

Little Lights Update

Act justly. Love mercy. Walk humbly with God.

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Fall 2009

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Letter from Steve



Every child, every person needs to know that they are a source of joy; every child, every person, needs to be celebrated. Only when all of our weaknesses are accepted as part of our humanity can our negative, broken self-images be transformed. -- Jean Vanier

For many of us, we may daily feel that God tolerates us in our weaknesses or perhaps even loves us because we have achieved success and gained status. Yet, the mystery of the gospel tells us that we are a source of joy to God even in our weakness and brokenness.

The word "celebrate" and "celebrity" are obviously related words. There is such a hunger in our society for celebrity. There's an innate need to be celebrated and acknowledged as important and significant. We all want to be valued.

The gospel tells us that through the cross we have already received "celebrity" status. The angels celebrate, scripture tells us, when one person repents and receives the "good news." God tells

us to stop striving for acceptance from people and receive the acceptance and celebration readily available through Christ. The work of being acceptable has already been done by Jesus on the cross.

Our society tells us that wealthy, successful and physically beautiful people are to be celebrated. That is fine. However, it is a very temporary celebration. All wealth, worldly success, and physical beauty will pass away. They are ultimately superficial things. Only what is done in love will last.

It is our mission to communicate the message to every child we meet at Little Lights that they are ultimately sources of joy. That they are loved right now, just as they are. We do show "tough love" many times a day, because that is what many children need. They need to know right from wrong.

But we never want to lose the joy of being with children and youth even as we discipline and teach. Children need to know that they are sources of joy.

At Little Lights, we have much to be thankful for during the holiday season. Our Ignite the Light banquet was a blessing as over 200 people gathered to support and celebrate the children and youth at Little Lights. We are thankful for our table sponsors, businesses, and guests who helped to raise more than \$30,000 in donations and pledges.

We are also thankful to supporters and churches who recently helped provide funds to cover the costs of two funerals this past year for students in our program who lost their mothers. It is so difficult to see children lose their mothers at such a young age, but our faithful friends came through to provide dignified funerals for the families.

We are also thankful for Jerry (see more of his story inside) who was shot only a few weeks after coming on staff at the ministry house. His remarkable spirit and attitude during his own time of need has been as remarkable as his quick recovery.

Of course, we are also thankful for our faithful donors and volunteers, without whom Little Lights would not exist.

Thank you for participating in what God is doing at Little Lights and Potomac Gardens. May the gospel of joy and celebration be yours this holiday season.

Steve Park
Executive Director

ignite the Light Banquet & Silent Auction



Josie Ortega
Fundraising Coordinator

On October 23, more than 225 Little Lights volunteers, supporters, staff, families and friends gathered at the Hilton Arlington to raise funds for Little Lights' programs and celebrate God's grace in this organization and in the lives of the kids here. Guests enjoyed a fun and elegant evening of dining, music, and silent auction bidding; but inspiring testimonies were the evening's true showstoppers. Featured speaker Virginia Ward and Little Lights parent Pat Hill shared especially moving words, and sixth-grader James Guerrero spoke on what Little Lights means to him. Current teen intern Cierra Peterson told of how the academic help and personal support she received as a young student now inspires her to serve younger kids in the same way.



How amazing to see such a wonderful group of people, of various ages, races, churches, and backgrounds, all gathered to support Little Lights and our students! The enthusiastic performance of the Little Lights Gospel Choir prompted the whole audience to clap along with the choir's singing and dancing

in praises to God. Folk musician Wendell Kimbrough also performed selections from his excellent CD, Find Your Way Home. DC Mayor Adrian Fenty sent his greetings and congratulations to the crowd, as did the Consul General of the Embassy of the Republic of Korea, Yongchun Cho.

The event also served as the perfect kickoff for Little Lights' new Ignite the Light Monthly Partnership, made up of supporters who are committed to giving each month as an investment in the futures of the children we serve. At the banquet, supporters pledged to donate more than \$16,000 in monthly gifts over the next year. (That's on top of the resources raised through the banquet's ticket sales, auction items, and one-time donations!)

Little Lights Urban Ministries is so grateful to all our friends, old and new, who made the Ignite the Light Banquet and Silent Auction a huge success, and to the Ignite the Light Charter Partners for your great investment in the lives of God's precious children in Southeast DC. The dedication and generosity of the Little Lights community is astounding. Without these committed supporters, our work would not be possible.

