

Announcing Launch of Project MOVE Program!

Vineyard Community Offerings is excited to launch, in partnership with Pentecostal Tabernacle Church (PT), our Project MOVE program in January 2009. We talked with Tara, Director of Youth Services at PT and one of the creators of Project MOVE.

What is Project MOVE?

“Project MOVE is a two year sequence of enrichment activities for kids starting in the 8th grade. During the first semester, students develop a personal mission station as part of their training in 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens. The remaining time in the program is spent reflecting on and changing that mission in light of enrichment activities in the arts, service and career exploration.”

What's been the results?

“We initially thought we'd only reach kids from the Area 4 neighborhood in Cambridge since that's where our church is located. Kids loved the program so much that they invited all their friends from all over the City. We had 20 kids last year and we're shooting to reach 15 new kids in North Cambridge at your church this year. In addition, all of our kids that became juniors this year have joined the Passport Program.”

What's been your coolest experience?

“The very first day of the program, the kids were asked to introduce themselves,

not as they are today, an 8th grader, but to imagine who they might be at age 30. Not one student would do it. There was something deep at the core of these kids that didn't allow them to explore possibilities for themselves. During the course of the year, they created personal mission statements, imagining what their lives could be in the future. They ultimately shared their mission statements with their families and each stood up straighter when they did it... and today, each 'owns' their personal mission statement! That transformation was a really big one... and amazing to watch... and was exactly what we'd hope would happen!”

Upcoming Vineyard Community Offerings' Training Classes

Jan. 10, 2009, 9 am-1:00 pm
Volunteer Training for Community Development Ministries

Feb. 6 (7-10 pm) -
Feb. 7 (9 am - 5:30 pm), 2009
Building the Multiethnic Church

March 1, 2009, 2-5 pm
Developing Your Ministry

For more info or to sign up for classes, please email communityofferings@bostonvineyard.org or check out www.bostonvineyard.org/classesprograms/topical/.

Vineyard Community Offerings

Bi-Monthly Newsletter

Creating hope, healing and unity in Greater Boston through relational, community-driven solutions.

Dear Friends,

Every year, during the Christmas season, I'm amazed at the story of Jesus' birth. It's always simultaneously bewildering and inspiring that God would choose to come down to earth in the form of a frail, helpless baby, only to turn the world upside down with His message of love for God and for our fellow travelers on earth. And the most incredible part is that God then invites us to be a part of His story by investing ourselves into the lives of others! Through Vineyard Community Offerings, many of us in our church have discovered the joy and purpose that God promises each of us as we step out in faith to love the world around us.

Over the past year and a half, we've enabled you to start, join or contribute financially to over 25 different programs and events in Boston and Cambridge. My hope is that these stories, just a few of the many from this past year, inspire you to discover the calling that God has for you:

Partner and pursue your destiny! Mehdi, a member our church, first partnered in organized Community Offerings events, then stepped up into leadership. Read how Mehdi's working to strengthen relationships across cultures.

Partner through an existing program! Tory, another member of our church, believes strongly in the value of mentoring youth. Read how she's pursuing her calling through our Passport Program.

Partner financially and invest in a relationship! This month we're launching Student Sponsorships. It's not just about giving financially to support one special student, but also about partnering relationally to benefit that student.

Let us help you discover your part in God's story. Go to www.bostonvineyard.org/communityofferings to discover how we can help you take the next step.

All the best this Christmas and New Year,

Danny Tao
Executive Director

PS: A big THANK YOU!! In October, you contributed almost \$30,000 towards our \$170,000 Community Offerings fundraising goal. The money will continue to help build relationships between you and those in our community. We're really excited about a new opportunity for you to partner financially and relationally with youth in our community through Student Sponsorships. The cost to run the Passport program, for example, is \$2,400 per student per year... and the results from our first year encourage us to continue to invest in our youth programs. In the Passport program alone, we now have 37 students who will be the first in their family to go to college!

Iftar Dinner Builds Bridges with Muslims in North Cambridge

Over the past year, we've spearheaded several programs and events that we collectively call our Community Healing Initiatives. One of our dreams is that Vineyard Community Offerings would play an instrumental role in healing the conflicts and divisions in our city. In our post-9/11 world, we've seen painful rifts and hateful stereotyping between Muslims and followers of Jesus. So it's been to our great pleasure that we've been developing relationships with many of the over 200 Muslim families of various nationalities



Kishwar and Wendy meeting at the Iftar Dinner.

That evening, over 50 people, ranging from young children to the elderly, crammed into the community room at the Towers to celebrate Ramadan and began the long process of breaking down prejudices and building understanding and mutual respect with each other.

living in North Cambridge, particularly at the Rindge Towers housing development. Over time, we've seen amazing friendships form and calls for greater understanding and peace from both sides.

One of the major milestones in our relationship building started with a simple, yet powerful, idea by Mehdi, a member of our church and a regular Community Offerings volunteer. His idea was to strengthen relationships through a shared meal, an Iftar dinner that we could host during the Muslim's holy month of Ramadan in September.

During Ramadan, Muslims fast everyday and break the fast at dusk with a communal Iftar Dinner (Iftar literally translates as "breakfast"). Desiring to love and bless our new friends, we received the endorsement of two prominent Muslim families to host an Iftar Dinner and invited all the Muslims we knew at the Towers. One woman we invited broke into tears, confiding that it was the first time she had felt seen and valued by a non-Muslim.

That evening, over 50 people, ranging from young children to the elderly, crammed into the community room at the Towers to celebrate Ramadan and began the long process of breaking down prejudices and building understanding and mutual respect with each other. Since that evening, several members of our Rindge Towers Core Team have followed up by sharing meals or tea with individuals or families that they met at the dinner. We're looking forward to deepening our relationships further and seeing what God might be offering to us and our Muslim friends. If you're interested in being a part of our Community Healing initiatives, please contact us at communityofferings@bostonvineyard.org.

Passport Program Offers Outlet for Mentor's Passions



Mentor pairs and volunteers after the Passport Amazing Race Event.

We recently talked with Tory, a member of our church, about her experience as a mentor in the Passport program, an enrichment and college-advising program for high school juniors and seniors. Here are some inspiring highlights from our conversation:

"I've always believed in the importance of informal mentorship. I think most people do. But I've only recently discovered how important intentional mentorship is. Providing space to allow someone to share their identity, struggles, and successes is quite a joy."

"I have been humbled to realize that the best advice I can give doesn't come from applying solutions from my past struggles to my mentee's life, but rather from listening and helping any way I can while appreciating that growth is a process."

"Having someone dedicated to prayer for mentor partnerships is extremely important. My hope would be that Student Sponsorships would allow folks to be a part of the lives of these wonderful students even when they don't have the opportunity to be a mentor themselves."

If you're interested in participating in Passport or any of our other youth programs, please contact us at communityofferings@bostonvineyard.org.

Student Sponsorships are a great way to give to the community... and develop a new relationship! Help fund the cost of a Project MOVE or Passport student for one year (up to \$200 per month) and be part of that student's personal support and prayer team. For more information or to sign up, contact us at communityofferings@bostonvineyard.org or visit us at www.bostonvineyard.org/communityofferings