

URBAN CONNECTIONS

Connecting with Christ, Connecting with People,
Developing our Community Together

FEBRUARY 2013

SEEING TRANSFORMATION ONE STEP AT A TIME

By Burt Manchester

Every so often we see glimpses of understanding and change in the kids we work with at Urban Connections. A few weeks ago one of our elementary age students named Talisha (not real name) was paying very close attention as we explained what it meant to have a personal relationship with Jesus. We weren't just talking about the forgiveness of our sins but also asking Jesus to lead and direct our life choices. It is then we discovered how she helped someone else make a good choice out of something bad. The week before one of our students had taken a leaders purse before leaving early that night. When this student went to Talisha's house she immediately told her it was a bad choice and she needed to return the leaders purse right away. The girl did return the purse sort of. She placed it on the car trunk of the leader. Thankfully, the Lord made it invisible to anyone passing by until we discovered it later that night. The encouraging part is that Talisha connected following Jesus with making good choices and she stood up to tell another person to do the right thing. In our ministry those steps are huge.

*She helped
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LONG TERM PARTNERSHIPS

For the past several years we have had mission teams coming to Urban Connections to help us with our ministry in the neighborhood. We have begun long term partnerships with many of these teams as they return for a second or third time. So what can happen to a person's perspective when they enter an unfamiliar urban

culture for a week or two? What can happen when someone creatively uses an everyday item like a button? This is the story of Amy Miller who is currently attending Malone College in Northeast Ohio.



CREATIVE USE OF A BUTTON

by Amy Miller

All inner city areas lay heavily upon my heart. My major at Malone is Integrated Language Arts because I hope to teach in an inner city school district. Sometimes when I tell people my desired working location they look at me oddly and ask, "Why don't you work in a 'comfortable' area or a Christian school." Those working environments are perfect for some teachers and those teachers are definitely needed, but those 'comfortable' areas are last on my list.

The summer before my senior year of high school and this past summer, I had the privilege to go to an inner city area in Columbus, Ohio with other members of my church. While I was there we worked with a non-profit organization called Urban Connections for a week. I was truly blessed beyond belief during both summers working with Urban Connections. My heart truly and completely broke for the children. But even through hardships, joy emanated from the children.

My most memorable moment was a conversation I had with a young girl no older than 7...

Me: "So how many siblings do you have?"

Her: "Just 3 now, my baby sister died and my brother died too."

Me: "I am so sorry."

Her: "Oh it's alright, cause my sister and brother are upstairs with Jesus."

Me: "Well that's great; I know He is watching over them."

Her: "Yeah, Jesus is. You know what else Jesus is?...He's cool, He loves me, He protects me, He helps me, He's the best."

These children need Jesus, and are receiving the truth about Him through the workers and ministry of Urban Connections. So join me in supporting Urban Connections.

So how is Amy following the Lord's leading to support our ministry? This is where the buttons come in. She has begun making jewelry out of buttons and wire. God is using simple everyday items along with Amy's time, creativity and skill to help her respond to the experiences she had while at Urban Connections. This is what can happen when people step out into unfamiliar and often times uncomfortable situations. They discover the Lord meeting them there and sharing the passions of His heart.

Who knows what else can happen to you and me when we seek the Lord's heart and step out in faith?

TO VIEW AMY'S PRODUCTS AT JUST A BUTTON OR PLACE AN ORDER, PLEASE VISIT HER WEBSITE
[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/JUSTABUTTON](https://www.facebook.com/justabutton)



MAKING A POINT WITH A BIG GULP

By Burt Manchester

I'm known for having a 44oz. Big Gulp of Pepsi on numerous days during the week. However, on this particular school day I had a different "Big Gulp". I teach a Character Class at Fairwood Ave. Elementary school to a group of eight 3rd graders. I try to have some visual or hands on project to get the point across each segment. The point for the day was to abstain from anything which might damage or pollute your mind or body. As each student shared an example they came up and added

some ingredient to a pitcher full of grapefruit juice; such things as mustard, ranch dressing, pepper, soy sauce, etc. After mixing all the ingredients I poured some in a glass and after a momentary hesitation I took a big gulp. The reactions were predictable with groans and yucks. I then stated, "You need to have the same reaction when it comes to polluting your mind or body with harmful things". Hopefully, it got the point across and perhaps they will remember the illustration as they grow older and have many life-altering choices to make. Although I can't specifically share from the Bible or about Jesus we have some great conversations that parallel the teachings of the Bible. By the way, afterwards I did go and get my regular Big Gulp which tasted even better than usual that day.



