

BEYOND THE BALL

MEMPHIS ATHLETIC MINISTRIES NEWSLETTER

86 cents and a burger are fighting illiteracy

Huey's is partnering with MAM and Literacy Mid-South to take illiteracy off the menu of our city.

"In Memphis between 20 and 30 percent of adults are functionally illiterate. That means more than just unemployment - too many minds are unused and too many dreams are unrealized."

- Knox Shelton, Executive Director, Literacy Mid-South

Huey's is partnering with MAM and Literacy Mid-South to "86" illiteracy off the menu in Memphis. (86 is restaurant lingo meaning: no more). Each month a different Huey's restaurant is sponsoring the 86 Illiteracy campaign. Patrons of Huey's can add 86 cents (or more) to their checks to help eradicate illiteracy in our city.

For the month of October, Huey's Germantown is sponsoring the campaign. After the holidays, the campaign will resume in January at another Huey's to be announced later.



86 ILLITERACY
take it off the menu

Through a partnership with Literacy Mid-South,

MAM provides literacy classes to our elementary and middle school youth after school four days a week. Currently, \$150,000 is needed to fund one year of our reading program. Every donation of 86 cents helps MAM children improve comprehension and vocabulary, building their confidence in the classroom. After the \$150,000 is raised, additional monies will help other Literacy Mid-South partners provide literacy classes to both young and old Memphians.

SO...grab your friends, go to Huey's, eat a burger, and add 86 cents to your check!

Building Urban Workers for the Future

This fall MAM is offering a new two-year program to deepen and expand our impact in the inner city. The goal of the MAM's Urban Leadership Program is to build professional urban youth workers. Participants will receive their certification in community transformation by attending classes at the Memphis Center for Urban Theological Studies (MCUTS). The curriculum and training is intended to provide knowledge, skills and hands-on experience, so at the end of our two-year curriculum, participants will be fully equipped to do ministry anywhere in the world.

This year's inaugural class is composed of five ladies and three men. Each participant works at MAM with a target age group of 15 to 20 kids and a small group of four youth who receive more in-depth mentoring.

"Like most of our kids, I grew up in the inner city. When I became a believer, I grew to have a heart to bring biblically sound teachings to the inner city. I want to do everything through the power of the Holy Spirit to reach the kids in urban Memphis who may not have heard the Gospel."

Theron Wright, MAM Urban Leadership participant



I love teaching at MAM because it's a safe place to show kids learning is fun and they have so much more potential than they think!
Coach Molly



MAM Insights from the President: The “Why” Behind MAM

People who know me well say I am an eternal optimist. Most of the time, I see the glass as half full rather than half empty!

However, in the last three months, I have experienced two crises in my life. My beautiful bride Kelandria - who suffers from a chronic illness - almost died. We found ourselves in the Baptist East Hospital emergency room late one night and our lives were in turmoil. She had a blood clot in her lung. Long story short, after two stress-filled weeks in the hospital, God in His infinite power miraculously healed her. My bride is doing well today and the blood clots are gone. Then two weeks later, our house flooded. It was a mess! We had to move out of the house and our lives were uprooted again. In the middle of both these situations, I lost hope and an attitude of defeat became my constant companion.

Have you ever been there?

Why did I immediately fall into hopelessness when faced with these situations? Because I lost sight of the Gospel. Both were crises, one major and one minor. We needed help. And although I doubted God’s goodness, He sent us what we needed as only He can, in His perfect timing. God did the supernatural by healing Kelandria, but He also provided for us in the normal ways of our earthly life. People brought us food, visited us in the hospital, helped with Enoch, wrote us cards and letters of encouragement. I read every card, two or three times.

Just like my crises, many of our MAM kids live in crises. Just like me, these children need the Gospel of Jesus Christ radiated into their hearts every day. Only by God’s grace does MAM exist to share the Good News six days a week at our eight gyms. This is the “Why” behind MAM. Because of you and our other supporters, MAM has the platform for modeling the Gospel, so that our children have a reason to hope, even in the middle of crises.



As you read in this newsletter, MAM staff worships together once a month. Just like our children and me, our staff needs to be continuously attuned to the power of the Gospel. Please commit to praying for this ministry, our leadership, staff, kids, their families and their neighborhoods. We covet your prayers - and we thank you for believing in the “Why” behind MAM.