How Does My Gift Help?

Your gift helps us to continue, improve, and expand our after-school, summer, and mentoring programs and services as well as support full and part-time staff who will build meaningful and impactful relationships with the children and families. Your support also provides part-time employment to teens in Potomac Gardens and other DC neighborhoods who are in need of job training and experience as well as an opportunity to give back to the community.

\$50 Provides one month of meals and snacks for one child during our after-school programs.

\$75 Sponsors one child to participate in our Christian mentoring program for one month

\$100 Provides one month of reading and math tutoring sessions, including curriculum

\$250 Provides one month of after-school programming including art, recreation, and homework help

\$500 Provides one month of housing and utilities for full-time staff at our ministry house in DC's Anacostia neighborhood

\$1,000 Sponsors one month of living expenses, excluding housing and utilities, for a full-time staff.

For more information on becoming an Ignite the Light monthly partner, visit our website our contact donate@littleglights.org call 202-548-4021.

Jerry's recovery



Jerry Redfield III

Teen Intern Coordinator

It has been more than two months since the night I was shot. I just need to say how overwhelmed I've been by all the prayers, letters, phone calls, emails that I've received since that wild night. If I'm not the luckiest gunshot victim ever, I feel as if I am certainly the most loved.

What a wild night that was. It's still a little hard to believe it all happened. I still remember getting off the plane freshly back from a missionary retreat in Colorado the day before. I had just come back from China, and not until God spoke to me during the retreat did I feel complete peace about moving to DC. Little did I know how much I was going to be in need of that peace, and how soon!

One of the many things on my to-do list upon coming back was to call a friend about her upcoming wedding. No danger there, right? Except that I didn't get around to it till 9:30 PM...and I wasn't getting any reception inside the house, so I decided to go outside and make the call. I walked up and down the street on my phone and ended up across the street from my house in front of the library and unbeknownst to me, I'm about 5 minutes away from getting shot. When it finally happened I didn't see a thing. I sure heard it though-- four or five loud explosions in rapid succession as the dirt at my feet evaporated into loud puffs of smoke. Scouts honor, my lone thought as I raced back across the street toward home was "What fool is setting off firecrackers in front of the library?!" (four years in China doesn't wear off easily. Ironically, when I first heard firecrackers in China I thought it was gunshots. Wrong twice. And this time it really, really stunk to be wrong.)

I actually don't remember a moment of impact, but it was the exploding pain in my back that first hurled me to the ground. And by the time I hit the ground only 30 feet away from my house, I could feel sharp pain in my left leg as well. I realized it might not be firecrackers and dragged myself behind a parked car for protection. After a few seconds I didn't hear anymore gunshots and so I started to call for help. It seemed like forever before anyone answered, but my housemates figured out that it was me that was calling "Help!" from outside and bravely came to my aid. Before long I had drawn a sizable crowd from the neighborhood, the one time in my life I would rather not have been the center of attention. Hearing people talk about me must have done something to jog my brain, because it wasn't till then that I finally had the realization of "Good Grief! I really just got shot" followed closely by "Good Grief! This hurts!"

After that the night descended into a confusion of ambulances, phone calls, visitors and (finally) pain medication. There's still a bunch we don't know and probably never will, but here are all the facts.

1. It was a lone shooter advancing as he shot from the left side of the library. Motive unknown. I never saw the guy at all.
2. Most of the shots missed me, but of the three that hit-
 - One struck my left heel going through the Achilles tendon and breaking my heelbone.
 - A second hit me in my left calf fracturing my fibula
 - A third bullet entered through my lower back, ricocheted off of the bottom part of my spine fracturing two vertebrae in the process, and lodged itself in a mass of muscle tissue and fat (this bullet is still in me today).
3. I stayed in the hospital for less than two whole days, and needed NO surgery while I was there. Three bullets. Two days. Zero surgery.
4. God is extremely and utterly amazing. Multiple bullets flying past before I even have a chance to run? A bullet ricocheting off of my spine? I should be dead or seriously injured. A broken heelbone is what happens from the playground or when you fall down the stairs. God is GOOD! And He has some serious power to back up that Goodness. He is very deserving of praise.

