



ON THE LEVEL

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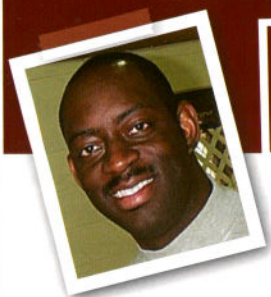
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SUMMER CAMPS

MOMENTS FROM THE MADNESS

By Marvin Daniels



I don't think anyone would argue that urban youth workers live in demanding times – working and living at a “breakneck” pace! From ongoing ministry crisis to financial survival, to event after event, one may echo “I need a moment!” And like many adults – children and youth are also crying out, “Can I get a moment away from the madness!”

THE CONTEXT OF CAMP

For the last thirteen years I have had the privilege of providing *moments from the madness* for my youth at summer camp. They were provided the opportunity to experience a variety of activities for eight straight days where they enjoyed being a child; engaged in new friendships with fellow campers; being loved on by Christian counselors and discovering or rediscovering the God that loves them so much.

It's nothing new that all camps are not created equal in terms of the context and quality of programming it provides urban youth. For a number of reasons, some camps are quite limited and very few contain

both quality programming coupled with quality facilities. That's why many urban youth workers opt to participate at predominately suburban camps that can offer great facilities at the expense of cultural relevancy. This trade off, however, has proven to be more detrimental than beneficial. As Director of Leadership Training at Kids Across America, I'm convinced it's possible to create a camp that will provide youth with culturally relevant programming in an atmosphere that they'll enjoy - while providing an escape from the madness.

It is wise to invest in a camp that has a variety of sporting activities, leadership training for high school students, a facility for youth workers to network, worship, rest and play. More importantly a staff that cares deeply about the youth they serve, and programming that introduces Jesus in urban flavored parables. Thousands of youth and youth leaders have found this approach to be what their youth need and enjoy. ▶ *continued page 6*

HERE'S MY TAKE

Cabin Pressure

By Gerald Bell

For a week or two in the summer many youth get very little sleep! Youth camp can fill their days (and most nights) with bonfires, water balloon fights, Bible devotions, breakfast, burgers, snow-cones, skits, tons of sports, guest speakers, talent contests, ropes course, pillow fights and that's just scratching the surface...Oops! I should add that long lecture from the camp counselor who's striving to make the world a better place!

Parents, youth pastors and camp staff hope that summer camp will invigorate kids self esteem, develop people and leadership skills, improve behavior, build Godly character, and the list of expectations continues to swell.

So as the clock ticks over the span of five, maybe ten days...it feels like gridlock attempting to make sure every youngster's camping experience produces something extraordinary in them before returning home. Could this be a tall order? Too much to accomplish in such little time? A few DVULI alumni know the pressures that summer camp demands...here's their take!

Scott Sangster (Denver, 2003)

Director of The Sky's The Limit day camp in Denver, CO

Everything is a challenge being a camp director. You have to be prayed up because it is spiritual warfare. You can't remove your spiritual armor...you have to sleep in it. The pressure I feel is making sure my cup is filled so that I minister out of my overflow and not

[give away everything] that's in my cup to others. When camp's at full throttle there are so many moving parts. You have to maintain a level of energy and not run out of gas because it is part physical, emotional and spiritual. For three consecutive summers I fired teen camp worker, Adonis Brown, due to explosive anger issues and missed meetings. He was musically and athletically gifted but his attitude sabotaged himself. Year four he came into his own and "out-worked" everybody at camp. It carried over after camp and he is now one of the best academically eligible high school running backs in Denver Public Schools. It took keeping my cup filled to help him.

Nes Espinosa (Philadelphia, 2002)

Youth Director at Bethel Temple Community Bible Church in Philadelphia, PA

I've taken the youth of my church to Young Life Camp in Lake Champion, NY. What inspired the decision for this camp is that it's a little different. There, I'm the camp counselor and I get to go through the experiences with my youth. The cost was about \$300 per kid, and you have to bring your own leadership. I am looking for a cheaper camp because kids can't afford it. Plus, I am more passionate about our youth being free to share, and that shouldn't cost a lot of money. A camp counselor is able to get into subjects that parents may not be able to get into with their children. At camp youth have an adult they can confide in...someone they see as cool. If a kid can't go to camp and get refreshed by hanging with other adults who care, then it's just glorified baby sitting.

