Leap up! For children: a church based education program

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Leap Up! For Children:
A Church Based
Education Program
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LEAP UP! FOR CHILDREN: A CHURCH BASED EDUCATION PROGRAM

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DR. COUTO
There is a tremendous need for better holistic education for our children; not only are schools the problem, but few parents and organizations step forward to really give children a solid education. A variety of groups around the country are working for the needs of children and discovering new ways to support their growth and learning. Education is not just in schools or through a program that meets the academic needs of children, which enables them to be successful in a worldly sense. The total needs of children should be met; this means physically, emotionally, socially, academically, and spiritually. Too often a program designed to help children will only meet one particular type of need.

The Christian church has the means and an obligation to participate in the whole education of children. There is no other place that can freely influence and teach children the truth. To realize the vital function the church has, it is important to first examine why meeting the needs of children is important; why would any of us have a reason to meet the needs of the "least of these" unless we had a heart for it? This paper will attempt to explain some truths behind this. In addition, looking at the church and parachurch programs that are already in place help to establish what can and is being done. What are they doing already to meet these needs? How will children be influenced? What are the strengths and weakness in these parochial services? The final section of this paper will be the development of a program that I would like to institute through a church for the total education of youth. I will be a member of the Teach For America corps next year and I need to be involved with the community; my desire would be to facilitate a
program enabling a church to meet some of the needs of children in the area.

**THE KIDS, THE NEEDS, THE CHURCH**

William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army in the late 1800's not only instituted programs for the poor and needy, but he also wrote extensively on social problems and the Biblical way with which problems should be dealt. Booth desired to work for the salvation of souls because he realized that meeting educational or physical needs was only treating a person's immediate or temporary problem. He had a particular concern for street children, yet his philosophy was to reach the parents and affect them for the sake of the children. "If we can reach and benefit their guardians, morally and materially, we shall take the most effectual road to benefit the children themselves" (Booth 209). However, Booth also realized the need for some type of holistic care that would support and encourage the parents in the work that they were doing. The framework under which William Booth worked 100 years ago and the current framework are very different; today some children have no parents that can be encouraged to care. However, there is truth in his recognition that parents must be a role model and establish a better way for their children. In the past, our society has chosen to take on the problems of children and deal with them apart from the family structure; it is only recently that there has been a strong emphasis on parent involvement. If this is not present, then adult caregivers are recognizing that it is important to know what children in crisis really need.
In terms of needs that children have, it is important to note that children have strong emotional and spiritual needs that can begin to be either met or modeled by parents and other significant adults. Knowing this affects how we respond or fail to respond to children and their needs. Kathryn Chapman outlines the following needs (other than physical) that children have:

**Children need love and acceptance.** This would mean creating a psychologically safe climate where love is spoken and acted upon. This communicates a sense of belonging.

**Children need affirmation and support.** They need adults to be positive advocates for the changes that they are going through in their lives.

**Children need our model of stability.** Not only will this provide emotional support, but it also shows a child that other people can be trusted and could have theological implications for a child to trust God.

**Children need to derive from us a sense of hope and promise.** A sense of hopelessness is a given for our children who are disadvantaged. This comes not from offering "things" to a child, but it is communicated through an attitude.

**Children need our example of religious faith.** In short, the Christian "walk must fit the talk" (Lester 44-47).

It's clear from these examples that what children need is strong role models and a good sense of guidance. Perhaps William Booth was correct in his understanding of how strong adults contribute to the growth of strong children.

Our society places a strong emphasis on the needs that children have concerning social, emotional, and physical help. The reason why it is important for the church to become involved in this type of ministry is because they are the only ones who can offer a whole and
true approach by showing how God desires to be in every part of one's life: emotional, social, academic, physical, and spiritual. The Bible teaches that education (as well as any other endeavor) should enable us to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength... Love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:30-31).

In order to teach children this it is important to understand how they may spiritually develop. Children's faith development will usually happen in stages. The faith that children are capable of is truly worthy and desirable in God's eyes. Jesus once said, "Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:4). Children have an amazing ability to accept and embrace the truth especially when there is a positive and encouraging environment in which to do this. Like adults, children will have variations in the development of their faith, but it is important to note that there are some visible differences in the way younger and older children exemplify their faith. A younger child will be more accepting of authority figures and could see God as different from Jesus and possibly as mean or destructive. An older child is starting to see the fallibility of humans, and understands that God is complex and not easily described, as He is also Jesus. There may also be a change in understanding prayer; as a child grows older he or she may see it as talking with God. An older child will begin to take into account motives, circumstances, and goals of being a child of faith (Lester 37-38). Understanding how children of different ages perceive things in a faith context as well as other contexts enables us to know how to better facilitate this development.
In the city of Richmond, Pastor Delores Jones has been one example of providing for the variety of needs that children have. Her ministry is called Love Outreach Ministries; she and her husband pick up children from different neighborhoods and take them to a large house that she rents in Ginter Park. They do this on Sunday morning and Tuesday/Thursday nights. This allows the children to come to a different environment and experience that "The only solution is God, the love of God" (Mullen A1). Their time is spent playing games, having Bible lessons, and simply talking. There is little parental involvement though, so Jones and a few others have the responsibility of caring for the children and getting them involved. Unfortunately however, Jones received some opposition from the churches that she was ministering with, so she left in order to start this venture; her congregation is unique in that it is made up of 80 children. This would be considered a parachurch organization because no specific church supports this ministry, yet it still has a Christian focus and heritage.

