

# THE BRIDGE

A Newsletter from Bridge Builders For Kids

Spring 2010



Connecting Lives. Instilling Hope.

## Following God Where He's Moving

As I've been praying and seeking God's direction for this ministry, I've been drawn to the book of Joshua, especially the first few chapters where God was preparing the Israelites to cross the Jordan into the Promised Land. In Joshua 3:3, God told Joshua...

**"When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests, who are Levites, carrying it, you are to move out from your positions and follow it."**

What I heard God say in that verse is, **"When you see Me moving, follow Me"**.

As a ministry we've begun watching very intently for where God is moving. I personally had hoped it might be in a financial way, but we've actually seen God moving in other ways. Over the last few months, we've seen a significant increase both in caregivers seeking mentors for their children and individuals wanting to mentor. We've also had numerous volunteers come forward to help in different ways and have developed a national partnership with Prison Fellowship and Angel Tree. All the key ingredients seemed to be in place to grow and expand this ministry, that is everything except for the funding piece...at least so it seemed.



Joshua leading Israelites across the Jordan River

During my one of my quiet times, I was reading the story of Jesus and the Feeding of the Five Thousand. It struck me that the disciples asked Jesus to turn the people away, for they did not have the resources to feed them all...at least so it seemed. It suddenly occurred to me that we were doing the same thing! We have been turning away both children and mentors, as we haven't felt we had the resources to hire the staff needed

to support those relationships. Just as Jesus asked the disciples to give him what they had so he could multiply it, I felt God was asking us to use the little funding we had to hire the staff needed to serve the children God was leading to us. I shared this with our board and they voted unanimously to take that step of faith.

As only God would have it, he had already prepared two individuals to step into the new director roles we created. God immediately began blessing their efforts.

In just the last 4 months we've seen God moving in mighty ways and we believe that God is preparing us for a very significant expansion not too far down the road. I look forward to sharing more details as God reveals what he has in store for us.

Thank you so much for your continued prayers and support, for without you this ministry would not exist!



Jeff Bremer  
Executive Director



## It's Tough Being the Bad Guy

Trooper Scott Devereaux has worked in many different areas of law enforcement since 1987 and has served as an Iowa State Trooper for the last four years. After we gave a presentation at Faith Lutheran Church in Palmer, IA, Scott came up to us and expressed his appreciation for what we are doing through this ministry.

Scott is a committed Christian and loves his job. "It's not just a job, it's a calling", he shared. During his years working in law enforcement he has seen and experienced a lot, involving many



Trooper Scott Devereaux with his wife Aimee and their children

situations where children have witnessed him arresting one or both of their parents. With emotion welled up in his eyes, he talked about some of those heart-breaking experiences. "I had pulled over a man on the highway. The man's 11-year-old daughter was along with him. As I approached the man in the car, it became immediately apparent the dad was under the influence of alcohol. As soon as I brought the man back to my car, the daughter got out of the car and it was obvious she had been crying. She refused to go back to their car. I asked the dad to instruct her to return to their car but she still refused. The situation quickly escalated when the dad began to fight me. **As I wrestled him to the ground to arrest him, his daughter jumped on my back screaming at me not to take her dad away.**"

Scott went on to say, "It's tough being the bad guy in front of these children. They are always going to remember me as the one who took their parent away.

Unfortunately this story is not an isolated incident. We have heard many accounts of children witnessing the arrest of their parent. In fact, research indicates that 60 percent of children of prisoners have experienced this trauma.

In stressing the importance of the role Bridge Builders for Kids is taking in reaching out to these kids, Scott shared, "I have been in law enforcement long enough now that I am arresting the sons and daughters of people that I have arrested before. **If you don't get to these kids, I'm going to have to deal with them later, as it's tough for these kids to come out of it alone.**"

# Meet **Angelique and Melissa** by Ashley Dudek

As I sat down to meet Angelique and Melissa, my heart instantly grew warm. Angelique, an 8th grader, warmed me with a big smile. Melissa, her mentor, greeted me with a cheerful hello while preparing cookie dough about to get baked. With a smile about to form and a light laughter coming from Angelique's voice, she commented, "I hope these cookies



Melissa and Angelique hanging out

turn out better than last time. Last time we baked cookies, somehow all the cookies melted together into one big cookie! We had to throw them away!" We both chuckled.

Cooking and baking along with playing games, attending museums, watching plays, and visiting are just a few things these two enjoy doing together. One of Angelique's favorite outings with Melissa was when she got to help Melissa decorate her 4th grade classroom.

Angelique has a passion for children. Melissa commented that Angelique is wonderful with children and infants and has a curiosity along with a genuine love for them. Another huge passion for Angelique is basketball. "I want to play college basketball for the Gophers," she explained with a passionate heart and a sincere smile. That's one of her long-term goals along with getting a degree that would allow her to work with children. "I want to work with kids who are sick, and to help them feel better", Angelique commented with pure delight from within.

While asking Melissa what her goals are for life, Reagan (Melissa's Daschound) jumped onto my lap. Melissa quickly answered, "To train my dogs not to beg for food!" After a few laughs she replied with an honest and pure answer of wanting to be a good mother, to take life as it comes, and to give back to those in need.

