



CGM

common ground montgomery

August - September 2014

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CGM

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CGM Life

newsletter

For years we have had many volunteer groups from all over the nation come to our community and serve Common Ground Montgomery and our partner ministries. In the beginning of the summer our high school students, under the leadership of Joshua Conley, the executive director of Urban Seed Xchange, took a mission trip to New Orleans, Louisiana, to serve through Mission Lab. The tables turned as our teenagers became the sent ones to areas that rely on God to send volunteers to show up and serve.



Kevin King

Our young men and women got the opportunity to serve in multiple locations around the city of New Orleans. One group invested their entire week running a summer camp at a church in an under-resourced neighborhood similar to their own community. The second group rotated between helping out at a food bank, visiting nursing homes, and sharing the love of Christ in the French Quarter.

Nicole and I had the privilege of being with the team running the summer camp. It started out rough because you have the distrust factor as well as other issues that hinder relationships when doing short-term missions. A few of the kids at the camp who initially rebelled were some of the most encouraging and loving by the last day. Our students had the opportunity to paint murals, play sports, help others read, and a few even put on a mini concert.

Our teenagers were deeply impacted as well as the students and the staff at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church. The pastor mentioned to me that it was the first time ever that a group of African American students had come to serve the youth at their church. Hopefully it won't be the last time.

Our students are accustomed to being served by others but a greater impact is made once they step outside of themselves and serve others, too.

This reminds me of Mark 10:45 when it says “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

We've built a lifelong bond with the children from Gloria Dei and they haven't stopped writing letters and reaching out to a few of our

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teenagers.

During the last week of CGM's Summer Camp this year the high schoolers switched it up and went away for a week to Missouri for Kids Across America. This experience definitely challenged our high schoolers. They arrived to meet a host of excited camp counselors who quickly split them up into separate groups with other students their age. They did not have an opportunity for a second to gravitate towards people who they were more comfortable and familiar.

Our students learned a ton of crazy and fun chants, played various sports, took part in team building exercises, went tubing, and heard the Gospel in creative and relevant ways that they could relate to. Every component of this camp was so intentional and well organized and didn't leave room for idle time. Relationships were formed that week as they engaged other students with similar backgrounds and shared experiences.

This year's summer camp experience at Kids Across America to me was one of those life defining moment experiences where the Lord's presence was evident in a life changing way. One student mentioned that she experienced the love of Christ in the fact that though she isn't a Christian, she's experienced Christians in her circle of friends that truly care about her and want to hang out with her even though she isn't a Christian. This is a characteristic that should be in each of us as Christ's love radiates through us to impact those who do not know him.





back in class!



# after school program volunteer needs

We are very excited to announce that we will be partnering with Sylvan Learning Center in our After School Program. Sylvan will help us to assess our students and from there they create learning plans that are specific to every child's learning needs. We are so excited about this new opportunity and are confident that Sylvan can help our students be academically successful.

With this being said, we are going to ask for some very specific volunteer needs that will help comply with our schedule and help the kids gain all that they can from the program.

- Monday 5 P.M. - 6:15 P.M. – We are looking for volunteers to help us create an atmosphere of learning while they help the kids with homework, reading books, and learning games on the computer.

- Tuesday and/ or Thursday 5 P.M. - 6:15 P.M. – There are “alternative” electives that we have set up for the kids, but this would be a great time for anyone who is able to teach an elective class on one or both days with the kids.

- Wednesday 5 P.M. - 6:15 P.M. – We are looking for individuals who can commit for the semester to lead a bible study.

- Friday 4 P.M. - 6:15 P.M. – We are using Friday's as a fun time to hang out and fellowship with the kids. We are asking groups (larger than at least 6) to help us plan our Fun Friday activities! If you or your organization would like to sign up for a Fun Friday it can look many different ways. We have a large school bus and a driver so you can plan an off campus field trip or a fun day at Common Ground. The options are limitless.

If you would like to help us out in any of these areas, please contact Ava Conley at [ava@cgmlife.org](mailto:ava@cgmlife.org) or feel free to call at 334.328.6722 (cell), 334.593.5803 (work).

The logo for Common Ground Ministries (CGM) is displayed in a dark grey rounded square. The letters 'CGM' are written in a bold, serif font in a gold or orange color.

