

# ON THE LEVEL


Celebrating  
20 Years

## Juan Chavez

*Answering the call: what  
one urban youth worker does  
to support youth and their  
families during the heart-  
break of deportation and  
immigration challenges.*

Return Address:  
PO Box 230257  
Grand Rapids, MI 49523-0257





*Every culture and every race waits for this joyous day to commemorate the birth of our Savior.*

*We pray you'll find His comfort, peace, and favor this season.*

*Merry Christmas from your DVULI family!*





# Introducing Misael Guzman

The DeVos Urban Leadership Initiative staff welcomes Misael Guzman (Newark 2014) to our team of liaisons. Misael will support alumni relations and local follow up efforts in the New York City and Newark, New Jersey metropolitan region.

Misael has been in ministry for more than 15 years. An I.T. professional by day, Misael serves as an associate pastor at Calvary Christian Center in Newark. He has a deep passion for the development and health of New York City, Newark, and the surrounding communities. His work often affords the opportunity to build strategic relationships with local clergy, police, and a variety of civic leaders.

As someone who can relate to the struggles of urban youth ministry, Misael has high aspirations for strengthening relationships with our New York and New Jersey-based DVULI alumni. He believes there are many opportunities to collaborate with local stakeholders, and he looks forward to acting as a bridge between stakeholders, the youth worker community, and his DVULI alumni family.

“I’m excited about what can develop in our community,” Misael said. “However, my heart is heavy from growing up in the city of Newark. I know the need for discipleship and the need for having leaders in your life who will walk with you.”

When leadership in his ministry and community is not vying for his attention, Misael can be found spending quality time with his family. “I love playing with my boys and my family,” said the father of three. “Going hiking is one of our favorite getaways.”



Last September, Misael traveled to Grand Rapids, Michigan to join the DVULI liaison team at their annual gathering for training. He has already started convening alumni in the NY/NJ region for ongoing relationship building, strategic planning, and collaboration opportunities.

Currently, Misael is studying business management at Kean University. Misael and his wife of 18 years, Madeline, reside in Union, NJ with their daughter and two sons.

Feel free to send Misael a congratulatory email at: [misaelg@dvuli.org](mailto:misaelg@dvuli.org)



# CULTIVATING CHURCH DONORS: SPEAKING THE CHURCH'S LANGUAGE

by Terry Levine-Trevino (San Antonio 2017)

It's that giving time of year again. As a pastor who has worked as a development director and grant writer for several years, I have come to realize the church is an untapped resource for nonprofits. In my early years as a fundraiser, I worked for a nonprofit that was founded by a large, well-known church association. A few weeks into my job, I was cleaning out my new office and came across a treasure box containing very dated information on previous donors. All of the donors listed were churches. I also found copies of old pamphlets similar to what we would refer to today as newsletters. I later learned the church association required churches to support the nonprofit on a monthly basis as part of the agreement for licensing their pastors/ministers. Can you imagine if that requirement was in place today?

This old donor list and information ended up being a gold mine. We created several church campaigns using church language and terminology referenced in the old pamphlets. We mailed out the audience-specific campaign material to old donors as well as churches throughout the city, introducing the wonderful ministry we were doing and inviting them to join us as part of God's Kingdom to reach more and further. We also included commitment cards and, to our surprise, we received cards completed with mail donations and phone calls from pastors who wanted to learn more.

What I realized was the pastors remembered our nonprofit and took notice of the familiar church language and scriptures I had included. As I spoke to them, I found ways to mention we were still doing God's work, and their support could help us continue to do so. I also introduced myself as the organization's new development director and noted I was a PK or pastor's/preacher's kid. Pastors immediately related to me and our nonprofit. These connections also led to a couple of invitations to speak on Sundays and tie in the work we were doing, so I incorporated the nonprofit's work to God's commandments.

## THE BIGGEST HURDLE YOUR ORGANIZATION MUST OVERCOME WILL BE TRUST

The fundraising lessons I learned early-on helped change my mindset toward soliciting and cultivating churches. Now, I love finding opportunities in our pastoral networks to push for support of nonprofits, outside of our four walls and church-run outreaches. I like asking church leaders to think what our Christ-like reach would look like if every church supported at least one nonprofit. When I question why we aren't doing so, their rebuttal is always in the same vein: they are unclear which nonprofit is doing good work. I have often heard churches would be more open to becoming a



donor if someone they knew and trusted was already connected to the nonprofit.

