

God can change our cities. He has already begun!

April 2011

Beauty from Ashes: Empowering Urban Youth

Dear _____ :

Lost. Abandoned. Forgotten. Abused. Fatherless. Angry. These words and more describe inner city youth. When we came to the South Bronx, we began by loving people, especially children and youth, and pointing them to Christ. God led us to the ones who needed Him the most.

Raul was very reserved when we met him. I invited him to be a part of our student leadership training program. He began to study the Word eagerly and grow in his new faith. But shortly after, Raul's mother called me: "Would you please inform my son that I have changed the locks and he is not welcome to come home?" After praying with Lidia, we opened the doors of our home and Raul quickly became like a member of our family.



Raul with our family

Raul eventually asked me if I could teach him to play the keyboard. I showed him some fundamentals but did not have time for consistent lessons with him. Then one Friday night, I asked the students to gather around Raul. As they circled Raul in prayer, I asked God to give Raul the talents that he so longed for. God heard our prayers! In less than one year, Raul was playing the piano, guitar, bass, and drums. He became the worship leader in the Bronx. ***This quiet and reserved young man was not quiet and reserved when he stood before God's people in The Harvest Center or on the streets to lift high the name of our Lord in pure worship!***

God's giftings upon Raul did not cease with music! Raul designed our website and all of the graphics, logos, posters and brochures for Urban Harvest and Hope for the City. He is now using his computer abilities in the Marines to support our troops on the ground in Afghanistan. (Pray for Raul during his tour of duty there!)

Vonetta was five-years-old when she came to the Bronx. Her mother was a heroin addict. We often saw Vonetta wandering the streets at night looking for her mother. Her junior high school counselor told Vonetta to drop out of school. "You'll never amount to anything." But Vonetta remained in school and in the Kidz Klub after-school program. Her grades excelled and she eventually became a gifted young leader. ***Though she received offers for basketball scholarships at other universities, she is going to college in the Bronx so that she can continue to give back what God has given her in programs at The Harvest Center where she faithfully serves the Lord. God is using her to touch the lives of many people.*** And after 41 years of heroin addiction, Vonetta's mom finally allowed Christ to change her life and they worship the Lord together.



Vonetta and Angel

What a joy it has been to see young people like Raul and Vonetta find peace, joy, salvation, education, a spiritual family and a future in Christ. The pressures against youth in the inner city are ***enormous***, but ***our God is bigger!*** And those who chose to persevere are bearing fruit in Christ. ***God can use people like Raul, Vonetta, Angelo, Vilma, Keith, Marie and others to change the world, and Urban Harvest Ministries is a part of making that happen!***

Your prayers and support have helped opened the doors of opportunity for urban youth like Vonetta and Raul. As you continue in partnership, more young lives can be set in the right direction. During this time of great need for UHM, pray with us that many will capture the vision of Urban Harvest and make it possible for the lives of many children, youth and adults to find salvation, hope and destiny in Jesus Christ. ***Thank you for all that you have done to make this possible!***

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