

Bridge Street House of Prayer



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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.

INTRODUCING...

There are exciting things developing here at the Bridge Street House of Prayer. Next month we will be adding three full-time staff to the BSHOP team (I will introduce them in a minute). Now, I don't get too hyped up about bigger... bigger staff... bigger budget... bigger ministry... What I do get really hyped up about is the Kingdom of God coming here to the West Side. I get really excited about our friends here in this neighborhood coming to know Jesus. I get really excited about young people finding something in Jesus that is worth giving their whole lives for and living for something greater than the American dream. I get really excited about Jesus being exalted in our midst. So, I don't get too excited about the growth of our ministry, but I do get really excited about having a greater capacity for the Kingdom of God to move through us.

In a recent prayer meeting, as we were preparing for two days of dreaming and strategizing, I felt God speak to my heart and say "before there was the Bridge Street House of Prayer, there wasn't the Bridge Street House of Prayer." Profound, I know! As we continued in prayer I asked God what He meant by that and He brought me to the beginning. Not just to the beginning of the BSHOP, but to the beginning of time. Genesis 1. "In the beginning, God created... And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters." Before there was creation, there wasn't creation. There was only God. And from nothing He created something. And then from the chaos of that original mass He created order. This is the first picture of God that we get in Scripture and this is a consistent theme throughout Scripture... God, and God alone, bringing order out of chaos. As God was revealing this to me, I started to understand what He was trying to tell me. What He is doing here on the West Side is not about the BSHOP. We didn't come up with this idea. It was only God. Before the BSHOP, or any other ministry here on the West Side, there was God hovering over the chaos of this neighborhood. And out of that chaos He is beginning to bring heavenly order.

This is what I get really excited about. This is why I get really excited about three new BSHOP staff members (also, because they are three people that I really love and respect). The story of the BSHOP is simply the story of God. It is the story of Him working through broken, human vessels to

bring Himself glory and advance His kingdom here and to bring Heavenly order to this broken neighborhood.

So, without further adieu, I want to introduce to you the latest addition to our BSHOP team. A few of them you may recognize...

Derek Sterenberg

Derek has been a part of our Bridge Street Community for almost 6 years and has been helping lead our Saturday evening gatherings as well as leading our Immersion initiative for the past two summers. After 6 years of serving as a part time youth pastor at Sunshine Community Church, Derek has taken a step of faith to join us here full time. He will continue to help lead our Saturday evening gatherings, as well as lead our Immersion initiative. In addition, Derek will help develop a year-round spiritual leadership training initiative for high school students.

"I have been living and ministering with the BSHOP community since 2005 as a worship leader, and am currently moving into a full-time role in youth discipleship. My vision and driving passion is to see this generation of young people give everything to know God and live with purpose in building his kingdom. I love making music with friends, cooking, and virtually any outdoor adventure sport such as mountain biking, rock climbing, or backpacking. A little known fact about me is that in 28 years, I've never broken a bone or had a cavity. And I love cheese."



Alex Pominville

Alex is a young man of God who recently graduated from Cornerstone University with an accounting degree. We first met Alex when he started coming around the BSHOP a couple of years ago and took a significant volunteer role at the Pavilion. Rather than continuing to pursue corporate accounting jobs along with many of his peers, Alex is also taking a step of faith to raise his own support to be here on the BSHOP staff (all of the BSHOP staff raises their own support). Alex will be stepping into a dual role here at the

BSHOP as a part time bookkeeper/accountant as well as a part time role on the Pavilion lead team.

"I love prayer, worship and studying the Bible. I also like reading, writing, playing piano, cycling and swimming. I am passionate about storytelling, learning and music. With learning I am passionate about new ideas in science that reveal more of God's creation. With music I am passionate about the many voices and colors of sound that can be arranged into beautiful expressions. Oh yeah, also, I could live entirely off of peanut butter, honey and cinnamon."

Lindsay Sisson

You may recognize Lindsay from our July newsletter. Lindsay and her husband Andrew recently were married in the park across the street from the BSHOP. Rather than pursuing a "typical" newlywed life of comfort and ease, the Sissons have responded to God's call to live and minister with us here on Bridge Street. While Andrew finishes up his masters degree work at Grand Valley, Lindsay will be stepping into a lead directorship role at the Pavilion.

"My name is Lindsay Sisson and I have the honor of being the wife of Andrew Sisson for just over 3 months now. We began being involved in the ministry of the Pavilion about 2 years ago and now are blessed to live in community with our friends on Bridge Street. As people have asked me what I want to do "when I grow up," my instant response is,

"Love God and Love People." Whether I'm singing my lungs out, baking cookies, speaking Spanish with neighbors, or taking a walk with my husband, the joy of the Lord continues to fill me. Even more, I see the joy of the Lord taking root here on the West Side...what a marvel!"

Please pray for these three, as well as the rest of the BSHOP team as we step into the next season of growth. Pray that the message of Jesus would be clearly and boldly proclaimed here and that His Kingdom would advance powerfully in our midst.