It is important for a venture like this to be anchored to a church because this is a necessary connection to the body of Christ which can provide the resources to accomplish certain goals. The black church has been a particularly under used resource in the improvement of the plight of urban black Americans. The urban black church can and does provide a wealth of resources which allow people to come to a haven that is safe where love and care are freely offered. The people in these churches firmly believe and exclaim that, "We're not going to straighten up this mess in our world and we're not going to fix our families until we confront and accept the
power of God in our daily lives" (Meacham 8). The pastor who said this has not only taken a strong stand on overwhelming problems, but he also has a church which offers day care, basketball leagues, karate classes, and anything that will keep young people off the streets. One difference between the church and public/social service agencies is that churches are able to relate to people; "We have to reach people on a personal, human level; you can only fight human entrapments with divine encounters" (Meacham 10). Not only can a church provide necessary community networks, but personal transformation through Christ is the business of the church.

**CHANGING LIVES: WON BY ONE**

The recognition that the church affords people a place where lives can be changed is an important aspect of the development of community leaders. Emmett Carson, a Ford Foundation officer, feels the church is the cornerstone of the black community. "For many people, the church provides an early training ground for leadership; the first time they read out loud or lead a group or find a role model is in the pews or in Sunday School. It's the center of our communities" (Meacham 11). It is not only necessary, but imperative that the church be recognized and utilized as a viable option for a place where people are cared for and transformed through knowing and experiencing the love of God.

Not only is it important to think in terms of the church being used, but we should also recognize that people are a necessary part of this role. Peter Drucker has predicted that within 10 years two-thirds of all American adults will volunteer five hours of service a week. This will become necessary as there are already a number of
models in the private sector of organizations doing the government's job better in education, prison reform, and working with the unemployed. Government cannot match the effectiveness or efficiency of nonprofit organizations. Through the eyes of the church the problems of crime and poverty are seen as moral problems; this paradigm permits one to recognize that the "only answer is a change of heart... It comes through spiritual regeneration, the love and life-changing power of Christ. This love is modeled by relationships" (Colson 88). Charles Colson, who was incarcerated because of his involvement in the Watergate scandal, became a Christian during his time in prison. He started Prison Fellowship, a parachurch movement which is a tool of the church that allows members to do work they otherwise would not have the opportunity to do. He recognizes the accomplishments of great evangelists like William Booth in the 19th century who used the church as a tool to "serve the least of these." Colson also knows the needs of people are deep and require more than just meeting physical or emotional needs. He sees the church's role as vital in serving human needs for our time. Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians described a Christian's role as this:

> But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body (2 Cor. 4:7-10).
Christians have a greater power, treasure, and privilege to be used for meeting people's needs in a whole and complete way that no other social service agency or government program can match.

Recognizing the need for the church and Christians to be an important part of this work of "reaching out" particularly through education is necessary before one can establish the type of the service given. What are the reasons why this should be done? Christian education should have a two-fold purpose for the people connected to it. The first should be that it allows one to achieve one's full completeness as a person. The second is that it enables one to lead a life as a Christian. This should be an overriding goal in the curriculum, enabling a person to develop Christian intelligence, and foster a strong spiritual life (Fuller 177). In acknowledging these goals, we must also develop a way that this will be done. Because the church will be helping students in his or her whole pursuit (academic, social, spiritual) what is taught is not always directly of a Christian nature. The need for Christian workers who will consistently be "salt and light" is essential because the "mode or manner" in which one teaches the material will be an important aspect of the work (Fuller 180).

There are often times when students will study subject matter concerning personal issues, ethics, and questions dealing with existence and destiny; the church should be willing to stand up for truth and express how truth can permeate every area of human life. By doing this the children are not confused by a "relative truth," nor are they learning the "just choose what you believe" mentality. The church is offering children "a unified and integrated (view) of
knowledge" (Fuller 181). Jesus himself said that "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:31-32). It is essential for the church not only to be willing to be innovative in its approach to education but to speak of this truth. Children are bombarded with a variety of different moral and ethical problems, and they need a solid knowledge and relationship with Christ as they encounter problems of racism, drugs, violence, divorce, homelessness, poverty, and poor medical attention.

MEETING THE NEEDS: PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL

When I spoke with Deanna Durham, the Director of Family Services at Community of Hope in Washington DC, she talked with me about the balance between meeting physical and spiritual needs. Community of Hope is part of the Nazarene Church and they provide for health, housing, and educational needs (this will be explained in more explicit detail later). They have a fourfold purpose through their educational programs of spiritual development, social growth, community service emphasis, and academic excellence. She feels that God is exemplified to the students through the caring actions of others; Durham feels the most important way physical and spiritual mix is when some type of rapport and relationship is established. Since she has been at Community of Hope for 13 years, there have been several families and individuals with whom she has had long-term relationships. She sees her evangelism as an outgrowth of these relationships.
Programs established like staff worship, dinners, church on Sunday, and the summer camps allow children who come to have physical needs met encounter what they need spiritually. Having experienced an afternoon at Community of Hope with the children involved in the educational program, I observed a definite focus on meeting their academic needs.

My concern with the program was that there was no consistent spiritual emphasis except in the summer when there is a vacation Bible school format and chapels. There is a danger in continually meeting physical needs and not identifying the deeper causes of problems, which would primarily be spiritual in nature.

