

MISSION SOUTH+HSIDE

A Neighbor's Heart



Interns

Brianna

This past couple of weeks, my focus has been Backyard Bible Clubs. It's been absolutely amazing to see the way the Lord speaks to these children. I've learned so much about who He is through my conversations with the kids! At one of the clubs, I had a buddy named Sofia. As we were journaling together, she suddenly began listing off a plethora of insecurities she had. Most of them seemed small, but they clearly had a big impact on her. We began to discuss how God had given her a unique set of gifts and skills that no one else had and that He loved her exactly as she is. Since she has a hard time writing in English, we talked about how God can also understand what we're saying if we prefer to draw, speak, sing, or dance for Him instead of writing in our journals. She proceeded to draw a picture of her hand (which she had previously declared "ugly"), and added a smiley face, saying that she loved her hands now because they allowed her to create art. That next day, I overheard her tell a friend, "God can even hear our thoughts, so if you just want to draw pictures for God, He'll understand them!" It was so beautiful to see her begin to enjoy her talent and then to share what she had learned with a friend. Please keep Sofia in your prayers as she continues to grow in confidence through the Lord.

Nathan

There is something that I want to share with you that has really just gotten me on fire for this mission. It is the way that Mission Southside is so intentional with the community. There is a difference between just giving to the community, and giving to the community with relationships. Our focus here at Mission Southside is to bring help and hope, but how can we truly bring help if we don't know the people we are serving on a relational level? How can we bring hope without, Jesus, without knowing those that we serve on a relational, personal level? We can't. That is why we can only bring Help and Hope through relationships, and that is why I am falling in love with this ministry. We are not only focused on the physical needs but the spiritual needs.

A highlight of my summer has been my involvement in a Fun Friday at Eagle's Point Apartments. It is something that we do weekly to connect in a fun and interactive way with the communities that we serve. We also sometimes bring physical things that some of the people might need. This is just one of many other amazing ways that we connect with the people God has called us to serve. In these times of fun and play, there have been many conversations that lead to meaningful conversations, which lead to spiritual conversations, and in that process, is where we begin to see change in the community. That is why Mission Southside is so important, to bring Help and Hope.

Morgan

I thank God daily for the opportunities he has given me to be a part of these kids' lives. It always amazes me the way God invites us into loving his people and being the hands and feet of Jesus. I would have never thought that I would enjoy junior high ministry, but all of my ministry highlights revolve around them. They have stolen my heart. One highlight came during the craziest season of the summer when we put on 10 Backyard Bible Clubs in 2 weeks. I felt overwhelmed and nervous that we wouldn't have enough volunteers at all the sites. I reached out to several of our junior high students and they were eager to help! There were 3 students that went with me to both my afternoon clubs, both weeks. When we started, they were timid and anxious about knocking on doors and talking with the kids after the story. Within a few days I got to watch them grow in their courage, learn to take initiative, and look for what needs to be done. I was also able to have several meaningful and spiritual conversations with them throughout our two weeks of service together. They gave me strength and joy to continue when I was tempted to feel worn down. That's just one of many stories that shows how God is using me for his purposes and also using my new friends to make me more like himself.

Thomson

One of my favorite stories during this summer happened about mid-June outside of my very own apartment. One of the middle schoolers came over and we laid on a picnic table, shared each other's favorite music, looked at the stars, and told stories about our dreams and desires in life. When I applied for this internship, I was not expecting this scenario to happen at all. But there I was, with a person I just met about a month ago, talking about my hopes and dreams. During one of our conversations he asked me if he could meet my kids. My response was, "Only if you let me meet yours." This caused him to chuckle a couple of times and to take a deep breath that signaled me that he was about to say something very important. Looking intently at me he said, "You are like a dad to me" I knew that he did not have a dad and that he never had a fatherly figure in his life before. While filling out my application on my computer during a class a few months before, I never expected that this was going to be what I was going to receive this summer. I was prepared to give from everything I had learned in college, give my humor, and give my love to these awesome kids. What I have received while being at Mission Southside is fierce, unconditional love and unending lessons on how to be served by my new, younger friends. Living life alongside my new Mission Southside neighbors has effortlessly changed my life, and it would naturally change anyone's life that is bold enough to encounter it.

Renee

One of my favorite memories so far was when we took the LIT students to a canoe ministry in Missouri where we spent one night having bonfire worship and bonding time and the next day on the river. Kim, my canoe buddy, and I got to have devotional time together and it has set the tone for our conversations that we've had since then. I've also gotten the opportunity to teach the group a lesson on the Image of God and taught all of the kids the sign language alphabet. It has been an incredible experience learning the stories of these first and second generation immigrant students and they have forever shaped the way I see my world and more specifically, the people who live within five minutes of my house.