I learned what draws Angelique to her mentor. Angelique explained that her favorite part of having a mentor was that she had an extra person in her life who was there for her, a thoughtful person to talk to, and someone to help her with her schoolwork.

Angelique is a social butterfly at school, a superstar on the basketball court, and a loving and genuine young woman who has a huge heart for children and infants. Five years from now, I would not be surprised if Angelique was playing basketball for the Gophers while getting an education that she will use to love and take care of children. Watch out for this young lady, she will be going places!

## **MENTOR A CHILD** Making New Matches in 2010!

We have several children waiting for a mentor in both the Twin Cities and Rochester. For more info on mentoring visit our website or contact us at:

Rochester: (507) 226-7735  
Twin Cities: (651) 245-4800  
E-mail: [info@bridgebuilders.cc](mailto:info@bridgebuilders.cc)



Jay and LeShawn

# Big Turnout for 2010 Easter Party

Nearly 100 people including 50 children from 15 families showed up for BBFK's first annual Easter party held in partnership with The Salvation Army. The evening was jam-packed with a devotion, fun activities, prizes, food, and most importantly the love of Jesus. After the devotion time about 20 children responded to the invitation to invite Jess into their heart.



De'quaia with a brand new bike she won. This was one of the prizes given away



The children listen closely as Ashley Dudek talked about the meaning of Easter and what it is to really "know" Jesus in a personal way.

*"Let the little children come to me...for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." - Matthew 19:14*



Families attending have fun participating in the coloring contest together



Sarah is shown how to use the new Bible she was given after responding to the invitation to invite Jesus into her heart.

# Pulling Up Anchor and Raising the Sails!

When talking about our ministry, we often use the analogy of a sailing vessel. As a ministry we've talked about how God called us out to "deep water". We talked about how as we went through a time of stormy seas we held off on expanding and "dropped anchor". During that time we reinforced our ship by building a foundation that can sustain significant growth. We can now say, **"WE'RE READY TO SET SAIL!!"**

## Be the "Wind in Our Sails"

Become a monthly **IMPACT Partner**

Up to \$8,000 will be matched in new or increased monthly donations! \*

Whether it's \$10, \$25, \$50 or \$100 per month every dollar will make a **DOUBLE IMPACT!**

**DONATE ONLINE NOW** at [www.bridgebuilders.cc](http://www.bridgebuilders.cc)

\* The annual equivalent of your monthly gift will be matched by an anonymous donor



## Updates From Our Directors

We couldn't feel more blessed to have Ashley and Sarah leading our BBFK teams in the Twin Cities and Rochester. They both have special gifts and experience that make them such a great fit for their roles. They also each have a deep desire to walk closely with Jesus and follow HIS lead. We are already seeing the lives of children of prisoners being touched through their efforts.



Ashley Dudek  
Program Director

Hello Everyone! I am Ashley Dudek and I am LOVING my new job as Program Director! The last 6 months has been an amazing journey packed with getting to know the families/children, doing presentations, making new mentor matches, and developing programs. I had the opportunity to help facilitate our 1st Annual Christmas Party and Easter Dinner which was fun, inspiring, and successful. I also have been blessed with insight and volunteers to start a new monthly event called BBFK BreakOUT. BBFK BreakOUT will start off with the families together for fellowship and activities and then break out into separate groups (caregivers and children) to have a time of devotion, games/activities, and support. If you are interested in volunteering please check out our website for more details. I am looking forward to what Jesus has in store for the children and families through this ministry!



Sarah Maas  
Rochester  
Area Director

Hello, my name is Sarah Maas, I am the NEW Rochester Area Director! In the 4 short months that I have been with BBFK I feel that we have really started to make some headway in the Rochester area. We've talked with so many people in the community and God has really blessed us with so many open doors. I've met with pastors, parole/probation officers, principals, and other community leaders, and people are really excited about what BBFK wants to do in the Rochester area to help children who have a parent in prison. The first few months I've concentrated on building awareness and building relationships in the community. I am now looking for committed Christians who would like to be a mentor. So if you or someone you know would be interested in mentoring please contact our Rochester office. I am excited to see what God has for BBFK in the next few months. Please continue to pray for this ministry!

## Ways YOU Can Make an **IMPACT!**

### Upcoming Events

- TBD Mentor Training - Rochester
- May 9 BBFK BreakOUT - Twin Cities
- May 22 Mentor Training - Brooklyn Park
- Jun 3 Mentor Huddle - Rochester
- Jun 13 BBFK BreakOUT - Twin Cities
- Jun 14 BBFK Night at the Honkers
- Jul 11 BBFK BreakOUT - Twin Cities
- Jul 14 Mentor Huddle - Twin Cities

### Special Needs

- Macbook laptop (for Rochester)
- Craft supplies & storage tubs & bins

Visit our website for more details:

[www.bridgebuilders.cc](http://www.bridgebuilders.cc)

### From Our Board...

We would like to personally thank everyone who has prayed, volunteered, or given monetarily to the Bridge Builders for Kids organization. We have been successful because of our staff's effort, God's provision, and because of your generosity. Providing mentors for children of prisoners gives them hope and the knowledge that God loves them and has a wonderful plan for their lives. Partner with us to reach more kids. "Do not do nothing because you can only do a little"



Kathy Zenk  
Board Member