



# Breaking Ground Plantings

## July Spotlight: Catching up with Cleanstreet

Breaking Ground's Cleanstreet is more than a transitional employment program – it offers lifelong empowerment possibilities. Created as an entrepreneurial neighborhood beautification business, Cleanstreet has expanded its scope of services this spring to include power washing sidewalks.

Offering on-the-job training, mentorship, and supportive services for Breaking Ground's APL Teaching Factory graduates and community residents, Cleanstreet transforms lives and communities while creating quality job opportunities. It offers a “clean start” for individuals typically excluded from the workforce due to limited educational opportunities, criminal records and recent incarceration.



Since 2005, Cleanstreet's highly-trained team has provided comprehensive beautification services including:  
Power washing sidewalks (**New as of Spring 2008!**)

Cleanstreet clients are satisfied customers, becoming the contractor of choice for the following Chambers of Commerce and their members and business partners:

- Andersonville Chamber of Commerce
- Lakeview Chamber of Commerce
- Northcenter Chamber of Commerce
- Northalsted Area Merchants Association
- West Ridge Chamber of Commerce
- Southshore Chamber of Commerce – our new power washing contract

### The inside “sweep!” from Brian Friday, our Cleanstreet Director

#### Brian, tell us what's new with Cleanstreet.

Power washing! Cleanstreet has expanded its scope of services to include power washing, and we secured our first client this spring. We're thrilled to be contracted by the South Shore Chamber of Commerce, and look forward to offering this service throughout Chicago.

#### Why power washing?

Expanding our business model to create more jobs for APL students is always a priority for Cleanstreet. Now we have yet another missional business venture to generate employment opportunities and diversify our offerings for both our clients and employees. Also, with the addition of power washing, we move closer towards fulfilling our goal of becoming a self-supporting business within Breaking Ground.

#### What's the purpose of Cleanstreets?

We exist to help ex-offenders establish healthy lives by creating opportunities for them to succeed in a part-time job. Employment is meant to be transitional, and our ultimate goal is to help employees gain meaningful work experience that will translate into better jobs with benefits. We partner with our employees to help them develop the skills and work history needed to move into permanent, full-time employment. Empowering men to support themselves and their families is a long-term outcome of our efforts.

#### Is the Cleanstreet pre-work Bible study still going strong?

Yes! The group is very active, and we just finished studying the book of Revelations together. From our group discussions, I know we all left the experience with a fearful respect. Next, we will go back to the beginning, to the book of Genesis, to gain an understanding of how and why Revelation was necessary.

#### Executive Director Brief



Jeff Dennis

It's shaping up to be a busy summer at Breaking Ground. While most families are planning well-deserved vacations during this season, we continue to forge ahead with thirteen houses under construction. (It is prime construction time in Chicago, after all!) Additionally, we've undergone some exciting changes, which include expanding the scope of services offered in the Cleanstreet program, securing new business contracts, and hiring a Job Developer Coordinator, Aloysius Coffey. He will oversee employment partnerships and is passionate about increasing our job placements. You'll meet Aloysius, as well as Brian Friday, our Cleanstreet Director in this month's issue. We've also included an interview with Jerome Edwards, whose personal story will encourage and remind you that your prayers and support are transforming lives from the inside out. From our family to yours, we hope the summer serves to refresh and renew you. In thankful partnership ...  
Jeff

## Clean Life/Cleanstreet – A Story of Hope for Those Who Are Stuck



**Jerome Edwards** grew up on the Westside, the youngest of twelve siblings. After finishing 11<sup>th</sup> grade at Crane High School, he began experiment-

ing with drugs and illegal activities as a young adult. In 1988, he served three and a half years in prison. Upon release, he returned to drugs and began selling on the street. Again, his actions caught up with him, but this time the penalty was harsher. He was sentenced for 12 years in 1992. Upon his re-release in 1996, something changed – he connected with Cleanstreet. Since then, he’s been on a forward path to stay clean. It’s a journey he’s been on for six years without looking back.

After attending a program for ex-offenders at State Representative Danny Davis’s office, Jerome began to work for Cleanstreet when it was a program of Breakthrough Urban Ministries. When Breakthrough transitioned the ministry of Cleanstreet to Breaking Ground, Jerome came as part of the start up team. He credits his experience with the program as providing a transition to a better life. During his four years at Cleanstreet, he recognized God’s strength as the driving force behind his success. This strength helped him, “hope for the best and stay prayerful,” despite his past or present uncertainty about the future.

Five months ago, Jerome transitioned to Fresh Market Supermarket where he works full time in the meat department and enjoys full benefits. While he is thankful for his new job, he misses the Cleanstreet Bible study and his colleagues. He adds, “Cleanstreet is such a good place to start off – I wish [more] people would come for help.”

He hopes that sharing his story will encourage those who are “stuck” or facing challenges that seem overwhelming. Jerome’s heart to help others succeed is obvious when he says, “I want to reach out to people and help them look to the future. I know from personal experience that you have to want the future to get it.” He adds, “By being responsible and respectable I now have something good to offer. I’m glad to share how I’ve grown, how I’ve changed my life around and become the man I am today...thank you, Jesus, for rescuing me.”

## What’s Happening:

### Meet Aloysius Coffey:

#### Breaking Ground’s New Job Developer

Aloysius our previous Director of Fish Window Cleaning has come on staff as Job Developer for the Teaching Factory. When asked, how did Fish prepare me for this new position, he said. “Fish was great training for hiring and working with ex-offenders. It gave me experience with accountability and participating in devotions to help develop relationships with employees. I also learned how to set up business contacts with potential employers and develop those relationships in a mutually-beneficial way. I am excited about this new challenge. The need for reliable, trained employees is as great as our clients’ needs for work, so I anticipate much success!”

**For more information about Breaking Ground’s Job Development program, please contact Aloysius at:**  
Cell: (773) 265.1370 acoffey@breakingground.net



### Manufacturing Training Center.

Pictured here is the second graduating class. Look for more details in our feature story next news letter.

### APL at Breakthrough

Breaking Ground is beginning a new afternoon class at Breakthrough Ministry Center  
402 N St. Louis Ave in Chicago  
Classes begin on Monday, July 23. For more information contact Yolanda Harris at 773-265-1370 ex 111

### Partnering with us:

Contribute financially online at  
[www.breakingground.net](http://www.breakingground.net)

or via mail by making your check payable to:

Breaking Ground  
3501 West Fillmore Street,  
Chicago, IL 60624

All contributions are tax-deductible.

### Pray and sign up:

For our monthly prayer letter via e-mail, contact Jeff at: [jdennis@breakingground.net](mailto:jdennis@breakingground.net)