

CORNERSTONE NEWSLETTER

Spring 2024



A communique' of

Cornerstone Baptist Church

Cornerstone Community Development Corporation, Inc.

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April 2024

Dear Friends:

Thank you so much for your continued support of Cornerstone's outreach in the South Dallas/Fair Park community. Your words of encouragement, prayers, volunteer help and financial support are all much needed and greatly appreciated. We count ourselves blessed to have you as a friend to make it possible for us to help others in need. In this newsletter, we hope to share with you the various outreaches and programs that we have engaged in the past several months and with God's help and your supports what some of the plans are for this Spring.

SPRING BREAK MISSION TRIPS AND BIBLE CLUBS

Spring break provides us at Cornerstone a great opportunity to host about 350 youth and their leaders to serve with us at Cornerstone. Youth come as far away as Wyoming and Mississippi and as close as the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex. They assist with feeding the homeless at the Cornerstone Kitchen, providing clothing through the Clothing Closet and Shower, mowing grass and Spring landscaping, sorting, and organizing donations, performing soccer camp and block parties, completing renovation projects, and serving in other areas that are identified as most needed. It also gives many of our regular volunteers a time to take a break to be with family or just relax.



Also, for many families Spring break is a time spend time with family and travel. However, for many of the families we serve in the neighborhood, this time of the year is more of a challenge because of increased food bills (many of the children qualify for free and reduced lunch), lack of properly supervised children because a large number of children are being raised in a single female head of household, and little exposure to many of the local sites due to lack of funds and transportation. Because of these realities, once again, Cornerstone will provide a Spring Break Bible Club free of charge to neighborhood children that will include field trips, breakfast and lunch, Bible lessons, supervision and lots of love and affirmation of the children.

CORNERSTONE
Worship & Life

SPRING BREAK Bible Club

DOOR OPEN AT 9:45 AM

March 11th- March 15th
10:00 AM- 2:00 PM

Held at the Small church location
2815 South Gray Street
Dallas, Texas 75215

Bible Study
Arts and Crafts
Recreation

Registration open:
January 15th- February 1st

<https://forms.gle/i9JNgY6fRz6G1rz6>

If you are interested in supporting this effort that will costs \$7,500, you may send your tax-deductible contribution to CORNERSTONE at PO Box 152551, Dallas, TX. 75315 or electronically via www.cornerstonedallas.org.

AS COLLD LINGER, CHURCHES OPEN DOORS FOR MINISTRY

This article appears in the **BAPTIST PRESS** on January 19, 2024

By Scott Barkley



DALLAS (BP)—As hot as Dallas can be in the summer, temperatures become just as brutal in the winter. Pastor Chris Simmons and Cornerstone Baptist Church have learned it's always best to have a comfortable place to rest for those without one, to give them somewhere to shower, eat and clean their clothes while hearing the gospel. Opened doors tend to open hearts. They know this. Simmons and Cornerstone became acutely aware in January 2018 after a homeless man froze to death within eyesight of the church. "That spurred us to begin looking at what we could do to keep our homeless neighbors safe in the wintertime," Simmons said.

Other shelters are available, with one 900-bed location filling up quickly and another with 100 beds doing the same. Texas Baptist Men volunteers provided more than 15,000 meals as of Jan. 18 to help local agencies feed individuals in shelters, and that ministry was continuing in light of a second arctic blast that hit North Texas early on Jan. 19.

However, many remain "shelter-resistant," said Simmons, due to reasons such as the fear that a background check will reveal an arrest warrant, or they won't be able to come and go as they wish. Technically, per city policy, Cornerstone doesn't offer a place to sleep. However, its warming center is a separate, on-campus building outfitted to do laundry. Open at all times, it isn't unusual for guests to rest while there.



TBM volunteers prepare hot meals for unhoused people in Dallas who are seeking shelter from a winter storm. (TBM Photo)

Bitterly cold temperatures across the country have brought at least 37 deaths nationwide, with another frigid wave set to descend in days. At times the wind chill has sunk to -25 degrees in Salinas, Kan., where Greg Savage is pastor of First Southern Baptist Church. "My wife and I were talking this morning about how to do a warming area," he said. "For right now, our church staff and deacons are watching out for widows and the homebound, offering to get them food and those sorts of things. "People can't be out in this weather very long," said Savage, who has lived in Kansas for 30 years and in Salinas for the last nine.

