



JANUARY 2012

The BSHOP is a missional community surrendered to the love of Jesus working in us and through us to bring transformation to our neighborhood that will multiply in the city of Grand Rapids through communities of prayer.

PREVIEW TO 2012

Pray then like this: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.'
Matthew 6:9-10

Welcome to 2012! In our latest email, we sent you a review of how God amazed us in 2011. Now, at the beginning of a new year, I want to share with you some of the things that we are hoping to embark on in the new year. This will be a bit more practical than what I write in most newsletters. So, for you engineer types, you can take a deep breath. Some of the things that we will be embarking on are the kind of initiatives that we love to write-home-to-mom about. Things like children's ministries and youth leadership initiatives. Others things are the less glamorous things that you don't put in newsletters... things like board of directors development work. Yet, all these things are necessary for effective ministry. And I share it with you to ask you to dare to believe with us and support us in your prayers. So, here is a sneak preview to 2012...

Youth Discipleship—As you have probably read in other updates, we are expanding our Youth Discipleship initiative to a year-round, three level program that will include a spiritual leadership training program. Oh, and did we mention that we already have 5 churches signed up for Immersion? Yeah, I thought so, we are pretty excited about it.

Board of Directors Development—When I mention our board of directors, some people ask me, "you have a board of directors?" Yup, we are a bonafide non-profit organization. And I believe that a strong ministry needs not only a strong team and strong leadership, but also strong oversight and accountability. This year, we are hoping to add several new board members to broaden and deepen the expertise and skill-set of our board to lay a foundation for future ministry development

Children's Ministry—Much of our neighborhood ministry is addressing the needs of young adults that have grown up in the bondage of poverty. I believe that if we want to have long-term impact in this neighborhood, we need to start with the kids. Be proactive, rather than reactive, ya know? We had a really effective children's ministry several years ago, but do to changes in staffing, we had to suspend it. With the help of some great, godly people who have been helping out in the Pavilion, we are hoping to relaunch this initiative in the coming months.

Office Space—While working out of our living rooms and filing under our beds has been kinda fun for a couple years, I am not

sure that it is the most effective way to run an organization. Pretty sure it's not, actually. We are now in a place where we could really use some office space and the third section of the building that our coffee shop and prayer room are in would serve us perfectly. Please pray that God would move in the heart of our landlord and that he would sell us the building. Oh, and then pray for the finances to buy the building.

Bridge Street Church—We believe that we are the church. Our end goal is not to get people inside the doors of a church building on a Sunday morning. Yet, as we desire to be a bridge from the streets to abundant life in Jesus, we also believe that gathering with other believers for times of prayer, worship, and biblical teaching is inherently valuable as a follower of Jesus. In this new year we will work with the Boiler Room to multiply the church plant that we partnered with them on about a year ago. They will relocate to their neighborhood and we will continue to lead the Sunday morning gathering here on Bridge Street.

Well, I am out of space, and I have not even mentioned the Sanctity of Human Life training (the Choice Project) that we will be embarking on with LIFE International, or the seminars that we are hoping to host (if we can add an event planner/administrator to our staff), or the housing renovations that we are hoping to partner with a local church on, or the collaboration of local ministries and churches that we are partnering with to invite an urban christian school organization to work in our neighborhood. But we'll be sure to keep you posted on all this as the year progresses

One final thought... as we dream about these things, what we are talking about here is not primarily the expansion of the BSHOP, but the establishment of God's kingdom here on earth. Just as Jesus prayed, so it is our burning desire to see the Father exalted and His kingdom established here on the West Side. In a neighborhood that has been long characterized by its poverty, despair, and chaos, we believe that God is in the process of bringing beauty out of these ashes and order out of this chaos. We believe that simply because we believe that is who God is and that is what He does. And we believe that these dreams are not our own that we are trying to convince God of. Rather, we believe that these are the very dreams of God that He has convinced us of. And we believe that we serve a God who is able to do abundantly more than we could ever ask or imagine, and that He uses weak, broken, willing people to bring His kingdom here on earth. Would you dare to dream and believe with us?

