

January 4, 2016



God's Ministry At America's Best



1820 E. Park Place Jeffersonville, IN 47130

A God-Sized Task Accomplished!!

South Indiana Conference of the UMC, Exit 0 and Park Memorial UMC partnered together with the resources of God's people to accomplish a God-sized task. What we found to be true is what Ephesians 3:20 speaks so clearly about, "God can do immeasurably more than we can ever ask or imagine."

God says, "Love your neighbor, as yourself." Sometimes we are so homogenous, spending all of our time around the same people, that we fail to notice our neighbors. Without a doubt 54 children at America's Best were loved by God and by God's people because of your generous support. Our goal was to bring in about \$100.00 per child (\$5400) and through the generosity of God's people we were able to raise \$12,997.50 for ministry to people who would otherwise not have known the love of God this Christmas.

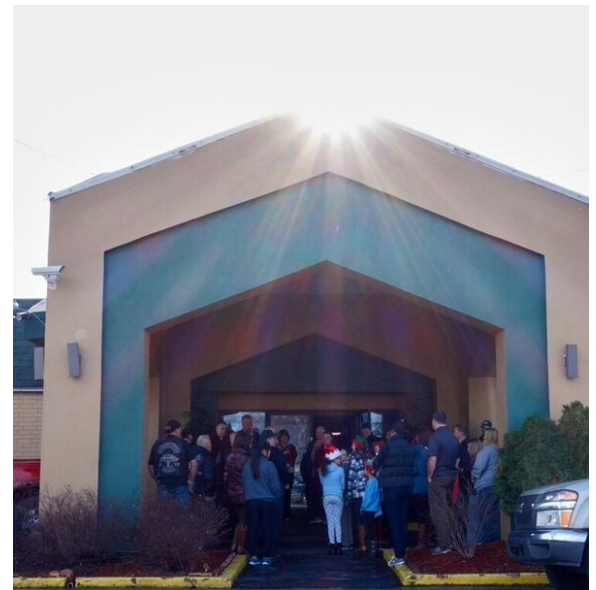
We provided each child with an outfit (shirt, shoes, pants) and a stocking filled with goodies (toothbrush, toothpaste, a piece of fruit, candy, silly socks, coloring books, crayons, and a couple of small toys). We also set up a make-shift Santa Shop in the "bar" where each child was able to sit

on Santa's lap and talk to him about their Christmas wishes. After their chat with the "big man" they were able to pick out several toys from his shop to take home with them.

Each family was able to pick out toiletries of all kinds, coats, hats, scarves, gloves, and blankets. The Seeds of Abraham Christian motorcycle alliance brought two truck loads of canned goods to pass out to families. Animal control came to our giveaway and provided dog treats, dog food, and dog toys for children of the furry variety.

AJS and Associates, owners of Kentucky Fried Chicken provided 172 meals so that every person at America's Best could receive a hot meal on Christmas Eve.

Because of the generous support we were also able to provide room and board for a family of 6 who were burned out of their apartment in Clarksville, IN. We also were able to provide room and board for a family of 4 where the father has terminal cancer. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!



50 + volunteers offered up their time, energy, and resources to make sure God's love was shared at America's Best on Christmas Eve. We kicked it off with prayer and a plan!

Santa's Helpers and the "Silly Sock" Girl

Seeing the children so willingly help so many people warmed the hearts of all who participated. But one story stands out above the rest.

Brianna the "silly sock" girl made it her mission to make sure that every child at America's Best had a pair of "silly socks." Silly socks are multi-colored socks that are given in order to brighten up someone else's day. Not only did she work hard at

making sure each child had a pair, she came on Christmas Eve and served at America's Best as well. Anyone who thinks that they cannot be "in ministry" needs to learn a lesson from Brianna's faithfulness in using her gifts for God's glory!!

