

ASLAN YOUTH MINISTRIES

A Presidential Point of Light

65 West Front Street ❖ Post Office Box 270 ❖ Red Bank, New Jersey 07701-0270
Telephone: 732-741-7824 ❖ Fax: 732-741-3284 ❖ E-Mail: aslanyouth@
Web: www.aslanyouth.org ❖ Blog: www.theforgottenpeople.typepad.com

October 9, 2009



Dear Friends,

I want to begin by thanking you for caring about Aslan Youth Ministries and the children who we are privileged to served. The only reason you are receiving this mailing is because you know about our work. Aslan celebrates our 35th year in January. Because we've been here for so long, people tend to think we'll always be here. This is a comforting thought but not one that is necessarily based in reality. God uses people to provide the resources we need, and this is why I hope you will read this letter as it is intended ~ not as a mass appeal, but written directly to you.

Why is there only one Aslan Youth Ministries in the world? We are unquestionably unique because we are willing to go to the ends of the earth to help one little child that God has placed in our care.

Yesterday I drove the Aslan bus through the projects in Asbury Park for our Thursday classes. I could easily have honked a few times, as most groups would do, and driven on ~ but that is not Aslan. I turned off the bus and waited as staff and volunteers knocked on door after door throughout the projects to gather our brood of 40 children in and onto the bus. This is not a one-time occurrence. We do this each and every week.

Why is this necessary? If only we could take you inside the home of one of our kids in the projects, the answer would be so obvious. The lives of our children are in shambles. Ninety percent of them do not have a father in their lives. Many of them do not even know who their father is. With "Mom" just trying to keep body and soul together and provide for her family, most of our children raise themselves. These little ones are victims. It is not their fault that so many of them were born out of wedlock and live in such deplorable conditions. The question is how much difference has Aslan made since our humble beginnings in the cold winter of 1975?

Ask Shauna*, who grew up in a family so poor that her mother was cooking on a single-burner hotplate for a family of eight until Aslan bought and installed an oven in her house. Shauna, now a happily married mother of three, recently became a Registered Nurse.

Ask James*, who was removed from his home because his mother was abusing his brothers and sisters and him. Were it not for Aslan, his incorrigible behavior would probably have won him a trip to jail or death. But all the Bible classes, tutoring, bike trips, camps and two trips to Haiti transformed his life forever. After becoming an Army sergeant and faithfully serving our country in Iraq, James returned and enrolled in college in Alabama. Only weeks ago, he was happily married as he prepares to serve God in ministry.

Ask Kristy*, who grew up with a falling down drunk father and distant mother. From the age of six, she attended Aslan every time our doors were open. Multiple trips to Haiti transformed her life and inspired her. She's currently preparing for a wonderful career in the medical field.

Ask Quanisha*, a bright young woman who this September entered a university in Virginia. Street tough, she credits Aslan with transforming her whole values system. Rather than perpetuate the cycle of unwed mothers who bring children into a world with no father, Quanisha has promised herself and us that she will marry someone for life and raise her children with these transformed values she learned at Aslan!

I could list hundreds and hundreds of names and stories like these four above. And each and every one of these individuals would credit Aslan as the defining reason they have overcome seemingly insurmountable odds to live a successful life.

Aslan is currently experiencing one of the most difficult economic crises we have ever experienced. I need not belabor the point of how difficult this year's economy has been for every nonprofit in America. Many ministries and churches have laid off staff and cut back important programs. Some have even been forced to close their doors forever. The reality is this: Aslan is in the same boat! **Our donations are down in every area ~ foundation giving, church giving and individual giving. Without a huge influx of income in November and December, we will be forced to cut back severely with staff and services.** We are already serving far more children, with our small staff of seven, than seems humanly possible. Cutbacks will mean one thing ~ children who desperately need our help will no longer be able to receive it!

If you look back through our many years of ministry, we have not often sounded the alarm. Now, however, is the time. We need your help. Allow me to rephrase that. We need your generous help now more than ever. We know there are many worthy causes. Our hope ~ our prayer ~ is that you will step forward with a generous gift for Aslan. We do not ask for ourselves. If we are forced to, each of our capable staff could probably "do something else" in order to provide for our families. **We ask for these precious little ones who are sheep without a shepherd.** As Jesus has taught us, we have left the ninety-nine to search for the one missing one.

May God bless you,



Craig Bogard

P.S. As I drove through the projects yesterday, a mother came running toward the bus wildly waving her hands. "Please," she pleaded, "Can my children come to Aslan?" Thank you for reading this. **Thank you for reaching deep.** If you do, we can tell this mother, "Yes! We'll be by to pick up your children next week."

We have changed the names of our children to protect their privacy.

