

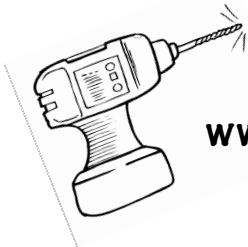
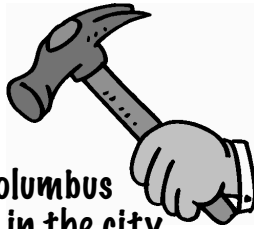
Urban Connections

Connecting with Christ... Connecting with People.

Spotlights

ServeFest 2010
October 16th
9am-1pm

Service projects around Columbus
Christians mobilized to serve in the city



to adopt a project visit
www.servefestcolumbus.com

INTERNET SHOPPING

Urban Connections can earn money when you search the internet or shop online. Please go to www.goodsearch.com and enter Urban Connections in the "who do you goodsearch for?" line. It costs you nothing!



Let us Pray...

- + ServeFest is a morning of service in communities like ours. Pray for the workers all over the city, for safety and for a presence that pleases Christ. Pray that we represent Christ well in each location. Pray that volunteers would become connected with our neighbors and our ministry.
- + Pray for the violence in our neighborhood. Pray safety for our students, volunteers and staff and also for a time of peace between neighbors.
- + Our Bible Clubs are getting a slower start this year. Pray that our students would be bringing their friends and pray that we would be reaching out to those in our neighborhood that we haven't yet met.
- + We start tutoring at Fairwood Avenue Elementary and Ohio Avenue Elementary this month. Pray with us that we can provide effective, loving help for the students and that we can be a blessing to the community.

There are many characteristics of our neighborhood that we can't ignore. I see poverty, I see desperation and I see violence. The last one really has been bothering me. On September 18th I was outside when my neighbors and people from a few houses down started bickering. Eventually the police came and broke it up but as soon as they left everyone was back outside arguing again. Again the police came, again they sent everyone inside, and again as soon as they left everyone was back outside. This time they were in the road slapping one another around. I brought the kids in to the house and told them people weren't making wise choices and we needed to stay in. Again police, again everyone inside, again the police leave, again everyone back outside... this time with bricks to throw. Again the police...

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well you get the picture. Until at 8:25pm shots were fired. One man died, one woman injured, and the suspect arrested. There were roughly 20 witnesses to the events. Detectives from not only homicide, but also burglary and assault were called in to conduct the many interviews, which went on long into the night. How is a peacekeeper to respond?

Well, online there were many responses to the news story. One comment said "What a shock, someone was killed on the east side. Time to plow it under and start over only this time no white trash or thugs allowed." Another said "good thing the city's black population is quickly killing each other off at an alarming rate." These thoughts, and how common they are, concern me more than the violence. My response will not be hate.

We have had the response of those that love us, concerned for our safety who question our commitment to living here. This is more than a few people and let me tell you now that I'm not packing my boxes. My response will not be to flee.

I've wondered if I should've done more. Should I have tried to stop the fighting? Should I have gotten involved earlier in the day? Shoulds won't help me here... my response will not be regret.

Of course there are days when I worry about my children, the students to whom we minister, and others in the community that we love. We shouldn't ruffle feathers, we shouldn't walk alone at night and so on. But my response will not be paralyzing fear.

On October 16th we're hosting ServeFest teams. Just about 24 hours after the shooting I got word that our "neighborhood cleanup" project had been adopted. My first thought upon reading the email was to question whether I should cancel that project. But the vision of the project is to bring outsiders and my neighbors together to do the cleanup. My response will not be to abandon unity and vision.

Let me tell you another event that happened that same Saturday with less flair, zero news cameras and no glory. My daughter Hope, 7, invited her friends (7 and 5) over from across the street. While they were on our porch playing she asked them if they want to come with her to Bible club on Mondays. They got excited, went home and asked their mom who then came over to chat with me about what Bible clubs are. That started quite a conversation about church, jobs, children, school (Hope is in the same class as their 7 year old) and so on. It was a good chat and I'm glad that Hope's outgoing nature brought my neighbor to my door.

My response will be love, outreach and hope. My response will be to keep building relationships. I will continue to hold out a vision for this neighborhood that goes beyond poverty, pain and degradation. I will hold fast to the calling set before all of us to love our neighbor.

This happened on my street, but what will your response be? We hope you will come and see the changing lives that are part of our ministry and choose to respond by loving your neighbor in our community.

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