If you take nothing else away from this, I would invite you to ponder that. Join with me and just give God some praise for whatever you want to praise Him for. It could be a job, health... the fact that you're alive... or the fact that you don't have to wear a cast on your leg for three months. Whatever! That's been the most encouraging part about all this for me, seeing how people have been inspired to praise God. Hopefully that continues for a long, long time. He sure deserves it. Later friends!

Little Lights Programs

At Little Lights....

Publisher Class

Diana Mojica - Program Coordinator

It's amazing to see in just eight short weeks of starting our Publisher Computer class the amount of progress that these students have made. Starting in September with the basics, I was focusing all my energy on teaching our students how to open the program, write their name, pick a picture from clipart, and understand what exactly this program even allows them to do. I entertained questions like "What's the name of this program again?", "How do I type my name into the box?", and "How can I change the color of the words?". Now, just two months later, I find myself trying to keep up with their pace as they quickly open up the programs and create posters, signs, greeting cards, banners, and more. Their questions have changed now to ones like "How can I set this picture as my background?", "How can I use WordArt to create fancy text?", and "How can I draw my own picture using the toolbar?" Their progress has been remarkable and inspiring. Using their creative energies our students have found a way to uniquely express their character and personality in all of the publications that they make. We continue to add new concepts as I teach them how to add personally drawn graphics, pull artwork from online sources, and design customized artwork in their publications. I can only imagine what another eight weeks will have in store for our students. I wouldn't be surprised if they started teaching me a thing or two.



Teen Internship Program

Jerry Redfield III - Teen Intern Coordinator

It's my joy to be able to work with and develop the teen staff at Little Lights. In my short time as the coordinator it's already been clear to me that our teens are here not just for a paycheck, but because they love the children in our programs and want to give back. They are truly a joy to be with! Our goal here at Little Lights is to encourage that loving spirit not only to provide the younger children with great programs, but also to help the teens realize the joy and the importance of sharing Christ's love. Taking on the teen internship program gives me a wonderful opportunity to invest in a group of young people with lots of potential and help them develop into the people God has called them to be. And through training and daily interaction, we aim to equip them to succeed not only here at Little Lights but beyond.



Summer Drop-In

Linda Rice - Associate Director

As summer unfolded this year we decided to do a Drop In Program instead of our regular Camp Heaven. Initially kids were a little sad, maybe it was the memories of Six Flags. You think? After kids began to check us out on Tuesdays, Wednesday, and Thursdays they discovered that this was fun. Each day we allowed 25-30 kids at a time to come. Many days we had a waiting line of kids wanting others to leave so they could have a chance to hang out with us. Kids could participate with Swimming, Special Field Trips to Nationals Games, Tennis Matches, Arts & Crafts, Computers, Playstation, Xbox, Wii, Karaoke, Keyboarding, Drumming, Rockband, Hockey, Fooseball, Air Hockey, Movie and Food Outings. (Whew!) They dropped and dropped in until we flopped out by summer's end. We bid the kids farewell until our next exciting, wonderful, magnificent program began. It was a blessing to see so many kids enjoy their summer with Little Lights, and we look forward to 2010 Summer Drop In.

SUPPORT Little Lights

Unit 1212

On November 13th at 10:28pm, the Little Lights After-School center inside Potomac Gardens was burglarized. Three Flat-screen TV's and four video game systems were stolen. The purpose of the program space was to provide children and youth of Potomac Gardens a first-rate program space right inside the premises. It was and still is a wonderful space for kids and youth. Some of the children were very upset about the violation of their after-school space as were the staff. It was tough seeing one of the Junior High boys cry as he talked about what happened at the units.

Since the break-in, we have had tremendous times of prayers as a staff as well as numerous visitors praying with us and for us. We are not giving up, but rather recommitting ourselves to prayer and to showing the love of Christ to the children and families at Potomac Gardens. God has already provided donations, used TV's, and video games systems to replace what was stolen. Many members of the community as well as the children have really rallied around us and offered encouragement and support.

I'm also glad to report that on Nov. 17th one of the teens in the community said he purchased two of the TV's and returned them to our offices after hearing that they were stolen from our center. He felt convicted that he needed to return the TV's since he knew that it came from a program he participated in as a younger student. Please continue to pray for us.

We are excited about what God is doing in the midst of the drama. We are believing that great good will come out what was meant to be evil.