Denise Fase (Grand Rapids, 1998)

Former Director of Camp Tall Turf in Walkerville, MI

One of the biggest pressures is staff recruitment. Finding those who are Christ centered, understand children and their behaviors, and are committed to working with them in the camp environment. You want staff that will grow kids rather than hurt them (physically, mentally and spiritually). Finding staff that want to impact kids rather than wanting to come to camp only to be impacted. That's tough. Also finding staff who are experienced with kids in taking care of various behaviors can be a challenge. We hire workers who are able to entertain kids rather than be entertained. As counselors, staff have to deal with kids 24/7, playing the roles of a parent, big sister/brother, social worker, coach, their biggest fan, and conflict resolver. You want them to be responsible enough to get sleep at night rather than hanging out with other staff or pursuing a new boyfriend/girlfriend. They burn up that second burst of energy at night that often leaves them with empty reserves and little energy the next day to grow, empower, and invest in kids. They end up putting out fires rather than preventing them. That's a lot of pressure.

Dr. Bernard Franklin (Kansas City, 2001)

President of Penn Valley Community College and father of 4 in Kansas City

As parents, Elsie and I knew there was only so much we could do to help our children establish a relationship with God. Sending them to YouthFront Camp was safe because we knew we ►

BRIEF NEWS AND BREAKTHROUGHS

could trust the content and it would give them a solid foundation. I place a heavy emphasis on meeting their camp counselors. When I drop my sons off I want to have a conversation with their counselors. Get a glimpse of what kind of person they are and if they are sensitive to African American boys. I also wonder if I'll lose access to my children with them being so far away. Will they get exposed to a movie or something I may not approve? What I most desire is that they will gain a closer relationship with the Lord, disciplined quiet time, calmness, devotion and a difference in attitude around the house. I just want to know they've made a deeper commitment to God.

THANKS TO ALL
OF THE DVULI
ALUMNI WHO
COMPLETED
OUR ON-LINE
QUESTIONNAIRE

June Williams-Smith (Pittsburgh, 2004)



married Minister Arthur James Smith after Sunday service on August 27, 2006 at New Beginnings Family Worship Center. June said, "I sang to him 'We'll Never Be the Same Again' and that was such a highpoint." June is also the new Youth Director and Publicity Coordinator for their church.

Danielle & Will Gantt (Boston, 2006) gave



birth to Joy Elise on Friday, February 16 at 9:58 am she weighed 7lbs 13oz and was 24 1/4 inches long. After having three sons Danielle says she had become content with a house full of men. But now that baby Joy is here they have a "little princess in the house," and she's brought them so much joy!

Shawn & Christina Beach (Kansas City, 2001) on January 13, 2007 at 9:00 am



welcomed Richard Alexander with open arms who weighed in at 8lbs 2oz and measured 20 inches long. "We named him after my uncle, my grandfather and Christina's grandfather," said Shawn. He also explained that having a little boy now requires a different technique when changing diapers—"he can squirt ya!"

Robyn and Kuko Moya (San Diego, 2001)

welcomed, one week early, Isaac Kimball on January 10, 2007 at 11:19 am. He weighed 6lbs 11oz and stretched 19 inches long. This is their first baby and Robyn says they don't sleep like they used to "but it's all worth it!"

Dionne Peeples (Portland, 2003) is the new Executive Director of Faithful Friends, a faith-based mentoring program under Friends of the Children. She relocated from Portland, OR to St. Louis, MO to assume the role she says has taught her to really lean and depend on God. "I not only have a higher responsibility to Faithful Friends," she said, "but it's a responsibility to God of empowering others and giving them the tools they need."

Virginia Ward (Boston, 1998) On Saturday, February 3, 2007 was the recipient of the Martin Luther King Youth and Leadership Award from the Cambridge NAACP Chapter at their annual MKL Breakfast. Virginia was one of five awardees.

John Echeverria (San Diego, 2000) is the



winner of San Diego's ABC affiliate 10 News Leadership Award for his counsel of youths who are at risk of getting involved with gangs. John earned the award for his work in speaking at local schools and educating parents about the warning signs of gang involvement, teaching about the history of gangs in San Diego County and discussing effective intervention and support strategies.

