shared in Common Grace (continued from Page 1)

meaningful relationships with those in the neighborhood and to be able to witness to the unchurched.

"We're so relationally connected to the families, we think that many will visit and some will stick with us," Tammi said. "The parish model will help, in that they will see the Christian life modeled in their neighbors. They will get to experience living with other believers in their community."

Also integral will be the concept of covenant, or a binding commitment to each other and the Common Grace way of life. "The inner city is transient, but this has to be a binding commitment," Chris said.

Part of the commitment will be sharing a spiritual rhythm of life, which includes seeking God together at appointed times. Those times include evening prayer, morning prayer, and honoring the Sabbath. People committed to Common Grace will commit to schedules formed around such appointed times. "To follow Christ is a way of life," Chris said. "There is a common life that is part of being a church."

Common Grace is envisioned as a racially mixed but majority African-American church, which is another way it will differ

from most churches in the Kansas City metropolitan area. "We have an opportunity to love each other across racial lines, which has been a problem in Kansas City," Chris said.

Common Grace will also help fill a void for young people who have not connected with The Hope Center or who have graduated. "I'm so excited about having a place for kids who have outgrown the structured programs here," Tammi said.

The vision for Common Grace aligns with the life-on-life evangelism in which The Hope Center excels. The credibility The Hope Center has earned, as well as the many relationships it has forged, will help in the launch of the church.

The current path for Common Grace is to be non-denominational, though a denominational affiliation would be welcomed. Regardless, Chris said Common Grace will want meaningful connections and relationships with other churches in Kansas City.

Long term goals for Common Grace are to hire a pastoral staff and to have the opportunity to renovate the church building on The Hope Center's property. The building

housed what was once a vibrant church in the neighborhood and is still remembered by community members as a place where families gathered to share Christian life together. The Hope Center's board approved investing in a new roof on the building to protect the asset for future rehabilitation.

Common Grace will develop a needs list, which likely will include Bibles and titles for a study library. It also will seek sponsorships so that the people of Common Grace are able to participate in retreats where they can benefit from reflective solitude.

As Common Grace becomes a more formal Christian community, The Hope Center leaders ask for your prayers for the families and community that will become Common Grace Community Church. Prayers that it will become a place where adults and youth in the neighborhood can come to know God closely and grow into a Christ-like family.

## TEENAGE YOUTH EAGER FOR COMMON GRACE

The youth in The Hope Center's Teenage Bible Study (TBS) are part of the critical mass that will give life to Common Grace.

All the youth in TBS have been involved in The Hope Center's Leaders in Training program, which has put them in contact over many years with the adults who are leaders in the community. "Throughout their time in both programs, we have been prepping the kids for leadership," said Christian Dashiell, LIT coordinator. "We want them to be leaders in their church."

Their leadership has already manifested itself in the way TBS youth interact with other youth and with the adult leaders and staff of The Hope Center. Adults have witnessed the growth and development of these teens.

"In a lot of ways, TBS is already a church in and of itself," Christian said. "The kids worship, they learn, they pray. The chance for them to do that more than once a week and for them to do it with adults, and in their own neighborhood is exciting."

In addition to coming together with adults to seek God as a community, Common Grace will also give TBS youth an opportunity to demonstrate leadership by getting their families involved. Incorporating their parents into THC's community of faith will offer the youth powerful stability. A worshipping

community that includes parents, neighbors, THC staff and adult leaders is a comprehensive support system that will greatly enhance the teens' discipleship and development.



TBS youth grow deeper in their relationship with Christ as they worship through song. They will be an integral part of Common Grace

# Hope Youth Ministries: Developing World-Class Christian Leaders

The Hope Center Youth Ministry is made up of four programs: Outreach Bible Study, Leaders In Training, Teenage Bible Study and Leaders In Training High School. Each program has a specific role to play in the spiritual development of the youth as they move from grade school through high school.

## **Outreach Bible Study (OBS)**

OBS is our entry program, and is open to youth who are in 1<sup>st</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. It's our opportunity to develop relationships with the youth and their families, as well as to start laying solid foundations for biblical knowledge and leadership. Since most of the youth don't attend church with their families, OBS is the main place where they get to hear and discuss the Bible. They also spend time working on scripture memorization, and the older youth have the opportunity to spend time learning about and experiencing praise and worship through song.

