NEWSLINE

Once again, our year-end trip was a success. This year our students enjoyed a visit to Universal Studios in Orlando, FL. and visited other theme parks. Our staff and students stayed in a beautiful vacation home with a pool. Each year our nine most involved students are awarded with an all expense paid trip after the school year.

Anonymous donors are sponsoring a fundraiser for Valentine’s Day on February 9, 2008.

What a great night it will be, and we hope you will join us for an elegant evening of hors d’oeuvres, a sit down dinner, and dancing. Sponsored by the Marriage & Family Ministry of McLean Bible Church. Please contact The House for more information.

Take a picture tour of our new facility on page eight.

Our activities also include, pool, ping pong, air hockey, and pinball. And yes, staff also enjoy the new toys as well!

A brand new 60 inch Plasma Screen TV was donated by George Dunn for our new building. We can now have a “real” movie night. If you happen to see staff in BLOCKBUSTER, you will know why. Thank you so much George!

Former House Student ExceLS In College

The House is proud to announce the award of a $3,000.00 scholarship to Jessica Reeves, a graduate of Anacostia S.H.S. and a former participant in our after school programs. We recently caught up with Jessica and we’re excited to share that she is currently enrolled as a freshman at Coppin State University. Jessica is doing very well academically; preparing for final exams and looking forward to her second semester at Coppin.

Our application defines the ideal House Scholarship recipient as follows: A high school senior who has persevered through a difficult urban living and school environment and is committed to complete further education that will help in preparation for a self-sufficient adult life.

We are so proud of Jessica and grateful to long time supporters of The House that established a special charitable trust. Jessica and her roommate are currently researching how to start an organization on campus with a focus on helping children and families in Africa who are suffering from HIV/AIDS. She wants to rally other students to collect medicine, clothing, food, and other essentials. We are so delighted to see that Jessica has a servant’s heart. Jessica is a wonderful example of the type of students we proudly serve here at The House. With a helping hand, we truly believe that there is no limit to what they can accomplish in life.
Above And Beyond

Our job doesn't end with providing a safe place for youth to hang out, where they can take advantage of in-house program activities; nor does it end with the external programming we provide at Anacostia Senior High School. Sometimes we advocate for our students in the criminal justice system. Recently, Andrea Counts went to court with a student and his mother and prayed with them before the hearing. Andrea was able to talk with the prosecutor, who agreed to continued probation. She also spoke to the judge and was encouraged to hear the judge's excitement about The House and to hear him say that if there is anything we need to let them know.

The House is the only after school program in this community for high-school aged youth. That's why our mission is so critical! Intervention, support, accountability, and love can go a long way in preventing further actions or behavior that may lead to a long-term stay in our juvenile/adult penal institutions. Andrea will tell you that she does not have a 9 to 5 job; working with youth is her calling.

Although we are certainly sad to see Chris move on, we are just as excited for him and his expanded role.

On his last day, The House hosted a farewell celebration for Chris which featured a slide show highlighting special moments. Students recounted their “funniest Chris moments” and everyone enjoyed lots of food and dessert. There were very few dry eyes as Chris delivered his last Life Session. His insightful words could not have been more profound or timely as he challenged our students to be “Fishers of Men.”

Chris relayed the story of the calling of the first disciples. He described how Jesus saw Peter fishing and asked Peter to follow him. Jesus told Peter that he would make him a fisher of men. For three years Jesus trained Peter to fish for men, but three days after Jesus had died, Peter was back fishing for fish. After the resurrection, Jesus was seen walking on the shore. Peter quickly jumped out of the boat and scurried to Jesus. In Chris’ words, Jesus asked him, “If you love me, stop fishing for fish and fish for men like I taught you.” Chris instructed the students not to be like Peter. Chris said, “After all of the life sessions, devotions, and input I’ve put into your life, don’t go back to your old way of living just because I’m not here everyday. Don’t go back to fishing for fish. Keep taking the high road in life!”

Almost every student in the room came forward to pray with Chris and to commit their lives to being fishers of men. Others gave Jesus their heart for the first time. Thanks Chris! We wish you continued success in all your future endeavors. We will be sure to thank God for the fruit we harvest from the seeds of success that you have sown at The House DC.

