

Mission Partner Updates (6/23/2020)

Because of your support, we were able to approach a church near us and explore renovation, with a potential lease to follow. We had no idea if it was going to happen. We just asked the pastor to go find bids for floor replacement, pew removal, and chair purchase (and from a business perspective, essentially attract us as a tenant by keeping the renovation costs manageable).

In God's kindness and without the pastor knowing any of our financials, the bids for all of the above totaled the EXACT amount Shades gave Mission City! So now their church is getting an update and a tenant, and Mission City has its first home in NYC! The renovation starts next week.

This is also a big win for the kingdom of God in this divisive time in our country, as we reach across denomination and racial lines and work together as one church.

Incredible. We are thankful Shades' gift - send this news to anyone it would encourage! Shades is helping us set up for impact in NYC!

~Garrett Raburn, Mission City New York~

I got word this morning that our school district is cancelling all outside groups from using their schools due to COVID-19. That was tough to hear. The principal of our school immediately called the superintendent, (on her own without talking to us) and told her that our community and school is better because of Aspire. She listed:

1. They clean our school grounds every quarter
2. Deliver food to our families in need during the pandemic.
3. Donated money to help unemployed families connected to our school.
4. Serve lunch for our teachers every quarter.
5. Do not leave a footprint when they leave on Sunday.

I was blown away. The superintendent and board will meet regarding a special use addendum for Aspire.

I do not know of another space in the Foothills to meet. Space is SO limited here.

Thank you for your prayers as we see God work in this situation.

~Brian Hook, Aspire Church Tucson~

This time in isolation has been an opportunity to reflect on our ministry and examine where God is working and also areas we may need to step back from. As we seek his will and look at God for guidance on the different directions our ministry is taking, please pray that we trust in Him and delight in doing God's will daily.

~Rob Bensinger and Jase Vann, 5:9 Ministries

COVID-19 may have restricted our ability to be together in person with our patients and families. However, that isn't stopping our staff and volunteers from brightening our patient families days from afar! This month we sent patients and siblings Summer Boredom Buster packages full of bubbles, chalk, fishing nets, water toys, and so much more! Thank you to our volunteers from a local church for gathering the various items and Anne Chamberlain for making the hand painted bags!

We wanted to share outstanding milestones that have been achieved by a few of our patient families children and siblings who have gone through the pediatric cancer journey. These graduates have experienced pediatric cancer personally or been a sibling and served as a bone marrow donor. What a tremendous blessing to see how each of these young people have overcome many different obstacles in their short life to now celebrate being a 2020 graduate. Join with us to honor and recognize their amazing achievements!

We hope you join us as we continue to pray for all the children we know who are currently fighting pediatric cancer.

~Andy and Jan Thrower, aTeam Ministries~

- Visa - Please pray that the Visa for his new country will get approved and sent to Tim as soon as possible.
- Moving date - The Army told us that we do not have to wait for the Visa before we can schedule our move to Enterprise, AL. Please pray that the rest of our belongings will arrive to our new home at the same time we do!
- August 1 deployment - Please pray that the country Tim is going to will open to Army travelers and that Tim will be able to begin his deployment on August 1. If it does not open by August 1, Tim will have to move back to Tacoma alone and work from there until he is able to get into the new country
- House in Enterprise - Please pray that we will be able to find a wonderful house in Enterprise to either rent or buy. Both the rental and for-sale markets are very competitive right now, so lots of prayer is needed on this one!
- Renee's parents – please pray for them as her father has a herniated disk and is in lots of pain. Her mother, who is legally blind is trying to take care of him.

~Tim and Renee Shepherd, US Army Chaplain~

Many times we think that God's agenda is determined by our news cycle. I assure you it is not, His agenda is determined by His predetermined plan to extend and expand His Kingdom to every nation, and every people. Many times we are so focused on the news from our earthly kingdom that we lose sight or perspective of what God is doing in His.

He has never lost sight of what He is doing, He is not caught off guard, or does He desist in His perfect plan. He continues to do everything to draw the men and woman of the nations to Himself, for His glory and our good.

Many would think, is God calling families to plant their lives in other countries during everything that is happening in our world? Yes He is! This last week I was able to meet separately with 2 different young couples from Mexico that God has called to plant their lives among the unreached in 2 different Southeast Asian countries. We were able to spend several hours conversing about their fields, their preparation, and their home churches that would be sending them. It is our privilege to continue to help raise up and send out a new generation of missionaries from the former mission fields.

So, God is still on mission in the midst of a worldwide pandemic and racial riots. He is still equipping local churches to own His mission and take the Gospel to the ends of the earth. We are privileged to be part of His mission and His Kingdom!

~Ralph & Xochitl Canada, Connect Global~

We are doing well. We've been extra busy since things opened up with meetings and other events. Headed to a wedding now for a friend's brother. We will be in their hometown all weekend. It's getting really hot now.

We met the new bro in person for the first time and he wants to be dunked. He's doing well.

~J & A, North Africa~

Thank you so much for your continued prayers! Things are sort of returning to normal here. We've been able to get out a lot more and meet new people or hang out with friends we met before or during the quarantine. Most of our meetings have returned to being in person, but our church services won't start again in person until July. Until then, we're continuing to stream a recording of the service every Sunday!

Last week, we started our English chats again in person and had 6 new people come! Please continue to pray that those will be a bridge to gospel conversations.

We also started back with some of the youth things at the church. We had several come to study the book of John this week and we had a great time hanging out at the park with 7 youth and 2 leaders on Saturday. Please pray for the youth at the church to grow in their love for the Lord and for one another!

Here are some things you can pray for this week:

- English chats Monday and Tuesday nights
- Bible studies at the church on Tuesdays and Fridays
- Youth Bible study on Wednesday
- Current relationships to deepen and interest in spiritual topics
- Opportunities to meet people and share the gospel with Spaniards!

Thank you so much for your support and encouragement!

~Seth Graves, Spain~

I just wanted to send you a quick update as to how things went yesterday at immigration. We had all the documents needed to submit our application, but they would not yet accept it as they wanted more clarification as to the kids being homeschooled. They wanted some type of proof/documentation from an oversight institution acknowledging that they're aware we are homeschooling and that they are monitoring their progress and especially their exams (primarily end of year exams). This examination is a big deal in this part of the world and counts much more than semester or end of term finals. They also requested a letter on my behalf stating my credentials as a teacher, what guidelines we adhere to and what subjects the kids study.

I just received word from the attorney that she submitted all the documents to the main immigration office in the capital city and the chief officer will be reviewing everything

Please pray for a good judgment from the visa office.

~M & A, Central Asia~

Our ministry transitioned to online during this time and in many areas, it has transitioned back to working face to face, but there are some areas that we are still working with an online format. Schools have been closed since March 18 so all work with children is required to be virtual even with churches. V was able to continue discipling three ladies and has started to disciple one more through WhatsApp. Our church plant was done online for a month, and then transitioned back to meet in person. The group has met weekly this year. Last year it was once every two weeks. Though the COVID-19 pandemic was not in anyone's plans for 2020, we have seen the Lord move in many different ways during this time. Thank you for your support. Please continue to pray for our family and our ministry and let us know how we can pray for you too.

~K and V, Brazil~