



ASLAN Youth Ministries

P.O. Box 270 * Red Bank, NJ 07701 www.aslanyouth.org



JULY 2009

Hello Friends of Aslan,

Summer is always flush with possibility, challenge, and wonder. The possibility of a changed heart. The challenge of peeling back all the brokenness of our kids lives. And the wonder of watching them grow, mature, and transform right before our very eyes!

Jayden*, one of our teenage boys demonstrated this metamorphosis perfectly. In the spring of 2008, he signed up for our Cheesequake Challenge. He'd been in our Bible class program for quite some time and was also in our tutoring program. He has a tough home life. His father is largely absent and his mom is troubled with her own problems often leaving Jayden to fend for himself.

The Cheesequake Challenge bike program is not easy either. It requires a significant commitment from the kids and is physically and mentally challenging. Physically, I knew Jayden would have no problem. Most likely, he would struggle mentally. He has a huge problem with authority and is very quick to get angry and shut down. Like so many of the kids we work with, Jayden struggles with anger management and self-esteem issues which can be easily exacerbated under challenging situations like our bike program.

Sure enough, Jayden seemed to fight me every step of the way on the rides. The funny thing is, he kept coming back! After successfully completing the bike ride, Jayden joined me for a week-long camping trip to Creation Music Festival where he continued to struggle with his attitude. When the school year started he signed back up for tutoring, and he faithfully showed up to our Bible classes.

This past spring, Jayden signed up for the Cheesequake Challenge again. When he arrived for the first ride, something was different! I couldn't quite place my finger on it, but something had definitely changed. He went out of his way to help me prepare for the rides, and his demeanor was hopeful and lighthearted, which set the tone for the rest of the riders. His anger issues seemed to be in check.

Beyond the bike rides, Jayden willingly offered to help prepare for this year's Creation trip, and he took an active role in helping raise funds for our upcoming servant-leadership training trip to Haiti, which he will be attending for the first time this year.



The changes Jayden exhibited over the past year are an example of what we strive to accomplish with every Aslan kid. Many of the children we serve struggle daily to rise above the brokenness of their lives, their families, and their communities. We surround these beautiful children with love and affirmation, and we encourage them to see the obstacles in their lives as opportunities for personal growth and life transformation.

Recently, I took a vanful of kids to Allaire Airport. It was a wonderful opportunity to meet and talk with pilots, learn about planes, and go flying! The kids were ecstatic to have this unique opportunity. As each child took their turn crawling into one of the many small planes, placing the headsets over their ears, and eagerly looking skyward, I was struck with the look of hope that danced across their faces. When Jayden got out of the plane, he ran up to me and, smiling broadly, recounted every thing he saw from the sky. The brokenness of his life vanished, even if just for a moment, and his eyes were filled with possibility, challenge, and wonder.

Through your ongoing financial support we are able to continue providing kids like Jayden with the opportunity to discover that they can soar above the trials of life and attain their dreams! Please consider making an extra contribution to Aslan this month so we can continue to inspire and be inspired by the Jaydens in this world!

Sincerely,

Doug



IF YOU'D LIKE TO RECEIVE OUR NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL PLEASE FILL OUT THE RESPONSE CARD AND MAIL IT BACK!



* We've changed the names of Aslan children to protect their identity