

In the mean time, supporting NCN has never been easier. You can now go to www.newcityneighbors.org and click on the donation link, and make a donation to NCN using a PayPal or Credit Card account. Those funds go directly into NCN's bank account and are used to support our ministries. Giving is a click away and saves the time of filling out an envelope and the cost of a stamp. Of course, you can still give that way, too.

We know times are tough, but we ask that you prayerfully consider making a gift to New City Neighbors so that we can continue to make a difference in the Creston Community.



Upcoming Events

Garden Party - On Friday, October 2 we will be having our annual Community Garden Harvest Party to celebrate another great summer. Like years past, gardeners will bring an assortment of tasty dishes prepared with produce grown in their garden. The garden party is always a wonderful opportunity for people to connect with the new friends they made during the summer.

Dumpster Day - October 3 marks our third annual day of partnership with Grand Rapids and the Creston

Neighborhood Association to help clean up our community. The city drops off 6 large dumpsters and with the help of volunteers we empty numerous truck loads of garbage from 8:00AM to 12:00PM. We are looking for some able-bodied volunteers to help us unload vehicles and fill the dumpsters. If you are interested, please call Eric Schalk at 970-4817.

Garden Cleanup - On Saturday, October 24 the Garden Team will be cleaning out the garden in preparation for winter. We will be:

- Emptying uncleaned garden plots.
- Preparing the compost pile for winter.
- Spreading manure.

We will likely need a small chipper to help break down some of the larger plants like corn and Brussels sprouts. If you have one we can borrow, please call the number above.

Parenting Classes - Beginning October 8, we will be offering a monthly parenting class. Each week will feature a different topic like disciplining your child, child safety, and childhood development. Classes are free and will be offered at 4th Reformed. Register by calling Eric Schalk.

Ministry Wish List

The items listed below are all things that will enhance our ability to do ministry. If you are not able to purchase the item, but would like to make a donation towards it, simply make out a check to NCN and include the item description in the memo line.

- Gas Grill for \$250
- Room cooler/air conditioner (not a window unit) - \$400.
- Small Wood Chipper (A new one costs \$700, but it could be used. We need for Community Garden use.)



The Blessings of Breaktime - by Eric Schalk

It's mid September already. The sky is clear, it's sunny, and unseasonably warm, which is quite unlike the summer we just had. The speed at which time passes continues to amaze me. It honestly seems like moments ago that we were wrapping up our first major fundraiser and preparing for Breaktime.

Our summer, especially for Breaktime, began with some challenges. One of our leaders became extremely sick with a serious infection in her lungs. This illness weakened her to the point where she wasn't able to work this summer and left us short-staffed with only four weeks before Breaktime began. After a frantic search, we were able to bring in Mark Wiersma, a college student studying youth ministry, who happens to be my brother-in-law. He arrived the day Breaktime began which didn't give him or Erin Meendering much time to adjust to working together, but they clicked quickly and the transition went smoothly.

We had over 20 different kids participate in Breaktime and 12 kids in the Bakery. We had an amazing time getting to know these kids, exposing them to Christ, and teaching them educational, life and job skills. It was incredible to see how God used trying circumstances in the lives of kids to soften their hearts to receive the gospel. During a segment on heroes, one child broke down in tears because his father had abandoned him at a young age. Mark and Erin were able to take time to listen to his pain and explain that he has a heavenly Father who will never abandon him, a Father who loves him so much that he gave his son to die for him. It was an incredible moment.

We also saw growth in our Bakery students. What began as a motley crew of kids, who would have never hung out together under normal circumstances, became a group of friends who helped each other

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Fall 2009

Seeking to be a diverse, welcoming ministry that works with Northeast Grand Rapids neighbors to restore and develop their community.

succeed and encouraged each other to grow. The Bakery group also experienced God's blessings in a number of ways. We received a grant from the Grand Rapids Community Foundation to cover most of our expenses, King Milling, in Lowell, donated 300 pounds of flour, Herbruck Poultry Ranch donated nearly 40 dozen eggs, along with new aprons for each student and Buffalo Wild Wings provided a great meal to close out the summer. On top of all that, the Bakery was featured on the front page of the Grand Rapids Press. The kids saw God at work in huge ways, providing for their needs and it helped to bring to life the story of Christ feeding 5,000 people with fives loaves of bread and two fish.

God was clearly with us this summer building friendships, growing students and providing for our needs.