Donate

Individual donations are essential to the work we do here at Little Lights, as they account for approximately 45% of our yearly support. Please consider donating money to help ensure that we provide the highest quality programs that we can, which is what the kids deserve. For more information or to make a donation, please contact Josie Ortega (josie@littleglights.org: 202.548.4021) or go to our website at littleglights.org and follow the "donate" link.

Combined Federal Campaign

Little Lights joined the Combined Federal Campaign for the first time this year, and now members of the military and federal employees may contribute to Little Lights by designating CFC #89156. Several federal workplaces-- including the Treasury, Interior Department, USPS, and Navy Yard-- invited us to participate in their CFC fairs, where we've had a blast making new friends and handing out information about Little Lights and what we do. If you work at a government agency, encourage your coworkers to give to Little Lights through the CFC, or ask your agency's CFC campaign manager if we could be invited to your fair. Don't miss this excellent opportunity to spread the word!

Volunteer Highlight

Little Lights Urban Ministries has been serving families and children in Washington, DC for over a decade. Volunteers have been a huge part of getting things done here at Little Lights from the very beginning. Even today we depend on caring and willing individuals to running programs, encourage the full-time staff, pray for our students and families, and provide other blessings and services as part of the Little Lights family. Whether you are here for a day or 10 years, volunteers definitely have left their mark on this community! Thank you so much for your hard work!

We wanted to highlight two volunteers for their above-and-beyond commitment to our kids and our organization.



Ethan Kim has been involved with Little Lights for more than six years. On top of committing himself to working with students every week, he often comes in to help with computer networking problems into the wee hours of the night. Always supportive and encouraging to the rest of the staff, Ethan cheerfully and joyfully serves in every capacity that he can-- as a network specialist, an MC for our Christmas party, driver/host for different events for our kids, and as a weekly tutor. Ethan has been and is a true champion for Little Lights. Thank you Ethan!



Subuola Kujore has been involved with Little Lights for about three years. An administrator at the Capitol Hill Day School by day, three times a week after-school you'll find Mrs. Kujore working with our K-4th graders with their homework, leading an art activity (the results of which you can find all around the LLUM program sites), among other things! Ms. Subuola's expertise and moral support has proven to be invaluable for us here at Little Lights. Thank you for all that you do, Ms. Subuola!

meet our



Diana Mojica

Program Coordinator

As a young Puerto-Rican American from Elizabeth, NJ, I have always loved Enpanadas & Tostones, East Coast Pizza, Jersey Diners, NY Hotdogs, and going to the Jersey shore in the summer with family. Needless to say, I love food and fellowship. I have always had a passion for teaching and working with youth. I graduated from Wheaton College with a BA in Secondary Education and became a High School Spanish teacher for a couple of years. During my undergrad work I met my handsome husband Vince, and we were married in 2005. I felt God's call on my life to pursue Urban Ministry with my husband as we jointly attended Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Boston, graduating with my Master of Divinity in 2008. I am currently studying remotely through this same school for my Doctor of Ministry degree in Pastoral Leadership Skills in the Hispanic Context. I love preaching, teaching, cooking, and hanging out. If I could combine two of my greatest passions, it would be sharing the love of Christ with others over some Puerto Rican food -- que rico!



Josie Ortega

Fundraising Coordinator

Hey everyone! I've been hanging around Little Lights since I moved to DC three years ago, and I feel so blessed to be here all the time now in my job as Fundraising Coordinator. I grew up in Memphis, TN and acquired an English degree at the University of Virginia. These days my husband Israel and I live in Alexandria and attend Iglesia Gracia y Paz. I enjoy BBC mini-series, sports, decorating, and sweet tea; and I'm excited to see how God continues to use Little Lights for racial reconciliation, renewal, and transformation in the lives of the kids here.



Tim Rodgers Jr.

Media & Publications Coordinator

Hello! I'm Tim Rodgers I was born in North Carolina and moved around as a military brat till I hit high school. I attended Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA receiving my BFA in Communication Design. Since that time I have interned for Virginia Living Magazine, The Idea Center, and worked for the YMCA of Greater Richmond. Here at Little Lights I'm responsible for the newsletter you're currently reading and any other publications and media Little Lights puts out. I also teach an art class for our middle school kids once a week. I love writing silly nonsense rhymes, getting smacked by stars, and the way the ink flows from the tip of a pen. You can usually find me messing around on twitter, facebook, and all those other social media sites.