Fishers Of Men

After four years of passionately serving youth within The House and the surrounding Anacostia community, Activities Manager, Chris Chilez has accepted a new role serving youth in Prince George’s County Maryland.
Young Life

The House is proud to call Young Life one of our key partners. We share the common mission of carrying the message of Jesus Christ to youth who are living in turbulent times, experiencing a sense of hopelessness, and looking for answers that will point them in the right direction. Both Young Life and The House are committed to building solid relationships with the youth we serve. We meet the kids where they are—and without pressure—encourage them to renew their hearts and minds through a relationship with Christ.

Homeless

While many people were celebrating the Thanksgiving weekend with their family, two of our staff, Jada Jackson and Andrea Counts traveled to Norfolk, VA with one of our female students, Karen, to pick up her one year old daughter. Karen, now 17, has not had a consistent place to live for the past two years.

Unfortunately, many of our students have been homeless at some point in their lives, and some still are today. These students are doing whatever they can to survive, and in many cases are taking on adult roles—paying rent—for a place to stay. Some have been kicked out because of pregnancy, some because their parents are on drugs, or there are just too many people to feed.

House students participated in a Candle Light Vigil and Walk for Homeless Youth. Students saw how this could happen to anyone, and many of them recognized their peers. The walk was to teach our students to be sensitive, and for some, to appreciate what they have. We still have students that do not have a place to call “home,” and we are now seeking ways to address this serious issue.

Twice a month on a Tuesday, you can find a spirited Young Life Club session going on at The House. Young Life Club sessions are similar to The House’s Life Sessions, where youth are given a safe place and an open forum to just be themselves, have fun, and to receive a message of hope through the word of God. Club sessions can be filled with skits, games, or open discussions about the challenging issues that our youth face today. Club sessions provide The House with a great opportunity to present our students with a different voice that echoes the same message: God loves you and he has a divine purpose and plan for your life.
VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

In 2003, when Tracie and her husband Mark Moulton went to Africa it opened their eyes to needs everywhere. They decided to visit a local ministry, Southeast Christian Fellowship Church, in Washington, DC. It was at that point that they became interested in The House and wanted to serve, because they “were impressed with the model of The House. We were maturing spiritually and thought we were being called to get outside of our comfort zone and find some place to serve,” said Tracie.

She had no clue what all this would mean, but God continued to put this in front of her. It would be years later while Tracie was having lunch with La Wonda Harris that they would discuss the needs of The House and her interests. La Wonda asked Tracie, “if you could do anything you wanted to do for The House what would that be?” Tracie said that she liked to cook and shop, and that’s when things started to click.

Tracie was concerned whether or not she would be able to relate. Tracie also felt it was important to build trust and didn’t want anyone to think “here’s some lady in the suburbs coming to D.C. to get her feel good moment.”

“My experience has been great. It’s been special to get to know Andrea,” says Tracie. Each week, Tracie shops for food and prepares a meal for our students. While shopping in Costco one day, Andrea and Tracie stopped to get lunch. They talked about some of the problems our students face. Tracie said that “I’m always dealing with other people’s problems. It weighed very heavily on my heart and Andrea gave me advice about how you keep from getting discouraged—she gives it all to God. And I thought to myself, here I am down here and I get such a great pearl of wisdom from Andrea.” She is now starting to form relationships with House students. Tracie says, “I have no ulterior motives, I just want to serve even if that means cleaning the bathroom.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Valentine’s Dinner And Dance

McLean Hilton
Tysons Corner, Virginia
February 9, 2008
6:00 - 11:00 PM
Tickets $100 per couple
valentines@thehousedc.org

The Annual Spring Banquet

McLean Hilton
Tysons Corner, Virginia
May 8, 2008

Thank you Tracie for laboring with The House staff as we minister to the youth in Southeast.
This past November, House students and staff traveled up to the mountains of south central Pennsylvania for a time of fun and relaxation, which included enlightening workshops, entertaining games and challenges, and inspirational devotions. One of the highlights of the weekend was a game called "Mountain High." During this game, the students were challenged to climb to the top of the mountain. They were given two paths—one easy and one difficult—and asked to pick the one that they felt could successfully get them to their desired destination. The easy path was appropriately called "Settlement City," and although it seemed to be the quickest and easiest route to take, it didn't actually lead you to the top of the mountain. The goal of this challenge was to give the students a practical application of how the easiest path may not always yield the best results. In fact, those who chose Settlement City, never made it to the top of the mountain. But congratulations go to Andrea Counts, and the six students who took the difficult path and made it to the top of the mountain. Thanks for being a great example to our youth Andrea! (By the way, we hear she's still recovering.)

