

GET *to* GIVE

Quarterly Newsletter of Lower Lights Ministries

Winter 2009

A Stable Home is Family's Aim

Jerry and Judy Chapman began attending Lower Lights Community Church soon after they moved a couple doors down from Pastors Dave and Jane Fulks. Instantly, their family found a community of support and warmth. Their two active sons were immediately drawn to the many children's activities sponsored by Lower Lights Ministries, and soon engaged in *Project AIM* – Achieving Interdependence through Modeling.

As *Project AIM* participants, the Chapmans met critical goals in becoming a thriving Franklinton family. They completed financial literacy classes, and worked with a Finance Coach to create and implement a family budget. Jerry and Judy have maintained that budget, and Jerry even found more stable employment in the process. The family also worked with Kyle Meyers, *Project AIM* Director, to gain stress management and conflict resolution skills, as well as exploring educational advancement opportunities.

One challenge that loomed over the family was unstable housing, having to move four times in less than three years. To assist the Chapmans in overcoming this hurdle, the family recently transitioned into *Light the Way Home*. As participants in our supportive housing program, the Chapmans look forward to continuing positive changes for their family, particularly as their sons enter school. The centerpiece of this transformation is their faith in God. Jerry comments, "I don't think I can get close enough (to God)."

Jerry and Judy's faith increases as they remain connected to the local church where they are now members, and grow closer to God as a family. Judy works with the children's ministry of the church, assisting with arts and crafts on Sunday mornings. She hopes to eventually become a Sunday School teacher and is currently taking parenting classes at Gladden Community Center. Senior Pastor Mike Vallangeon says, "The Chapman family is an example of the transformation Christ can make in a family, not only for the sake of themselves, but for other families as well." Jerry adds, "We are looking forward to influencing others in our church and community."



BREAKFAST with SANTA,

In December, Lower Lights held our fourth *Breakfast with Santa* event. As in previous year, the event began in the morning with a special pancake breakfast where we served over 100 kids and their parents. Andrea Hansen and Mark Ewing led a crew of volunteers to make sure every belly was full.



Following breakfast, children made crafts, enjoyed a special holiday story, and had the opportunity to visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus. Barbara Schwartz and teens from [Piqua Upper Valley Nazarene](#) ensured that each child left with a special Christmas photo, hats and gloves, and other gifts.

Events like *Breakfast with Santa* would never be possible without the invaluable work of volunteers, investors and community participants. If you would like information about how your group can get involved in a special event, please contact our offices. We hold special events each quarter and have many opportunities.

Local Resident Helps Create Project AIM Tutoring

Volunteers are our biggest asset and our most valuable resource at Lower Lights. We are continually amazed by, and thankful for those that continually give of their time and their talents. One volunteer, Dave Rowe, commits several hours a week of his time to *Project AIM*. He assists our Program Director, Kyle Meyers with family visits, attends *Family Share* sessions, and assists with administrative tasks.



Most recently, Dave is using his experience working with children from our neighborhood to begin an afterschool tutoring program for *Project AIM* families. Noting that many children continue to fall behind academically, Dave and other volunteers have begun to provide direct one-on-one tutoring weekly for children, focusing primarily on reading and math skills. Adding these direct services to other community initiatives such as the Franklinton Literacy Program, we hope to empower children, and their parents, to succeed academically.

If you would like more information on joining this initiative, or to learn of other volunteer opportunities, please contact us today.

Rachel's House Director Transition

This spring, Pastor Jan Ruark and her husband, Bill, will begin a new chapter in their lives as Jan enrolls at Asbury Seminary to pursue her Master's Degree. Bill and Jan have served the Franklinton community and the women of Rachel's House faithfully for seven years. During their ministry, Rachel's House became a nationally-recognized prisoner reentry program. Jan developed a cohesive, caring team of mentors and leaders, and the program expanded to include post-graduation housing and most recently, a greeting card venture. Most importantly, over seventy ladies and their families have experienced the love and grace of Jesus through Bill and Jan's work.

In February, our leadership transition will take place. Kristin Garrison, a Rachel's House volunteer for the past three years, has been chosen as Jan's successor. Kristin has a Bachelor's Degree in theology and psychology from Ohio Dominican University, and is currently in the graduate program for Clinical Community Counseling at the University of Dayton. We are excited for Kristin to lead Rachel's House to the next level as Program Director.

Joining Kristin in leadership, Marilyn Goin has been named the Spiritual Director for Rachel's House. Marilyn is a Licensed Independent Social Worker, has attended the Lower Lights Community Church for almost twenty years, is a former Nazarene missionary, and recently retired from *Franklinton County Children's Services*, where she served over 18 years.

"Our succession plan could not have gone smoother" comments Executive Director David Gay. "The planning team was unified throughout the process, and we feel that God has sent us two amazing individuals whose qualifications are eclipsed only by their passion to serve."

