

## **Aslan Youth Ministries to Host Island Nights**

RED BANK - Aslan Youth Ministries, a local nonprofit that provides leadership programs for disadvantaged youth in Monmouth County, will host its largest fundraiser of the year from 5:30 to 11 p.m. Saturday, July 17.

The event, to be held at 41 Breezy Point in Little Silver, will feature dinner, cocktails, live entertainment by the BethAnne Clayton Band, a performance by the Aslan choir, a silent auction, and sunset sailing on the Navesink River on behalf of the 35-year-old Aslan Youth Ministries.

Founded in 1975 by CEO Craig Bogard and his wife, International Program Director Lynn Ann Bogard, Aslan Youth Ministries helps empower children and teenagers who are growing up in poverty in Red Bank, Asbury Park, and Long Branch to step out of their circumstances in the service of others.

Aslan's youth development initiatives incorporate mentoring/tutoring, scholarships, camping, cycling, culture, music, and a Right Choices program that teaches young people to make responsible decisions based on Christian morals and values. Aslan will take local youths to the Summer's Best Two Weeks Citikidz program in western Pennsylvania, as well as New Jersey's Camp Lebanon. Aslan offers day camps in Asbury Park (July 12-23), Long Branch (July 26-Aug 6), and Red Bank (Aug. 9-20).

No matter what the activity, the Aslan experience is steeped in community service, noted Douglas Eagles, Chief Operating Officer of Aslan Youth Ministries.

"Kids who struggle with poverty every day can have trouble recognizing their unique value," Eagles explained. "At Aslan, we believe that with a values-based support system of compassionate adults, every child can blossom into a servant leader. They just have to be guided along their path of service. That service might begin with cleaning up beaches or fixing houses right here in Monmouth County. Then, when our young people are ready, they're able to magnify their leadership at our mission in Haiti."

For the past 15 years, Aslan Youth Services has expanded its ministry to the Ouanaminthe region of Haiti, where 90,000 people live in extreme poverty. Low-income teenagers from Red Bank, Asbury Park, and Long Branch journey to Aslan's 5 acres in L'Acajou, Haiti, and perform community service alongside adult volunteers.

According to Craig Bogard, "The time our New Jersey children spend in Haiti has such a tremendously positive impact. Seeing people in the Third World living under such extreme conditions helps our young people rethink their wants and needs in the broader perspective of people who are literally starving to death on a daily basis."

In Haiti, Aslan volunteers construct homes, operate summer camps, and distribute essentials such as eyeglasses, medical supplies, and toiletries. They forge relationships with Haitian families and at times assist in the construction of Aslan's future medical clinic, missionary training school, and orphanage in L'Acajou. Aslan's next journeys to Haiti are planned for this month and next.

None of these efforts would be possible, Eagles pointed out, without fundraisers such as Island Nights.

Tickets for the gala evening are \$125. A portion of the ticket price is tax-deductible and will support Aslan's many programs for children in Monmouth County and Haiti. For details on sponsorships and tickets, call Aslan at 732-741-7824 or visit [aslanyouth.org](http://aslanyouth.org).