

## From Tears to Triumph **Daniel's Big Win!**

**Daniel's shoulders slumped and his eyes glittered with tears.** "I'm never gonna be able to get a perfect score," he declared. "I just can't spell!"

Like many of his peers, Daniel struggled with spelling and reading, a lingering effect of COVID school closures. He had missed many of the foundational skills taught in primary school and consistently scored only two out of six on his weekly spelling tests at school.

But help was on the way! Thanks to your support, Daniel attends a S.A.Y. Yes! Center for Youth Development® in Los Angeles. The staff at the center went right to work tutoring Daniel with a big dose of encouragement.

Everyone rallied around him. Even the director for the Cru® Inner City team got on board. "You're gonna do it, Daniel. You're gonna get a six out of six because we're gonna work on it together!"

The very next week, Daniel bounded into the center, spelling test in hand and grinning from ear to ear. "I did it," he exclaimed, "I got a six out of six!"

Daniel's success was about more than getting a perfect score on a spelling test. This triumph enabled him to feel good about himself instead of



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feeling defeated. He declared, "I am smart. I can do this." His entire outlook has been transformed, and he has the support he needs.

Your prayers and your faithful support make transformations like Daniel's a reality. In some of the poorest neighborhoods in America, S.A.Y. Yes!® Centers are serving, loving, and teaching children who need an extra boost. Thank you for investing in the next generation!

# Cherie's Travel Surprise



**We can't wait to see how God will work through friends like you ... and our dedicated inner-city partner ministries ... this Easter season!**

Cherie wanted nothing more than to be home for Thanksgiving. On a whim, she packed her children into her car and made the 150-mile trek from their home in Madison, Wisconsin, to her mother's place in Chicago.

But when they arrived, the house was dark and empty. After finding an inexpensive motel, she immediately called her mom, "Where are you?!" "Oh Cherie, I didn't know you were coming so I made a last-minute trip," was the reply. Then she said, "Call Shantellas. She will help you!"

"Come **here** for Thanksgiving!" was Shantellas' immediate invitation.

Shantellas is the coordinator of outreach at New St. Jude Church of God and administers the annual Boxes of Love® campaign. (Each box contains enough food to feed six people a Thanksgiving meal with turkey and all the fixings — plus gospel literature for the family.)

Cherie's unpleasant travel surprise led to the greatest surprise of all!

Last fall, nearly 18,000 boxes were distributed through our inner-city partners — to feed about 100,000 people! But fortunately, there was one left at St. Jude, and Shantellas was able to use it to provide Thanksgiving dinner for her surprise guests: Cherie and kids.

While they were enjoying the delicious Thanksgiving meal, Cherie acknowledged faith in Jesus but admitted her relationship with him had



eroded. Before Cherie and her children left that evening, Shantellas packed up all the Thanksgiving leftovers for them. The little family wouldn't be hungry during their motel stay!

This simple act of kindness stuck with Cherie, and the very next Sunday, while she was still awaiting her mother's return, she showed up at New St. Jude Church with her children. Cherie rededicated her life to Christ that day!

Cherie's unpleasant travel surprise of finding her mother's home empty led to the greatest surprise of all: a brand-new friend and the rediscovery of the very best friend, Jesus!

Thanks to your support, we were able provide nearly 18,000 Boxes of Love last fall. This had the potential of feeding more than 100,000 people, including Cherie and her family!



*Pastor Danny (in the red sweater) lives out his conviction that relationship building is vital in ministry.*

## Pastor Danny — Making a Difference in Chicago

**Pastor Danny Rogers has been in ministry a long time — through nine different presidents — yet he is still eager to learn.** That’s why he enrolled in a 13-week discipleship program you support through Cru® Inner City Chicago.

It has transformed his ministry.

“I used to believe that I didn’t need to learn Scripture; I just needed to know where it was in the Bible. I now understand that sharing God’s Word firsthand accelerates spiritual growth.”

Now he’s founded Angels Interactive International Ministries, a web-based ministry that serves people who have become isolated because of illness, addiction, or trauma from a previous church experience. Pastor Danny’s vision is to provide a safe online haven until those he serves are ready to meet in person. He even envisions a day when the online ministry replicates the discipleship course he learned through Cru Inner City.

You have to build a relationship with people ...

Pastor Danny not only learned the importance of knowing Scripture, but he has also become more confident as he continues to minister in his own community. “You have to build a relationship with people, not just come at them all the time with, ‘Do you know Jesus? You need to know Jesus!’”

Since completing the discipleship course, Pastor Danny remains in weekly contact with Marc Henkel, the Chicago co-director for Cru Inner City and leader of the program. Pastor Danny also networks with other leaders he met during the class.

He says, “We just started a little group who loves to pray together and share ideas about how to reach even more people.”

