



Church Hill Activities and Tutoring

Opening Homes, Transforming Lives, Rebuilding Communities

Dangerous Dreamers

“Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more” Genesis 37:5 NIV. Dreams are dangerous things. They look beyond the mundane reality of the present to a future that might not come. And yet, those dreamers push on, daring to hope, courageously pushing forward. When Angie and I moved into north Church Hill almost 9 years ago, we didn’t find a lot of dreamers. We found a lot of cynics and realists. Have you ever met a 10 year old realist/cynic? It isn’t fun. You ask questions like, “What do you want to do when you grow up? What is your dream job?” The answer was usually professional athlete or model. I thought these kids were dreaming big. Instead, they would ultimately confess that they were more than likely going to do nothing. They picked dreams that they knew were well out of their reach so that they wouldn’t be disappointed when they didn’t achieve them. They were being realistic. Saying something impressive, but knowing they didn’t have a chance. Since then, I have seen a new generation of dreamers rise up in the neighborhood. I don’t hear much about playing in the NFL anymore, but I hear a lot of other things. Students are dreaming about going to college. Those same kids are talking about becoming nurses, lawyers, counselor, and teachers. And let me tell you, it is hard to hold on to these dreams in the inner city. Others in the community ‘hate’ them for daring to dream, for wanting more. How do they respond? They keep showing up for tutoring. They keep showing up at the Academy. And we are thankful. Because if dreams are dangerous things, then dreamers are dangerous people. They have the ability to transform communities and the lives of all those around them. Joseph’s dreams ultimately made him the salvation of a whole people. At CHAT, we dare to dream that our students just might be that for our section of Richmond, VA. Thank you for sharing in our dreams. – Percy Strickland



Third Annual

I HAVE A DREAM Event



CHAT experienced a great night at the Third Annual “I Have A Dream” Event. In 1963 Dr. Martin Luther King inspired a nation to imagine a world marked by compassion, understanding, and love. Our participants demonstrated their same dreams through song, dance, poetry, and speeches. Winter, a middle school student (pictured left) dared us to “dream without end” and “to not be afraid of our dreams” Other students shared their dreams to a room of 200 supports enjoying desserts and coffee. Their dreams included that no kid would get suspended and that everyone would pass their SOL’s, that my father could stop his alcohol problem, that there would be no violence at my school and nothing harmful would happen to my neighborhood, and that one day as an African American we can go somewhere without being looked at as a dumb individual simply because of the color of our skin. The high school LOVE (Ladies of Virtue and Excellence) Bible study danced to a worship song explaining the many names of God. As the night ended with the song “God of the City,” we were all convinced that God is the God of Richmond! Although there are broken homes, broken hearts, and broken families, God is hearing the dreams of our youth and pursuing a neighborhood marked by compassion, understanding, and love.

More Than A Job

CHAT has grown in many areas of the years. The summer intern program is one of the major achievements. Last summer, CHAT had 12 college interns running tutoring, mentoring kids, and serving at CHAT's first full day camp! Mackenzie (pictured right) was one of those summer interns. Mackenzie enjoyed his summer so much that he decided to continue working in Richmond and living at The Lighthouse, CHAT's headquarters, to stay involved.



Another first for CHAT was their yearlong intern program. Five college graduates committed to moving into the neighborhood, raising their minimal salary for year, and serving CHAT in any way needed. Caitlin (pictured left with one of her mentees, Latifa) lives in Church Hill and teaches History at Church Hill Academy along with her many other tasks with CHAT. After working with inner city kids from Boston, Caitlin wanted to work with at-risk youth in their own neighborhood in a more permanent way. "I am constantly encouraged by the faith and commitment of the people around me, and the relationships I have formed with fellow interns and CHAT staff. I truly believe there is a uniqueness in these relationships that are based on a shared belief that God is working in this neighborhood and a love for this community," Caitlin explains.

A Special Thanks....

Laura Inscoe and St. John's church for hosting CHAT at their pancake supper on Shrove Tuesday

Reveille United Methodist Church for hosting the "I Have A Dream" event

Mitch Bennett and Mechanicsville Christian Center for providing the rehearsal space and stage for the "I Have A Dream" event

The University of Richmond's **Molly Coplan and Theta** along with **Michael Rogers and Sig Eps** for their service work with CHAT.

Katie Widmer, our PTA representative for CHA

Interested in being a summer or yearlong intern for CHAT? Visit the website for more details and the application or contact Murray Withrow at murray.withrow@chatrichmond.org

Interested in sponsoring an intern? \$3,000/summer intern and \$12,000/year long intern. Contact Ashley Smith at Ashley.smith@chatrichmond.org

HAPPY BIRTHDAY CHAT!!!



On February 15th, CHAT celebrated its 8th birthday! All CHAT participants went duck pin bowling, ate pizza, and devoured a giant birthday cake! It was 8 years ago that Percy and Angie Strickland graciously opened their homes to the Church Hill neighborhood and inspired an entire community to open homes, transform lives, and rebuild community.



CHAT

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