



Breaking Ground Plantings

The APL Teaching Factory: Ten Years of Transforming Lives through Education, Encouragement and Employment!

Talk about getting better with age...it's time to celebrate Breaking Ground's resident job readiness program, the APL Teaching Factory, and its ten years of transforming lives. After a decade of providing education and employment placement for Lawndale residents, the program has a lot to celebrate, including 80 job placements in 2006 alone.

With a goal of 125 graduates and 100 employment placements for the upcoming calendar year, newly-appointed Program Coordinator Yolanda Harris is enthusiastic about the year to come. A member of the Breaking Ground team since 2002, Harris brings passion and vision for the future to her new role. "Most of our students come to us because they are ready to make changes in their lives," she states, "They are looking for help and for hope, and we provide the support and opportunities they need to be a success in the classroom, on the job, and ultimately in their homes and communities."

Approximately 75% of Teaching Factory students come looking for employment, and Job Development Specialist Gloria Williams delivers. "Gloria is committed to finding employment for everyone. Of course, Gloria doesn't do it all alone. The commitment, dedication, and hard work of TF students and their instructors play an important role in individual successes.

One of the Teaching Factory's greatest strengths is its commitment to partnerships. Collaboration between students, teachers, employers, volunteers, funders and strong referral networks are key to the program's success. "Word of mouth is one of our primary referral sources," says Harris. "Come to the Teaching Factory it's a great resource to assist you in finding employment.."



Welcome to our new instructor, Veronica Blair, who brings us many years of education, writing and job readiness training. She is a welcome addition to our staff.

Generously supported through contributions from individuals, foundations, and congregations, increased funding is critical to the Teaching Factory's sustainability. "We want to grow our number of graduates as well as offer post-employment follow up to ensure their long-term success in the workplace," Harris states. "We will need more financial support to make this possible." Contributions to Breaking Ground that are designated to the Teaching Factory are tax-deductible.

For more information, please contact Jeff Dennis at jdennis@breakingground.net.

Other ways to be involved:

The Teaching Factory is currently seeking volunteers to serve as academic tutors in the areas of, adult literacy and/or math. Commitment for the six week class period is needed. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Yolanda Harris at yharris@breakingground.net.

Special thanks to our Teaching Factory partners:

- Steans Family Foundation
- The Navigators
- Westside Ministers Coalition
- The Greater Open Door Missionary Baptist Church
- Westside Technical Institute
- Wright College
- North Lawndale Employment Network
- Park Community Church

...and our early establishing partners

- House of Prayer
- World Vision
- Lawndale Business and Local Development Corp.
- Mt. Sinai Community Institute
- Lawndale Christian Development Corp..

Remaining class dates this year:
November 5-December 14

Executive Director Briefs



Jeff Dennis

What a great Breaking Ground retreat we had in September. Breaking Ground staff as well as friends and family participated in training on how we can become better family to one another. We had a blast playing paint ball, doing the short ropes course, fishing, hitting a piñata, and enjoying an evening camp fire. New friendships were begun and better bonds were made among our staff. As we learn to play, eat and worked together, we experienced more of what it truly means to be part of the Kingdom of God and be family to one another.



Teaching Factory Spotlight:

Terrell Taylor, Class of September 2007



Terrell Taylor isn't your typical success story. In fact, some might say that the odds were against him from the beginning. A lifelong Lawndale resident, Terrell suffered third degree burns from his waist to his knees as a result of an accident with boiling water when he was only eight years old. His prognosis was far from encouraging – doctors thought he would never walk again and he

spent six months in the hospital and eight months in rehab relearning how to walk. From that time on, he always felt different, isolated, and longed to fit in. During his rehabilitation, his mother lost their apartment and moved into a homeless shelter. His lengthy hospitalization and rehabilitation also forced him to miss school, and his many absences left him academically challenged and perpetually behind his peers.

In his teens, Terrell thought he had found acceptance in gang life, and began a downward spiral that included selling drugs. On July 4, 2007, Terrell's wake up call came – literally – in the form of a telephone call in the middle of the night from a friend who mistakenly believed that Terrell had been arrested. In his confusion, Terrell realized that he had loaned his car to a friend, and the police had arrested him – instead of Terrell – on drug charges. It hit home with Terrell that it could just as easily have been him in a jail cell in place of his friend. Days later, he signed up for the July 2007 job training class at Breaking Ground based upon a referral from a friend who had successfully graduated from the Teaching Factory. Terrell cites his decision to attend the Teaching Factory as the “first good thing he had ever done for himself.” He states, “The staff opened their arms and took me in like I was family.” Finally, for the first time, Terrell found the acceptance and community that he had looked for throughout his life. In the process, he also found himself. “I have never felt so wanted or such a part of something useful,” he states. “For the first time in my life I am a role model – I never had anyone look up to me for a good reason. It makes me feel good to be a positive mentor.”

Upon graduating from the TF in September 2007, Terrell became a regular fixture around Breaking Ground, eagerly volunteering his time for any job that needed to be done. Today, Terrell is a new member of the rough carpentry crew at Breaking Ground, building new homes in Lawndale.

Our mission

Breaking Ground is a faith community characterized by grace and truth that seeks and develops those who desire to become instruments of lasting change in their community.

Word on the street...

Africa: It's not just for Bono!

That's right...a team of six Breaking Ground staff have been invited by the Navigators to come to Africa and visit missional business partners in Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia. The team will be traveling from October 17-30. Our hope is to form a long-term relationship with one or two of the businesses there, as God leads us. Please pray for safety, health, and for an understanding of how God would have us partner with our brothers and sisters in Africa. Thank you to our financial partners who made this trip possible. Stay tuned...

Watch for our new website!

We're giving www.breakingground.net a face-lift and re-tooling it to better accommodate all of the news, information, programs and events happening daily at Breaking Ground. This is just the beginning of a new effort to increase our online sources and spread the word about what's happening here! Look for the debut, which is scheduled for December.

Breaking Ground Family Retreat Lake Geneva Sept. 2007



Our programs:

- Teaching Factory
- Affordable Housing
- Clean Streets
- Contractor's Coop
- Discipleship House
- Manufacturing Training Center

Partnering with us:

Contribute financially online at www.breakingground.net or via mail by making your check payable to:

Breaking Ground and mailing it to
3501 West Fillmore Street,
Chicago, IL, 60624.

All contributions are tax-deductible.

Volunteer with one of our programs:

Please contact oharper@breakingground.net for more information.

Pray and sign up:

For our monthly prayer letter via e-mail, contact oharper@breakingground.net