Local Church Shares Why They Support Lower Lights

For many years, Cindy Schmidt, Director of Missions & Outreach at [New Life Church Gahanna](#), has been instrumental in vital collaborations between her suburban church and urban ministries, including spearheading a citywide mobilization of compassion through the Servefest initiative. Recently, we asked Cindy to share with us a few thoughts on why their church partners with LLM.

"We 'stumbled' onto Lower Lights Ministries several years ago through the Saturday meal program and volunteered sporadically, enjoying opportunities for ministry teams to be involved in the inner-city. It soon became apparent that we needed to begin supporting Lower Lights financially on a monthly basis when we saw, year after year, families and individuals being transformed through *Rachel's House*, *Project AIM*, and the summer camps for children. We saw love and compassion for the whole family, and mentoring and empowerment rather than the band-aids of temporary fixes. The staff is awesome, easy to work with, friendly, well-trained, and the volunteer opportunities are varied – we have made meals, planted flowers, cleaned and repaired homes, collected clothing, helped with food baskets, and sponsored an Arts Camp last summer – we know our way around Franklinton thanks to our friends at Lower Lights.



"Seeing the women from Rachel's House succeeding and finding **HOPE**, watching the kids in the summer camp program learn about Jesus, enjoying a family dinner with the folks from the neighborhood, we see what a difference Lower Lights Ministries makes in their neighborhood. A beacon of HOPE, light, success, growth, teaching and training – all offered by God's power and by the caring, compassionate staff and an army of excited volunteers."

Being Present with Our Families

Lower Lights Ministries values involvement in community groups that seek to assist families with children in schools. In the past, this has included staff members participating in the *Franklinton Education Task Force*, the *Franklinton Partnership*, and our continued commitment to the tutoring program. Recently, Kyle Meyers, Director of *Project AIM*, has increased our involvement in several groups in the community, including facilitating a parents' meeting at Dana Elementary, participating in family events with the Columbus Coalition Against Family Violence and parenting classes conducted at the local United Way Settlement House.

Kyle explains the reasoning behind our intensive participation in community support groups. "In the development of any community, it is essential to create safe spaces to reduce isolation and increase security and stability. We share a meal, empathize with each others successes and failures, and engage service providers." This strong conviction has led Project AIM to conduct monthly Family Share events where local families enjoy a breakfast served by students from Grove City Christian School, and spend time supporting one another.

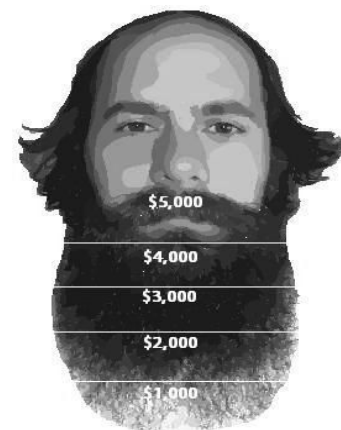
JOIN THE CAUSE

You can now spread the word about our work via *Facebook* online community. Simply search the [Causes](#) tab for Lower Lights Ministries, join, and invite your friends to do the same. From the site, you will be able to make donations, post our ministry on a your profile, and provide us with feedback.

The Facebook logo, consisting of the word "facebook" in white lowercase letters on a dark grey rectangular background.

BIG CUTS ON THE WAY

For some time, Lower Lights has grappled with two daunting questions – "How can we raise more funds in a struggling economy?" and "How can we keep our mentoring director from scaring little children?" We have come up with a great solution!



Kyle Meyers, *Project AIM* Director, has consented to shave his beard (completely) if we raise **\$5,000 on Facebook** by March 31st. Log on to your Facebook account, search "Lower Lights" under the [Causes](#) tab, and make your credit card gift today.

Do you send greeting cards?

Currently, Rachel's House has a line of blank greeting cards with artwork by inmates of Ohio Reformatory for Women. A package of 8 cards sells for \$10 and makes a great gift. To view samples of cards, or to order yours, please visit our website. Proceeds from card sales enable us to serve more women with holistic, God-centered services.

Lower Lights' Specialty Mentors Make Impact

In 2009, Lower Lights is expanding our volunteer program to include "specialty mentors" in the areas of Recovery, Education, Employment, and Finance. These mentors have particular skills and a passion to see individuals and families succeed in a life focus area as part of our holistic approach.

One volunteer, Amanda Strader, accountant with *Pritchett, Dlusky, Saxe & Keller, Ltd.*, recently became a Finance Mentor. As such, Amanda has the opportunity to use her experience and knowledge of financial management to work with participants from our programs. In January, Amanda conducted two workshops that included important information on budgeting and tips for filing taxes. Amanda is a vital component to helping individuals and families break financial dependencies, become better stewards, and use their financial freedom to help neighbors.

For more information about this exciting new evolution in our volunteer program, contact us today.

Lower Lights Ministries is a faith-based, non-profit organization established in 1991 to promote the well-being and development of our community by **partnering together as loving neighbors** - moving people from "get" to "give," and thus restoring Franklinton to a thriving neighborhood.

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