



CGM Life

common ground montgomery

P.O. Box 1866
Montgomery, Alabama 36102

334.593.5803

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September 2013

newsletter



after school program

Dr. Leslie Cowell
Education Director

We are very excited about the new school year! Beginning Monday, August 19, our kids returned for our After

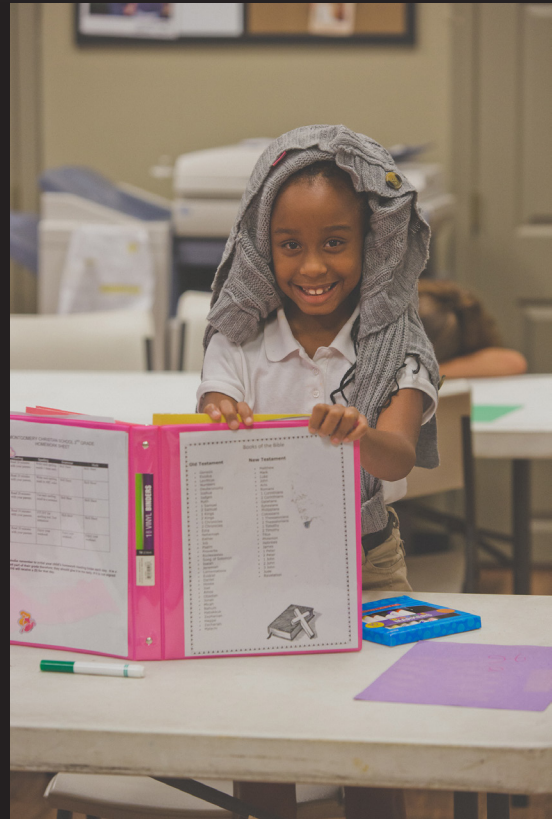
School Program for the 6th year.

During this summer, the staff was involved in an in-depth analysis of our after school program, with hopes of meeting the needs of our students more effectively in the coming year. The results of this analysis led us to focus this coming school year on holding our students more accountable to their daily school work and assignments as well as motivating them to do their best work and achieve at higher levels in their schools.

Each staff member was assigned a group of students to work with, either elementary, middle, or high school. Within this group, the staff will visit the schools their students are attending and work with their teachers to have a greater presence as a ministry within our local schools. These staff members also have permission from the students' parents to receive information regarding grades, homework and tests to bring that back to our After School Program for greater integration of their school needs. Six teachers have been hired to work with our elementary students in small groups. All of these teachers are pre-service college students majoring in elementary education.



#cgmlife academics



“Do you think CGM is really making a difference?”

Last week, someone asked me if I thought Common Ground Montgomery was really making a difference. Without hesitation I replied, “Without a doubt”.

This question is definitely understandable. This year's murder rate is reason enough for people to focus on the evil that is taking place and fail to recognize that at the same time, God is bringing about redemption in the same city.

Social media is often filled with posts from kids in our program saying ‘R.I.P.’ to the young man or woman recently murdered. It's overwhelming to know so many of our kids are in some way connected to every murderer, or murdered person, in our city.

I told the guy who asked me the question that I feel like we are investing in a bunch of youth group kids. I don't mean this in a facetious manner. One of many reasons I say, “youth group kids,” is because, like the rest of us, these kids navigate through real life issues and struggles, but are also sheltered from much of what happens on the streets or at home during the hours they are with our staff at CGM.

Issues that exist in their neighborhood are still highly visible to them, but a lot of them would rather be at CGM because they know they have an alternative to the destruction they see around them. Coming together after school can sometimes be mundane to a lot of them, but most of the time they are excited to be here. Just as parents make their kids participate in youth group, the parents of our kids make them come to CGM because they see the value in their kids being here - no matter what their motives are for sending them here.

I have no doubt that every one of the kids in our program has a bright future. For the first time, many of them even believe they have a future. My constant prayer for them is that while they live here they would not be of this world, but while they live in its constant state of drama that God would make them a conduit of His plan of redemption.