With 80 youth in attendance every Thursday, OBS can be a very exciting place. This is especially true during the more hyped game time where the energy level could convince a passer-by that attendance reached well into triple digits. But even the times of fun serve to achieve the overarching purposes of the program: to give youth a solid foundation in the character and work of God, and to identify and develop youth who would be a good fit in the Leaders in Training Program.

## **Leaders In Training (LIT)**

Once youth have been in OBS for a minimum of one year and have reached at least the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, they are eligible to apply for LIT. Entering into LIT ratchets up the commitment level for the youth because they are required to attend Monday thru Wednesday in addition to their Bible Study commitment. The time at LIT is spent working on school work, but also providing the youth with experiences that broaden

their worldview and help them better understand what it looks like to follow God in a way that calls them to leadership and service.

This year there are eight boys and nine girls in our LIT classes. All of them are enrolled at rigorous college preparatory schools that push them academically. Both classes are predominately made up of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders who have been around THC for several years. These youth are now reaping the dividends of working hard for the past few years. They are exhibiting improved work ethic and finding success at school. During conversations about leadership on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, they also showed encouraging improvement in their ability to discuss deep issues.

## **Teenage Bible Study (TBS)**

LIT youth who age out of OBS automatically join the Teenage Bible Study, which takes place immediately following LIT on Wednesday nights. It looks a lot like a church-based youth group with extended times of Bible teaching, worship and prayer. The last two years have seen this group develop into a close-knit family of peers. The teens have also grown a lot in the depth of their worship, as well as in the maturity of their praying.

## **Leaders In Training High School (LIT HS)**

LIT HS is our pinnacle program. High Schoolers earn their way in by showing faithfulness and growth in LIT, and then accompanying that with good effort in a multi-step application and interview process.



THC youth are hard at work as they develop into world-class Christian leaders.

Those who earn a place in LIT HS not only get to spend Tuesdays and Wednesdays at THC getting academic support, but they also get to rejoin OBS as Junior Leaders.

One of the most encouraging parts of LIT HS has been watching the youth flourish in their leadership roles in OBS. The younger kids really look up to the high school students, and the LIT high schoolers are able to model what it looks like to be a teenager who loves God and is pursuing excellence. It's also a great opportunity for the LIT high schoolers to live out what they have been learning in a safe environment.

It's been a very exciting time in our youth ministries and we look forward to the future as we see our youth continue to develop into world-class Christian leaders.

## **E-NEWSLETTER SIGN UP:**

In an effort to keep people informed of all that's going on around The Hope Center, we are planning to launch an e-newsletter later this year. The e-newsletter will be sent once a quarter in between our regular newsletter giving quick updates on the different initiatives of The Hope Center. If you'd like to receive our e-newsletter please send an email to [info@hopecenterkc.org](mailto:info@hopecenterkc.org) with "e-newsletter" in the subject line.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

2800 E. Linwood Blvd.  
Kansas City, MO 64128



NONPROFIT ORG  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
KANSAS CITY, MO  
PERMIT NO. 1962

## PRAYER:

Relying on God's Spirit to guide and empower the ministry of The Hope Center is vital. On our 2010 prayer card you will find different prayer topics for each day of the month. Below are prayer topics from the prayer card that we request you spend additional time praying for during this season:

### Education

- Day #10: Guidance as we pursue starting a charter school: Hope Leadership Academy

### Medical

- Day #19: Give thanks that Hope Family Care Center is now open and serving patients
- Day #21: Provision of a full time physician

### Safety

- Day #30: God's protection over our neighborhood
- Day #31: Decrease in murder and other violent crimes in our neighborhood

## SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

We, like all non-profits, continue to feel the effects of the economy by receiving fewer donations than in the past. We want to do all that we can so that the ministry to the youth is not reduced any further.

The following are two opportunities to support our youth ministry:

### Kids Across America Summer Camp

KAA is a Christian sports camp that we have taken youth to for the past 10 years. It is the highlight of the year for many of our youth as it provides a safe place for them to grow in Christ and have fun

Cost per camper: \$257

Total cost for THC: \$8,500

### Annual Awards Ceremony

The most important night of the year in the youth ministry is the annual Awards Ceremony. This event rewards the 100+ youth that we serve for a year of hard work and success in their efforts to grow in Christ and become a world-class Christian leader. Not only do we give the youth high-quality awards and T-shirts, but we also invite parents and other neighbors to join the celebration, which includes a full meal, prizes and fun.

Total cost: \$7000