

Outreach Notes

Mobile, Alabama

A friend once said, "If people learn where your restrooms are, they'll be back." We've resolved to make our entire facility a familiar home for the community.

In the fall, we invite preschool children to our pumpkin patch. They sit among the pumpkins in a field adjacent to the church and listen to church members read stories. It's very popular. The schools have begun busing the children in to our pumpkin patch.

When the GMAC Bowl Game is played in Mobile, the church parking lot will be the start and end of a 5-kilometer run.

Someday, our senior pastor Jeff Spiller, dreams we will build a community swimming pool. **Any visible participation in community life advances our goal.**

At a busy intersection adjacent to our campus, the church opened a bookstore. When a man entered and asked for the "adult" section, a clerk took him to the Bibles and began a conversation. Before the man left, they prayed together.

"I came looking for pornography," he said, "but I found a spiritual encounter."

—*Kenna Sapp, Minister of Adult Discipleship, Christ United Methodist Church, Mobile, Alabama. For more information, go to www.christumcmobile.com.*

From LeadershipJournal.net, (Jan. 15, 2004)

Boston, Massachusetts

Youth and Police in Partnership is one of four major projects of the United Methodist Urban Services (UMUS) which center around the issues of youth violence and education.

UMUS is an independent non-profit corporation that is "faith-based but aggressively inclusive." Created in 1990 by the New England Conference of the UMC, the organization works as a "broker," strengthening the work of greater Boston's UM churches, as well as secular community groups, businesses, and government agencies.

For more information, go to www.umus.org.

Chicago, Illinois

When Parvine and Ali, a Pakistani couple who came to Chicago a few years ago, encountered problems with their immigration papers, they turned to The South Asian Friendship Center for help.

There, volunteers helped them re-write the necessary documentation, then they prayed with the couple, asking God for favor with immigration officials.

These kinds of services are commonplace at The South Asian Friendship Center—begun by a group of five Christian missionaries intent on reaching out to Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs. The center, located in the hub of the immigrant community, opened six years ago.

"Ali and Parvine were grateful for our help and prayers," says Roy Oksnevad, director of training and development for the center. "We continue to keep in contact with them and pray for their various needs as they arise."

Among the 400,000 Muslims and Hindus in Greater Chicago, significantly large percentages have migrated from South Asia. The SAFC has the unique opportunity to share the Gospel with unreached people groups now in the U.S.

The SAFC reaches out to Muslims through specific ministries, including an outreach to taxi-cab drivers and another one to Muslim women. SAFC volunteers offer women—who usually have little contact outside their homes—rides to local malls, parks and other places of interest.

"It's important to be in the community and establish good and credible relationships with the Muslims around us," Oksnevad says. **"We aren't afraid of living out our Christian faith openly. Yet we don't want to be offensive by trying to convert every person we meet. Nor do we want to be benign, only doing good works and never proclaiming Christ. Instead, we strive to be sensitively Christian, responding to the needs of people we meet."**

—*Patrick Wilson. For more information, go to www.OutreachMagazine.com.*

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