Cort Rosebro, who is the interim program coordinator with Strategies To Elevate People (S.T.E.P. Ministries) in Richmond, said that one must carefully integrate the ways in which physical and spiritual needs are met. Because they are a parachurch organization, they see their primary function as supporting the urban church in the Gilpin Court area. They use church members as volunteers, and unite several suburban churches in a common effort to serve the inner city. When I spoke with Cort, and as I examined S.T.E.P. ministries, I saw more of an effort to care for people spiritually even as they tried to meet their physical needs. As Fuller stated earlier, it is an attitude of the heart and mind, and this is particularly important for the volunteers.
The responsibility to share with others through the church context is of paramount importance and many groups have already begun the work of this task. The first of these is through church events and parachurch organizations which allow others to give back to the community. From the organizations that I have observed, I see three major components that need to be a part of any operative program.

As stated earlier, the connection with the local church is a key component in providing resources/personnel, money, spiritual direction, and prayer support that would be necessary for the success of any program. It is imperative that a program not compromise itself in its manner of teaching or services offered. Having a strong connection with the local church improves this goal. Cort Rosebro at S.T.E.P. ministries stated that their priority objective is to support the urban church in the area where they are working. In this way a correct and consistent foundation is able to be established that will support growth not only for the direct benefactors of a certain program, but also for the family members who may be indirectly involved. Church involvement can allow them to also participate in programs or services which will meet and provide for their needs.

The second important aspect of programming that a church must consider is how comprehensive it should be. It seems that uncovering and helping with needs that children have through providing for them would also expose what parents need or ways
that they can be supported. Community of Hope and S.T.E.P. built their ministries slowly according to the needs that they saw, and these ministries have become fairly comprehensive. Community of Hope focuses on education, health care, and providing housing/employment. S.T.E.P. does more in the area of spiritual, educational, and economic development. Each program has carefully and continuously examined the needs of the community and their resources to determine how they can better serve their “constituents.”

The final important factor in all of these organizations that enables them to function better than public organizations is their ability to create an organic connection within their neighborhood. All of the programs I examined were at some level neighborhood based. This allows the people in the community to voice the needs that they have. Deanna Durham pointed out that this is essential in building relationships, but it also promotes a sense of ownership for the programs that a church or parachurch organization may be doing. Deanna has been with Community of Hope for 13 years, and she feels that this long term relationship combined with letting the neighborhood direct the course of their needs produces a pride and sense of hope within the organization. She feels that a “white” organization coming to the black community telling them what they need is often a reason for the failure of these programs. Si Kahn refers to the organic connection and the fact that it is a key component to any type of community organizing. There must be a “community of interest.” People have certain interests in common
that can provide the basis for bringing them together within an organization" (Kahn 72).

Concerning philosophies of ministry, I have seen many that are helpful in outlining how the work will get done, but few that establish a vision of what a program or church promotes through its ministry. The following philosophy of ministry has been adopted from the Friends of Jubilee church which runs programs in the for inner city children (this will be explained in greater detail later).

1. **That Jesus Christ is God's Son and the only Savior of mankind.**

2. **That salvation is a gift of God’s grace, received by faith.**

3. **That believers are commissioned to take the gospel to the lost and minister to the total needs of man.**

With this philosophy in mind, it is important to examine programs that already exist.

In terms of a church organization that is providing for children's physical needs, Love Outreach Ministries is proposing a Kid's Cafe. This model has worked in other cities and Reverend Jones is currently trying to get funding for it here in Richmond. It started in Savannah, GA and is a soup kitchen designed to feed needy children. 5.5 million children go to bed every night hungry according to the Food Research and Action Center (Hansen). This is a place where children can come to have a healthy meal; not only is there physical nourishment, but children also receive love and attention that they may lack at home. Many children live with parents who are not home from work early enough to feed them, and they cannot properly prepare meals for themselves or their siblings. In addition,
and rest. This would be followed by some type of sports or recreational activity. Finally they would be taken home at the end of the night. She also desires to have church services that they can come to on Saturdays and Sundays.

Not only would this Kid's Cafe involve feeding hungry children, but it would give children opportunities in the afternoon to work through a special curriculum designed for children with "attention deficiencies." Children from lower incomes who are malnourished tend to lose attention more quickly. Her hope is to involve 21 children if the grant money is allocated. While this program is growing to be more comprehensive in nature, it has developed a primary function as nurturing and providing total day care for a group of children. It does not have strong ties with an established church that would enable it to have a strong reserve of resources, but it does have the mechanism to reach children that few other organizations have.

A program that has gotten a more recent start in the East End/Churchill area is through Friends of Jubilee church and Christian Children's Fund. Christian Children's Fund has been a major factor in providing the monetary resources, while the church has the "organic connection" to the community. They have a strong educational focus, and their philosophy and "mindset" in this ministry is the one stated before in this paper. Some of the objectives of the program are to offer one-to-one tutoring for two hours a week, and to have time for recreation. The tutors are included in a training session which teaches them how to best work with their students and build positive rapport. They have a computer learning center which not
only teaches the children an important marketable skill, but it also enables them to print a monthly newsletter which they sell. The funds which they receive from the newsletter become an incentive for participation. Finally, they have developed a KIDS council which allows the children to take responsibility for conflict resolution and create a self-government (KIDS).

