



# Sojo Street Reach

Sojourners recently received funding from the Administration of Children and Families through the Department of Health and Human Services, in order to operate a street outreach program.

Sojo Street Reach provides outreach services designed to build relationships with street youth, in order to help them leave the dangers of the streets and chronic homelessness. The

program will provide information and other services to youth aged 16 to 21, and who may be at risk for domestic violence, sexual exploitation, drug and alcohol problems, or homelessness.

Sojo Street Reach will serve hundreds of youth annually from the counties of southeast Ohio, including Athens, Gallia, Hocking, Jackson, Meigs, Ross, and Vinton.

Currently, a 15-passenger van is being outfitted with high-tech gadgets and equipment, in order to engage with young people. Special events will be conducted throughout the region and a 24-hour crisis line will be available for those in need. Also, workshops will be arranged to educate about homelessness. For more information, contact program director Fallon Kingery at (740) 591-6290.

## Notes from the Director



Now I remember...

Last week was a pretty common week, except for one extraordinary scene.

There were meetings with child welfare professionals. There were home visits, assessments, counseling appointments, staff meetings, and so on. But all of them pale in comparison to what I witnessed on Thursday morning.

To fully appreciate this story, you have to understand the beginning. We've had dozens of children at Sojourners over the years with similar stories. Neglectful and abusive pasts; many, many placement disruptions; next-to-no history of school success; predictions from professionals ranging from physical

violence to long-term incarceration. Not a pretty picture. This young man had all of that, and then some.

"Doin' homework with Pops", he says, "gotta finish it before school today." As I'd walked out of my office, I see a young guy who's been through it all...doing an English assignment with his foster dad. Not arguing with him. Not throwing chairs or fleeing down the stairwell. Just doing homework with his dad.

And it doesn't stop there. They share how great things have been at home lately, and even too, at school. "He's really been doin' well", his foster dad says.

I don't know what's "clicked" for this guy, or even that it has.

It certainly could be the dedication of a foster mom and dad who simply have refused to give up on him. He has a plethora of services and providers in his world working to meet his needs. It could be his own growth and maturity. Its anyone's guess.

Regardless of the "why's", one thing is for certain...I'm sure glad he's had the opportunity.

As I'm working through balancing the budget, writing up assessments, or reviewing records...I'll remember that as wonderful as a neatly typed report or strong bottom line is, nothing is quite as special as seeing these children get to do the simple things...like homework with Pops. *Steve*

### Independent Living Classes

Sojourners monthly independent living classes continue on the first Tuesday of each month. This month, Russ will be leading a course on job attainment skills, focused on developing resumes, interview skills, and much more. All are welcome!

### Calendar

- Independent Living Classes  
February 2nd at Sojourners Offices, from 5-6:30pm
- Valentine's Day - February 14th
- Food Bank  
February 17th, at 318 W. Main St, McArthur, 11-2pm
- Foster Parent Training (Verbal De-escalation)  
February 23rd in Chillicothe, from 6-9pm.  
February 25th in McArthur, from 10-1pm.



## Caring for Kids in Care

|        |          |                       |
|--------|----------|-----------------------|
| Shelia | 464-1411 | General Questions     |
| Steve  | 418-1072 | Director, Foster Care |
| Lisa   | 357-0143 | Placement/Respite     |
| Barb   | 418-0250 | Licensing/Training    |
| Janie  | 577-1347 | Adoption / Recruit.   |
| Liz    | 596-1117 | Operations            |

Sojourners Fax Number: 739-4357

All numbers are in area code 740.

Please call Shelia with questions about the newsletter—or to submit news or recipes.

### SHINING STARS!

Call Shelia to share good news about the young people in your care.



- \* T.T. received his 2nd-nine weeks grade card and made the honor roll! Great work!
- \* J.L. was seen doing homework with his foster dad last week before school. Way to stick with it!
- \* M.L. is playing on the basketball team and doing a great job!
- \* C.C. recently started her job at the YMCA. Way to go!
- \* S.M. was accepted into the cosmetology program at the local vocational school. Good luck!
- \* C.T. has enrolled into Hocking College. He'll be studying computer technology and music. We wish you all the best!
- \* A.M. did really well at a recent doctor's appointment. She has a great heart and remains strong!
- \* B.M. has been really helpful lately. Her family and Lisa are really proud of her!
- \* J.S. showed good social skills with his family. Great job!
- \* W.S. just started his new job. Good luck!
- \* C.J. earned a trip to a hockey game!
- \* B.C. earned over \$100 shoveling snow this winter and paid for his sledding trip



## Policy Updates and Review

Sojourners recently updated a number of foster care policies to align with the Ohio Administrative Code. In addition, we'll review one policy that has been confusing to some over the past year.

### Policy 1: Discipline and Restraint of Children in Care

*Due to the amazing skill and talent of our foster parents, direct service providers, counselors, teachers, and staff, physical interventions have become exceedingly rare in the foster care program. Clarifications were made to the policy. Restraint may only occur to protect one's self, to protect the child from self-destructive behavior, and to protect another person from the child. Destructive behavior towards property is not a circumstance to use physical restraint. Also, prone (face-down) restraint is explicitly prohibited under any circumstance. The practice has been prohibited across the country due to it's harmful (and potentially lethal) consequences.*

### Policy 37: Smoke-Free Environment

*The state of Ohio has taken significant steps over the past few years to prevent the negative health effects of secondhand smoke. Among these, has been to restrict smoking around foster children. Our policy was developed last summer to reflect these changes. The policy has been clarified as "no smoking may be permitted in the living areas of a foster home or in a vehicle used to transport a foster child while the child is present."*

### Policy 72: Transporting Youth


*Content has been added to conform to state requirements around the use of booster seats for children under 4'9" tall. In addition, lap and shoulder belts must be used for all children.*

### Policy 13: Medications

*Medications must be stored in their original containers, provided by the physician or pharmacy. Despite the convenience of daily dispensers, they substantially increase the risk of medication errors.*

## Being an Example

Albert Schweitzer, the 1952 Nobel Peace Prize winner, has been on my mind lately. There's an old quote of his taped near the coffee machine in the office. The quote goes, "Example is not the main thing in influencing others...it's the only thing." At first, the message didn't resonate with me. But after a few hundred cups of joe, it started to settle in. I began to think, 'what does it say to my kids when I show up late to a home visit', or 'when I stroll in a few minutes late to work.?' 'Do I ever use profanity and then turn around and chastise them for their language?'

The quote had a profound impact on me when I came to work on January 18th and thought about how Dr. King embodied this message in his life. He stood up for the right things in the face of adversity, violence, and injustice. He led by example. I don't believe we'll all be perfect, and I'm *certainly* not suggesting that I am somehow the world's greatest role model, because I'm not. I am suggesting, though, that we remember that children are often times like sponges, and our words and actions are the liquid that's absorbed and wrung out, manifested in their words and actions. Let us remember that if we want our kids to be good, caring citizens, we have to first be good, caring citizens ourselves. - Russ Elek 

## Shelia's Corner

### Baked Beans

2-16oz cans of Pork and Beans  
 1-16oz can of Black Beans  
 1 Large Onion  
 1 tsp Worcestershire sauce  
 1/2 c brown sugar  
 4 strips of bacon

### Directions:

1. Mix all ingredients together in a baking dish.
2. Cover with strips of bacon.
3. Bake for 1 hour in a 350 degree oven.
4. Serve warm and enjoy!