The House would also like to express its gratitude to all of the volunteers, including parents, who came out to lend a helping hand that weekend. Minister Stephen Brown from Hope A Glow Empowerment Center in Woodbridge, towards Christ. Teen Speak really encouraged our youth to be "occupied" with the Word of God. They relayed the importance of always having on the "Armor of God" as told in the Book of Ephesians. They even did a skit to creatively convey to our students what wearing the armor of God really looks like.

VA led an inspiring workshop where he reminded our students of God's purpose in their lives. We were also honored that Teen Speak of Prince William County came out to show their support. Teen Speak is a faith-based, non-profit organization composed of parents, youth, community leaders, and youth ministers whose mission is to turn youth
Eighth Annual Golf Tournament

The House hosted another successful golf tournament at Whiskey Creek Golf Club on September 19, 2007. This was our 8th annual golf event, a most enjoyable and worthwhile day, based on the observations of many of the nearly 100 people who participated.

We are deeply indebted to all of the tournament sponsors and silent auction donors. Thanks go to George Dunn, John Yetman, and John Andreoli who were the volunteer golf leaders; and to Jeff Palmucci, who oversaw the silent auction.

This is an important fundraising event for The House, as well as an opportunity to attract new donors. This year’s tournament netted approximately $36,000 after all expenses were paid. Next year’s tournament is scheduled to be held September 18, 2008. Please mark your calendars and plan to join us.

A Talent Show For Thanksgiving

In celebration of our great partnership, each year The House sponsors a Thanksgiving Dinner for the staff of Anacostia Senior High School and students. The highlight of this year’s dinner was a talent show that was put on by students of both Anacostia and The House. Guests were truly entertained by impressive rap performances, singing, and poetry readings. Congratulations go out to House student, Danielle, our first place winner that received $500.00.

Many thanks to our volunteers, Charles and Beverly Durham of the Southeast Christian Fellowship Church. Year after year, Mr. and Mrs. Durham faithfully support The House by cooking all of the food for the dinner. Their efforts never go unnoticed! We also would like to thank Ms. Williams, Anacostia’s Parent/Student Coordinator, and our point of contact for this year’s event.

As The House comes to the end of yet another year, we are truly thankful for the many students that we’ve been able to impact through our collaboration with Anacostia S.H.S. We are also excited about the challenges and successes that the new year will bring.
One day, through a community outreach, Michael Ruffin and his wife Mistye visited Anacostia Senior High School during their “90 Days of Peace Campaign.” The need for the youth in Anacostia to be exposed to something positive was very evident as they walked through the halls of the school. Prior to visiting the school, the Ruffins had no idea that The House served the community of Anacostia. But as Mistye puts it, “God works in mysterious ways.” It was in that moment, that she and her husband decided to go see what The House was all about.

In their words, ‘We knew our days in the area might be numbered, but we wanted to do something for these young people. They were trying so hard to be a positive force in our society, but there was so little support surrounding them. But, there was The House! It did offer them what they needed—a safe, positive environment that embraces who they are and shows them how to be a part of society. It was a place to learn, grow, and feel cared for. We just wanted to be a part of that picture.”

Since Michael and Mistye were not able to spend time with House students, they decided to give them an end-of-year trip to Six Flags, which included lunch. But their generosity didn’t end there. During their visit, they learned that The House was in the process of awarding a scholarship. They learned about the seven applicants, who all sounded like great students. Although not all of them were House students, every one of them were working against the odds to make a difference by pursuing a college degree. So, the Ruffins thought it would be a great idea to honor the students by taking them to dinner. It would also give them an opportunity to talk with the students and really encourage them.

Michael and Mistye had a blast at Benihana Restaurant in Washington, DC. The students even did a karaoke number for them. This special evening was topped off with surprise gifts for everyone. Each student received new backpacks filled with Bibles, autographed basketballs, watches, and money for books. “We really felt that these students were making a step in the right direction, and we wanted to honor them for their determination and courage,” says Mistye. “They made us proud to serve God and just moved us with their hopes and dreams.”

The Ruffins recognize how God has so richly blessed their lives. In doing so, they believe that it is their responsibility to give to others. Although Michael and Mistye Ruffin have moved on and are now residing in Milwaukee, The House would like to thank them for opening their hearts to the students of The House and the surrounding Anacostia community.
Our expanded facility will now have a Saturday program for middle school students starting January 2008.