My recommendation to faith-based nonprofits seeking church support is to create campaigns focused solely on pastoral and church audiences. Use biblical terminology to describe your work and share relevant scriptures to help make a biblical case to support your

organization's mission. My husband likes to refer to this language as churchisms.

The biggest hurdle your organization must overcome will be trust, so be sure to develop a sincere relationship with a trusted pastor. Also consider placing an active, respected, and well-connected pastor or clergy on your board. Keep in mind board members are often relied upon to open their networks and contacts to the nonprofit they are serving. This would be a great way to overcome concerns of trust. Additionally, having the



support of a pastor on the board can be a great resource to tap into when developing church-specific campaigns and reading material.

Finally, don't count any church out based on your perception of their size. Early in my career, I drove out to a country church that had about 50 members in its congregation. The church committed to supporting the nonprofit I was working with at the time; however, what surprised me the most was a phone call I received from their women's ministry leader months later. They had come up with an idea to do more for us. You see, once you have buy-in from the senior pastor in these small churches, the church and its leaders take beautiful ownership of the nonprofit's ministry well-being. The women's group had come up with a dollar amount they wanted to fundraise and planned to present it to us at their Easter service. She was requesting

copies of our newsletters and any marketing pieces I could share with her. What the small group of ladies fundraised was more than most medium to large churches had done for us at that time. We used her idea the following year to create Easter campaigns.

I encourage you to rethink some of your fundraising strategies to include some focus on the church as potential monthly donors, but remember great effort needs to be made in how this audience is addressed, recruited, and stewarded long-term.

*Terry Levine-Trevino (San Antonio 2017) is a Pastor of C3 Community Connect Church with her husband Ruben (San Antonio 2017) and is a Recruiter at PeopleScout.*

*Opinions expressed by alumni do not necessarily reflect the views of DVULI.*

*Got an opinion about a subject matter impacting your work as an urban youth leader? Email: [staff@dvuli.org](mailto:staff@dvuli.org)*



Terry Levine-Trevino (2nd from right) shares church platform with church leaders and donors.



Put yourself in the shoes of Juan Chavez (Phoenix 2017) when teen sisters Maria and Tonya made the panicked phone call to him with the news their father had been deported to Mexico. Alongside them, Chavez's heart was breaking. Although Chavez has nearly a decade of youth ministry experience, the immigration issue in the United States has created the need for new skills, sensitivity, and responsibility as a minister. He's a pro at helping youth navigate the typical adolescent challenges they face; relationships, academics, and peer pressure. But when the young person you're ministering to is separated from a parent, the crisis makes the goal of faith formation all the more difficult.

Based in the Southwestern region of Arizona, Chavez is doing ministry in one of the four states bordering Mexico that arguably has the strictest immigration laws in the U.S. In 2010, the Grand Canyon state passed legislation stating law enforcement personnel can check/question the immigration status of a person they have reasonable suspicion of being in the U.S. illegally and, if the person is in the country illegally, to contact federal immigration authorities.

In 2017, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) reports it deported approximately 226,000 people, the lowest in recent years, and arrested 143,470 unauthorized immigrants, including nearly 6,500 in Arizona. According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's 2017 ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations Report among those arrested, 92% had criminal convictions, pending criminal charges, were an immigration

# Mission Without Walls

## Helping Youth Navigate the Heartbreak of Deportation

by Rachel Weaver,  
*Staff Writer*  
and Gerald Bell  
(Kansas City 2003)

fugitive, or were an illegal re-entrant.

While the Arizona law is intended to remove criminals from at-risk communities, as well as end illegal drug and human trafficking, immigration

laws and enforcement also have unintended consequences for youth in the church.

At Arizona Urban Youth Excel, Chavez serves alongside longtime DVULI friend Orbi Gonzáles, and together they provide discipleship to youth, create an environment for spiritual growth, and help youth think strategically with the goal of building student leaders for our urban communities and schools. Chavez and Gonzáles help youth cope with an array of personal struggles, including parent deportation and other immigration-related challenges such as securing a job after high school graduation.

"I have students message me, 'Hey, can you write a letter for my family? They want to deport my dad, and we want him to stay because he's the breadwinner,'" reveals Chavez, who agrees to write letters for his youth to assist however he can. "A lot of them end up having to go back, and the family just has to deal with it."