# dr. david welch charity gala

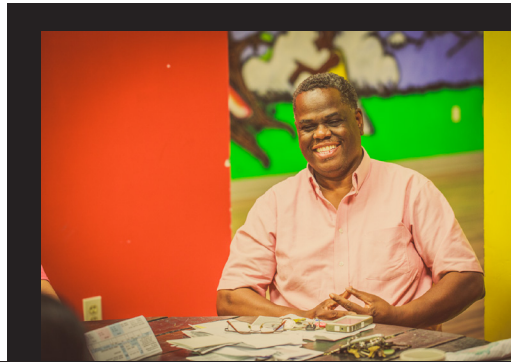
The Welch Foundation is hosting their annual fundraiser this Saturday, August 23, 2014, at the Wynlakes Country Club starting at 6:30 P.M. A portion of the proceeds will benefit CGM.

With food, live music, dancing, a great silent auction, and more, we hope to see you there!

## cgm lobby renovation

We are in the process of remodeling our lobby and looking for a variety of donations to help us get started. If you or anyone you know might be willing to donate the following items, please contact Summer Williams at [summer@cgmlife.org](mailto:summer@cgmlife.org).

- Paint
- Paint rollers
- Drop cloths
- Paint trays
- Paint tape
- Trim brushes
- Chairs for guests





Justin Hampton

*The following was written by a CGM staffer in regards to the shooting death of one of our former students before the summer. While CGM has already commented on this particular situation, Justin's realizations are just as applicable now in light of the unrest and pain from Ferguson, Missouri, to the Gaza Strip and beyond.*

Tragedies expose many things in our lives. We hear about the family that never sees each other until someone dies, or the one that realizes life is too short to hold grudges, or any epiphany gained from loss or

## our place among those around us

traumatic experiences. Well, I had one of those experiences.

I got a call that one of the young men that I first met when I came to Common Ground Montgomery was shot in the head. I got the news about 2 A.M. from one of my coworkers and handled it as I have handled much of the other traumatic news that comes our way in this line of work. I took it with shock. I pondered upon what could have been done to prevent this. I pitied him and the prospect of losing his life at such a young age. I cried a little... And I tried to go back to sleep.

At no point was I moved to do something.

You see, I'm not the one that visits people when they are sick. I'm not usually the one that gets involved when things go sour or when people are hurting. I'm the program dude; or at least that's how I've subconsciously seen myself. Tragedy allowed me to see this in my heart, and God allowed me to see what I've been missing because of it.

Soon after the call from my coworker, I had drifted off into somewhat of an unsettled sleep and I got another call from another young man in our program. He updated me on the status of the young man that was shot and told me how he feared for his friend's life because of his lifestyle. He was afraid his friend might end up eternally separated from God in hell.

All these things I felt as well. I identified with the pity. I felt his pain for the young man's family. But, then he told me where he was calling from - the hospital.

"He's at Baptist South, in case you wanted to stop by or something."

It was then that my real lack of compassion was revealed. Both of

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these young men had been coached by me. I'd had the opportunity to speak into each of their lives and now one of them was unknowingly setting a challenge in my spirit.

The truth is I didn't want to go. It was late, I had an obligation at my church in the morning, and I didn't really know what good I could do there anyway. But the kid on the other end of the phone made me ask myself some serious questions considering that I am supposed to be his official mentor. Why was he there and I wasn't? What were the limits of what I was willing to do for someone else? Did this young man need me there? What's more important, my comfort, or my presence in this situation?

After hanging up the phone all these thoughts and a thousand scenarios raced through my mind in about five minutes. I turned to my wife and said, "I have to go to the hospital."

It was the first time in the four years I've been at CGM that I have been called to respond to emergency. It was the first time my hands have truly been on the verge of being "messy." It was the first time I chose to go that deep.

I've missed so much by avoiding situations like this. Situations where I didn't have the answers. It's in these times when you don't have the perfect thing to say that just being there says everything that you need to. These are the hospital visits, graduations, birthdays, funerals, and other events where it is not words of encouragement that are the language of love, rather, it is time spent together that is the language of love.

This is where real relationships are built. In the times of celebration and the times of agony. Where everyone is saying the same thing, "congrats," or "I'm sorry." I think the phrases used in these times are so few because its in these times where words are not the most poignant form of communication; just being there is.

So that's the lesson. Be there, as much as you can be there. That's what incarnational ministry is all about. It's not always being there with something like food, clothes, a house, an after-school program, or a basketball league. Its not even about being there with some deep or applicable revelation. It's just simply be with God, so He can be with you, while you are being there with them. Done.

The logo for CGM, consisting of the letters 'CGM' in a bold, orange, serif font, set against a dark square background.

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