



Joining Hands

Summer 2009

JOYFULLY SERVING NASHVILLE'S IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

Church Partnerships Energize Summer Academy

In this newsletter we focus on the many volunteers who join with us in serving Nashville's refugee community. We thank all our generous volunteers and hope you enjoy reading of the good being done to make Nashville a welcoming city.

Nations Ministry Center is committed to the well-being and intellectual development of refugee youth. With school out, Summer Academy gives refugee children an opportunity to continue to improve their math and English skills. Our extended kindergarten readiness program grew to 16 children, morning computer lab time was

made available to older children, and middle school students joined us in the afternoon four days per week for a guided reading program. In July and August, 13 children joined us for THE BIG READ. The children read each afternoon and earned incentives for every hour of reading.

This extensive summer programming would not have been possible had we not been energized by over 180 volunteers from eight churches.

Forty-four **First Presbyterian Church-Nashville** youth and college interns, led by Erika Shapiro, joined us every Monday to help with our kindergarten readiness program and spend time with middle school students. They enjoyed playing games and talking. English fluency is an important skill for the middle school students to improve. The First Presbyterian young adults, led by Kevin Heim, also joined us every Thursday to support our on-going

afternoon tutoring efforts with middle school students.

In addition to the groups from First Presbyterian, **Westminster Presbyterian Church** college interns Brandon Hays and Allison Rappuhn led Westminster youth in supporting tutoring efforts each Tuesday afternoon this summer. The group provided healthy snacks and, most importantly, gave valuable time to the elementary and middle school students. The Westminster Alternative VBS also joined our preschool for a week. More than 80 Westminster adults and youth volunteered.

NMC board member Laura Dreher led a week of **Harpeth Presbyterian Church** mystery mission in June. The fifteen-member group provided snacks and enjoyed making friends with children from the other side of the world.



Youth from five churches—Davidson College Presbyterian (Davidson, NC); Pleasant Hill Presbyterian (Duluth, GA); Swarthmore Presbyterian (Pennsylvania); First Presbyterian Shelbyville; and Harpeth Presbyterian—worked with refugee youth for a week as a part of Mission Possible: Nashville. Bethlehem United Methodist Church youth also volunteered several times this summer.



LEAD Academy Partnership Opens Doors

When refugee children arrive in the United States, most often they are placed in their grade according to their age, not ability. Since most refugee children have had limited exposure to formal education, and have endured painful deprivation and much trauma, they are often significantly behind their peers, both academically and emotionally. Our on-going middle school program has taught us that these youth need special engagement to become successful.

Thanks to Melissa Shirey, Nations Ministry Center and LEAD Academy, a Nashville charter school, connected and developed a pilot program to enroll refugee youth at LEAD. LEAD will “do whatever it takes” to help these children catch up and Nations Ministry Center will coordinate with parents, assist with cultural issues, and provide additional academic support services. Six youth have been accepted to LEAD and began school July 27.

The emphasis at LEAD Academy is that every child will go to college! We look forward to supporting these children, and many more, on their path to academic success! We are thankful to volunteers who

provided school supplies, backpacks, and uniforms for a successful first day at school.

After their first few days of school, one new LEADer told us that he was glad to be at his new school because there no one laughed at him. LEAD staff and teachers are making an extra effort to help the Burundi children feel a part of the learning community.

If you would like to volunteer to provide after-school homework assistance, contact us at 615.828.9664.

A new student at LEAD Academy



Parents and LEAD administrators, and Melissa Shirey pictured during a parent orientation

Junior League Partnership Begins!

Nations Ministry Center is excited to announce the Junior League of Nashville has chosen NMC to be a 2009-2010 community partner. We are also very thankful to the League for their financial support through a pillar grant.

Ten Junior League of Nashville members will volunteer more than 350 hours to support our programs and help build NMC's capacity to

serve more refugees.

League members will be serving refugee preschoolers, improving our website, assisting with special events, teaching English, and much more. We are excited about this infusion of talent and energy!

NMC wants to thank all those who encouraged us to apply to become a Junior League community partner.

