



Youth Ministry Initiatives

A hallmark of The Miracle on 29th Street is our investment in multiple generations, from youth through seniors. Investing in our youth is not new to the people of Broadway United Methodist Church. For years, the church has taken a strong personal interest in its youth, both in the congregation and surrounding community. We understand that interaction with children and young adults in the early stages of their development can directly influence how they grow to become responsible, caring individuals in their communities. The hiring of Duane Carlisle as the Minister for Children, Youth and Families through The Miracle on 29th Street is direct evidence of Broadway's commitment to the future.

This year, Broadway's Leadership had a vision to do something different and innovative that would expand and build upon the summertime work of past years. We wanted not only to reach the youth, but also engage them with families and adults. The goal was to reach out to our entire neighborhood and to connect individuals, especially young adults and children, with others who share a common gift, talent and/or interest. Through The Miracle on 29th Street, many initiatives have been implemented which have done just that – connected these youths with adults and families. A couple of these initiatives include: The Summer of Blessings and the J-Squared Scholarship program.

The Summer of Blessings, implemented by Terri Coleman and Martha Wright, was designed to help build leadership among the youth in this community. Terri and Martha identified six youth who were interested in joining them for the summer as Roving Disciples. These youths reached out to people in the neighborhood by going door-to-door and engaging the neighbors in conversations. Through their conversations, the youth asked these individuals to name their gifts, talents and dreams. Then, they blessed them for their gifts and talents. Finally, they connected them with others who shared similar gifts, talents and/or dreams. This is how the concept of Naming, Blessing, & Connecting came into being. The next steps for The Summer of Blessings team are to take the relationships and connections that were cultivated and broaden this project into a year-round initiative we are calling The Year of Blessings Youth Initiative.

A recent story further demonstrating Broadway's commitment to youth involves a scholarship provided by the Horth family. The scholarship encourages youths to articulate in an essay a personal dream or goal as well as name an adult who will help them achieve their dream. In 2008, the first year of the scholarship, Kyla Gray, a seventeen year old scholarship winner, described her dream of working in the medical profession. She is currently using her scholarship to take medical training classes. Kyla is also working with a mentor to take the next steps in achieving her dream.

Under Duane's leadership, the broadening of youth connections continue in numerous ways: new friendships and relationships are being formed and youth are being connected with other community members to establish and develop positive, supportive networks. As we continue our work with youth, the financial support of the people of Broadway invests not only in the work of our youth pastor, but also in the youth of our neighborhood. Won't you consider an additional or first time gift to this Miracle?