In addition to the laundry center, Cornerstone offers a space with 19 showers in an adjacent building. At least one member of the church staff and two volunteers are always nearby. Cornerstone also opens its doors in the summer as a cooling center when temperatures climb well over 100 degrees. Then and now, the offer is well-received. "People are grateful to have a warm place and a meal," Simmons said.

"If you don't operate a warming center, I encourage them to volunteer at one. We have religious music and messages playing on TV at ours. The main responsibility of volunteers is to have gospel conversations with others. People tend to be open to that."

Savage agrees on the central focus of such steps. "At the heart of it, we need to keep looking for ways to give feet to the gospel," he said. "We know the truths and how Christ died for us. That's a message we share in a verbal way, but also must give hands and feet to let others see Jesus."

COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

On January 27, 2024, The Real Estate Council Community Investors (TREC CI) celebrated six years of working in the Forest District through the Dallas Catalyst Project. TREC Community Investors launched the Dallas Catalyst Project (DCP) initiative in 2017 to focus The Real Estate Council's philanthropic resources on a single, historically underserved community. Following a year-long selection process, TREC Community investors partnered with Cornerstone Baptist Church and Community Development Corporation, Inc., St. Philip's School and Community Center, (www.stphillips1600.org) and Forest Forward (www.forestforward.org) beginning in 2018 to revitalize the Forest District neighborhood near Fair Park.



Initially, TREC Community Investors committed \$1 million over three years toward catalytic real estate projects that promoted equitable development, improved the quality of life for Forest District residents, increased job preparedness and wealth creation opportunities, enhanced public safety and outdated infrastructure, and supported mixed-income and affordable housing. Many of the projects addressed Cornerstone's specific community needs like affordable transportation (We-Cycle Bicycle Shop/Resource Center), the first neighborhood laundromat in decades (Cornerstone Community Laundromat), food insecurity (the MLK Food Park, Southpoint Community Market, and South Dallas Cloud Kitchen), and improved public gathering spaces and educational (renovation of the old church location into a community space for summer camp and afterschool programs), among others.

Throughout Dallas Catalyst Project: Forest District, that investment grew to more than \$3 million from TREC Community Investors – plus \$1.2 million in pro bono professional services from TREC members and their companies and more than 6,000 volunteer hours – and an additional \$144 million into the community from outside sources.

Through its project, the 2023 ALC class furthered the Dallas Catalyst Project's commitment to improving Forest District housing without displacing residents. The Associate Leadership Class partnered with Cornerstone to overhaul security measures at the Royal Oak Apartments, which had previously faced violence and drug activity. Led by project co-managers Amber Ferrell (Balfour Beatty Construction) and Matt Ashbaugh (Bandera Ventures), the class built new fencing, upgraded window units, installed new security and safety measures throughout the complex and 16 one-bedroom units, and upgraded the outdoor gathering space with a new pergola, picnic area, and grill.



Although the partnership through the Dallas Project through TREC has officially ended, Cornerstone continued to work with other project to bring about community transformation in the neighborhood. Currently, we are working on transforming an old autobody and mechanic shop into the Cornerstone Resource Center. Once completed, it will not only provide additional office space, but meeting space for community groups, classes, and other support services for our local entrepreneurs who are looking to expand their business model.

In addition, we are working on transforming an old duplex that was originally built in the early 1900's into transitional housing to assist women who are returning to the South Dallas community after prison.



CHURCH PLANTING: CORNERSTONE EN ESPAÑOL

COMPañERISMO

EN FAMILIA



Last year, Cornerstone agreed to manage the church property in the Pleasant Grove area at 7300 Bruton Road, Dallas. The campus was 6 acres of land where 65,000 square feet of building space. The surrounding community is primarily Hispanic with 69% of the residents speaking Spanish at home. Because Cornerstone is committed to reaching the immediate community, we felt it best to have a Spanish work in that neighborhood. On the 1st Saturday in January, we were able to launch a new congregation, Cornerstone En Español. The work is being led by a Criswell College Student, Gustavo Maldonado.

To reach out to the surrounding neighborhood, we will be performing a Soccer Camp and Block Party on Saturday March 16th in partnership with Send Relief with the North America Mission Board. Please pray for this new work in this community.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: Mr. Ed Jones

Nonprofits and Church leaders know firsthand the value of faithful volunteers. Cornerstone is no exception with over 2,500 volunteers each year serving in several programs and ministries, we could not do the work in the neighborhood without them. From serving the homeless, youth, children and in so many areas, their help is invaluable.

