

# Extra Good News™

Every week throughout the most needy neighborhoods in the inner-city of Durham, North Carolina, Child Evangelism Fellowship staff and volunteers visit boys and girls as part of a comprehensive, block-by-block ministry called Extra Good News (XGN). Life-changing relationships are built through encouraging words, helping hands and an invitation to attend the Extra Good News event.

Buses transport children to the Saturday event which features high-energy games, live music, stories, one central Bible truth, a Gospel presentation and special activities designed to grip the audience's attention for an hour and a half. Over 450 children, ages 3-14, attend the weekly club and more than 100 have made decisions for Christ since Extra Good News officially began in January 1999.

Discipleship of unchurched children and establishing their families into churches for follow-up is vital to the success of the program. James, a ten-year-old boy, attended XGN regularly and then missed for two consecutive weeks. A worker was told that James' mother had been sick. During weekly visitation the worker met James' family who were just returning from his mother's funeral. The worker mourned with the family and offered encouragement. The next Saturday all of James' family, including the father, attended club. James came forward at the invitation and received Jesus as his Savior.

## Why Extra Good News?

Over 80 percent of inner-city boys and girls and their families do not attend or participate in activities of the local church. Their spiritual needs, which affect self-worth, motivation and a purpose for living are often neglected. The result has been one generation after another missing the key ingredients which will empower them to have the greatest opportunities in life.

The daily presence of crime, drugs, violence, delinquency and poverty have contributed to the children's desperate situation. Although meeting spiritual needs is the primary purpose of XGN, teaching that using drugs is wrong, plus instruction on how and why to say no to drugs, crime and hatred, is also provided. One resident of the disadvantaged area stated, "A paramedic vehicle in the streets is the norm. Seeing boarded-up houses, trash in the yards, the area is truly blighted and ugly and the children needy."

Keisha, a four-year-old girl, attends XGN every week; however, one Saturday she did not get on the bus. The CEF office received a call the next week from Keisha's mother explaining that she had missed the bus because of problems in the home and requested prayer. Because staff and volunteers visit every child each week it was discovered that Keisha's family had no food and was close to eviction. Through a network of supporting churches and ministries, food and half of the family's rent was supplied.

## Changed Lives

Jasmine, an eleven-year-old girl, jumps with excitement every week when she attends XGN and when she is visited by workers in her neighborhood. Jasmine's mother always compliments CEF for providing the Saturday program, but Jasmine is troubled about her mother's lifestyle. XGN workers prayed and encouraged Jasmine. After several weeks she received Jesus as her Savior. One Saturday Jasmine didn't ride the bus. She arrived later with her mom who attended club! Jasmine is praying that her mother will repent of her sin, be saved and live for Jesus.

Mario is an eight-year-old boy who lives in one of the many public housing complexes throughout Durham's inner-city. After a lesson titled "Don't Murder Anyone," Mario responded to the invitation and shared with the CEF director that his brother and mother's boyfriend have guns and point them at other people. His older cousin has been shot in the head and other family members are in jail. This is how Mario lives today. What about his future?

Because of Extra Good News, Mario and hundreds of other boys and girls have hope for a better life in spite of their environment. More importantly, those who have become part of God's family have the hope of an eternity in a perfect environment with their Savior!

*Names have been changed to protect privacy.*

### **What Makes Extra Good News Work Effectively?**

1. Prayer, Planning, Preparation, Presence, Proclaiming, Persistence.
2. Core Team meets every week; workers prepared every week.
3. Super Bowl event every week: fun games, prizes, incentives, large visuals, music, drama, puppets, object lessons, one Bible truth and Gospel, discipline, high expectations.
4. Community informed, involved and expected to promote.
5. Weekly visitation; visible, verbal communication; involving volunteers.