Beth Dewhurst

Academic Director

I joined Little Lights as Academic Director. I have a BA in secondary English education and an MA in teaching reading/writing. I grew up in Pennsylvania but have been in DC since 1992, where I did a graduate seminary program and served in a variety of urban ministries through The School for Urban Mission. Most recently, I was a middle school teacher for 5 years in DC public schools, where my husband, Tom and I have our three kids--all of whom love participating in Little Lights Homework Club! I first met Steve and Mary through their church, Peace Fellowship, and am grateful to be able to serve on staff, as I tell everyone, at "the best ministry in the city"!

new STAFF



Vivian Mah

Fellow

Hello! This is Vivian speaking, coming to you live from my desk! So you want to get to know me, eh? I have many titles that describe me: Jersey girl, New York University graduate, and the first Little Lights Fellow. As the local Fellow I happily serve in any way needed, but I mostly work with the younger kids at Homework Club and Reading/Math Heroes. I enjoy long walks on the beach and sunsets. I also collect bouncy balls. No really, I do. If you ever want to talk or chill, you can find me next to the fax machine and office supplies! Bye!



Vince Campbell

Program Assistant

My name is Vince Campbell. I was born and raised in St. Louis, MO. I went to Wheaton College, Gordon-Conwell Seminary, and Princeton Seminary, and I am currently a student at Catholic University of America. I am a program assistant at Little Lights helping with Youth Night, Boy's Night, Homework Club, and Spiritual Development. I'm 27 years old and still haven't learned to blow bubbles with gum.



Jerry Redfield III

Teen Intern Coordinator

My name is Jerry Redfield, III. I was born in raised in Chicago, the second-best city in the world. I studied economics at Wheaton College and when I graduated went on to serve Christ overseas in Changsha, China, the best city in the world! I am the Teen Intern Coordinator at Little Lights and I am also responsible for the younger children's Bible Study and the older children's World Culture Class...which is heavily skewed toward China. Oh, and I'm the reigning Little Lights champion in any and all board games.

Our Peculiar Staff

Jane Pak...

Don't ever...ever touch her desk. Anything slightly out of place and she will notice.

Jerry Redfield...

Appeared on National TV in China multiple times and even had a recurring role as a special reporter on a Chinese television station.

Tim Rodgers...

often freestyles while working on Little Lights' materials. He also should turn down the music on his headphones before he goes deaf.

Mijin Paik...

Laughs sound like a duck.

Michelle Osborne...

Loves Pizza, particularly the kind with pineapple and ham. Sike! No ham, just pineapple.

Josie Ortega...

Is really, really cool. "Word to yo' Motha!"

Current Staff

Steve Park: Executive Director, **Mary Park:** Deputy Director, **Jane Pak:** Grant Developer, **Nancy Colbert:** Program Assistant, **Kati Mapa:** Academic Developer, **Linda Rice:** Associate Director, **Michelle Osborne:** Academic Developer, **Bonita Guerrero:** Program Assistant, **Mijin Paik:** Volunteer Developer, **Sean Mills:** Program Developer, **Leah Archer:** Program Coordinator, **Andy Miller:** Mentoring Developer **Thomas Rice:** Program Assistant, **Kathy Brown:** Program Assistant

Teen Interns: **Cierra Peterson, Geizel Guerrero, Rachel Blount, Tyrone Johnson, Leslie Roue, Mia Mack, Chelsey Shelton, Raphael Dodson**

Little Lights

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let me tell you about....



World Culture

Michelle Osborne - Program Coordinator

Every Wednesday at Homework Club for younger kids, the students at Little Lights have the opportunity to learn about various cultures from around the world. So far the students have learned about the cultures of Tennessee, Puerto Rico, China, India, and Germany. They have gotten to learn a country line dance, watch a Chinese music video, make a German advent calendar, wear Puerto Rican clothes, and see pictures of India.

Through World Culture day, the students are expanding their worldview and getting the opportunity to take part in numerous interactive activities.

Many thanks to all the volunteers and staff who have made World Culture Day possible so far!!! If you are interested in teaching Little Lights kids about your world culture, please email Mijin (volunteer@litttlelights.org).