**OVER 975 HOURS
OF COMPUTER USE
HAVE BEEN
LOGGED THIS
YEAR IN OUR
ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
LEARNING LAB.**

Sewanee Intern Makes a Positive Difference

Rebecca Mooradian, a sophomore French major at Sewanee, received a paid competitive internship and chose to spend her summer months of service with Nations Ministry Center and the refugee youth who have joined us for Summer Academy.

Rebecca has been instrumental in enhancing our computer center and making those resources more easily available.

A few thoughts from Rebecca:

"I have enjoyed working for Nations

Ministry Center so much this summer! The children are all so wonderful, and I have become increasingly aware that, for them, a little bit of love and attention goes a long way. It is amazing to me how even a simple board game or a quick one-on-one reading session can turn into an important learning experience. It has also been such a blessing watching all of the wonderful volunteers. Their dedication to the children and youth is astounding, with many treating NMC as a part-time job. The children know them, love them, and have grown because

of them.

My time spent with NMC this summer has inspired me in so many ways to live and work in such a way that the lives of others are benefited. The children deserve all the love, time, and resources that we can give them, and I am grateful to NMC for the opportunity to have this experience and for the work that they do for these children and their families."



Rebecca and Germaine enjoying checkers



ELL Summer School Project Expands

A refugee family from Togo lives in an apartment complex about a mile from Charlotte Park Elementary School. The mother learned about the possibility of her children attending summer school and since she has no car, walked with her children, one an infant, to register them for summer school so they could improve their English this summer. The first day they arrived too late and registration was

closed. The second day they made the long walk again and this time they arrived on time. She had heard that some organization might provide transportation to summer school for her children and wanted to make sure they were registered.

We soon found out about the family, and I went to their home. The mother spoke no English and the second-grader interpreted. She was

delighted to learn we would pick them up and drop them off each day for the four

weeks of summer school.

Refugee parents want the best for their children and many are willing to sacrifice much, including walking several miles with three small children to register for summer school. We want to join hands with parents and provide the access to education they need to empower their children to learn.

This summer, thanks to the generosity of **Ensworth School** and many of our supporters, we were able to coordinate registration and provide summer school transportation for 23 children from four nations—Burundi, Eritrea, Somalia,

and Togo. The children received more than 1,700 hours of English language instruction.

Thanks to Ensworth School and generous donors who made this wonderful summer experience possible.

REFUGEES ARE RESETTLED BY THE US GOVERNMENT AND ARE ELIGIBLE FOR US CITIZENSHIP IN 5 YEARS.



NMC Recognizes Nations Ambassadors

Nations Ministry Center wants to recognize a very special group of volunteers, those who have given a substantial amount of time in 2009 by volunteering through one of our weekly programs. These volunteers, **Nations Ambassadors**, have given selflessly and without the desire for recognition. But we want to honor them for their many hours of service.

*Kathryn Andreen
Michelle Austin
Tina Barrett
Margaret Barker
Leslee Bechtel
Shannon Beisel
Wendy Beuter
Meredith Bishop
Denise Brown
Heather Cain
Winder Campbell
Terrie Crawford
Nan Cox*

*Mac Deloache
Barbara Dewitt
Laura Dreher
Laura Easter
Kathleen Estes
Gay Greer
Leslie Grote
Carey Haynes
Beth Higham
Laura Hill
Linda Hood
Rita Hood
Karen Jarratt*

*Kristin Kaminsky
Christie Kelley
Elizabeth Lewis
Ann Manning
Pat McFadden
Carolyn Perrone
Leigh Reames
Karen Richardson
Betsy Sanders
Melissa Shirey
Lynne Smith
Leah Sohr
Ellen Tanner*

We also want to recognize several students—and any we may have overlooked—who have volunteered repeatedly and served in multiple ways:

**Zach Brown
Anne Elise Cain
Tess Erlenborn
Ellie Frist**

**Rob Higham
Elliott Roche
Hayden Roche
Lacy Smith**



**MORE THAN
1,000
REFUGEES ARE
RESETTLED
IN TENNESSEE
EACH YEAR.**

Wish List

fruit juice paper towels
liquid soap kitchen towels

Joining Hands Annual Campaign Update

Nations Ministry Center wants to thank all those who have supported our annual campaign this year. It's a difficult year for all nonprofits and we appreciate your financial support. We are about half way to our annual campaign's goal of \$38,000. We continue to reach out to more potential partners and are actively seeking funding from foundations and churches. Be looking for an upcoming fall special event. Exciting things are happening at Nations Ministry Center. Thank you for joining us in the journey.

