



Breaking Ground Plantings

A Story of Redemption

May 2007

Brian grew up in foster care because his mother died and his father wasn't able to care for him. He lost contact with his sisters and his older brother over time. About two years ago he came to the Teaching Factory and graduated from the job readiness class. He volunteered for a time at the Teaching Factory but left to work another job for about a year. He kept coming back to Breaking Ground "hanging" with the people there. Staff began to disciple him. Sensing his potential, he was invited to direct Clean Streets (a new Breaking Ground enterprise that contracts with city business districts to keep their store fronts clean.)

Life Institute Training Bares Fruit

As the Discipleship House opened last year, Brian was one of the first residents. At the house's Life Institute Training sessions, he learned about Bitter Roots, un-forgiveness we hold in our hearts that defiles our relationships. He applied this rich teaching to his own life and started to see old family relationships change. One relationship was with his father. As he began to enjoy a relationship with his dad, God gave him an unexpected surprise.

What to do about Bill...

A letter came from his brother Bill who had been lost for 25 years. No one knew what happened to him or even if he was alive. His brother Bill had been incarcerated in Florida since 1993. His father became so excited he began calling everyday just to connect with him. Brian realized that because his father was suffering from some health issues and was getting on in years, it was important to complete the restoration between his brother and father. Soon a trip was planned. Working through some apprehension of traveling so far and venturing into the deep South, they turned the car trip into a mini-vacation. On the way they stopped at a theme park, saw a 3-D movie, and even saw the light parade. It was magical for them. On Easter Sunday they reunited with Bill. They were so nervous they were sweating and their stomachs hurt. They wondered what it would be like. The visitation room was very different from what they expected. Families with small children were everywhere. The atmosphere was warm and inviting. After about fifteen minutes, Bill came out to meet them. He smiled and gave them a long group hug. Brian's father could not keep his hands off of Bill. He rubbed his head and his arm and he could hardly sit down. Tears streamed down their faces. His brother announced to everyone in the room that this was his family who he hadn't seen in 25 years and the whole room cheered. When they finally sat down, his brother began to share his story. He told them he wasn't a bad person but that he had made some bad choices.



Soon it was time to say good-bye. Bill expressed that he didn't know where he would go when he got out. Brian said, "Of course your coming home; you have a home with us." It had been a great visit. Brian's family has been changed by dealing with bitter roots, and by Christ's deep love and forgiveness. The arms of God have hugged Brian and his family. God is so good!

This is such a beautiful story because it is the redemption story; the story of Grace. The story of what Jesus did for each of us. His lost son and daughters are found and He, the God of the Universe, makes a home for us. We are His children and He looks for us until we are found. The story brings a new sense of God's deep love for the broken and a renewed wonder of how precious each person is to Him... for we were created for His joy and He loves us passionately.

Executive Director Brief



Jeff Dennis

Greetings from the Family of Breaking Ground. What a joy it is for me to work with such committed and talented people. Breaking Ground continues to grow in its ability to meet the needs of community residents. Our 2nd classroom is complete and in operation with 22 new computers. We have sold 8 new homes and are building for two other non-profit organizations. The most exciting growth, however is among the men and women working with us from the community. In this letter you will meet three of them, Bryan, Ora and Lisa who were former students in the Teaching Factory and are passionately working with us to meet the needs of the community.



Affordable Housing

The housing team is building 50 homes in 2007. Construction time is down to fourteen weeks! These gains in proficiency make us the contractor of choice for three other neighborhood developers, building our future of opportunity.



Lisa White

Lisa White now serves the Housing Department as the sales representative for the new homes. She is a quick study and she charms the clients.

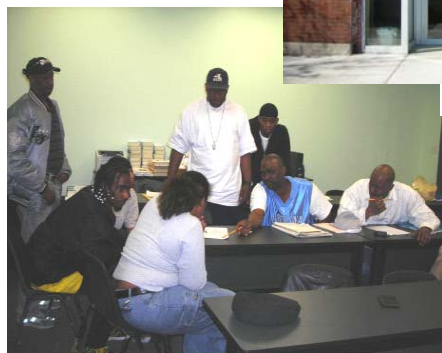
The Discipleship House

The Discipleship House meets twice a week for Life Institute studies. Pete and Connie also teach weekly at CCIL; a large transitional housing facility for the homeless in the neighborhood.

A group of volunteers are planning to build-out the first floor of the Discipleship House. With this done, a total of ten men can join the "family".



Connie Milton and Pete



New Classroom

APL Teaching Factory

We are on track for our goal of helping 100 students find employment in 2007!

Congratulations to former students Lamar Edwards and Jacob Baker who graduated from Westside Tech on May 12.

Ora Harper wears many hats... all with a flare. In caring for our facility and helping with Teaching Factory administration, she creates laughter wherever she goes. She often says "I love my job, 'Woo Woo!'"



Ora Harper

Contractors Co-op

Joe Pruitt has the Contractor's Co-op business plan ready to go. The approach is to provide payment to contractors immediately when they finish a job rather than forcing them to wait three months after the job is finished. This cash flow benefit alone can mean success or failure for a new neighborhood enterprise.

Clean Streets

Clean Streets is contributing to the monthly support of the Teaching Factory. What a display of God's provision!



New Front Entrance

Facilities News

We have finished the remodeling of our front entrance, class room and commons area. What a blessing to be able to host our students in its warm glow!



New Commons

Matching Grant Opportunity

We have a need to upgrade our staff computers which are eight years old. A local foundation has given us a matching grant of \$12,500. A local church has already given us \$2,500. Will you help Breaking Ground to become more productive in our service to the people of North Lawndale with gifts of \$1000, \$500 or \$100?

Thank you for your generous support as together we advance the Kingdom of God.