Ed Jones has been serving with us at Cornerstone for the past 13 years. A professional barber, he has provided time one Monday each month to come and cut the hair of the homeless and indigent. Nearly everyone who sits in the barber chair get up saying they feel like a new person. Knowing that many of our homeless friends struggle with low self-image, the goal is to help them to look good and hopefully feel better about themselves.



CHURCH SPOTLIGHT: Stonebriar Community Church



Realizing that many children in the neighborhood are being raised in a single-parent home or by grandparents. For over 25 years, Cornerstone has provided a Saturday C-Kids Program so that parents can get chores done on Saturday morning while their children can be cared for in a loving and nurturing environment. For the past 10 years, one of our primary sponsors of this ministry has been Karen Hawkins and the team from Stonebriar Community Church. For several years, every Saturday,

they provide Bible study, recreation, lunch and lots of love and support to neighborhood children.



CORNERSTONE'S WALL OF LOVE

At least once a quarter, Helping Hand, Open Hearts (www.helpinghandsopenhearts.com) led by Rosalind L. Bryant, assists the Cornerstone Community by providing a Wall of Love (www.wallsoflove.com). The concept is very simple but impactful because it showers love, compassion, and empathy to those in need. Realizing that individuals have needs like toilet paper, water, snacks, feminine products, gloves, socks, etc. people are allowed to come to the wall and take items that they need. It is a way to support people in a judgement-free and safe space and lets them know that the church cares about them not just in word but in deeds as well.



A VALENTINE'S DAY EVENT: CATERING TO LOVE

Catering to Love (www.cateringtolove.org) is an organization that networks and connects local business with local outreaches to grow the support and impact of their respective mission. One of the ways in which they do that is by love cost catering and food donations to organizations might have a need. For the past 13 years, they have partnered with us to provide a Valentine's meal for those in the community. This past Valentine's Day, they had 50 volunteers (caters and servers) to serve 371 meals. The day not only consists of a meal but also a Gospel concert with local and national artists providing their services without charge.





If you are looking for a place to serve others, we are looking for you!!!! Volunteers are the lifeblood of our organization and assist us to reaching out to those in need to make the community a better place. Below is a sample of some of the ways in which we serve the surrounding community, for a more comprehensive listing, please visit us at www.cornerstonedallas.org. If you are interested in serving with us in any of our programs, please contact our volunteer coordinator, Barbara Biddle @ bbiddle@cornerstonedallas.org.

CORNERSTONE KITCHEN

The Cornerstone Kitchen provides about 13,000 meals each month.

Times: Lunch on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays
Opportunities: Prepare and serve meals, donate supplies and build relationships with the homeless.
Current Needs:

Large Cans of Green Beans
Large Cans of Corn
Large Cans of Mix Vegetables
Large Cans of Baked Beans (24)
Seasonings (All Kinds: salt/pepper/garlic powder/paprika)
Dishwashing Liquid
Washing Detergent (liquid)
39 Gallon Heavy Duty Trash Bags
45-50 Gallon Trash Bags

Gallon Size Zip Lock Bags
2gal Size Zip Lock Bags
T-Shirt Plastic Bags (500/2000)
Pine Sol/Fabuloso
Bleach
Commercial Oven Cleaner
Commercial Grease Remover
Disposal Aprons (500/1000)
Beard Nets (500/1000)

CORNERSTONE CLOTHING CLOSET & SHOWERS

The Clothes Closet/Shower Facility allows those in need can choose clean clothing every 30 days and are able to take showers anytime the facility is open. Also, additional help is needed organizing and cleaning the facility.

Times: Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays from 8:00 AM until 10:00 AM
Opportunities: Assist the homeless in clothing and distributing toiletries

YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT IS NEEDED!!!!

All gifts to Cornerstone are tax deductible.

In Person: Cornerstone Baptist Church, 1819 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., Dallas, TX. 75215
By Mail: Post Office Box. 152551, Dallas, TX. 75315
Online: www.cornerstonedallas.org

Sincerely,

Chris L. Simmons
Pastor, Cornerstone Baptist Church
President, Cornerstone Community Development Corporation, Inc.