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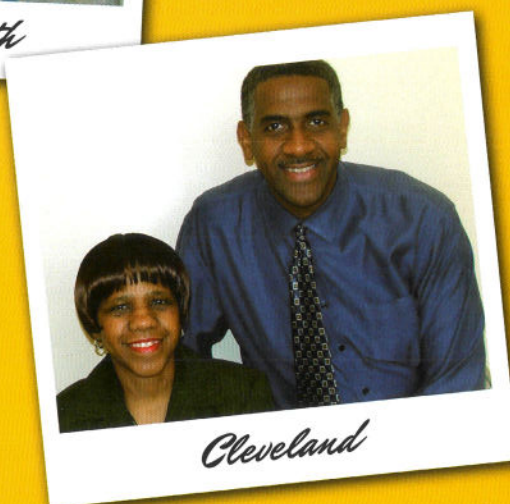
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CAUGHT ON CAMERA

By Liz Koster

City Coordinator and Coach Preparation - January 2007

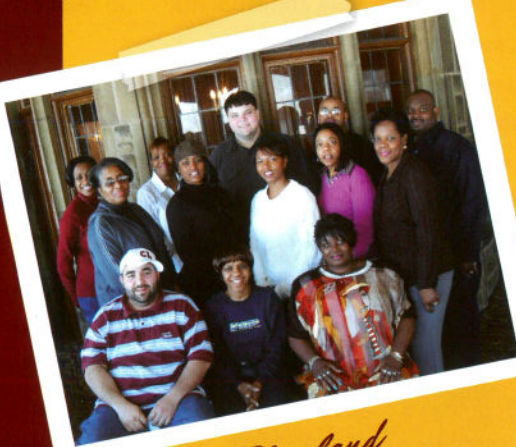
The DeVos staff welcomed this training year's city coordinators and coaches to Grand Rapids for three days of preparation for the 15-month learning journey that lies ahead for Chicago, Chicago South, Cleveland, Indianapolis and Miami. Each team is strategically arranged to support each other throughout the year. In Chicago the city coordinator's are Ray and Teresa Maldonado, with the coaching role filled by Eileen Kooreman. From Chicago South the city coordinator is Felecia Thompson and her coach is Angela Reeves (Chicago, 2002). Leading the way in Cleveland is Gail Reese as city coordinator with Gerald Bell (Kansas City, 2003) completing the team as the coach. Indianapolis returns for a second year with city coordinator Maureen Hankerson (Birmingham, 1999) and coach Kelvin Jackson (Grand Rapids, 1998). Completing this class is Tommy Carrington in Miami as city coordinator and Rick Diaz (San Antonio, 1999) will serve as coach.



2007 New City Groups

And so it begins – The 10th year of the DeVos Urban Leadership Initiative. Participants began the fifteen-month process with their first local workshop. All five cities felt the contagious excitement and enthusiasm as they began building friendships and relationships that we hope will last long into the future. The first local workshop focused on personal and ministry assessment. It was very easy to see that the participants are really ready for the challenge and eager to enjoy this journey together!

By Rick Diaz



Cleveland



Indianapolis



Miami



Chicago South

Photo Disclaimer: Chicago's Group was having so much fun with Personal Assessments there was not a pause in the process for a group shot. Look for them in the next newsletter.

COVER STORY- CONT.

THE CONTENT OF CAMP

When camps have the opportunity to provide *moments from the madness* for urban youth and youth workers, it is essential that the content of the camp is designed to draw youth towards a greater understanding of God and intimacy with Christ. On a recent drive to Chicago with Ron Carter (Birmingham, 1999) we noticed the magnificence of “man” all around the great Windy City. Its audacious architectural structures, luminous landscapes, magnificent museums and wonderful waterfronts all exhibit the creativity and skillfulness of man. Take time to notice, you will likely see the magnificence of man all around your city too!

The content of camp should somehow compel youth to realize the magnificence of God. Programming should steer both youth and youth workers to be in awe of the God who designed the stars; the animals that roam; the various types of trees and flowers; the lakes, rivers and ponds; and the quiet. It’s the kind of quietness that allows the mind and heart to be still and know who God is.

