

The Summer Ahead
Second Quarter, 2011



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Mid-Year Challenges

The Bridge Youth Ministry Center has always been blessed beyond expectations. As student needs change, more and more hours have been provided to meet these ever growing demands. As a faith-based non-profit God has provided despite our worries and concern. As 2011 gets near the mid-way point several challenges have come to the forefront that could make a significant difference in how we meet the ever growing needs of our community kids. Regardless of how you stand on the political issues of the day, some of the hot issues our congress folks are dealing with may have far reaching implications at the Bridge.

At the Federal level, the budget has become a fierce battle.

Being strongly considered for elimination is the partially funded AmeriCorps program

that is being targeted in an effort to help reduce the size of the national budget. Since expanding our programming in 2004, The Bridge has used AmeriCorps members to help provide the necessary staffing assistance throughout our six programs.

Currently, AmeriCorps provides over 60 hours per week of mentoring, community service and program assistance each week; as well as another 30 hours of mentor recruitment. The Bridge pays approximately \$15,000 per year for this opportunity, so it is easy to see how significant the elimination of AmeriCorps would have on our staffing.

Another Federal budgeting issue is the **threat to eliminate tax credits for charitable donations.** Every church and non-profit should have equal concerns about the potential threat of this proposed item. As a 501 c3 non-profit, charitable donations is our sole source of revenue. It is with these donations that we run our entire organization. 23 area churches, over 50 area businesses and 250 charitable individuals financially support your local youth center. Any obstacle that may make this process more difficult is not a benefit to the Bridge or the kids in Zeeland.

Despite these concerns, the Bridge must press on in serving our community and the kids who rely on us. For the past 10 years the Bridge has operated with

cement only on its gym floor. The floor has become increasingly slippery and the time has come for us to put on some type of covering to this well used floor. We have explored all different types of flooring and **settled on the most cost-efficient means of carpeting designed for our type of usage.** We believe keeping kids Safe, Loved and Valued is essential to who we are, and in this instance keeping kids safe must extend to our pocket books as well. One local company has already donated a commercial size vacuum and others have pledged there support in helping us pay off this nearly \$20,000 non-budgeted expenditure.

Finally, Cran-Hill Ranch has provided us the unique ability to take our kids to camp. So, **on June 14-16 and July 19-21, we will be taking approx. 20 kids along with AmeriCorps and volunteers to Cran-Hill Ranch** for three days of fun and getting to know Christ like never before. If you would like to sponsor a student, the cost is \$50 per student. -Jed

A Salute



Our



To



Volunteers

March Premier Mentoring Award

The Bridge Youth Ministry Center had the opportunity to honor Carol Zuverink with the Premier Mentoring Award in March.

Representative Joe Haveman was here to present Carol with this distinguished award. Carol has been working with The Bridge since Fall of 2005. She has worked with a number of middle school students through the



years, so it was a wonderful chance to recognize her in this capacity. The continuity that Carol lends to this program not just for the students, but for AmeriCorps also is unmatched.

Carol truly has a servant's heart



and genuine interests in seeing "our kids" succeed. We are so grateful to have had the good fortune of recognizing Carol and having her on our team of outstanding mentors.

-Jackie

At the beginning of the year, Felix was one of the most difficult to motivate. He always came up with excuses and had terrific stories for why he did not have any homework. It was not long and his poor work ethic and bad grades caught up with him. One of our 10th grade mentors asked to be paired with him and within a few weeks remarkable changes in his attitude and work habits. By the second marking period, Felix had significantly improved his grades. He even made the honor roll for the first time in his life! Students like Felix that are not used to a positive influence and quit trying can be successful when someone takes the time to believe in them

Adam came in on Tuesday all excited and after only 2 weeks in the B2E program he has gotten an 87% and an 81% on his math quizzes. He was so happy he said "Maybe I'm not as stupid as I thought I was."

A new student to B2E is also on the Bridge's I Am Third basketball team. We planned to use our new intern to help the new student with his homework. However, one of the high school peer mentors requested that he work with the new student because he was already working with him on the basketball team. It is great to see this high school peer mentor take this role so seriously. His commitment level has really made a difference.

