

NOVEMBER, 2008

**MINISTRY SITES**  
SUMMER PARK APTS.  
RANCHWOODS  
FOUNTAIN WEST  
FLORAL GARDENS

RE-OPENING SOON:  
STONEY BROOK



**Light & Life**  
URBAN MINISTRIES



## BRINGING NEW LIFE TO URBAN COMMUNITIES

### TEEN CLUB OPENS!

#### ONGOING PROGRAMS:

- After School Programs
- Teen Club
- Youth Group
- Kids' Club
- Graffiti Clean-up
- Los Comrades
- Neighborhood Watch



#### Ministry Staff:

Derek Isaksen  
Executive Director

Kathy Isaksen  
Program Director

Valorie Smith  
Youth Development  
Coordinator

Kevin Williams  
Youth Pastor

Federico Santillan  
AmeriCorp Volunteer  
After School Coordinator

Brooke Woods  
AmeriCorp Volunteer  
After School Coordinator

Brianna Lott  
After School Coordinator

September 22, 2008, was the day that Teen Club opened its doors for the first time! This is an after school program for jr. high and high school students, where for the first hour they have a place to do their homework, receive math tutoring and use the computers for academic purposes, then the second hour is just "hang-out" time. 22 teens are currently enrolled in the program with most of them showing up on a daily basis. Val Smith, Youth Development Coordinator, is in charge of the Teen Club and her description of the program is "a time of academic accountability and encouragement, plus a positive place for the teens to hang out after school—keeps them out of trouble!"

Val is able to track the students' progress at school by going on-line and checking assignments, grades, attendance, etc. She then regularly sits down with each of the teens to talk about successes, challenges and areas which need improvement.

The following are some quotes from a couple of the teens:

"It's where I can go when I need help with homework, projects and studying for tests...my friends are there and I can chill."

"Teen Club is the only place I have to go after school where I won't get into trouble."

"I like Teen Club because Val is here."



Val, Macy, Demmari and Joel converse at Teen Club.



Marissa, Jessica and JJ

### NEW PROJECT COORDINATOR

Steve Gonzales, long time resident of Summer Park Apartments, has agreed to become the Volunteer Project Coordinator for Light & Life Urban Ministries. Steve's duties include being the Vice-President for the SE district Neighborhood Watch group, Captain of the Summer Park Neighborhood Watch group and organizing volunteers for NQLI (Neighborhood Quality of Life Ini-

tiative) graffiti clean-ups, which take place Saturday mornings. The volunteers come from Sunnyside High School and the local neighborhood.

Steve's latest accomplishment was convincing the city of Fresno to paint a new school bus zone in front of Summer Park Apts. to help ensure the safety of the children riding the school bus.



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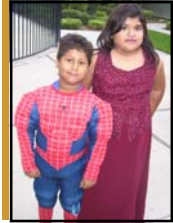
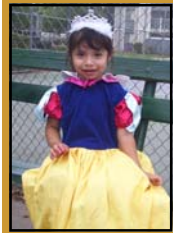


**THOUGHTS.....**I went to juvenile hall last week to visit one of our young men. As I walked into the housing pod where he was located, waiting for him to be brought out of his room, I heard somebody call my name. Obviously I was surprised and was looking all around to see who was trying to get my attention. There in one of the rooms, banging on the window and calling my name was a young man who lived in Stoney Brook Apts., who used to go to the jr. high youth group. Unfortunately, I really wasn't too surprised to see him in there—he had joined up with a gang several years ago—but it made me sad and I tried to communicate to him through my body language how distressed I was to see him in there. Then - I looked to my right and there in one of the attorney interview rooms was another young man who used to live here in the Summer Park Apartments and attended our programs. Sadly, it wasn't too shocking to see him in there either. Both of these guys are only 15 years old and even though I'd lost touch with them over the years, seeing them, in the very place we try so hard to keep kids out of, really affected me. Now.....I realize that we can only do so much to keep youth in this neighborhood on the straight and narrow, but I also realized again that day how absolutely vital our work is, and not just our work but the relationships we are developing. It isn't just a matter of "well, if I'm too busy, somebody else will help them out". It's more a matter of "if I'm too busy, somebody else **will** help them out"...and that somebody will be either a gang or prison. Never in my life have I been in such an urgent situation. I can't turn my head and hope that everything will be okay. I know, if ignored, it won't be okay. So—when a boy in juvenile hall tells me, "when I get out, I'm going to hang out at Teen Club because that's the only place where I'll stay out of trouble", I know that this is where I need to be, making sure Teen Club is happening; making sure the after school programs are happening so that children have a place to go where they are being told "your future is important, I care about you and I'm here to help you". And, most importantly, making sure Kids' Club and Youth Group are happening so that children and teens are being told that Christ is their hope and the Way, the Truth, and the Life. THAT is what will make it okay. (From Kathy Isaksen)

**HALLOWEEN AT SUMMER PARK**

Pumpkin Emporium in Madera donated a bin of pumpkins to L&LUM—this equaled approximately 300 pumpkins, and that's a lot of pumpkins! So what do you do with 300 pumpkins? You have pumpkin carving contests! Pumpkins were being carved all over Fresno and there were some very creative entries. The winner was Glen German (below).

We also had a costume contest and awarded prizes for the scariest, cutest and craziest costumes. It was a tough call, but the judges managed to come up with winners in each category!



Pictured above is Cherry. She is "Teen of the Month"! How did she get this distinction? She attended Teen Club every day, accepted some heavy accountability from Val and her grades are on the way up!

**Are you aware that the Winery Apts. are now Summer Park Apts.?  
It's true.**