

December 12, 2017

Divine Redeemer-MEYO End of Year Report

Greetings!

As 2017 ends, we reflect over all the blessings and goodness that have happened in the past 14 years and continue to this today. It is a great joy to share with you about the good work happening at Divine Redeemer Presbyterian Church's Multi-Level Educational Youth Outreach (MEYO), located in our small inner-city community in the heart of Westside San Antonio. We write with gratitude and enthusiasm that is catalyzed as we watch young people's lives change before us.

Over the 102 years of Divine Redeemer's existence on the Westside, DRPC has engaged in a wide variety of community services. 14 years ago, DRPC recognized the growing need for educational support for students in the neighborhood. With non-English speaking parents, and a system tight on resources, the challenges facing students is huge, and for many overwhelming. In 2003 we started with a community event once a week (Teen Night) which soon grew to become an after school program for teenagers (House of Teens) and has now grown into MEYO (Multi-level Educational Youth Outreach). MEYO provides after school programs for children and youth from grades 1-12, with tutors, meals, and programs on everything from sex education to money management. Kids come knowing that they will get fed, have help with homework, be with friends who won't bully them, and build relationships with adults who will advocate for them. MEYO creates a community of support that helps individuals break the cycle of poverty through education and personal development, one family at a time.

This past year MEYO created an environment that empowers its participants through Personal Development, Service to the Community, Solid Character Formation, and a Dedication to Post High School Learning. We encourage Personal Development by nurturing our participants' interests/passions through activities, speakers, and field trips. During this past school year Peace Pals participated in a Christmas program for Divine Redeemer's Annual Community Posada, singing and dancing with traditional Mayan Matlachines. It is wonderful to see the children develop and discover new talents, as well as learn lifelong skills for public presentation.

Through Service to the Community MEYO continued to develop a sense of ownership of youth's neighborhood, environment, and world. During this year MEYO completed Over 1,000 Hours of Community Service. This included volunteering at Divine Redeemer's annual Thanksgiving Dinner, serving over 400 people, Service Projects around the city and neighborhood-like working at the Food Bank, Graffiti Wipe-out, and House of Teens' week-long mission trip to Austin, where youth partnered with Presbyterian Church of Lake Travis to work at Community First Village and Silverado Memory Care Center. These trips serve to deepen the sense of kinship amongst the participants and develop character within the youth as they go out and serve others in and outside their own community.

MEYO also continued fostering an environment that encourages character formation. For the past 7 years, we have incorporated the Developmental Assets (40 concrete positive experiences and qualities that have a tremendous influence on youth researched by the Search Institute) into the heart of our programming. We measure for the following core categories in our youth: Experiences a Support System; Feels Empowerment; Understanding of Boundaries and Expectations; Ability for Constructive



REV. ROBERT MUELLER

MINISTRIES AND MINISTRY PARTNERS:

HOUSE OF NEIGHBORLY SERVICE (HNS)

MEYO - MULTI-LEVEL EDUCATIONAL YOUTH OUTREACH

- HOUSE OF TEENS
- TEEN NIGHT
- PEACE PALS
- PEACE CAMP
- MARTINEZ-RIVERA SCHOLARSHIP FUND

BOY SCOUTS TROOP 52

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use of Time; Commitment to Learning; Increase levels of Positive Values; Capacity for Social Competence; and Progress in Positive Identity. In the 2016-2017 school year, 71% of our students displayed at least 75% of the assets. These traits are nurtured during programing throughout the year.

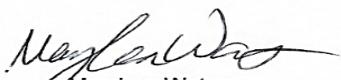
In 2012, MEYO added Peace Camp; a summer day camp for 4-12 year olds, with the neighborhood teens as junior staff. This supports families in the summer, with care, character development, enrichment and FUN! Many of the neighborhood children are without supervision in the summer, as they have working parents. Peace Camp helps fill the gap, and helps MEYO's school-year programs create an even stronger culture of cooperation, kindness and care. Peace Camp has also created a superb opportunity for the teens to develop and practice leadership skills, as they work alongside college students and adults in leading camp activities. This summer, we completed our sixth year of Peace Camp with 50 campers, 5 junior counselors, and 15 counselors. We also began a leadership program for 11-13 year olds, giving them more responsibility during their time as campers to prepare them to be Junior Counselors and Counselors. It is through these activities that we directly shape our children and youth's understanding and embodiment of love for God and their neighbors.