As a pastor in a border-state,



Juan Chavez (right) sticking close by the youth he serves at an outing.



Chavez and his wife, who supports his ministry to youth, are both keenly aware of the nation's struggle internally with immigration and its overflow into politics. "The lens that my wife and I look through is, 'Kingdom is first,'" he says. "Kingdom before anything else. We need to be out there helping [because] Christ has mandated us to help."

"I remember my first student, Carlos; he [was] undocumented. With everything inside of him, he wants to succeed and do better for his family," describes Chavez. "He couldn't go to college and he could barely even find work. And he's calling us asking what to do and we're trying to walk him through the right steps, paperwork-wise, to get a work visa."

According to Chavez, Carlos graduated from Cesar Chavez High School in Phoenix, Arizona nearly five years ago and has recently acquired a work visa. "I was super excited for him," Chavez says. "But it took forever for him to get his hands on that and for him to start working."

When teens come to Chavez with the realities about deportation in their life, there are three key points he applies and communicates to those who are in need:

1. We're here for you and we're going to walk with you. (This isn't a one-time conversation.)
2. Ask youth: how can we tangibly help to provide for the needs your home is facing right now?
3. Remind them of the hope of Jesus that we can hold onto in the middle of trials and challenges.



**"Our job is to keep them hopeful, and to weep with those who are weeping."**

Six hundred miles away in California, Diña González-Piña (Fresno 2014) insists that churches have to become more educated on the immigration crisis afflicting youth and their families.

González-Piña is a Ethnic and Gender Equity Specialist with the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Fresno, CA. MCC is a global nonprofit organization that strives to share God's love and compassion for all through relief, development, and peace. The organization fosters life-giving relationships of peace, justice, and dignity. It does so by partnering with churches and by providing opportunities for mutual exchange to encourage churches and individuals to respond to people in need to empower the lives of marginalized people.

"Our job is to keep them hopeful, and to weep with those who are weeping," says González-Piña about the youth and families facing the trauma of deportation. "I get to walk with students who are still a bit insecure about DACA. Even though our President has not

fully supported their pathway to legality...we want them to do well, but the system is working against our very own young people."

González-Piña further claims that the news media can only provide a very narrow view of what is taking place in our society and what needs to be done to fix a broken immigration system. She and the team at MCC offer workshops for churches and spiritual leaders in the hopes of building influential relationships to create opportunities for healing and justice and to humanize the situation.

"This injustice requires all of us to support the work of those who are being unjustly targeted or who are vulnerable from our broken system," González-Piña says. "It's very similar to mass incarceration and [the] new Jim Crow experience that our African American brothers and sisters are experiencing."

González-Piña claims the immigration system itself creates criminals. "We are the church. We need to address this [injustice], acknowledge it, and begin to dismantle it."

"[Our Latino youth] are not less because they don't have their papers," Chavez argues. "...They are special, they are part of the Body, and we need them. God has called them. God has placed them where they are and has them [as] part of the church."

Chavez continues, "We [youth ministers] need to educate ourselves in this field and not just assume we understand...listen before we speak, as James [in the Bible] tells us to and ask God for some wisdom on how He wants us to walk this out."



# Breakthrough — Lemule Pulley (Denver 2012)

## Braving the Risks and Rewards of Accountability

by Rachel Weaver, Staff Writer

Lemule Pulley (Denver 2012) entered the DeVos Urban Leadership Initiative (DVULI) having served in youth ministry for more than 10 years. At that time, he was pouring everything into his ministry work at Colorado UpLift. With no energy left for family time and fellowship, Pulley had only fumes to offer his wife and kids at the end of his workday.

When he got the call to join the DVULI cohort Pulley says, “I embraced the opportunity [from] God and I said to Him, ‘If you have something for me you will provide and make it right.’”

Throughout the 15-month journey of the DVULI program, Pulley built profound relationships with the five other men in his cohort; Steven Cartwright, Antonio Lucero, Gary Mullins, Josh Sosa, and Jerry Torrez. These new relationships helped shape Pulley’s Breakthrough Plan and he made a firm commitment to accountability and fellowship.