These programs are designed to promote positive self-esteem through leadership development, a sense of community, and provide incentives and resources for students to complete their education and attend college. They are under the auspices of a church which was started by other churches. It is a venture to be in the center of an area which was growing devoid of safe havens in which people could grow and learn. Rev. Stan Maclin is the minister; he is willing to go into the neighborhoods, meet people and provide for the community's needs, but he is also not shy about standing up for the truth in the fragmented community.

On the north side of Richmond, S.T.E.P. (Strategies to Elevate People) is at work in Gilpin court. It was started in the early 1980's by several suburban church's pastors who had a desire to see their congregations involved with the needs of the inner city. They selected Gilpin Court as their target area; 2300 residents live there and there are about 800 children. 87% of the families have a female head of the household.

One of the first things S.T.E.P. organized was Friendship Teams. These teams were volunteers from a church which met monthly with an institutional leader in the Gilpin area. They provided any support that they could for the leaders who were involved. Family
friendship teams between an urban and suburban family were also attempted, but it was difficult because of the significant cultural and socio-economic barriers.

As camps started during the summer, S.T.E.P. began to actively support the ministry of Victory Christian Fellowship, a church that meets at the Calhoun Community Center in Gilpin. The day camps were good, but the overnight camp at Camp Willow Run was a phenomenal success for the children because they had the chance to see and experience nature and farm life, which was totally foreign to most of them. This was also a place where the children were explicitly presented with the gospel of Christ each night in terms that they could understand.

As S.T.E.P. continued to grow they kept their emphasis on supporting the local church and not becoming another parachurch organization trying to solve problems on its own. In addition to their summer camp, they moved into the realm of Christian education during the regular school year. They began to have Friday Celebration at the Calhoun Center and about 80 children would come to study the Bible and find encouragement and direction. This also served as a good tool to reach the families with the Good News of Jesus Christ (Cox 5).

S.T.E.P. has been instrumental in responding to the community and meeting a variety of educational needs that are there. The tutoring programs like The Carver Promise or tutoring in the afternoon at the Calhoun Center enables children to focus on the academic and social needs that they may have. In addition, there has recently been a desire to address the problems of literacy among
single mothers who did not complete school. A S.T.E.P. ministry in Dallas instituted a program which provided a holistic look at education within a context of Christian values and needs. Basic classes and job skills were also taught to enable women to become economically independent. Unfortunately however, this program has yet to become a reality in Richmond.

The final way that S.T.E.P. has grown to serve the community is through economic support. At Christmas they run a Thrift Store which enables parents to buy their children new gifts at a low cost; the gifts are donated by other churches. Another program pairs up children with an adult mentor in a entrepreneur and leadership relationship. They come together for a one time business opportunity like leaf raking or baking. The child must advertise, manage people and profits, and provide adequate customer service.

S.T.E.P. takes seriously its commitment to prayer for the inner city ministry and communication between the churches. The Pastor's Breakfast is a gathering of staff from local churches who inform one another of events, and they spend time in prayer for the city. They believe this is the core of how they can do ministry and break the myriad of barriers that are present among people.

The Community of Hope in Washington DC has developed into a comprehensive program of health care, education, and housing for the Belmont neighborhood in which they operate. The mission of their ministry is to "restore hope by breaking the cycle of inner-city poverty" (Community of Hope). My visit there afforded me a chance to have an in-depth look at the educational aspect of the program. They receive some funding from Compassion International, which is
an international Christian organization seeking to meet the whole needs of children throughout the world. They have been key funders to provide things that children need for the program like supplies, computers, or games. In order to understand what happens educationally for the children, it is important to look at a typical day.

When I arrived, I sat with about 20 children from K-6 in a room. They were three adults; one of the children acted as the group leader and called on the other children to answer questions about things like the date, the temperature, who the four presidents were with similar last names, and to see if they could remember the time and date of the trip they were going to take to the zoo. The most important part of this time was the social manners and respect that they were learning to have for one another. They had to sit in a circle where everyone could see each other, speak loudly and clearly, listen carefully to one another, and take turns. They also had a time where they could share things that were important to them with the group. One girl showed an award she won for an art picture. Another girl shared a paper on which she had received a star. One boy shyly showed an art project that he had completed. This gave the children a chance to openly be proud of their accomplishments and learn how to appreciate the achievements of others. After that the children went upstairs to a small but colorfully decorated room to do homework and play games if there was time. Children were also taken in small groups to the computer lab to either play games or work on papers that they had been assigned. There were also some tutors present who make a commitment for a year to volunteer some time every week. This time each day produces a kind of "club"
atmosphere where children feel safe and get to know one another. Other things that the children are able to do include enrichment activities like drama, dance, or choir. In addition there are programs throughout the whole day in the summer which have chapel and provide Christian education.

In the room next door, junior/senior high school students meet. There is still a strong emphasis on homework completion, and there is a stronger mentoring program and more individual assistance. They have a basketball team, and college preparation courses are also offered. Compassion International has agreed to give any child $2500 toward each year in college if they choose to go. For this age group there is an emphasis on volunteerism and helping with the younger children. Both groups attempt to involve parents as much as possible and Community of Hope staff also takes an active role in knowing and assisting with the child's life at school.

Community of Hope has also developed programs for adults whether they need to take the GED, need help getting into college, or want to learn how to advocate their children's needs better in the school system. Job referrals are also possible, and special interest classes like cooking or self-defense are also offered. In this way, Community of Hope is seeking to care for the educational needs of all people in the community.