Your prayers and financial support make a world of difference to pastors like Danny. Because of you, they can impact their communities for Christ, lifting up believers, and seeing the lost come to faith.

# Continue your impact ...

*An estate gift will ensure your legacy lasts!*

**You can continue the impact you are making through Cru® Inner City well beyond your lifetime by leaving a bequest in your will.** This means, even after you depart this earth, your compassion will go on helping to feed the hungry, provide school supplies for needy children, shelter the unhoused, and through it all, share the love of Jesus with souls in need. What a legacy!

A bequest is written in a will or trust and directs a gift to be made to a qualified exempt charity, such as Cru Inner City, when you pass away. You can create a bequest of any dollar amount, or, as many people do, designate a percentage of your estate in your will or trust plan. You will:

- Receive an estate tax charitable deduction
- Gain peace of mind — knowing your hard-earned assets will advance the Great Commission and your loved ones will be provided for
- Reflect your life's passion to boldly further the gospel message to the lost
- Become part of the ongoing Cru Inner City legacy as we provide hope and a future to children and families in the inner city!

Please speak with your estate planning attorney to make your bequest, or feel free to contact David Ready at 619-507-1111 or [david.ready@cru.org](mailto:david.ready@cru.org) with any questions you may have.





Milton Massie  
Executive Director/  
Steward

*A personal word from Milton Massie*

# Serving in Faith and Faithfulness

**For more than four decades, Cru® Inner City has been committed to providing life-changing resources and options in some of the hardest spaces in America.**

The work can be challenging because of the transient nature of our inner cities. It often takes months to establish relationships with our working-poor neighbors, only to have the family move because of financial setbacks. We lose contact when they cancel phone service. Layers of suffering from the trauma of violence and/or substance abuse abound.

But nothing is more rewarding as we seek to serve those made in the image of Christ, the *imago Dei*.

So how have we served so long in such fluid situations?

Ultimately, it's the grace and faithfulness of God. God does all of it. Yet He requires a faithful response from us.

Hebrews 11:1 explains it this way: *Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see* (NIV).

In a society where word meaning is often reframed to meet an agenda, I think it's important to consider the original intent of the word faith.

It's not a bouncy, give-me type of hope. Faith comes from the Greek word *pistis*, which means belief, trust, confidence, fidelity, and faithfulness. It appears in the New Testament 243 times and is derived from the word (*peithō*), meaning "to persuade" or "divine persuasion."

I like this explanation from Bible Hub:

"It is used to describe the faith that believers have in God and Jesus Christ, encompassing both intellectual assent and trustful commitment. 'Pistis' is foundational to the Christian life, as it is through faith that believers are justified and live out their relationship with God."

Those of us committed to Cru Inner City, including our partner ministries, volunteers, and donors, are living out our faith through our relationship with God.

God does all of it. Yet He requires a faithful response from us.

Our faith in, and faithfulness to, God means trusting in Him and loving Him through all circumstances. It calls us to be steadfast and loyal. It also means following His commandments — including serving others — even when we'd rather choose a more comfortable path. The late Eugene Peterson said faith is a "long obedience in the same direction."

My prayer is that we are all obeying in the right direction.

Grateful for your partnership,

Milton Massie  
Executive Director/Steward



# A Family Seeking Jesus ... all because of Easter Bags and a 5-year-old!



**Easter Bags are a Cru® Inner City tradition! Each year, thousands of children in some of America's most difficult neighborhoods receive an Easter Bag filled with candy, crayons, a toy, a colorful beaded bracelet explaining the plan of salvation, and a Bible story activity book.**

Paige, age 5, and her siblings received Easter Bags last year and were delighted with the goodies inside. But the Resurrection Eggs explaining the gospel story really sparked Paige's curiosity.

When she got home, she asked the family's Amazon device, Alexa, a question: "How do I talk to Jesus?" Alexa replied, "Pray." Paige then peppered her family with more questions: "Do you know Jesus? How often can we talk with God?"

Pastor Aaron Gray of Westlawn Gospel Chapel, our partner church in Paige's neighborhood, said, "Paige wanted to know Jesus, and she has encouraged everyone in her family to know him, too."



Shortly after receiving the Easter Bags, Paige's mom called the church, shared the story, and asked how she can get her children involved in church programs. Pastor Aaron summed it up wonderfully: "We believe children are disciple-makers!"

In over 40 years of ministry, we've seen just how powerful this Easter Bag outreach can be — and God can use your gift today to set a child and a family on a whole new path ... toward a new life in Christ. Jesus is the only real hope. Please consider a gift and share the Savior with children and families in the inner city.



[CRU.ORG/INNERCITY](http://CRU.ORG/INNERCITY)  
[innercity@cru.org](mailto:innercity@cru.org)



Cru is a charter member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability

100 Lake Hart Drive  
Orlando, FL 32832  
(888) 278-7233

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