A camp’s atmosphere and content should detour youth from their daily drama and allow them to interact with the magnificence of God. I have discovered that a child’s heart becomes sensitive to the Gospel when they are not distracted by the television, radio, Ipad, the DVDs, the neighborhood, home, the job, or

the boy/girlfriend. In addition, most camps have discovered that gender specific programming provides greater opportunities for counselors and students to interact more honestly without the distraction of having to be “cute” or “cut” for the other. Subsequently, for the youth worker, the opportunity to reflect and rest is critical to their growth and sustainability in the work God has entrusted them to.



Campers find spiritual renewal at Kids Across America

CONTACT OF CAMP

Camps serious about urban ministry will view themselves as a partner with local ministries. Camp is a tool designed to serve the church, para-church ministries as well as those in the community raising or serving your youth. It is important that you see camps in this way and is why I am a proponent of the values of interdependence and collaboration. Take advantage of the many Christian growth programs for campers, seminars and training for youth workers.

I also encourage camps to look for opportunities to connect with parents.

At the same time it’s important to keep the camp connected to the city and the lives of the children and youth workers in their churches.

This kind of joint collaboration strengthens the ministry of the urban youth worker and allows camp to extend its borders beyond its own setting. Both youth and youth workers need a *moment to get away from the madness*. Contact with camps are a great way to afford this, and in a short time, can literally influence and infect the lives that walk through their gates to the glory and honor of God and the benefit of those they serve.

As you make summer plans for your youth, below are some of the urban camps that provide this context, content and contact. This is not a comprehensive listing:

- For The Kingdom (Memphis)
- Kids Across America (Branson, MO)
- Seek Urban Camp (Bridgeport, TX)
- Skies the Limit (Denver, St. Louis, Kansas City)
- Sky Ranch (Michigan)
- Young Life Urban Camps (national sites)

Marvin Daniels is Director of Leadership Training at Kids Across America and a 2002 graduate of the DeVos Urban Leadership Initiative.

BEFORE YOU GO

New Training Launches

Leading for Life

By Eileen Kooreman



In response to feedback from alumni of the DeVos Urban Leadership Initiative, a new training module was launched earlier this year.

Leading for Life, the name DVULI staff chose for this original curriculum, is designed for ministry teams and can be taught by DeVos alumni. The new

training encompasses a spiritual gifts assessment, the discovery of God's unique design for the individual, and the importance of the Core Values; balance, accountability, empowerment, and interdependence.

Many DeVos graduates have shared how their lives were changed by what they learned about themselves at the first DeVos local workshop and at the Core Values conference in Orlando. Their challenge has been finding an effective way to pass that transforming experience on to others in their ministry once they return home. *Leading for Life* provides an opportunity for alumni teams to offer a little piece of the DVULI training to others in ministry in their hometown.

Piloted in Chicago in February, DeVos alumnus Marvin Daniels (Chicago, 2002) and Ron Carter (Birmingham, 1999) presented

the 12-hour module, which was held on a Friday and Saturday from 8:30am to 3:30pm both days. More than 80 local ministry staff people signed up for the event, which exceeded the registration goal of 50 set by local coordinators. Some had to be turned away.

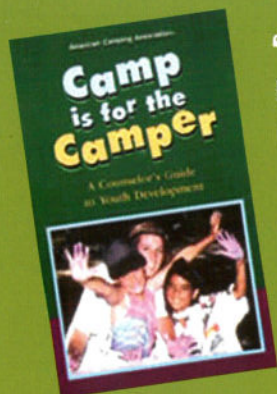
The DVULI alumni who want to host this event will assume many responsibilities in order to make sure the event is a success. They will determine if the training is best presented as a consecutive 2-day workshop, a six-week course, or in another way appropriate for their respective city. They will also choose a venue, publicize and set the cost for the training, manage the registration process, ensure that registrants receive a pre-assignment to complete, and secure travel arrangements for the presenters.

The DeVos Initiative has small grants available to alumni cities to help make this possible and provides all of the printed materials. For more information about how you can bring *Leading for Life* to your city, please contact the DVULI office.



Chicago *Leading for Life* pilot attracts unexpected number of local workers.

