



...igniting powerful change in the lives of urban youth

Fortress Youth Development Center MINISTRY OVERVIEW

Fortress Youth Development Centers' Core Purpose, Values, and Strategy

Core Purpose: Providing opportunities for inner city children and youth to experience powerful life change in order to become productive Christian adults.

Values: Relationally Based, Empowered by Jesus, Unconditionally Committed, Efficient and Effective, and Holistic

Strategy: Form authentic relationships with children and youth by equipping them with life skills using the best spiritual, emotional, social, physical, and educational resources available.

Fortress Youth Development Center's Calling and History

We feel called by God to bring hope to the lives of children and youth and to help break the cycles of spiritual oppression and poverty.

- 2005 – Transitioned from a church outreach program to an independent non-profit and began operation as Fortress YDC; obtained state-of-the-art software for 12-station literacy lab; enrolled 16 students in Fortress Literacy Center (FLC); enrolled 50 youth in summer program.
- 2006 – Enrolled 36 students in FLC.
- 2007 – Hired two new full-time program staff and increased FLC enrollment to 48 students.
- 2008 – Enrolled 62 students in FLC; launched new program, Building Blocks Early Learning Center, and enrolled 15 pre-school students (operates 2 days/wk).

Fortress Youth Development Center's Ministry Model

Our model is based on building intimate relationships with children and their families for the purpose of discipleship and offering hope and opportunity. This model includes 4 primary programs, which will evolve into a 4-step prevention-focused program design for children and their families. Each program includes summer and weekend supplemental activities:

1. Building Blocks Early Learning Center - preschool program
2. Fortress Literacy Center - elementary after-school program
3. Fortress Literacy Center - junior high after-school program
4. Fortress Literacy Center - high school college prep program

FYDC Growth Strategy

In 2008, we reached full enrollment capacity (plus waiting lists) in our after-school and summer programs, based on the size limitations of our existing facility. Growth over the next 2 years is anticipated to be:

- 2009: Hire full-time communications/volunteer coordination staff person; increase Building Blocks enrollment to 24 children and add outdoor playground; hire full-time lab facilitator for literacy and math lab; add strong academic component to summer programs; hire full-time education specialist.
- 2010: Identify future home of Fortress YDC for expansion; publically launch capital campaign for new facilities.

Prayer Strategy

In James chapter 5 we are told that “the prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective”; we believe that prayer is essential to our ministry. We have developed a committed team of prayer warriors to pray for our children/families, staff/volunteers and their families, board of directors and their

families, and for our donors and their families. Stacy Kocur coordinates our prayer team and has created a prayer blog (www.prayforfortress.blogspot.com) for prayer team members and anyone interested in lifting our specific needs up to the Lord. The prayer team will meet with the staff at least once per quarter to fellowship and pray together and they will also attend one board meeting per year to pray over the board.

Board of Directors and Advisory Board

Board of Directors

Danny Phillips - Board Chairman
Jacob Schneider
Stephanie Frost
Michael Thames – Executive Director
Darren Kocur
Kyle Bower
Deonna Courtney

Advisory Board

Kelle Jones
Bobby Moore
Charlie Middlebrook
Dale Brooks
Ron Holifield
Jack Roseberry
Johnny Lewis

Staffing

Michael Thames – Executive Director
Terri Henson – Director of Finance/Administration &
Director of Building Blocks Early Learning Center
Kristen Guillory – Director of Programs
Ramon Smith – Youth Coordinator

Dorothy Waites – Kitchen Oversight
Robert Pollard II – P/T Program Staff
Jessie Sorenson – P/T Program Staff
Stacy Kocur – Marketing/Communications

Funding Plan

We are primarily funded by individuals (52%) who have a passion for our mission. An additional 43% of our income comes from local churches (14%), private foundations (23%) and fundraising events (6%). The remaining 5% is made up of volunteer group fees, corporate matching programs, and interest. Our fundraising strategy involves sharing what God is doing through our ministry and inviting people to be blessed by financially partnering with us.

Results-to-Date

- Over 150 children and youth directly impacted for Christ
- Over the past 4 years, FLC have students achieved an average increase of 2.0 grade-levels in reading comprehension during each 9-month school year, with one student increasing 5.4 grade levels!
- Reached enrollment capacity of 62 students in FLC
- Trained 48 college students through summer internships

Current Needs

- 8-10 volunteers per day from 3:00-7:30 P.M for after-school program
- An extra \$10,000 per month to cover increased FLC enrollment (it costs approximately \$3,000 per child/per year)
- 15-passenger van to accommodate FLC enrollment increase
- Professional board and committee members: Board of Directors (1-2), Financial Stewardship (1), Fundraising (2-3), Building Blocks (2-3) and Program (2-3).
- New laptop(s) for FLC
- Juice boxes, healthy snacks, and office supplies