****Not Pictured are Locklan and Abby Leavell, and Madison Suell****



Brianna the silly sock girl

Touched in the Midst of Terminal Cancer



Through our many ministry visits to America's Best we came to know a man named Bernard. Bernard had worked at America's Best as the maintenance person for 20+ years. This past summer he was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer, and informed that the cancer was in his bones. He was also informed, at the same time, that it was terminal and he'd likely only live three months.

His wife Linda works at America's Best as a housekeeper and was beside herself with grief. Her love for Bernard was apparent. Linda walked my wife Tawnya and I over to their room. We introduced ourselves and had prayer for him and his family.

When Bernard was asked, "what we might do to help him?" He responded by saying, "my health insurance will

not pay for Boost meal replacements and they are the only things I can keep down." My wife Tawnya asked, "what is your favorite flavor?" Bernard responded, "chocolate."

Bernard passed away Sunday, January 10th but we were able to provide him with four cases of boost that made his life a little easier. Please pray for Bernard's family especially his wife Linda and their two children.



In Ministry at 6 Years Old

"My name is Laura Frakes. I am the Treasurer at Smith Campground UMC and we are located in Southern Harrison County. Our Pastor is Charles Pelc.

I received the e-mail that you sent to the District, which they forwarded on to all churches. You have already spoken to someone from our church. It was Beth Ferree from Duke Energy who called to ask about donating the leftover food from their company Christmas party. She said the manager was thrilled with the food."

I mailed a check to you on Thursday for \$597.50. You may have already received it. We have a free will chili supper every October in which we use the money for donations for local Christmas families. Unfortunately, the organization we go through forgot to

hold back two families for us so your e-mail fit our Christmas mission perfectly. I guess, though, it was a God thing--he knew where the money had a better use!

We are a small congregation; usually about 30-35 each Sunday. The church voted to donate to you \$500.00. Various people donated \$90. The reason that I am telling you this is that the only child we have in the congregation who attends regularly is Clinton, who is 6. He told his Sunday School teacher, Beth, that he wanted to give the offering they have been collecting to the kids, too, which was \$7.50. I thought that was so awesome that a six year old wanted to donate his money to other children that did not have anything.



It wasn't far from our minds that Jesus was born in a place an awful lot like America's Best

In the Grip of Grace



Mya and another little girl opening their outfits and shoes

Through our many ministry visits to America's Best, we met Aida the motel manager. It seems like you cannot be at America's Best without Aida being there, she is literally always working. After a couple of visits Aida asked, "are you a priest?" I said, "No, I'm a pastor, why do you ask?" She said, "because I really want my daughter Mya to be baptized." She went on to tell the story of her calling around to other churches in the area asking if they would baptize her daughter. They all refused saying that her parents "had to" be members in order for

them to baptize Mya.

This is where the United Methodist doctrine of grace comes into play. It's a theological position that our world is needing desperately to hear. It's something that is unique to us and something the world really needs to find. Grace literally changes everything!

I readily agreed to baptize Mya and explained to Aida what baptism means. I believe her faith in God was strengthened that day!

Christian Fellowship Easily Turns Into Ministry

Tawnya Moon, the wife of Pastor Jim Moon, worked tirelessly on organizing each families outfits to make sure everything fit. She put everything in gift boxes and ensured that all of the i's were dotted and the t's were crossed!

Tawnya then organized a packing party extraordinaire and put out a call to the women of Park Memorial UMC. And boy did the women respond! If my calculations are correct, there were 22 women that participated with every gift wrapped, and every stocking stuffed in under an hour.

I was literally amazed, but then I realized that all of the food Tawnya prepared and h'orderves that were made was a special call of fellowship for the women of Park Memorial UMC. After they conducted the ministry at hand, the halls of the church were filled with laughter, music, and fun. It was amazing how God could bring together so many

and use their gifts, then to see them minister to each other in special ways.

Hebrews 10:24-25, "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."



Kendra wrapping away



Jenny and Meredith helped wrap gifts at our "Packing Party" and gave up part of their Christmas Eve to share Christ's love with the people at America's Best!

Check out a specially prepared Youtube video of our time at America's Best @

<https://youtu.be/PJwjEUamng0>

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