“I stumbled across an authentic group of people that seek the Lord in their lives and in their ministries. I was not intentionally seeking to make friends, let alone build new relationships,” Pulley disclosed in his Plan. “I just wanted to come to this Initiative and learn and do my time... Unbeknownst to me, one of the things that I have been craving is fellowship with accountability.”

Now, five years after graduating from the DVULI, Pulley and the men of the Denver 2012 cohort continue to meet once a month for lunch, laughter, and accountability.

“We really valued our time together during our cohort. We were genuine with one another and we made a decision to keep the relationships with one another a priority,” says Pulley.



“We all have busy lives with families, ministries, work, life challenges, and we want to be there for one another. Do we get it right all of the time...no, but we definitely consider one another brothers. The relationships are all [a work] in progress, but we are committed to one another.”

Pulley contends these three principles contribute to the success of their accountability formation:

1. **Commit to making time.** Being friends on Facebook isn’t doing life together, nor is an occasional text or phone call an accountability relationship. The Denver 2012 cohort men make time for each other, month-after-month, and face-to-face.
2. **Be vulnerable.** “You have to be willing to be transparent and want accountability. We wanted that truly for ourselves and we found it in our cohort,” asserts Pulley. Keep in mind, these relationships weren’t built in a day, and growth and relationships take time. Never underestimate the necessity of inviting others into our lives and to hold us accountable to grow and become the men and women God has called us to be.
3. **Hold each other accountable.** “We encourage one another in the Lord and challenge each other to be the best husband, father, and man!” says Pulley. Some of the men in the cohort have even gone on to participate in other men’s ministry programs together, such as Crucible, a ministry that challenges men in their faith. “That’s another thing that they have in common with each other,” said Pulley.

When asked about specific practices or rituals of the group,





**Lemule Pulley (in white head wrap) hanging out with some of his accountability brothers.**

Pulley says, "The majority of us are in youth ministry or work with youth so we make ourselves available to come and share or be a resource for the others' organization." He also adds, "Eating and lots and lots of laughter is the only thing we practice."

Reflecting on his experience with DVULI, Pulley says the journey was not what he thought it was going to be, "it has been better than I could have envisioned."

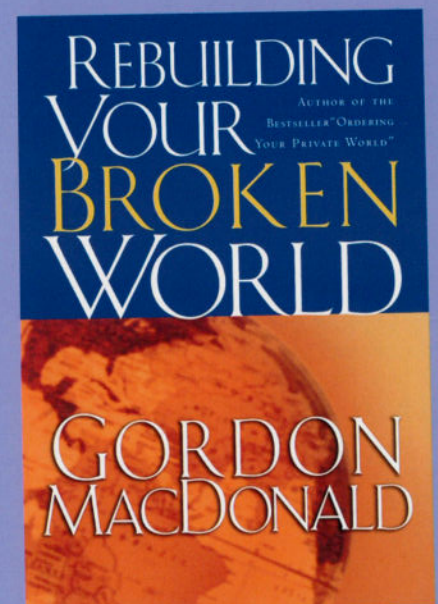
DVULI stresses the Five Core Values all work in tandem, and Accountability makes a solid foundation. Effective leaders regularly seek feedback and guidance from trusted sources. Yet, too often the busyness of ministry and isolation of the digital age make it difficult to maintain these critically important relationships, and urban youth workers lose the benefit of both the

encouragement and correction they offer. "With DeVos being a part of my life now I am getting accountability," Pulley says.

Feeling unchallenged in your own relationships? Below are three questions accountability friends ask:

- How is your relationship with God right now?
- Are there any unresolved conflicts in your circle of relationships right now?
- If Satan were to try to invalidate you, how might he do it?

McDonald, G. (2004). *Rebuilding Your Broken World* Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.





# Reunion 2019 Confirmed Presenters

DVULI is excited to announce the following presenters will join our 20 Year Celebration at Reunion 2019 in Phoenix, AZ May 1-4.

Pastor Chris Brooks

Brian Jenkins

A. C. Green

D. A. Horton

Chris Sumner

Lucas Leys

Gordon and Gail MacDonald

More presenters and entertainment added soon.

Follow us on Facebook to be the first to know when updates happen!

Watch your snail mailbox for official invitation and registration details.

