



ASLAN YOUTH MINISTRIES

A Presidential Point of Light



*A higher standard.
A higher purpose.*

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Dear Friends,

Springtime at Aslan is an exciting time! The office is buzzing with anticipation for the upcoming summer programs. At the end of June, Aslan staff and several volunteers will bring a group of 20 kids to the Creation Music Festival, four days of diverse Christian music and inspirational speakers. In July our day camp programs will kick off in Asbury Park, followed by Long Branch and ending in August with Red Bank, serving over 100 lower income youth! It is a wonderful time for Aslan staff and volunteers because we have an opportunity to develop deeper relationships with the kids we serve and invest more time and energy in encouraging and nurturing future servant leaders.

The arrival of spring also means “Cheesequake Challenge,” Aslan’s long-distance bike program. Besides the obvious health benefits, this program teaches our kids the principles of servant leadership, discipline, the value of setting goals, team work, and perseverance in the face of seemingly insurmountable hills! These skills are essential as our kids struggle to find positive, life affirming means through which they can navigate the troubled world around them.



All of our bicycle rides start out easy, gradually gaining in difficulty as our kids train for the final overnight ride. Midway through our training I decided to take our kids on a grueling 20-mile ride through the Navesink section of Middletown, which has some of the most difficult terrain in the shore area. Halfway through the ride we came upon a long, steep, gravel-covered road leading into the back of Hartshorne Woods Park. Stopping at the bottom of the hill, Lathea¹, a small, unassuming 10-year old girl, slowly lifted her eyes up, following the steep incline of the road. The look on her face said it all. She surely would be walking her bike up this hill!

Shortly up the hill, one of our volunteers had to start walking, too tired to keep pedaling. As I passed her, I thought to myself, “The kids will never be able to make it.” However, I glanced behind me and, lo and behold, Lathea was right there! With a look of grim determination, Lathea pedaled up the hill without stopping to rest. At the top of the hill, a look of sheer joy and triumph danced upon her face as she looked back at her accomplishment.

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¹ Names have been changed to protect the privacy of individual.

As I reflect upon this experience, I marvel to think of how God moved in and through Lathea's life that day, helping her overcome insurmountable odds. You see, here at Aslan it's not really about the bike ride. It's not really about the programs at all. On the contrary, it's seeing how Jesus works in the experience of everyday relationships and watching Him breathe new life into the kids we serve!

In the service of Christ,

Douglas C. Eagles

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P.S. Thank you for your continued support, both financial and prayer, because without it, the Lathea's of this world won't make it up the hill!



Changing the world . . . one child at a time!