

Neighbor



The Shadetree Group exists to offer the whole Gospel to the whole person by affirming the dignity of under-resourced persons and empowering them to improve their own lives and community.

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue No 4 -- June 2010

Reflection

Three months have passed since we last spoke. Our family now has no babies; which brings mixed emotions. Our equipment pastor of continues on We love and just need more playing with



at "HORSE" or anything basketball related, we treasure our time with our neighbors. I get the privilege to witness firsthand how God is transforming these youth in my life. I continue to be amazed that God uses me, even me, to share His love to the children and families around us. God can make a missionary out of anyone! I am living proof! I am blessed by saying "yes" to Him. God is good...

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Summer Day Camp

We partnered with Centenary Camp to teach children about the love of Jesus and swim lessons.

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Life Together

How Does Our Garden Grow?

Our Gretna Community Garden is in full production at this time. We are meeting more regularly since the summer began. The garden crew has even sold some of our peppers and cantaloupe. We are having a blast being together and discovering God's bounty every few days. Our friends from Love at Work weeded our plot and cleaned up our shed; God sent this awesome group just at the right time...the weeds were taking over! Thanks LAW...holla!! We will soon paint some of our equipment so that should be very entertaining!

Taking the Garden Crew West

Many of the young men and women in the garden are receiving the chance to travel west to Dogwood Acres near Chipley, Florida. Dogwood Acres is a summer camp program of the Presbyterian Church, offering



dads, and grandparents as we prepare for the kids to attend camp later in the summer. They are gathering forms and packing list supplies as I help provide a few large packing list necessities. Even the city of Gretna has been

swimming, archery, canoeing, art, music and great fellowship in a loving, Christian environment. Our dearest friends at Gretna and Woodland Presbyterian Church offered several scholarships to children in Gretna. I am blessed to spend more time with moms,

so generous by offering free notary services. Many of the campers are nervous about being away from home but they are more excited than nervous.

Joy of Friendship

Our sugar snap peas are one of the most delicious raw vegetables in the garden this summer. I savor their sweet crunch and encourage each young person to try one. Several of the guys kid me about how I will try anything. "Ms. Catherine, you like all that vegetable garden stuff. I don't know; I've never had a sugar snap pea." After the first crunchy bite, many of the gardeners take a few more for snacks and the bike ride home. I see us sharing and helping one another; restoring one another gently, working with one another. We are seeing the joy of creating something together. The children are learning to govern themselves as a team. I am reminded how each one of us is a gift from God. We need one another. We are designed for friendship. Each one of us matters.



Called to be Loved...

But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him.

— Jesus

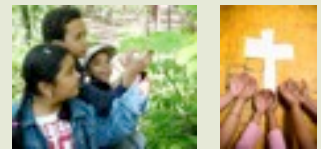
As she made her way across the width of the large pool, Kathy beamed with pride. After a few practice runs back and forth, we asked the swim instructor to allow her to go to the deep end. "Are you sure you are ready to not touch bottom?," I asked. "Yes, I can do it!", she eagerly answered. Kathy's mom watched patiently at the edge of the pool as Kathy and I made our way to the deep end. I assured her I would continue to be with her the entire time. "On your mark, get set, Go!" I watched her blast off from the side and shoot toward the depths. Her deliberate pace was confident and smooth. She was grinning as she reached the other side, "I did it! Now my dad will buy me a pool!". Her mom and I cheered.

Smiles were abundant June 14-18th. Along with many partners and volunteers, the Shadetree Group hosted over 50 children at Centenary Camp near Greta, Florida. For four years, Centenary Camp directors, Dave and Donna Bruns had envisioned a day camp where under-resourced children could learn to swim as well as learn how much Jesus loves them. Their prayers were answered as our

collaborative team welcomed more than 50 Hispanic children from Gadsden County each day from 9am until 3pm. They learned about a lost son and his forgiving father, full of love. The children learned how a little boy shared his lunch with Jesus and thousands were filled, with leftovers to spare. They learned how to pray for and love people who are mean to them. We witnessed children who were grieving the loss of parents share their favorite stories of their loved one. We heard squeals and praises as we sang out with all of our hearts to God! The children listened to and experienced different styles of music. We enjoyed dancing with children as we all pretended to be zoo animals, world travelers, and rodeo stars. We made awesome crafts and quickly realized we were surrounded by talented artists of all sizes. As the body of Christ worked together, we witnessed God transforming children's lives as well as ours. We had volunteers serving from Florida and Georgia. We saw the teen volunteers grown in grace, patience, and leadership skills. We worked together as Baptists, Methodists,

Pentecostals...as *Christians* serving Christ with gladness and singleness of heart.

In closing, Kathy's story may seem like a small feat to some, but she was afraid of swimming at the beginning of Monday's activities in the pool. As she practiced water acclimation and floating skills, she gained more confidence. By Wednesday morning, Kathy was swimming like a fish in the deep end of the pool. Just three days...Christ changed the course of humanity in three days. Who knows what we can accomplish when we work together for the glory of God?



Campers learned about God's love as well as music, art and nature.