

FROM OUR FAMILY TO YOURS - BLESSED CHRISTMAS



As we await the Advent of the Prince of Peace, we pray with you for God's Kingdom to come and His will to be done in our families, our communities and our world.

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JESUS CHRIST
THE HOPE OF THE CITY



WESTSIDE STORY
"Working alongside urban neighbors, building a community of hope, extending the love of Christ."

THE
WEST SIDE STORY

"The Other Way" Ministries

WINTER 2008

FAMILY MATTERS AT CHRISTMAS TIME

The truth is, 'family' matters all the time. Reality is, 'family' is a different experience for every person, even among siblings in the same family. Listening to parents gathered at a "Family Matters" meeting provided profound insights into what matters for Westtown parents, for their children and for their neighbors.

In a practical sense, "Family Matters" includes things like:

- having safe shelter and enough food to eat;
- living with people who help me grow up to know who I am and to whom I belong;
- learning the values of self respect and mutual accountability;
- parents and children alike developing into the persons God created us to become.

In a world of broken relationships and scattered, extended families, family matters more than ever. On the first Christmas, Joseph and Mary discovered this as

they birthed the Son of God into their family, and then their little family packed up and fled for their lives. Even as we celebrate the birth of Jesus again, we give thanks that His life and death and resurrection shows family members how to enjoy a legacy that never dies.

Please pray with us to "the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name", that our neighbors in Westtown may become "stronger, Christ-centered families" (Eph. 3:15).

I invite you to listen to our staff members reflect on how family matters and what matters for families, not only at Christmas time, but throughout the year.

Lou Roossien,
Executive Director



THANKS FOR GIVING

In November and December all Flowerland stores are collecting stock for our food pantry from customers.

Families from FairHaven Ministries, Remembrance Church, and Richmond Reformed Church blessed families in our neighborhood by giving 681 bags of groceries as part of their Thanksgiving offerings.

**2008 FAITH FOCUS VERSE
EPHESIANS 3:20-21**

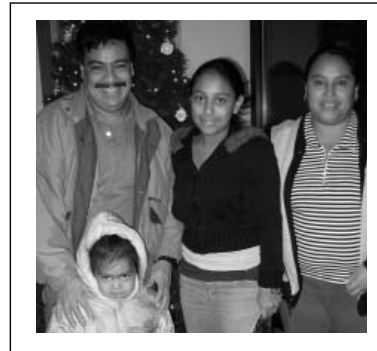
Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.



FAMILY REFLECTIONS FROM OUR STAFF

Scattered on these pages are photos of Westown neighborhood families from the Christmas Store and Family Camp.

Families are our home base, the people we come back to time and time again. Families play a key role in shaping who we are and guiding us as we discover who we want to be. Families matter because they are central to stronger communities. Families contribute to and benefit from the richness of a great community: resource sharing, safety, wisdom, connections, support and the encouragement needed to keep running the race.



I think of a young woman who grew up in our neighborhood and has been part of The Other Way family for many years. She is a prime example of someone who has benefited from growing up in a community that cares. Now attending a local college, she continues to be mentored, disciplined, and supported by her "Other Way" family. As she follows her dream of becoming a youth pastor, she'll have the opportunity to raise up a new generation of stronger, Christ-centered families.

Andréa Vugteveen, Teen Ministry

The foundational truth for families living below the poverty line is this: family is our most significant possession. We do not own things that give us status or provide us with security. We do not hold impressive degrees or job titles. No job or possession holds more value for us than the people in our lives. This means that every decision is weighed in light of what we value most. If one of us lands in the hospital, everyone comes. If one of us has no place to live, suddenly there are two families under one roof. Family is everything. Poverty has lots of challenges but it brings an unexpected gift. People matter most. That is the message of Jesus.

Melita Powell, Family Development, Food Pantry, Women's Ministry

The basis of all society is the family. It is the way a person discovers how to be human. What does "family" mean? It means we should give and receive. Yes, give and receive love, food, clothes, gifts and faith. Faith? The family needs to be united in the same belief in God, His plan, and how we as a family fit into it. Faith without love, does not work. Love without faith does not work in our families either. If we share the love of Jesus and our faith in God with our family, we can trust God to do the rest.

Cecibel Tejada-Sandoval, Receptionist



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WE PROMISE....

...to respect your privacy. We will not sell or give your name and address information to any other organization.

Please tell us if you wish to be removed from our mailing list.

YEAR END GIVING

We appreciate your year end gifts more than ever.

We accept securities, EFT and website donations. "The Other Way" is a 501 (c)(3) organization.

MORE FAMILY REFLECTIONS

"A father to the fatherless... God sets the lonely in families" Ps. 68:5-6

This verse brings to mind a young woman who grew up in Westown. Rejected by her father and neglected by her mother, she was raised by a faithful grandmother. She came to Girls' Club sporadically and then drifted off our radar. Years later she returned to "The Other Way" for counseling after a personal trauma. She persevered through months of painful work with her counselor. Gradually God brought His healing to her wounded heart. Today she serves in a mission in South Africa, sharing Jesus' love with orphaned children and supported by our Koinonia Women— part of her forever family in Christ.



Deb Borst, Ministry Program Manager, Women's Ministry

Right now in my home "family" means my wife and me. Soon, two currently empty beds in our home will be filled with two children we do not know. Our family will grow because God has called us to be foster parents. A determining factor for my wife and me in our decision to become foster parents was our larger family: our parents, our siblings, our friends, and our church family. Everyone playing a role in our family will play an important role in the lives of our foster children. They will pray for our foster kids, for my wife and me, for the parents of these children. They will baby-sit, share meals and birthdays and holiday traditions. Family is so much more than who lives in your house.

Brian Sharda, Family Development, Children's Ministry

I know a single mother of four young children who works to make ends meet. This means juggling child care, transportation, school and doctor appointments. When she comes home after a full day's work, her children need her attention even though she is exhausted. But she still has hope... the hope of going back to college and maybe someday owning her own home...and most of all the hope that only God can give to just keep going.



In the midst of all the demands of caring for kids and going to work she teaches her children dignity. She teaches them to do what is necessary and not to give up hope when things get overwhelming. She teaches them to trust in God because with God all things are possible.

Natalie Garcia, Family Development, Receptionist



At "The Other Way" Ministries our number one core value is the Lordship of Christ over all. Christmas is truly the season of Christ. When we see our need for Jesus and ask him to be the Lord of our lives, we become a part of God's family. God draws us closer to himself and to others through his gift of unconditional love. In the season of Advent, the greatest gift we can receive is the assurance that we are in God's family--not just at Christmas, but at all times. More than wreaths, trees, turkey or mistletoe, let's remember the STAR over the stable in Bethlehem where Jesus began his journey to make us part of God's family.

Paul Maciejewski, Community Center Host

A Spiritual Gifts seminar at my church reminded me that the body of Christ is made up of many unique parts. Each part plays a different, yet crucial role. For my family, my wife and me, it was a good reminder that we are uniquely gifted to serve each other and our neighbors in different ways. This also applies to our community; our Westown neighborhood families. Henry is gifted with the ability to fix Sandra's car. Sandra is able to provide a meal for the Rogers family who just lost their father. Each member of our community family is loved by God and created with unique gifts and abilities. As we focus on building stronger Christ-centered families, we encourage our neighbors to discover their God-given gifts and use them to serve each other.

Kyle VanStrien, Fund Development

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