One problem among all of these organizations is that there is not a strong interrelationship of the programs in the same area; they have no way to actively work together. This problem leaves groups in isolation of one another, and they cannot share the good work that they are doing. S.T.E.P. is one organization that is careful not to
create another organization per se but to provide resources for the programs that are there. In addition, they have agreed to embrace the ideals of a group called *Christ Over Richmond* (COR) so that they can facilitate the realization of similar goals that both groups have. They feel that this will form various relationships among urban and suburban people which will build bridges for the future. COR sends teams on inner city missions for a designated period of time just like they would send people on overseas projects (Cox 13).

**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:**
**A CHURCH BASED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

As stated in the last section, there are many excellent models of the church and parachurch groups which work with children; it seems almost redundant to develop another one. One of the big questions that I have is how can more children be reached? Reaching more children through large programs, though, is in direct opposition to the need for individual and personal attention which we recognize to be the epitome of what makes a program successful. My excitement over what I have observed and experienced in visiting and learning about these programs, and my belief that things like this can work to transform people and even a community has prompted me to develop a theoretical model that would combine this type of educational service in a church setting. My work in the next two years with Teach For America will enable me to be involved with this type of community service, and my desire is to see something like this happen in a urban or rural setting. Although the two settings are very different, it is important to acknowledge that there are similar needs among children; the approach will be the key
difference. Each must be treated as a different context and in that way it must be tailored to what is happening in that specified community. As I present this model, I will point out key differences in the rural and urban contexts. Urban examples are more common and more is written about them, but there is a need for children in underprivileged rural areas to receive this type of attention. The ideal may be a more comprehensive program like S.T.E.P. or Community of Hope. However this initiative must be focused, so I will primarily address educational needs and acknowledge that the community may respond and examine the other needs/problems that it may have.

The first necessary thing would be the involvement of a local church. This requires time to build rapport and become familiar with the people there and how programs work. Although this idea is a model ready to be implemented, it must never be held as more important than what the needs of the community really are, and the reactions of the church members there. Some type of steering committee consisting of parents or members eager to see this model develop will need to advocate and support this program within the church. This would be a committed group of adults willing to lead and develop the program. They would also lay a foundation for this ministry in prayer, believing that God will truly provide for the program, the church, and the children who participate.

An appropriate name for this educational program would be Learning and Educating About Prospering Under Pressures (LEAP UP!). This catchy name sets the tone for a program that will positively promote the growth and development that children can
experience through this initiative. Following this, it will be necessary to develop vision, mission, and goals around which everything in this program can be structured. The following are tentative examples of this.

**Vision:** *To allow children in grades K-6 to develop a firm relationship with Jesus Christ, and to have them feel a sense of confidence about their ability which He created.*

This vision provides for LEAP UP! a lot of flexibility in terms of programming. It means that a variety of programs and relationships should be developed that would enable children to respect themselves and one another because of who they are becoming as a child of God. It identifies that the leaders must provide a sense of confidence and “build up” the children for the skills that they possess, recognizing even the smallest accomplishments. This vision is a strong overriding theme that will provide excellent direction and a standard by which we can monitor each initiative that we take.

**Mission:** *Through a church-based primarily after school program, enable children to be successful and grow academically, emotionally, socially, physically, and spiritually.*

This mission specifies what we need to be doing and how the work should be done. It enables LEAP UP! to have a focus and design as to what components of the child’s growth (more specifically in their relationship with Christ) are important as goals are developed. Each child will obviously need help with schoolwork, and having a mentor will also enable them to share and develop emotionally. Socially, they should be taught or encouraged according to the positive ways that they interact with one another. Providing for children physically will primarily come through exercise that is established,
and having a meal which will enable the children to learn social skills as well. The number of meals that are able to be served per week or month will be assessed through the resources and needs of the children and the community.

**Goals:** Goals should be established in each area of the mission statement that would enable the church to quantitatively and qualitatively evaluate the program monthly, and eventually bi-yearly and yearly.

**Academic:** *To have each child spend the amount of time necessary on their work (1-1.5 hours) that will enable them to accomplish 75% of their work Monday-Thursday. (This will be individually assessed by the administrator according to skill level.)*

**Emotional:** *To have the children form attachments through relationships with one another and through a mentoring program that is established with someone high school age and above.*

**Social:** 1) *To have the children participate in a share time where they are expected to be attentive to one another and talk about themselves at least twice during the week.*
2) *To establish a set of rules that outline decorum and respect during work, play, and eating.*

**Physical:** 1) *To have physically active recreational activities 3 times a week.*
2) *To serve one meal a week for children; parents and members of the church are welcome to come. (This number can be assessed according to the needs of the community.)*

**Spiritual:** 1) *To have the steering committee meet once a week to pray over the activities and the children.*
2) *To have volunteers and an administrator of the program who are seeking to be like Christ in their actions and words.*
3) *To have some type of Bible school training every Friday that would present Christ, His life, and His relationship to the children clearly.*
These goals would be overriding factors in helping us to understand how the program will be measured. The next important component is to see how the program will "become real." What are some of the details for ways that it can be worked out? Again, it is necessary to break the program down into components to examine this.

**ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Each day after school the children (hopefully about 20) will come to the church, or if there is not enough room some other specified place (i.e. community center). When I was in Dulac, Louisiana last spring the church was an integral part of the community center which had a gym, and equipment around it on which the children could play. If this is an urban program, there may be a need for the church to rent or buy space within the neighborhood. The first activity will be similar to the program at Community of Hope. There will be time to interact where adults will be giving them constant reminders about how they can be attentive to and care for one another. It should also be a time to celebrate accomplishments that the children can share. This may also be a good time each day for an adult to lead the children in a short devotional which may just be a talk, or a time to interact. This provides children with opportunities daily to see how God relates to them.

Following this time children will do homework that they have been given. Each child will be paired with a mentor (this will be discussed later) who agrees to meet with the child at some point on one of the days during the week. Other children will be given instruction by the administrator, the parent, or church member who
can volunteer his or her time on various days. There needs to be a sense of order and respect maintained during the time so that children realize the seriousness of getting their work done, and also learn to respect one another. Then, the children will play games after they show an adult the work they completed, or they will go and participate in some type of physical recreation. Throughout their time at LEAP UP! children will be on a "star system." They will receive or have stars taken away from them depending on their behavior. Special awards will be given at the end of each week for behavior. Each month the children will have an auction, and they will be able to "buy" a variety of prize items depending on the number of stars that they have accrued. Some of the auctions may also be children selling services to one another like a room cleaning, a game of checkers, or a plate of cookies. This allows the children to get involved and be responsible for their own behavior and actions.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

This development for the children will be incorporated through the recreational games that they play. In addition, hunger needs to be assessed for the children. There will be a snack that is provided by people in the church or funding will be received. Needs that the children may have for a dinner will be assessed. It should be established from the beginning that children have dinner together once a week and the parents are invited. This will not only provide a good meal, but also enable the children to be taught more about good eating habits and manners at the table. If it is necessary to have lessons aside from this on these things then it will be important for the staff and administrators to be flexible in taking time to do this.
When I taught cooking this past summer I had the opportunity to take the girls in my class to a nice restaurant, and the restaurant paid for it. On the bus ride to the restaurant we discussed etiquette at the table, and the polite way to treat one another. They had all dressed nicely for the occasion, and responded well at the restaurant by asking questions about how to order, when to put their napkin in their lap, etc. By using resources in the community, we were able to provide a tangible lessons about how to best act in certain situations.

**EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The emotional development of the children is dependent on the level of parental involvement and those who work with the children. The mentor relationship would preferably be with college students involved with the church, but high school students who demonstrate a certain level of maturity would also be acceptable. They would be asked to come on one the days during the week to tutor their child in any work they may need help with, and also to participate in any activities that may be happening that day. This consistent relationship in the child's life will enable them to form emotional attachments and learn from a young adult who they respect. This whole mentorship idea is key in developing leaders and passing on values that will be important for building up of a strong community, and knowing tangibly how God loves them.

In addition to this, LEAP UP! will seek to include the parents as much as possible. The children need as much support for their efforts as their parents can give them, and it may also be a good opportunity for them to recognize their own spiritual and emotional needs. Though this, the parents should become the activists to direct
and change the program and allow the total needs of the community to be met. They could have rotating shifts through which they provide supervision during the academic time, or they could be responsible for some aspect of the food. Volunteers from the church, or if it is an urban church from other suburban churches would also be included to encourage this ministry of the church. This would help to build a rapport and establish ways that the children and adults can start to break down barriers, whether they be over age, gender, race, socio-economic status, or sin.

A certain amount of training will be required, especially for the mentors. This will establish guidelines for ways that they should be careful with their actions, and how they can best encourage their students. The Community of Hope established an excellent volunteer handbook that 1) explains the program, 2) provides guidelines for how to act with your mentee, and 3) gives helpful suggestions for how to work on certain skills like reading comprehension, writing, or math (Appendix). Some of the "rules of the relationship" include:

1. Have the child show you respect by calling you Miss, Ms., Mrs., or Mr.
2. If the child is refusing to work with you, do not reinforce his or her behavior; it is best to leave for that day.
3. Do not pry into the child's life.
4. Notify your student personally if you cannot make an appointment.
5. For discipline: connect calmly, set expectations ahead of time, be consistent, and be specific.
6. To give encouragement: identify the child's talents and reinforce them, show appreciation, value the person unconditionally, suggest small steps on big tasks, and help the child to view mistakes as learning experiences.
SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

It is the hope and vision of this program that children will begin to develop spiritually and see that God is not only one aspect of their lives, but encompasses every aspect of their lives; it is important for the volunteers to have a Christ-like attitude in everything that they do.

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with one another and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity (Col. 3:12-14).

This is the mindset that all of the mentors and volunteers should have. In this way they will be modeling behavior and inculcating values for children who often grow up in homes and neighborhoods devoid of any sense of values.

The steering committee, or some of its members and some of the parents need to be involved with a weekly prayer meeting. This will be a time to briefly communicate about any events for the week, and pray specifically for any needs that the children may have. Prayer must remain a foundation of the ministry that is through any church.

Of the programs I observed, it seemed that spiritual development through a specific mechanism was the least attended to with the exception of the S.T.E.P. programs. Ideally, we would have some type of small devotion during the sharing time, and then every Friday would be an afternoon dedicated to Christian education. S.T.E.P. works with this through the Elijah Academy; it is called the
Love School. During this time, faith could be developed through talking about issues they are confronted with, studying Scripture, praying, doing dramas, and singing songs.

