

THE ASCENT™

sponsored by



Jacob's Ladder™

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Come Up Higher...



*"More things are wrought by prayer
than this world dreams of"*

—Lord Alfred Tennyson

HOUSES OF PRAYER

Five years ago Josephine Street (in the Beltline) was on the slippery slope of collapse into ruin. Once a thriving and vital Memphis street with nice bungalows, neat sidewalk gardens and flowerbeds, Josephine was threatened with sinister looking problem properties signaling neglect, instability and crime. A team of Jacob's Ladder™ volunteers, local businesses, Wilson Foundation and United Housing have rehabilitated four key Josephine properties and started turning that image around.

The first house we renovated became the home for a mother and family who had previously been in the Salvation Army homeless shelter. Counseling help and a decision to leave her addiction made it possible for this mom to hold a job and start a new life.

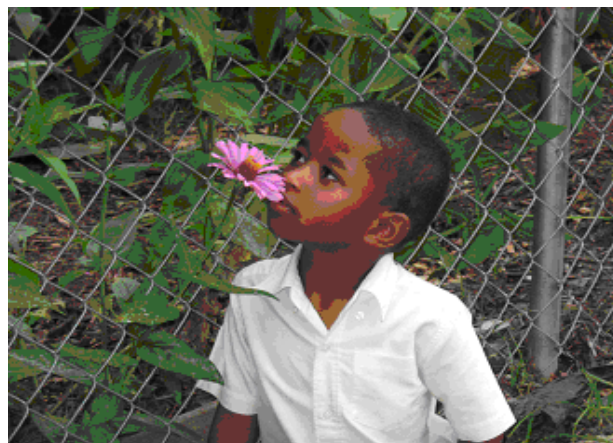
The 2005 Katrina disaster in New Orleans began the story for the second house. A mother, daughter and grand daughter fled to Memphis after the hurricane destroyed their home of many years. Again our team intervened, a second property became available, and Josephine had a new homeowner who takes great pride in her yard and garden. The grand daughter attends White Station optional school.

An Episcopal priest serving as a Methodist hospital chaplain and his Kenyan family now occupy house number three on Josephine.

Their home is a showcase, located at the corner of Josephine and Midland. The family has already begun cultivating a small garden and have expressed keen interest in helping Jacob's Ladder™ with community organizing.



Peter Kuria & Family at their New Home on Josephine



Four-year-old Emmanuel Kuria enjoys the fragrance of the Beltline Community Garden

The fourth house is now home to a retiring math professor. This gentleman taught at East High School and then Wiley College, Texas, the same school made famous by Denzel Washington's movie, "The Great Debaters". He has become the latest customer for our youth center's lawn care crew.

These homes were all restored to professional standards to match the original neighborhood and have new decades of life breathed into them. But rebuilding a distressed community takes more than good housing—it also takes good neighbors and strong social networks. It's always been our prayer and hope that God provide talented and community minded people to live in the housing opportunities we create. *Prayer has wrought more than could be dreamed on Josephine.*

MAKING A DIFFERENCE WITH YOUTH

So many of the Beltline's youngest children start life bright eyed, healthy and filled with all the curiosity to learn that any normal youth would have. By the time these same children reach age 25, at least half of them will have failed to get a high school diploma or GED, rendering them unemployable and statistically finishing in poverty. How can such a good start be followed by a chronically tragic finish? One has to believe the undertow of the streets - the combination of crime, blight, and the desperate need for a little money, takes a sad toll.

In contrast, one of the bright spots in this disturbing picture is a micro business/financial fitness class at the Beltline Enrichment Center. Every Friday this summer four of our Beltline youth provide an all day lawn cutting service to neighbors and churches.



Young Entrepreneurship Class: Josh, Michael, Norman and Antwon led by Ed Maston & Jean Ramsey

The following Wednesday they meet at the center with volunteers from Buntyn Presbyterian Church to complete their yard service invoices, study financial fitness and business ethics. These kids are dead serious about learning and earning. Equally serious to impart money management skills, math and literacy are Buntyn PC retired school teachers Jean Ramsey, Barbara Turner and recent IP retiree Ed Masten. Heading into class one can sense determination from all parties...for both student and teacher *the stakes are high!* The thirst for knowledge and bright-eyed curiosity about life is not denied at the B.Y.E.C.!



Rachel Grant's Art Class at the B.Y.E.C. painted this wall mural adjacent to the new volleyball field and wall climbing feature.

WHAT'S NEXT? MAKING A DIFFERENCE WITH FAMILIES AND WOMEN IN CRISIS

Beltline area pastors met with us in May to discuss the community's most urgent needs. Rev. Jerry Jackson commented, "our churches have no safety net housing to offer distressed families and battered women." The other pastors agreed and we all committed to continue seeking divine guidance. The irony is the Beltline is full of vacant housing, but no decent places to live, reminding me of the poet's cry, "Water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink." Barbara Martin and Ruby Malone, lay leaders at Williams Temple COGIC, had already been looking for a new direction before the pastors convened. Everyone has now agreed that two existing and long-vacant duplexes, situated side-by-side in a protected cove, would be the ideal starting point.



Acquisition and rehab planning is currently underway and churches are being asked to consider sponsoring a unit and family as part of their mission. Resident families and individuals will have to sign a contract outlining progressive milestones they will honor, ie. job training, community service, etc., as part of the opportunity to live in *Sanctuary Cove*. In addition, one duplex unit will offer room for a women's discussion and literary group, a much-needed first in the Beltline.

JACOB'S LADDER™ IS TRYING TO RAISE MONEY FOR ACQUISITION AND REHAB COSTS NOW! PLEASE GIVE TO THIS LIFE-CHANGING ENDEAVOR

THE BELTLINE FUNDRAISER

Saturday, July 25th was an exciting day for the B.Y.E.C. Youth Enrichment Center! We hosted a musical fundraiser to raise awareness to a broader Memphis audience and generate support for our growing Youth Enrichment Center that has been busting at the seams with new kids all summer! The event featured the director, Taurus Rubin's, Full Gospel Youth Choir, a young rapper named Total Savage, The Rivercity Tanlines, The Oscars and other young local talent. A diverse crowd came out and enjoyed food, drinks and great Memphis entertainment.

The show was a big win for the Beltline, attracting volunteers and raising awareness for our summer film project, headed by Assistant Director, Heather Hyden and budding movie mogul, Chuck Winsler. Speaking of volunteers, this event would not have been possible without all the help from our wonderful BYEC Staff, who donated their time, money, and food make this event a success. Thank you from JLCDC, Rev. Taurus Rubin and Heather Hyden!

PLEASE Help: SEND YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS TO US SO WE CAN SAVE POSTAGE EXPENSES IN FUTURE MAILINGS