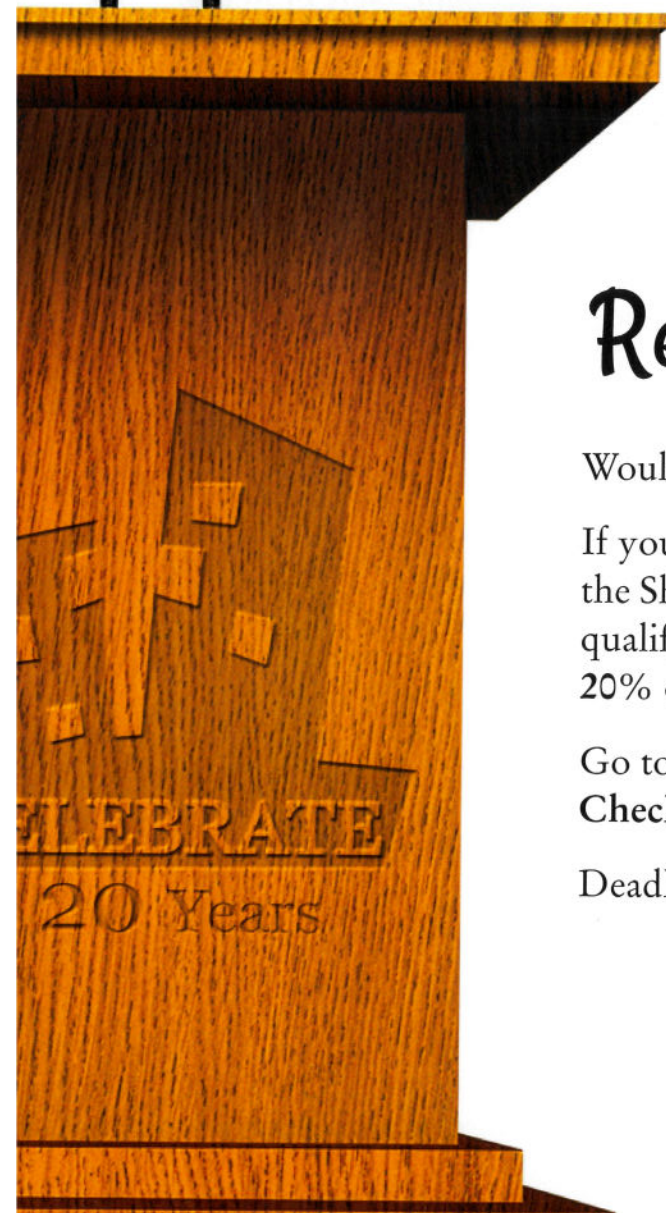
## Reunion 2019 Contest

Would you like to win 20% of your travel costs?

If your travel distance is more than 100 miles from home to the Sheraton Grand at Wild Horse Pass in Phoenix, AZ, you qualify for the grand prize giveaway of a travel voucher for 20% of your round trip travel expense to Reunion 2019!

Go to: [dvuli.org/ReunionContest](http://dvuli.org/ReunionContest) and enter in the code: **CheckingOnFlights**

Deadline to enter this issue's contest is March 15, 2019.





# Liderazgo Generacional (Generational Leadership)

## Resource recommendation by Zoraida Vélez, City Liaison

Imagine if every child born in the church had stayed in the church. What kind of church would you be leading today? Why is this not our current reality? These are the questions Lucas Leys answers in his book, *Liderazgo Generacional* (Generational Leadership).

With a Ph.D. from Fuller Theological Seminary and additional studies in missiology and neuroscience, Leys is considered one of the main forces of change in the ministry of new generations in Latin America. In this work, he pours his 25+ years of experience to help pastors explore an ongoing vision of working with the new generation to ensure greater effectiveness in the spiritual formation and discipleship of children, pre-teens, teens, and young adults. He challenges those who believe the church's responsibility is only a spiritual one, expressing that the church cannot detach itself from the cognitive stages of every child that comes through its doors.

