

Ameena

▶ from page 2

Our relationship with Ameena is a perfect example of this – while any services we provide for her are important, what most helps her to thrive is being known and appreciated for who she is and for her role in the community. Likewise, our relationship has also helped us to thrive, expand our worldview and build bridges with the Muslim community.

The hope, support and encouragement that come from knowing and being known is evident in Ameena's life. She remarks that everything in life is better now because now she's not doing everything by herself. Through our relationship with her, she feels empowered by the resources we've made available to her, motivated to keep working hard and excited to help out with our programs. Stephanie has also

Did you know that it will cost \$2,000 per student this year for Passport? You can help to build a great future for a student by sponsoring one!

remarked that her life has been completely changed by Ameena as they share life together. Ameena's story is just one of many. Thanks

Save the Date: Sunday, Oct. 5th!

- **In-Service Offering** – During Sunday morning services, help to cover our 2009 budget!
- **Community Development Fair** – After each service, join a team to impact the community in any one of our amazing programs!
- **An Afternoon of Chocolate Offerings** – 2-4 pm, Chapel of the Sanctuary building (Cambridge Site). Indulge in decadent treats while you meet some of the awesome students that we work with and learn about Vineyard Community Offerings in more depth! Please RSVP at chocolateofferings@bostonvineyard.org.

to your support, the programs and spaces created by Community Offerings catalyzed Ameena to be a known, active and loving member of our community!

I Want to Inspire Greatness!

If you'd like to learn more, volunteer or donate, please email communityofferings@bostonvineyard.org. Also, check out www.bostonvineyard.org/communityofferings for more information and a list of opportunities. Tax-deductible donations can be written out to "Greater Boston Vineyard Church" with "Community Offerings" written in the memo line. Thanks so much for your friendship and partnership in inspiring great communities and great youth!

Vineyard Community Offerings

Bi-Monthly Newsletter

Enriching our city in ways that build friendships and unity across lines of race, class, culture and religion.



Soccer Nights – A week of soccer camp that we hosted in July along with the residents of Rindge Towers and the Seven Mile Church of Malden for 90 youth!

Happy Fall, Greater Boston Vineyard!

Welcome to the first bi-monthly newsletter of **Vineyard Community Offerings**, the arm of the church that we launched last year to make a positive impact in our city. This newsletter will be your best bet for hearing updates and meeting our staff, our partners and those in the community (for example, read on below for a fascinating story of a Pakistani woman we've come to know and love in North Cambridge). We're starting off by putting this first newsletter in the church bulletin. If you'd like to receive these bi-monthly newsletters directly in the future (by e-mail only), you'll have to opt-in by contacting us at communityofferings@bostonvineyard.org.

All the Best,
Danny Tao
Associate Pastor & Director of
Community Development

Inspiring Greatness!

Our theme for this next year is “Inspiring Greatness – Great Communities and Great Youth!” One of the Greater Boston Vineyard’s core dreams is to effectively promote justice, compassion, reconciliation and ethnic diversity in our church, our city and our world. Last year, we raised some significant start-up funds from all the members of our church so that we could be more intentional in living out this core dream in our city. Over the course of the year, we launched Vineyard Community Offerings to help heal all the divisions in our city by bringing people together along the lines of race, class, culture and religion. We are beginning to foster the type of relationships where we can really go deep in our friendships and start to dream and work together to build the thriving communities we all long for. Could we be a great church that makes a huge impact in our city? That’s what we’re shooting for...and we hope you’ll join us!

Meet One of Our New Friends, Ameena

Ameena* moved to the U.S. from Pakistan 15 years ago. Now single and supporting her two children and elderly mother, she finds herself struggling emotionally and financially while trying to navigate life in a foreign country. Despite these circumstances, Ameena always has a smile on her face and loves children, bright colors, fruit tarts and Urdu love songs. Ameena also remains devoted to Allah and is unusually hopeful, working hard to keep going day in and day out to ensure a “good life” for her family.

We first met Ameena when she started coming with her children to the various programs we offered. One of our staff members, Stephanie, became fast friends with Ameena. She was always loving on Stephanie with

tea, food and motherly advice while Stephanie helped her by reading letters sent home from her children’s school, filling out job applications and showing her how to use an ATM machine. As Ameena begins to meet more caring members of our church, our hope is that we’d continue to deepen our friendship with her and help her to build a “good life” for herself and her family.

Our belief is that we will make the most impact in our city through the meaningful relationships we develop with friends like Ameena. Any programs we start will be exponentially more effective if they are grounded in deep, mutually affirming friendships.

When your small group helps to host one of our programs, such as our family game night at the Rindge Towers, it allows us to develop relationships with people like Ameena!

▶ continued on page 4

* Not her real name.

Meet One of Our Youth, Marie

Marie* now a senior at Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School, just completed her first year in Passport, our program that helps 11th and 12th graders to develop the skills, motivation and determination necessary to successfully enter and complete college. Passport is one of several youth programs we started in response to the growing concern from

In just one year, Passport has truly helped Marie to thrive, come closer to her goals and build close, meaningful relationships!

the community about the lack of opportunities and support for our youth. Born and raised in Haiti, Marie moved

to the United States only a few years ago and now lives with her mother in Cambridge. She has fond memories of Haiti and misses her strong network of friends and family. In contrast, her relational network here is sparse and her family dynamics are strained. As an adolescent growing up with many difficult circumstances, Marie has found it difficult to find a place where she can learn to love and trust others.

When she was asked to write some goals for the year, Marie said that she wanted “to be able to love without being scared, to be able to fully trust people and to be happy.” Although she is a natural leader, she confided that she often doesn’t feel comfortable enough at school to be herself there.

* Not her real name.



College tours in Pennsylvania with our Passport students in August.

In just one year, Passport has truly helped Marie to thrive and come closer to her goals. Marie has said that Passport has allowed her to build close, meaningful relationships with her fellow cohort of students and all the caring adults involved with the program. In addition, she has loved all the special events we have hosted and noted that the weekly workshops allow her to have fun, think about practical issues and reflect on deeper issues.

On the college front, there is a lot of pressure to do well in school and get into a good college, but her mom does not know how to fully support her in that. Meeting young professionals, particularly a Brown graduate who majored in psych (the school and major she is most interested in), was a major highlight of the year for her. Thanks to your support, Marie is looking forward to another exciting year in Passport and to all that her future holds for her!