It is important to create an accepting environment for children to begin to appreciate faith in God. Adults need to recognize that even though children may not be able to talk about God, they do have an ability to think about and appreciate God (Lester 174). Because children have an active imagination and are just beginning to develop some logic skills, this is an easy segue for a child to understand many of the stories and parables that adults may discount. When children ask questions, it is important to get them to think through the issue and to provide some guidance; one should not simply make up an answer to appease them. Telling the child about faith issues in terms of "I believe" can also help them to establish their own faith instead of having it imposed on them. There seems to be a careful balance between providing true direction and letting the child discover things for him or herself.

For children to be able to understand their responsibility for their spiritual development, it may be important to develop some overt guidelines. These could almost be "house rules" that are established that help children to form "good character." They are: shows a good attitude regardless of circumstances, displays kindness to others, obeys promptly and cheerfully, and displays honesty (Wagner 71). At some point, perhaps twice a semester, children could be evaluated through some type of written comment slip. This would allow them to see what they have done well and what areas they could think about more. If this is done in a positive manner
with careful attention paid to the needs of the child, each child/family could look forward to the evaluation. Children need to know, above all, that how much the people in LEAP UP! or how much God loves them is never dependent on their behavior.

Evaluations of this program need to be done by the children, the parents, and church members. It will be important to not only have written evaluations, but also to have interviews and even videotapes. These could be sent to people who run similar programs and ask for their input and suggestions. This part of the process will be invaluable in having the community become involved with shaping the future of LEAP UP!

The development of this program is in the formative stages and is dependent on the needs and resources of the community. It would depend on how much money the church has and whether any grants could be obtained for supplies and salaries that need to be paid. The excitement of this program, however, is that it affords a lot of room for growth and allows members of the community to become involved. My excitement over this program would be that it affords me more opportunities to get to know children that I may already be working with in school.
WORKS CITED


Volunteer Handbook

The Educational Enrichment Program
Community of Hope
1993
COMPUTER TIME

Each child will be given an opportunity to work with you on the computer. There will be a schedule posted outside the computer room door about the computers and times when you will be able to use them. The students enjoy this time. We have a few guidelines for you during this 30 minute time slot:

1. The students must engage in at least 20 minutes of EDUCATIONAL GAMES on the computer. These include:
   - Reading and Me
   - Reader Rabbit
   - Grammar Gremlins
   - Read n Roll
   - Math and Me
   - Math Rabbit
   - Math Blaster

   This is not an unreasonable request. These are fun and rewarding games. Please be firm on this.

2. Be sure that the students spend sufficient time on each program. At least 10 minutes are needed on each to get the full benefit intended.

3. Don't become frustrated. There will be a staff member and a computer guide to help you with any "computer hang-ups."

❤THANK YOU AGAIN FOR YOUR DEDICATION!❤
CREATIVE WRITING

It is not necessary to include writing in every tutoring session. However, the more practice the better. Writing is a good way to help children communicate feelings and express thoughts and ideas in a structured manner. Research shows that writing is a good way to improve reading skills as well. Encourage students to be creative, thinking of their own ideas to write about, etc.

Suggestions:

• write a poem or story
• make up your own book of stories, poems, and pictures
• take a comic strip, remove captions and have the student write their own
• write a paragraph or story to accompany a picture
• write a letter
• start up a pen pal
• write a funny sentence and have the student finish the story
GREAT IDEAS FOR READING

- write good fact questions on the story
- make up riddles to fit the characters
- make an illustration of the place where the story happened
- recall as many things as possible about a conversation
- summarize in one or two sentences what the character did to achieve the purpose
- write true/false questions and have the student answer according to the story
- design a book cover
- act out the part of a character
- write a review of the book or story
Reading Comprehension

In working on reading comprehension with the student, it is necessary to ask questions before and after reading the material. This helps the student understand the context of the material. To check for comprehension, use the following guide:

1. Preparation

   Before you begin reading, it is good to:
   - read the title and author’s name
   - look at the cover, and title page
   - know the names of the main characters
   - discuss new vocabulary words used in the story

2. Details:

   - who are the main characters?
   - what did the characters do?
   - why did character do what they did?
   - where did the story happen?
   - when did the story happen?
     (i.e. day/night, season, etc)

3. Main Ideas:

   - why it was a good title
   - what the problem is in the story
   - what the character learned

4. Sequence or Organization

   - what happened in each part of the story?
     - the sequence of events
   - what the character did to solve the problem,
     - step by step
   - how the character became a hero/heroine

5. Inference:

   - why the character felt a certain way
   - how the character(s) changed
   - how the student identified with the character
   - what it might feel like to be in the same situation
IDEAS FOR TUTORING TIME

Suggested Tutoring Session

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>READING</th>
<th>30 minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aloud with comprehension questions</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| COMPUTER                             |            |
|                                      |            |
| OTHER ACTIVITY                       |            |
|                                      |            |
|                                      |            |

30 minutes

This is just a suggestion. If you find that your student loves to read, by all means take the time you need. Do not feel badly if you do not get to an activity. Reading is our #1 priority, so enjoy that time.

Below find some suggestion for your time together.

READING

Reading Aloud

Reading aloud on a regular basis improves a student’s:

  - reading
  - writing
  - spelling
  - listening
  - imaging

Reading aloud with a child is important in the child’s personal development. It helps to inspire, guide and educate.