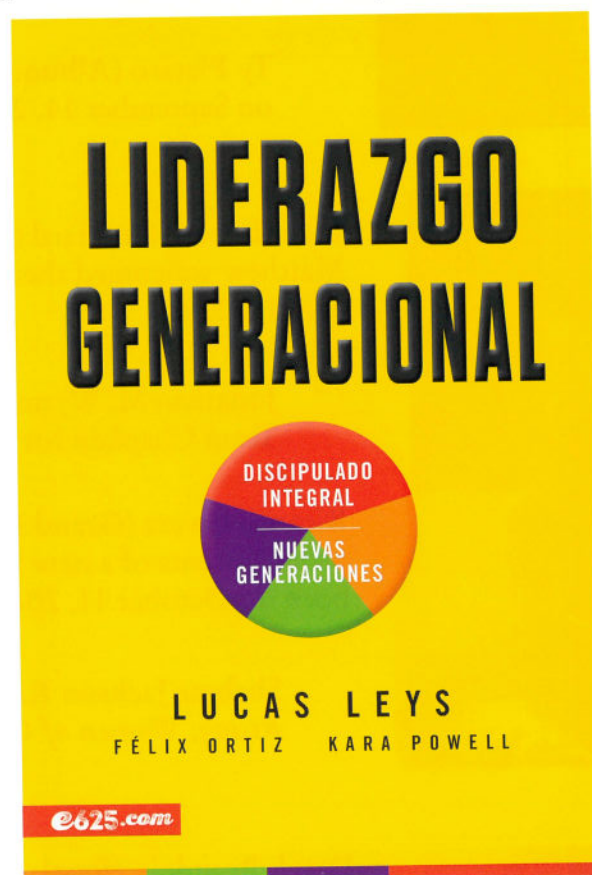
“Why does the church still consider 13-year-olds and those in their 20s, who have not gotten married, ‘youth’ and pretend they all need the same programming?” Why do most pastors assume their task is to focus on adults, and first-time leaders are the ones who have to deal with adolescents?

Leys challenges the reader to “walk away” from four main paradigms:

- The ministry of children and youth are (collaboratively) two separate ministries
- Adults are the priority of the main pastors
- The ministry happens in the church and not in the family
- Success is measured by the number of people sitting in the temple

With commentaries from Felix Ortiz (*Cruzada Estudiantil*) and Kara Powell (Fuller Theological Seminary, *Sticky Faith*), the book provides best practices on how to improve the retention of children who pass through the church, how to develop an effective plan to reach adolescents, and how to better shepherd high school and college students. It also lists different techniques to ensure a healthy generational change in the congregation and how to reconcile the work of the church with the family influence.

Considering all the tools, examples, and detailed information given, this book is a resource that every Hispanic pastor, youth leader, and educator should have. *Liderazgo Generacional* is currently only available in Spanish.





# Alumni Updates



For more, visit:  
[facebook.com/dvuli](https://facebook.com/dvuli)  
[instagram.com/dvuli](https://instagram.com/dvuli)



Phil Jackson (Chicago 2000) completed his Master of Divinity at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in 2015.

Shadrach Napoleon (Miami 2018) and his wife Denise welcomed a beautiful baby girl, Elizabeth Rose, on September 13, 2018.



Christopher Bates (Los Angeles 2010) accepted a new position as the Men's Sports Medicine Manager with USA Water Polo in Long Beach, California.

Ty Platero (Albuquerque 2015) married Monique Rene Hammitt on September 14, 2018.



Julia (Lovan) Goddard (Los Angeles 2010) and her husband Matthew welcomed their first child, Naomi Lavang Goddard, on July 14, 2018.

Jonathan M. Wynne (Detroit 2004) joined the NBA last year as Team Chaplain for the Detroit Pistons.



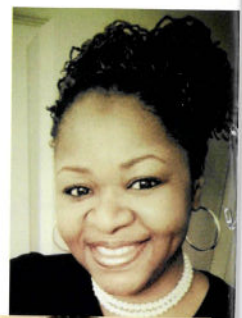
Ricardo Rivera (Grand Rapids 2000) and his wife Jennifer are the proud parents of a new baby boy. Miles Benington Rivera was born on October 11, 2018.

Shabrae Jackson Krieg (Philadelphia 2004) released a book, *Voices Rising; Women of Color Finding & Restoring Hope in the City*.



Derek Beaudoin (Portland 2013) and his wife Krista are the proud parents of a new daughter. Violet Grace Beaudoin was born on June 16, 2018.

JoAnn Dean (Atlanta 2014) released a book, *Josiah's Prayer*.



Angela Reeves (Chicago 2002) received the Young Life Chicagoland Region's Legacy Award for her decade of leadership.

Wesley Reyes (Cleveland 2013) released his first film, *The Pastor's Son*.