With 47.3% of the area adult population having not completed high school, MEYO continued its dedication to post high school learning as we This year MEYO celebrated a major success when a MEYO alumni was the program's first bachelor's degree recipient. His story of growth and service is featured here:

Alejandra (not real name) started with MEYO as a first grader in Peace Pals. Alejandra's parents both worked multiple jobs and long hours, and she often had to care for her younger siblings. Because Alejandra's parents spoke no English, they could not help her with homework, or participate in Alejandra's school. With the tutoring and homework help offered by MEYO, Alejandra did well in school, even tackling honors math and science in high school. Additionally, through MEYO, Alejandra attended Mid-winter Youth Conferences, camp at John Knox Ranch, and multiple youth retreats and mission trips. Alejandra's family does not attend DRPC, but Alejandra became a baptized member of the church during high school. Last May, Alejandra graduated with honors and an Associate's Degree from high school. With the help of College Vista, a MEYO partner who helps youth apply for college and seek financial assistance, Alejandra is attending UTSA. She is the first in her family to go to college. She says she wants to study criminal justice, because she sees how un-just our system is currently, or perhaps psychology because she is interested in what makes people tick. Either way, she is sure she wants to do something that helps people believe that they can do anything!

MEYO creates a network of support for the students as they enter school and stays with them until they complete high school and transition to college or vocational training. We look forward with great hope to the coming year to build on the foundation that has been laid before us. With our expanded programming and partnerships we are now able to support a child from 1st grade through High School graduation and beyond! Divine Redeemer is a small church (about 130 members) that is making a big impact on the Westside, but the truth is, we need help! MEYO is funded 100% through church donations, individual donations and grants. Would you consider partnering with us? Your tax-deductible donation will provide the food, shoes, equipment, staff, and building repairs we need to keep the doors open and the electricity on! Please watch the video "How MEYO Changed My Life" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1pa8BXjhM1E> to see the impact our program and your donation can have on the youth of the Westside!

Blessings,



May Lea Watson
MEYO Director



Rob Mueller
Pastor



Peace Camp counselors do leadership & staff training activity



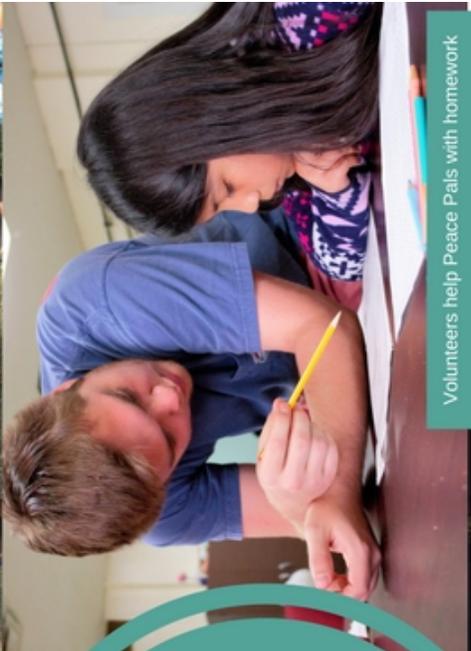
Teens working hard at Community First Village during Mission Tip



Peace Campers relax by the river at Camp Capers



House of Teens at a Cave with No Name with the Sierra Club



Volunteers help Peace Pals with homework

MEYO 2017



Peace Pals perform a Christmas pageant at Divine Redeemer's Christmas Posada



Peace Pals Trick-or-Treating at Trinity University