To encourage reading, it is important that the child is interested in the reading material. Any form of reading material is fine if the child wants to read it. Allow the child to help choose the reading material.

SUGGESTIONS: Read stories, books, plays, magazines, comic books, etc
Take turns reading... getting through a longer book
TIPS FOR GIVING ENCOURAGEMENT

Encouragement is a process whereby you focus on the talents, assets, and strengths of your children to build their self confidence and self esteem.

Use the following tips when appropriate:

- Identify the child's SPECIFIC talents, strengths, and assets and reinforce them
- Give recognition for efforts or improvement - no matter how slight
- Show appreciation for contribution and demonstrate confidence and faith in the child
- Value the person, no matter how they perform
- Find and point our positive aspects of behavior
- Suggest small steps in new or difficult tasks
- Have reasonable expectations
- Help the children us mistakes as a learning experience
- Don't compare one child to another
TIPS ON DISCIPLINE

These tips provide some ideas on setting limits for children. Discipline is always difficult the first few times as children are determining the limits you will enforce. The rewards are great if the techniques are exercised consistently and with care.

1. CONNECT CALMLY
   - Use the child’s name
   - Make eye contact
   - Make sure you are on the same level as the child — try not to be standing if they are sitting, kneel if necessary.

2. SET EXPECTATIONS AHEAD OF TIME (and make them high)
   - Whenever appropriate, let the child help make up the rules.
   - After you decide on a rule or the need for a behavior change, ask the child to tell you what he or she understands the rule to be.
   - Don’t use threats unless you are actually going to carry through with them. (students pick up on inconsistencies)

3. BE CONSISTENT
   - Establish routines
   - Point out the sequence of activities
   - Give warnings about transitions
   - If a child has to stop an activity she likes or cannot do one he likes to do, offer a time in the future when the activities can resumes or begun.

4. BE SPECIFIC. SIMPLE, CLEAR AND BRIEF
   - Be firm -- Children NEED firmness. It provides limits. Use both words and body language to communicate what you mean.
   - Clearly state expectations. "I want you to read page 2 and I will read page 3."
   - Use as few words as possible in simple language. "Keep all four legs on the floor," "sit down".
   - State directions positively
     Example:  **Positive:**
     "Write as neat as you can"
     **Negative**
     "Don’t write so messy"
GROUP MEETING GUIDELINES

The following guidelines have been helpful for us to establish for group meetings with children. When you are working one-on-one with students you may decide what is appropriate or not.

1. Insist that children sit in a chair (or on the floor) not on your lap.

2. Encourage children to not play with your hair, clothes or accessories... this can be very distracting for others.

3. We always walk quietly, and discourage running or rough-housing.

4. Encourage children around you to participate in group activities, i.e., singing, answering questions. **The best way to do this is by example.**

5. Encourage children to use inside voices.

6. Always assist the leader at the time in keeping the children focused.
TUTOR/STUDENT RELATIONSHIP

Volunteering involves building a relationship with a student with the understanding that it will enhance the life of both of you. It will involve giving and receiving. It will involve a commitment that must be taken very seriously. The on-going relationship developed through commitment, time, energy, and love will bring much joy and many occasions to celebrate. If you are interested in becoming involved, please be sure that you are willing to pledge your time for a school year. Consistency and reliability are very important for our children.

Relating to your student:

1. Be sure to learn your student’s full name, how to spell and pronounce it correctly.

2. Be sure the student knows your full name, how to spell and pronounce it correctly.

3. It is important that the children respect adults and authority figures in their life. For this reason, we are encouraging all children to address adults with Miss, Ms., Mrs., or Mr. Thank you for your cooperation in this.

4. The children may act in negative ways (hiding from you, ignoring you, etc.). We all need to work together to discourage this behavior and not allow it to happen. If your student is not willing to work, don’t feel obligated to stay on that particular evening.

5. Do not pry into a child personal life. As your relationship develops, your student will naturally share more information.

   If a student relates distressing stories or experiences to you, please talk with a staff person. Any problems related to clothing, money, or personal needs should be handled in this manner.

6. **Always notify your student personally in you cannot make your appointment.** Try to reschedule missed sessions close to the missed appointment. We appreciate calls for our own information, but would ask that you talk directly to the children.

7. Include the student in personal activities away from Community of Hope when appropriate.
WELCOME!

We are pleased to know that you are interested in investing your time in the life of a young person in our neighborhood. We are sure that this experience will be both rewarding and enjoyable.

Community of Hope, Inc. is a non-profit agency which began its ministry in the Belmont community in 1973. Since that time, several distinct programs have evolved which include: Health Services, FAMILIHOPE (transitional housing for homeless families), and the Educational Enrichment Program.

The Educational Enrichment Program began in the Summer of 1980 under the direction of Joyce Page, a neighborhood resident who had a life long interest in children. Since Community of Hope’s earliest days, volunteers have spent countless hours with the children of Belmont community.

We recognize that our young people are "whole" persons who have spiritual, emotional, physical, social, and educational gifts as well as needs. It is our desire to promote and encourage:

1. academic excellence
2. preventive health education
3. spiritual and moral development

We are excited to have you join with us as we continue our ministry in this community. We are convinced that academic success, strong relationships, and the development of positive self-esteem will help our children and youth rise above helplessness and hopelessness to new levels of confidence, faith, and success.