Kevin King
Program Director

urban seed xchange

Josh Conley

USX Director



Imagine 20 high school students, separated into four teams, all given the challenge to create, develop and sell their own small business to potential investors. Imagine them taking classes focusing on business development, communication, management, leadership, sales, marketing and social media.

Finally, add training in how to operate and manage a Screen Printing business and that would make for an awesome opportunity for students to be a part of.



Well, at Urban SEED Xchange that's reality for our students every day.

The first week of class the students learned the ropes of the program, had a welcome back party, focused on setting goals for the semester, and ended the week with the first (we hope to be annual) USX Kickball Game.

This week we've been working through different development classes to help them see what the semester will be like and to begin the process of fulfilling the mission of USX: Enriching the lives of youth through entrepreneurship.

Want to be a part of this amazing opportunity?

If you want to volunteer, we are looking to add more elective classes to our program so if you have a particular business skill, business experience, idea, or just want to invest in our students, let us know!

Or, if you'd like to help financially, we'd welcome that as well.

Please contact USX director Josh Conley for more information:

(337) 501-0966 • josh@cgmlife.org

volunteering



Current Fall 2013 After School Program Volunteer Needs

- Mon-Thu 3:30-5:00 PM ASP Academic Tutoring

{A teacher or CGM staff member will be in the class to provide instruction. We are really in need of volunteers on Wednesdays.}

- Fri 3:30-6:00 PM Friday Fun Day Help

{This is a fun day with our kids! Bring your own kids along to hang out; contact our staff to actually plan a fun party for the kids - get creative!}

- Tue/Thu 5:00-6:00 PM elective leaders

{Electives can be anything! Come once a week to teach a small group of kids a specific skill like cooking, gymnastics, crafting, painting, etc.}



if you would like to volunteer,
visit us online at:

cgmlife.org/volunteer



Bryan Kelly

CGM Founder and
Executive Director

Relationships are the context of every thing we are a part of at Common Ground Montgomery. Our mission includes providing a place of grace and love for kids to come into from off of the streets, and the creation of developmental structures that help us and others invest into their lives; but long term, consistent, redemptive relationships are the real goal of all that we do.

I say "redemptive" because it is in the context of relationship that God continues applying the grace, love, and ministry of Jesus to us and through us. He continues to allow grace to flow back and forth in the

relationships

growing relationships of people. He works through our brokenness and weakness. He loves to show His glory in that place.

I understand the gospel of grace taught in the scriptures to be that God has chosen to be in connection with us through the presence of Jesus to us, for us, and in us. Many benefits flow our way through His work on the cross in the past and now through His gift of His presence through Holy Spirit.

God is present to us in the Spirit and also in the relationships we have with others. This is why it is so important to us that so many different people cross normal boundaries and connect with one another (neighborhood kids, financial donors, board members, staff, tutors, mentors, volunteers, bible study teachers, corporate partners, coaches, teachers, neighbors, visiting teams, summer college interns, etc).

It is in these relationships that exchanges of grace happen, and these exchanges are by God's design. Lives are changed. God is present. People are rescued and transformed. We are rescued from cultural, racial, economic, and denominational isolation among other types. These places can become, by default, ghettos of

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poverty. It is in these relationships that our poverty is exposed, and possibly redeemed.

CGM life has become, for us, a natural place that many different people come together. Some meet Jesus and are rescued. Many of us continue to discover how narrow and limited our experiences of Him have truly been.

Some have left frustrated and disillusioned by the seemingly impossible mess and hurt as these relationships have surfaced. Many of us are sitting in the mess of relationships and trusting to see resurrection in sad brokenness. Some of us have seen miraculous resurrection in these relationships and have come out together "on the other side" as family.

One thing I have learned: it IS worth it. The ghettos of isolation and clean, false, security are illusions at best, and they destroy us from the inside out at worst.

I would like to invite you to come out and spend time with this growing community. We would love to have you come contribute to the lives of some amazing people. As important, we would love to see you become recipients of wild riches contained in life-on-life exchanges with others outside of your natural circles.

You may never be the same.

Thank you for loving and investing in this broken work. God really likes to show off in our weakness together.

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