In His Grip,

Randy



Looking Ahead

MAM Christmas Store - It’s almost the Most Wonderful Time of the Year when our supporters help us make Christmas possible for approximately 120 of our faithful children. This year’s MAM Christmas store will take place at the Colonial Target on December 12. Selected parents will have the joy and dignity of shopping with MAM staff for presents - no kids allowed! For more Christmas Store information, visit: www.mamsports.org/christmas.

MAM Christmas Classic Basketball Tournament - The 25th Annual MAM Christmas Classic will be held December 19 to December 23. Church teams, recreational teams, competitive teams and middle school teams are invited to play. For more information, go to www.mamsports.org/classic.



Daryl Braden: True Restoration

"I tell people all the time that God created MAM for guys like me." Daryl Braden, MAM Area Director

Daryl Braden's testimony is one of a man who wholeheartedly believes in the saving grace and mercy of Jesus Christ.

As a professional basketball player, Daryl had it all. He had been one of the college players whom Coach Gene Bartow selected to start a team at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) in 1977. After UAB success, he excelled in basketball, traveled the world, and enjoyed the finer things of life. When it all ended, he crashed.

It was the crashing that led to trials - trials that Daryl readily and humbly admits were self-appointed. He states frankly that his success in the sport had birthed egotism, arrogance and an "all about me" attitude.

"I believe that God permits things to happen in our lives so we understand that He is the source of all things."

These self-inflicted trials lasted 10 years as he descended into homelessness, crime, a prison term, and estrangement from his parents, all because of a crack cocaine addiction. His deliverance came in the form of a note from his younger brother. Because the note gave the address of the Harbor House Rehab Center, Daryl says God permitted him a moment of clarity. He realized that his lifestyle was not "all on me" but was causing deep pain and hurt to his brother whom he loved dearly.

And as Daryl puts it, **"I believe God said that that was enough. So, I checked into the Harbor House Rehab Center fourteen years ago on September 28th and I have been delivered and clean ever since."**

Daryl began growing in a fuller relationship with God in ways he had not experienced before. **"Being an ex-drug addict and ex-convict, it is hard to find a job. People do not want to hire you. They do not trust you. This was when I really, really got close to God."**

The providence of God was working in Daryl's life. He began volunteering with urban youth at a local church, then getting recommended for a part-time job and then a full-time job with MAM. **"I preached to my kids at MAM repeatedly about getting a good education. God put it on my heart to go back to college and get my degree."** So, in 1998, Daryl left MAM and went to obtain his degree from UAB.

"I called Gib Vestal, MAM president, and asked if there was something here at MAM for me." The door was still open, and so begins the story of his return to MAM to finish the work he began. **"I have been rolling ever since from part-time guy, youth coordinator, director to area director."**

Daryl thanks MAM for giving him a place to belong, but the ultimate thanks goes to God, as Daryl reflects daily on how He restored the purpose of his life in more abundant ways than he could ever imagine. He plans to continue to disciple and lead young men and women to Christ for as long as the Lord allows. To God be the glory!



MAM Worship and Prayer

"And this is the confidence which we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us."
1 John 5:14

To keep Jesus at the forefront of our lives, we believe in the power of worshipping together. On the first Tuesday of every month, MAM staff gathers at one of our eight centers to worship our King and pray for neighborhood issues and the youth served. We also rejoice together over the evidence of God's goodness in the lives of our youth.

We invite you to join us in praying for our boys and girls.

Pray for the youth in under-resourced neighborhoods to grow in their understanding of how God has created them uniquely and individually. (Psalm 139:14)

Pray for Gospel transformation to take place in the lives of the youth in under-resourced areas of our city. (Romans 12:1-2)



Take That for Reading Data

Our 2017 Summer Academy reading results are ready and we have data to share!

A pre and post-test was conducted on 141 middle and elementary students.

- **14% of the students improved three or more reading levels**
- **23% improved two reading levels**
- **27% improved one reading level**
- **26% maintained their current reading level**
- **10% declined in their reading level**

In summary, 90% of our students were successful in preventing summer slide!



If you would like to share a special skill, help with literacy, mentor a MAM kid or coach a sport, email volunteer@mamsports.org or visit: www.mamsports.org/volunteer.



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“By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:35