

Difference Makers



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Our Mission:
Strengthening Families Through
Student Communities

NEWS FROM THE BLOC

BLOC Ministries Newsletter Winter 2009

BLOC's TOP NINE FOR 2009

As a way of saying thanks for your support, we're sharing some of the best stories of 2009. Be blessed as you read them, for it is your partnership with BLOC that helps makes it all possible.

Afterschool afternoons - One of BLOC's major focuses is to be a safe haven during the hours when, statistically, youth are most likely to engage in criminal behavior. BLOC sees a blend of regulars and a few new faces, averaging from 90-100 youth daily. Despite a tight budget and staffing, the BLOC at McPherson is now open one afternoon a week, serving a steady 20.

Recognition - BLOC received the first place Clean and Beautiful Award for an ongoing project! We're honored by the recognition from Keep Cincinnati Beautiful for reclaiming boarded-up buildings in East Price Hill back from drug dealers into a safe gathering spot for citizens.

Partnerships aplenty - Santa Maria Community Services, Price Hill Will, Citycure, CODEDI, local schools and police are just some of the groups we collaborated with in 2009, striving to streamline our strengths so that the community can receive the best possible benefit as we work together.

Coffee connection - It's strange how just having a place to get a good cup of coffee can really start something. The BLOC Coffee Shop serves many needs of a diverse crowd: students receiving tutoring, businessmen meeting over lunch, local moms stopping in so their kids can play video games, and a place of purpose and pride for the neighbors.



Tutoring after school

Family support - In a new partnership with BLOC, Youthworks Adolescent and Family Counseling Center opened this fall. Expanding on her ten years' experience counseling students at the BLOC, Stephanie Young has partnered with Jenee Hartkopf

and Kirk Sheppard to specifically address the needs of troubled youth and families.

Tech training - The Community Computer Classroom, created earlier this year, offers free computer skills training, job searches and homework help. Programs serve 60 individuals weekly at McPherson BLOC, with plans to upgrade the computer labs at two BLOC Houses in 2010.

Education - Another exciting service BLOC made available is free classes to the many Hispanic families living in Price Hill. CODEDI (Coalition for the Dignity and Rights of Immigrants) partnered with us to offer English and acculturation services.

Neighborhoods impacted - Now with four BLOC houses - serving East and West Price Hill and the village of Cleves, BLOC touches more than 1000 disadvantaged students and families.



And the Number One story of the year ..

Students, parents, families receive positive support in Jesus' name!

A perfect example of families responding to God's love through BLOC is the Bohanan family. Not only do the six children and one grandchild of Marketa Bohanan attend the afterschool program at the Iliff Ave. BLOC, but Marketa does as well.



This family, like every family, is no stranger to struggles. Marketa has worked hard at achieving her GED. Niasia, the oldest daughter, has transformed. Her rebellion has morphed into a cooperative attitude. Brianna was elected her elementary class secretary, an

exciting achievement for her. Demarco has always been a leader at the BLOC, receiving a bike last Christmas for his attitude and dedication. When he recently memorized a large section of Scripture, BLOC awarded a pizza party to his family for this achievement. His brother Michael's poor behavior in school and short fuse is improving. William is tutored through the new Whiz Kids tutoring program offered at Iliff

BLOC. As the youngest, Cheray has started attending school this fall. An incredibly quiet girl, Cheray has started to open up considerably because of interaction at school and at BLOC, where she is very attached to Kaitlin Gear, BLOC Program Director.

It has been an inspiration to see the Bohanans moving away from many destructive behaviors and growing closer together.

THANKSGIVING 2009



Partnering to Serve our Neighbors

As BLOC began working in different neighborhoods in East Price Hill, we became aware of the Latino immigrant community – the second largest concentration in the city.

BLOC has partnered with CODEDI, an information resource group for Hispanic individuals and families, to offer a variety of programs at two of our Price Hill locations. Programs include acculturation classes, educational programs, such as ESL (English as a Second Language), computer skills, and GED preparation. Five classes are offered at the Coffee Shop using the Internet café weekdays, as well as weekend classes at the McPherson BLOC Center. One positive story from BLOC's



collaboration with CODEDI is the Morales family. Mrs. Morales, a single mother of four children, is currently a student of the Spanish Literacy class. She is happy that she is now beginning to be able to read her children's notes from the school. Because of the classes made available at BLOC, Mrs. Morales reports she is able now to help her children with homework. By the end of the year, she will advance to the first level English class.

PARTNER WITH BLOC

BLOC Ministries Dwight Young
3952 North Bend Rd 513.325.5635
Cincinnati, OH 45211

www.blothead.org

Welcome Youthworks

Please join us in welcoming Youthworks Adolescent and Family Counseling to the West side. Youthworks partners with BLOC in their mission of strengthening families. The center is staffed by licensed clinical counselors with a passion for teens and a strong faith background. Youthworks is committed to helping youth and their families rediscover their strengths while dealing with teen issues such as depression, self-injury, or family conflict. For more information, call the center at 661-TEEN.



In Memory of Tony

We lost a special member of our Cleves BLOC family in November. Please pray for and support the Cannon family during this difficult time. Young men like Tony are the reason we show up every day to do ministry through BLOC. Tony was a young man who was artistic, musical, loved to skate board and loved his family and friends. Tony, we love and miss you.



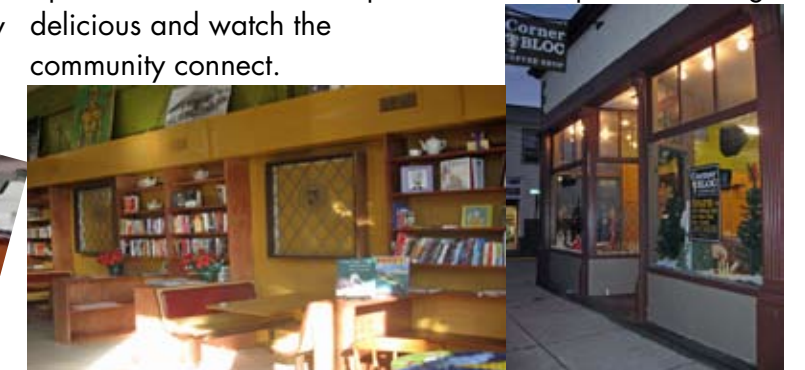
Serving Coffee, Connecting the Community

The best part about accepting the 2009 Clean and Beautiful Award for the BLOC Coffee Shop is what it represents to the community. Stepping outside the coffee shop, you face boarded-up buildings. Ugly and unused, they symbolize the blight that has troubled this area. Yet the shop stands invitingly in opposition, injecting life and optimism. Having a safe place to gather sends a powerful message to our neighbors, and we are just beginning to see the ripple effect.

The coffee shop features affordable hot beverages as well as light breakfast and lunch offerings. Check out the menu at cornerbloccoffee.com.

As word of BLOC's impact in neighborhood recovery has spread, local businessmen approached us to renovate a storefront in the heart of Cleves. Thanks to

many volunteers, including some of our BLOC youth, the Corner BLOC Coffee Shop on South Miami Avenue just opened in December. Stop in for a hot cup of something delicious and watch the community connect.



GRAND OPENING DEC. 4TH
Corner BLOC
COFFEE SHOP

TWO GREAT LOCATIONS
3101 Price Ave. Cincinnati, OH 45205
Monday - Friday 7-7 Saturdays 8-8
New Location
49 S. Miami Ave. Historic Cleves, OH 45002
Monday - Friday 6:30-7 Saturday 8-8

