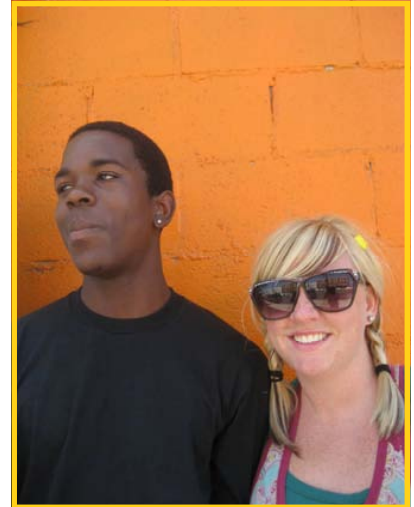


The One by Candace Rink

They were given an assignment: encourage each other. Tell each other about the good that you see in one another. Tell the truth. Make sure it is from your heart.

So we sat in a circle, in a small room, in the heart of inner city L.A. Eight kids from a rough neighborhood in North Las Vegas heard words from each other that they never thought they'd hear. They spent an entire week together serving, loving the unloved, praying for strangers, and seeing each other at both strong and weak moments. But tonight they heard words like "I love you," "Thank you," and "You've helped me." It brought joy to my soul.

Tell me why people think that inner city kids are a waste of time. Tell me why they think that "these" kids will never have a chance because that's not what I see. I see young people healing each other's wounds. I see them loving each other well. I see them reaching out for Jesus in ways that I couldn't grasp at their age.



Not only were the students touched by each other, but so was I.

Allen left Club Christ about a year ago. We have prayed for this kid, wept for this kid and chased after him too. There is a calling upon his life that he has yet to recognize. Last summer I saw Allen before we went to camp. He was supposed to come with us, but I could tell that he was straying. He had not come to the meetings and I frequently saw him hanging out with the wrong kinds of people. We prayed and prayed that he would come to summer camp and that the Lord would change him there. A few days before camp I saw Allen at the corner store by his house. The Lord gave me a word for him that I could not withhold.

"Allen, this is your chance to choose Jesus. If you don't do it now, you may end up where you really don't want to be." He didn't say much and walked away. And last summer, we left for summer camp without Allen.

That summer Allen ended up getting locked away in a youth correctional facility for a crime he committed with a friend. His sentence kept him away from us for nine months. So we wrote to him. All the students and leaders at Club Christ sent letters to encourage him while he was away. Evan even visited him. When he got out a few months ago we wondered if he would return to God and to his family at Club Christ. We wondered if he even noticed that we had been after him for so long.

This summer, we prayed Allen would join us on our mission trip to inner city L.A. Our prayers were answered and on Sunday morning Allen was packed and ready to go!

Flash forward to the last night there in L.A.

It was Allen's turn to encourage Evan and I. It was silent for a good while before he spoke. This is what he said: "When I was away in juvy I felt so alone. And you guys wrote to me. And I felt so loved. I felt like you guys really cared. I read your letters every night before I went to bed. And you guys never gave up on me. You were always there, knocking on my door, telling me to go to Club Christ, making sure that I was doing the right thing."

A single tear fell from behind his stylish sunglasses. "And you guys don't know this yet, but I think you changed my life."

Tears came streaming down my face. Words really cannot express what I felt inside. All I could do was praise God. All I could say was, "Thank you Lord, thank you Lord, thank you Lord."

"What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off." -Matthew 18:12-13



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 CLUB CHRIST MINISTRIES
 PO Box 71445
 Las Vegas, NV 89170
 702•301•3141
 www.clubchrist.org



Las Vegas to Los Angeles



"I think it changed me for life," Shaquil, 10th Grader.
 That's what happens when you take eight inner city teens and drop them off in downtown Los Angeles. That is where a young Hispanic mother looked to Allen (pictured left) for help learning English. That is where hands got dirty serving breakfast to homeless men at 7a.m. It is where kids looked up to Myzaveon as he shared his story of transformation after being expelled from school for fighting. It is where leaders were made. Leaders with a vision to transform their own community for Christ.



"Love is patient, love is kind," 1 Cor. 13:4.
 Jeremie, pictured below, had a chance to love little old ladies like this one who were thrilled to have someone around that cared.



No job was too messy for our teens as they served with a smile at a downtown food bank. But the teens also got to have some fun at the beach and at an Angels vs. Yankees baseball game!

Pictured from Left: Myzaveon, Shaquil, Jacque, Jeremie, Candace, Marquis, Jayde, Allen, Evan (Above Right: Crystal and Robin)

~Walk With Me Campaign~

Club Christ Ministries is inviting you to take a step forward next month in your support of this ministry. As the vision of reaching and developing urban youth takes shape, we need to work together to reach young people like Allen. With your commitment to support Club Christ financially, you choose to walk with a kid through life.

You choose to make a difference.