FAMILY GATHERING

Enlarge the place of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; do not hold back; lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes. For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left, and your offspring will possess the nations and will people the desolate cities. Isaiah 54:2-3

Anytime we hold an event for our West Side friends, it feels like a family gathering. There's our older friends that greet us



with warm hugs, the teenagers that look for other teenagers to hang out with, and the young kids that keep us running around after them. The event that we recently held was our Christmas Feast.

We started with a wonderful dinner that was made possible by many generous donations, heard the Christmas story from one of the BSHOP staff, sang a few Christmas carols, and then finished with making Christmas gifts.

Here are some stats:

50 West Side friends attended

3 crock pots of soup, 4 pans of cheesy potatoes, 2 delectable salads, and MANY cookies were served

100 cups of punch were served (by West Side local Teddy)

35 mason jars of homemade hot chocolate mix were made

24 ornaments were painted

72 sugar cookies were decorated

What gripped me most about this time spent with the West Siders was the time of worship and listening to the message of Christ's birth. Not only did Pavilion regulars get to hear of Christ's humble coming, but many new people joined in this time. As mentioned in the verse above, it truly felt as though our "tent was enlarged" with people that God has been pursuing.



Now, I think it's appropriate to thank you all for your prayers and generosity for making this event happen. God's provision and faithfulness are shown through your willingness and desire to offer your resources, gifts, and time to help make these events possible.

Lord, continue to enlarge our tents and raise up the West Siders to people the desolate cities.

lindsay sisson

PRAYER

Thank you for praying. Here are some things you can be praying for:

- Pray for salvation among the young people of the West Side.
- Pray for grace, protection, and boldness for BSHOP staff and community.
- Pray for discipleship opportunities with our neighbors.
- Pray for real transformation in our neighborhood.

A GOD-SIZED DREAM

This is the beginning of a very exciting new year of ministry at the BSHOP. Our dream of seeing thousands of young people being trained and equipped in the ways of God and being sent out to be witnesses in the world is coming into reality. Some of you have been asking questions about Immersion, so I want to take a minute to describe this incredible emerging ministry.

We started Immersion sort of accidentally a few years ago when a local youth pastor asked if we could host their high school group for a night of their mission trip to Grand Rapids. We basically said, "Sure, why not?" unaware of the future implications on our ministry at BSHOP. Since that first unexpected pilot run, we have hosted over a hundred high school students for a 10 day urban mission trip to Grand Rapids through Immersion, and we're anticipating hundreds, even thousands in the years to come.

Our strategy is very simple. We teach them how to pray. Prayer leads them into an intimate relationship with God. His Spirit then leads them into action as they get on their knees (often literally) to serve their neighbors right here in Grand Rapids. All we have done is invite the youth of Grand Rapids to join our community in the mission God has called us to, hoping that through this experience they will hear God's calling for their own. We want to see a whole generation of Samuels who hear God's voice and respond with an emphatic, "Here I am. Send me!" and then go into all nations to fulfill the final command of Jesus Christ.

We value giving as much time to experience as we do to teaching. Every morning is filled with worship and prayer and teaching while every afternoon we turn our prayers into action by serving our neighbors in really practical ways. We rake, shovel, chop, plant, weed, and paint for the benefit of others and the glory of God.

In the last three years we have come to realize Immersion as core to the ministry of the BSHOP. It is unique in that it bridges a gap from the local churches to the BSHOP while also bridging the gap from the BSHOP and local churches to the poor in Grand Rapids. With the added horsepower of the youth of the church, the focused Kingdom impact on our neighborhood between June and August is multiplied many times over. It is humbling to see the impact these youth have had in our mission to see transformation on the West Side, and it's exciting to hear the ways they are taking what they've learned back to their churches, neighborhoods, and families. I believe we are witnessing the making of modern day revivalists in these young people who burn with love for God and will not rest until the world knows Him. This is the hope that drives us to press on as we pray, "God, let your dreams come true through us."

derek sterenberg

The Bridge Street House of Prayer is a registered 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Donations are tax-deductible and can be sent to the Bridge Street House of Prayer at 1055 Bridge Street NW Grand Rapids, MI 49504.

The Pavilion @ 1056 Bridge is open from noon - 5 pm Monday - Friday
Our Saturday Evening Worship Gatherings begin at 7 pm every Saturday in the Tabernacle @ 1054 Bridge Church is at 10 am Sundays in the Tabernacle