Check This Out



"Camp is for the Camper: A Counselor's Guide to Youth Development"

By Connie Coutellier and Kathleen Henchey

Equip every new counselor at your camp with this revised, easy-to-use "counselor's handbook." It's the perfect orientation tool designed to help counselors understand and enhance youth development. This book addresses many critical issues and provides important and relevant information. From stress/temper management to positive behavior reinforcement to parent interaction, *Camp is for the Camper* is a highly recommended guide for the camp counselor. The well-seasoned counselor may also find this to be a great refresher to stimulate creativity and strengthen their foundation for future camp involvement. — Gerald Bell

Message Board

These people have updated contact information:

Dian Foreman (Indianapolis 2005)
Melvin Cole (Kansas City 2001)
Pat Pearl (Kansas City 2003)
Tony Garcia (Phoenix 1998)
William Hogans (Phoenix 1998)
James Harris (Phoenix 1998)
Derrick Reed (Pittsburgh 2006)
Scott Hackler (Albuquerque 2002)
Gerald Reed (San Diego 1999)
Michael Allwood (Boston 2006)
Michelle Gonzales (San Antonio 1999)
Mike Hilf (Pittsburgh 2006)
Mark Juarez (San Antonio 2001)
David Sebreros (Orlando 2000)
Raul Alleyne (Portland 2005)
Jonathon Lambe (Kansas City 2001)
Andrew Campos (Kansas City 2001)
Angela Thompson (San Antonio 2001)
Mary Fogelson (Phoenix 2000)
Amber Drinin (Phoenix 2000)
Larry Brown (Boston 1998)
Larry Cockrell (Birmingham 1999)
Bryan VanWyk (Philadelphia 2004)
Kirt Thompson (San Antonio 2001)
Stanley Wilson (San Antonio 1999)
Tony Beckham (Los Angeles 2005)
Charlene Turner-Johnson (Detroit 2004)
Laassah Hudgins (Grand Rapids 1998)
Henry and Kathleen Greenidge (Portland 2005)

These people have new emails:

Jon Wynne (Detroit 2004)
June Williams-Smith (Pittsburgh 2004)
Marcella Lee (Kansas City 2003)
Domingo Mota (Los Angeles 2005)
Melvin Cole (Kansas City 2001)
Barbara Stanley (Phoenix 2000)
Shawn Riley (Denver 2003)
Uilses Gonzales (Phoenix 2000)
Bill Brittain (Phoenix 2000)
Michael Allwood (Boston 2006)

If you are interested in contacting any of these people, please visit the DeVos Urban Leadership website for updated contact information. www.devosurbanleadership.org.

*1st
National Conference
Class of 2007
April 16-21, 2007
Core Values and Healthy Change*

*2nd
Local Workshop
Community Capacity Building
June 7-9: Chicago, Indianapolis
June 14-16: Chicago, South
June 21-23: Miami
June 28-30: Cleveland*

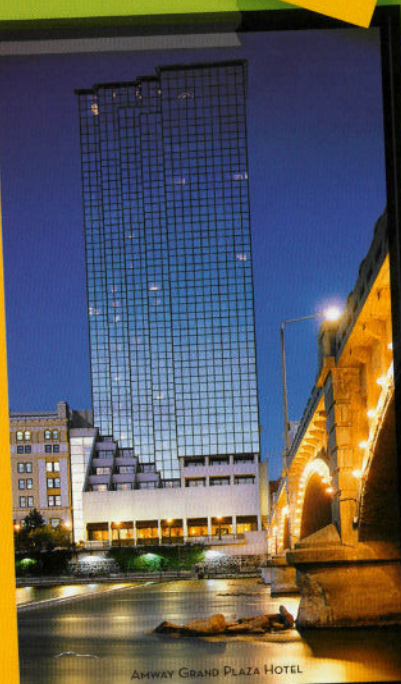
Graduation Dates

*May 6 - Atlanta
May 19 - Pittsburgh
June 1 - Grand Rapids
April 28 - Boston
April 29 - Minneapolis*

Congratulations Class of 2006

DEVOS
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AUG.
22-25



AHWAY GRAND PLAZA HOTEL

DEVOS URBAN LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE REUNION 2007

Grand Rapids