Before we knew it, we were on our final field trip of the year. Because of our record Bakery sales, just over \$3,000, we were able to take the Bakery students to the Wisconsin Dells for four days of camping, swimming, crazy rides and great campfire food.

Of course all this couldn't have happened without the huge number of volunteers who made meals, read with students, ran errands, loved students and purchased baked goods. This year we had a number of businesses that also supported the Bakery by purchasing baked goods. We'd like to say thank you to the Michigan Community

Blood Center, Mercantile Bank, Carstar, and Words of Hope for your regular purchases and promotion of what we're doing.

The summer is gone, but the memories and stories will linger on for years. God has begun a good work in the Breaktimers and we pray that he will continue this work until they fully embrace Christ as their Savior and Lord.

A Summer of Learning - by Mark Wiersma

Proverbs 3:27 "Do not withhold good from those who deserve it when it is in your power to act."

This verse in Proverbs was one of many lessons that I had the privilege of teaching our Breaktimers this past summer. As I think back on the summer, I remember smiling faces and tears, fun times and hard times, both hurting and healing. But through it all, God has done a great work!

For those of you who have had a chance to work with young children in a Christian environment, you know what a blessing it can be. It was my privilege to work with the 2nd-5th graders in a number of different activities. Everything from singing and playing games, to arts and crafts, and silent reading. However, my favorite part of the day was telling the kids a story from the Bible. I watched eyes grow big as the Word of God captivated them with stories they had never heard before. I got to respond to questions like, "Where do you get these stories from?", and, "who wrote these stories?" The group was unique and intriguing, coming from all different paths of life. Some had grown in solid Christian homes, hearing the Word of God often, while others were deeply hurting and hearing the gospel story for the first time. And in all of this, God allowed me to speak

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straight into their lives, replacing hurt with bits of hope. I was able to cry with hurting children and show them Christ as the security, reassurance and love that they needed when everything else seemed to fall apart. I was able to show them a true Father who would never leave them; a trait hard to find in many of their lives.

But as I reflect back on Breaktime 2009, on all the fun, all the restoration and even the tears, I am reminded of a God who cares. I am blinded by the difference relationship makes and clearly see a Savior longing for a more truthful relationship in our own lives, a Christ-centered life devoted to praising our maker in everything we do! As memories of camping trips, silly games and action songs fade away, I know that the Word of God stands forever. It is with that knowledge that I am assured that God is doing a wonderful thing in the lives of the Breaktime kids. It is because of that knowledge that we had an opportunity to share the love of Christ, our Lord and Savior, with these kids. And it is with that knowledge that I am able to move forward, continuing to seek relationships with others, introducing the living Word of God to an often torn-apart and misled generation. For as much as the Breaktimers learned incredibly important principles that have the potential to be life altering, I too, as a leader, was able to revisit some "simple" promises. For more often than I, than we, admit, it is "...in our power to act." What an incredible place God put me in this past summer and what an amazing work he is doing!



Reflections on the Spring Benefit Concert and Giving

New City Neighbors is a non-profit living in a lack-of-profit time. Many people are struggling to make ends meet and many businesses are hoping they can get enough work to pay the bills. In these tough times we have been blessed by those of you who have been able to give to support the causes of New City Neighbors. Those contributions, in combination with our Spring Benefit Concert Fundraiser, have allowed us to live three stress free months.

The Spring Benefit Concert was amazing. John & Gwen Varineau did an amazing job entertaining us with both music and wit. On top of their performance, we had videos and a great testimony from our neighbor Liz who talked about how God used the garden to impact her life. The evening concluded with dessert, provided by the Breaktime Bakery. It was a great night of introducing people to NCN and building new relationships. Between ticket sales, and generous gifts, we were able to raise roughly \$11,000. As noted earlier, we were blessed and the summer was largely stress free financially.

As we enter the fall, we need your financial participation with us. Our budget for the next four months is roughly \$20,000 which includes the costs of running EMS, the Job Readiness Program, GEMS, garden expenses, bills and salaries. To help meet those expenses we are planning a special "Fall Harvest Fundraiser" on Saturday, November 7, at 6:00PM. This night out will feature an amazing chicken dinner created by Chef Rick from Amway, dessert made by our Bakery students, a short video and some testimonies about the work of NCN. If you're interested in joining us for a great night of food and stories, please RSVP by October 30.