Ryan Waalkes

IMMERSION '11 IN SUMMARY

The numbers...

Immersion students: **43**

Students who gave testimony of God's transformational work in their lives: **43**

Neighbors' landscaping redone or maintained: **19**

Stumps removed by hand: **3**

Seniors visited at Mt. Mercy Residential Apts: **45+**

Friends and neighbors who played in our West Side kickball tournament: **50+**

Distance prayer walked: **40+ miles**

Carrots consumed: **48 lbs**

Pop-tarts consumed: **0**

Amount of kitchen waste recycled or composted: **75%**

Strangers prayed for on the streets: **too many to count**

Raccoons that chewed through students' tents to get their food: **3**

Thunderstorms while camping: **1**

Hours Immersion students volunteered in the Pavilion: **120**

The stories...

"Because of the Immersion Trip, I don't doubt that God is really there anymore. I mean, I actually heard him talk to me, and since then I try to talk to him as much as possible. Also, Immersion has given me so much more courage to do things I normally wouldn't have. I'm not afraid to be myself around people I don't know anymore, and that's where I needed courage the most."

- Immersion student

"He killed my doubt. He gave me conviction. He forgave me. He made immersion a TRUE stepping stone in my spiritual life."

- Immersion student

"Things are going great! [One student] is leading a small group for Immersion students for accountability that meets each week. [He and another student] are working on organizing a monthly prayer and praise night with the help of some of my adult leaders, and we're meeting each Wednesday an hour before youth group for community prayer much like we did each morning on Immersion. [Another student] is organizing monthly service projects. We started a prayer chain through texting which is in its second week and has over 20 students participating already, we've prayed for dozens of people! [One student] taught 3 times at our programs since Immersion but insists that he's not going to be a youth pastor lol. [Six former Immersion students] have all skipped sports practices, events, and meetings to participate in youth stuff making their relationship with God a priority over sports! The Holy Spirit has really captured their attention and they are so focused and growing!"

- youth pastor

Derek Sterenberg

LOVED, HEARD, CARED FOR

We can do no great things, only small things with great love. It is not how much you do but how much love you put into doing it. ~Mother Theresa

To be loved. What does it mean to be loved by the Father?

To be heard. What does it look like to be listened to?

To be cared for. What does it look like to know someone cares about you?

These are questions that may not be audibly heard by the children from the West Side, but is communicated in their actions and how they respond to those around them.

Everyone is created in the image of God and has a purpose (Jeremiah 29:11). I desire these children to know that. Which is why this summer we had a Vacation Bible School for the West Side kids. For three weeks we had teams of a couple Immersion students and leaders prepare skits, games, and crafts. Through the consistency and intentional time with the kids we were able to see growth take place in the children. What had started at the beginning of VBS as almost a time of crowd control just to have the children pay attention when someone was speaking ended in them learning what it means to respect those in authority, and to talk with words of kindness instead of hurtful comments.

I can remember a day during our last VBS that really had an impact on the children.

We had everyone tape a piece of paper to their back. This was then filled with words of encouragement from all the children and VBS leaders. Then the moment came of reading what everyone wrote about them... "You are beautiful." "You are filled with joy." "Jesus loves you." ... Something so simple, yet words they don't often hear.

Our words have the power to either destroy or to be life-giving. These kids just need someone to show them how...

So with that, we love. We love these kids. We teach them to love. And then....a beautiful thing happens...they love each other. Their actions and their words begin to change, and what comes forth is an outpouring of what they have in their heart - love. Oh, if everyone would know that they are loved by the Father, how this world would be different!

And so we keep praying! Because with prayer, God moves powerfully!

prayer

Jessi Wetherbee

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

- Pray for grace and wisdom as we steward these ministries.
- Pray for BSHOP staff as we move forward with ministry.
- Pray for grace over our community life.
- Pray for protection of our minds, bodies, and hearts.
- Pray for our neighbors and our relationships with them and for real transformation in our neighborhood.



TEAM

On Bridge Street we talk about community, family, and team quite frequently. However, on Friday, August 19 we used the word "team" to describe something unusual. Teams of pirates and ancient Bible characters, among other teams, came to play in the 1st Annual West Side Kickball Tournament. Teams of West Side community members and neighbors took over Lincoln Park's stadium (okay, fine, it's an old baseball field) to challenge each other to officiated games of kickball. Six teams played past sunset in a double-elimination bracket to claim the title as "West Side Kickball Champions." We're all about the real deal.

Being part of this tournament was a true delight, allowing us to bear witness to the tangible unity being formed on the West Side between believers, and the influence of the love that flows from that unity on those who have yet to come to a saving knowledge of Jesus. For a few hours there was joy and life in a park that is often characterized by darkness and chaos. So, whether you were playing for the West Side Arrrvengers or the Jiminy Kick-its, you were part of a team that was doing more than kicking a ball, you were part of a team that loudly proclaimed the love of God who is so good.



Amanda Stephen

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