Volunteer Voices

Volunteers have made such an important difference in the lives of so many refugees. Here we spotlight Shannon Beisel, one of our most devoted kindergarten readiness volunteers. When we wanted to expand the children's program to an extra day of the week, Shannon volunteered to be the lead teacher and recruited many of her friends to join in. Here are some of Shannon's own words as she reflects on her volunteer experience:

How did you get involved with the preschool?

Heather Cain, a long-time client, asked me one day to consider. How do you turn down someone like Heather Cain?

What's surprised you the most about your experience?

Probably that I went from not really wanting to read the story out loud

in front of everyone to co-leading on Tuesday which turned into leading Wednesday preschool. I have never been a teacher of ANY kind and really thought I was already way out of my comfort zone.

What have you learned during this experience?

First and foremost, that God has blessed me ABUNDANTLY. I have also gained a teeny tiny bit more patience. I have learned its okay to get your hands dirty (and your hair--face---arms---clothes.....) and that hugs really go a LONG way (both for me & the children & my fellow volunteers) and last that I could not do this without a great team of volunteers who make it fun.

Why do you think it's important that we provide this service?

But for the grace of God there go WE. I truly feel that as people of



faith we need to take care of others who are less fortunate and in need. We have all been extended grace in our lives at some point so we must pass that on.

What would you say to others considering volunteering?

What I usually do ! Its SOOOOO much fun. It's a tiny time slot out of your day, you don't have to worry what you look like, you really will be rewarded, and my favorite reason is to be around friends both new and old. It makes the day so rewarding and I often see it as my RECESS from work !



Shannon with a new friend

New Volunteer Director Joins NMC

NMC recently received a one-year advised fund grant to create a Director of Volunteer Services position. We want to thank the very generous anonymous donor who made this staff addition possible.

Norie-Anne Young now serves as our second full-time employee and is developing our volunteer



management system, recruiting additional volunteers, and making certain our more than 120 volunteers

Norie-Anne and Fabiola reading during our THE BIG READ project

have an incredible experience.

A few thoughts from Norie-Anne: "In the short time I've been on staff, I have come to know these wonderful families, and work with these wonderful children. Once they get in your heart, they are there to stay! As I work with volunteers on a daily basis, it is affirming to see volunteers give of themselves with such a heart for service. It is the selfless acts and generosity of our volunteers, donors and board members that drive this organization in all that is accomplished. I see that one person really does make a difference, and have gained an appreciation for the incredible service our volunteers give in a way that makes these families feel valued, not pitied."

Nations Ministry Center

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Our mission is to joyfully serve Nashville's immigrants and refugees through advocacy, acts of compassion, and access to education.

Nations Ministry Center maintains its 501(c)(3) status as a subunit of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

All gifts are very appreciated and tax deductible.



TFLI Provides New Teachers

One of the great barriers refugees face in becoming genuinely self-sufficient remains the rather high wall of effectively communicating in English. It's especially a struggle for those who have had little formal education and have barely achieved literacy in their own language.

English classes have been a staple with NMC for many years, and we are pleased to announce that the Tennessee Foreign Language Institute is now partnering with NMC by providing volunteer English teachers to our women's English class, and, through this new partnership, we have been able to open a men's English class. Refugees from three nations—Sudan, Togo, and

Burundi—take advantage of these courses on a weekly basis. Thus far, five teachers have been placed with us, and we look forward to working with more teachers in the fall.

Three English students and their TFLI teacher



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Regular NMC updates available on our blog at www.nationsministrycenter.blogspot.com.



Honor and Memorial Gifts

Honor Gifts

Tom McDow

Disciple II--Westminster Presbyterian Church

Terry Allison Rappuhn

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Partner Churches

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