John came to the Bridge never being here before and not knowing what to expect from us. This young man made a mistake and was suspended from school. Every day he helps his brother with cerebral palsy get off the bus because he can't do it on his own. His brother doesn't speak, cannot eat, and is in a wheel chair, and yet John makes sure that he is taken care of everyday after school. He has never met his real dad but does have a great father figure in the home that he looks up to and calls Dad. As part of the Career Exploration portion of the day we went over to Zeeland Schwinn. Rich took John thinking that he would only be there for an hour or so. We found out that John loves to work on bikes, and does so all the time in his neighborhood for all the little kids. Not only did John go there before lunch, and went back after lunch because Rich invited him. Here is a young man that loves putting stuff together, getting to work with a business owner in the community, how great is that?

Once again, friends from Royal Park and the youth from Bridging Out came together at Royal Park's cafeteria to create handcrafted cards to send to soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan. Happy to receive the youth from the Bridge, both residents and youth alike, took turns writing messages on the blank cards. In addition, many cards included a prayer for the safety of the soldier and prayers for their loved ones here in the United States. This "Crew" decorated 61 cards and they will be shipped in care packages to units from Michigan. The cards range from "Thinking of You" to "Thank-You" to other common expressions of prayer and encouragement. Everyone involved had a great time making the cards and interacting with each other.

Upcoming Events

**The 5th Annual
Bridge to the Community
3-on-3 Basketball Tourny
will be held August 5-6**

**Summer Hours
Drop-In every Tuesday &
Thursday from 1 to 3
Bridging Out every
Wednesday**

Summer Camps 2011

Get ready for three days packed with excitement and fun! Come with us to Cran-Hill Ranch and experience cool

activities while building stronger relationships with your friends.

We will enjoy campfires, swimming, hiking, fishing on the lake, and many other fun adventures.

We will also be talking about serving God by

helping others and our community.

Along with all of the fun and excitement, the high ropes course, team building activities, and the rock-climbing wall will challenge us to work

together as a team and tackle obstacles.

Only \$50 to sponsor a child to camp.

How Much Will Camp Cost?

Camp will cost only \$50 for each student!

This includes three days of food, transportation, and all the exciting activities.

High Ropes Course

Campfire and Smoers

Swimming

Low Ropes Course

Fishing

Canoeing

Hiking

Scavenger Hunt

Rock Wall

Basketball

When ? June 16-18 or July 19-21

Where? Cran-Hill Ranch

**THE BRIDGE YOUTH
MINISTRY CENTER**

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BYMC Mission

The mission of the BridgeYouth Ministry Center is to be a source of community strengths, meeting the needs of youth through programs, activities, facilities, and events that help youth develop in healthy ways while at the same time reaching out to them in the name of Jesus to draw them into a relationship with Him.

We are blessed to be a blessing!

The Bridge Staff

Jed Mulder
Executive Director

Jackie Rutgers
Staff Volunteer
Coordinator

AmeriCorps Staff

Monica Slagh
Faith in Youth

Scott Baumgartner
Faith in Youth

Zach Trumble
Mentor Michigan



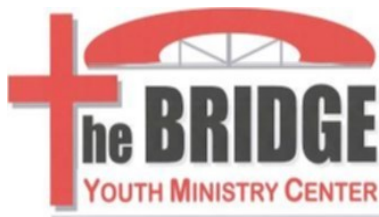
To learn more about serving with AmeriCorps contact:

Robyn Afrik, AmeriCorps Program Director, Faith & Youth Partnership,
616-392-7159 rafrik@goodsamministries.com

Ben Gulker, AmeriCorps Program Director, Mentor Michigan
517-492-2451 bgulker@mnaonline.org

AmeriCorps members at The Bridge Youth Ministry Center are provided through a grant made available from AmeriCorps through **Good Samaritan Ministries**. Good Samaritan Ministries recruits, trains and places AmeriCorps members in the community as part of the Faith In Youth Partnership. For more information visit www.goodsamministries.com

AmeriCorps also trains, supports and places one member with us through **Mentor Michigan**. For more information on this program visit www.mentormichigan.org



I Corinthians 9:22-23 - "I have become all things to all men, so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I might share in its blessings."