Burt & his
Big Gulp

LEADING WITH LOVE

by Doug Hartman

Leading with love, characterized by compassion. If I had but a few words to describe how the Christian faith affects us in a practical sense, I would choose those two phrases. How should we treat each other? How should we engage the world around us? What makes us distinctly Christian? At recent gatherings of our UC house church, we've been wrestling a bit with those questions. I think those two phrases are a good answer. As followers of Christ, we lead with love. We're characterized by compassion.

Many times in the NT, the authors begin lists of practical ways to treat one another. Be devoted to one another, honor one another, rejoice with one another, don't judge one another, build one another up, agree with one another, be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another. More often than not, NT authors sum these various ideas up with the simple command to love one another.

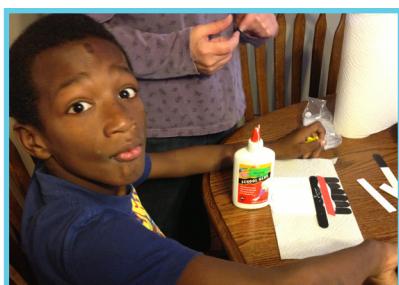
Such a description of "church" can sound unrealistic or even ridiculous to our ears. But this also is to misunderstand how the situation is actually described. The Bible does not sugarcoat the challenges we face

in life. It assumes the disagreements and arguments, the divisions and pain of everyday life, the ways we can tear one another apart, and so places that much more emphasis on how we should treat one another. This is how God treats us, Scripture reminds us again and again, so we ought to be this way with one another.

In Jesus' life and ministry, God chose to engage us through love and grace. This is the message of John 3:16, is it not? God loved the world and so decided to send his Son... God believed—if I can use that term—that his love and grace could penetrate our callousness and indifference, could transform our evil and wicked ways, could create among us a new humanity out of the wreckage and turmoil we've made of the old. However "idyllically" the NT may speak of the way of life among Christ's followers, it at best only mirrors the incomprehensible way God has already treated us. "In light of God's mercy..."

This idea of leading with love and compassion applies equally well I believe to the way we ought to engage the world around us. As the Scriptures make abundantly clear, God did not wait for us to be good or have faith or to turn from our sin or pursue righteousness or anything of the sort. "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us," Paul wrote. God initiated our redemption through grace and love. As we share his story, we bear witness to the truth and power of the message by extending love and compassion to those who hear.

If God is courageous enough to lead with his love, to trust in the power of his compassion, we can hardly do better. It is my prayer that the work and people of UC will continue to lead with love and be characterized by compassion.



*How should we treat each other?
We lead with love,
characterized by compassion.*

WAYS TO HELP URBAN CONNECTIONS

BIKES FOR FITNESS 360 CAMP



We are in need of 20+ bikes for kids and youth who participate in our Fitness 360 camp this July. The bikes need to be in good condition (not perfect) and can range in size for young elementary through middle school students. The bikes will be used to teach kids about bike safety, take daily bike trips on local bike paths, and then kids who want to participate in an ongoing bike club will be given a bike to keep. If you can provide a bike please contact Burt Manchester at burt@urban-connections.org or call 736-0470. Bikes can be donated anytime between now and June.



SCHOLARSHIP A CHILD FOR UC KIDZ CAMPS

Can you make it possible for a child to attend one or more of our summer Kidz Camps this year? We need to raise \$1200 to cover the registration cost for 30 kids. That works out to \$40 per child for up to 3 weeks of camp. Why are we doing this? We don't want lack of finances to prohibit any child from attending one of our camps. What will be expected of the child and their family instead of money? Each child and/or family members will be required to participate in various community projects. This will benefit the community by completing needed projects and neighbors will be able to work together to add value to the neighborhood. We are very excited about this opportunity. You can send donations to Urban Connections at 447 Fairwood Ave., Columbus, OH 43205 and designate your check to Camp Scholarships.



SAVES THESE DATES!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

- Feb. 16: Kidz Outing to World of Bounce
- March 16: Volunteer Meeting,
9am at UC House
- March 23: Kidz Outing - Bowling
- April 1-5: Spring Break,
No Kidz Connections
- April 6: Garage Sale, 9am at First Alliance
- April 20: Kidz Hiking
- May 18: Community Service Project
- July 15-19: Kidz Camp
- July 22-26: Kidz Camp
- July 29-Aug 2: Kidz Fitness Camp
- August 31: Volunteer Meeting
- Sept. 7: Children's Parade

SAVE THE DATE:

UC ANNUAL GARAGE SALE

April 6, 2013
9am-3pm
First Alliance Church
(on the corner of Sawmill & Henderson)
ACCEPTING DONATIONS NOW!

CLEVELAND REGIONAL CCDA

“Building Bridges of Hope”: Going Beyond Charity
Together
Saturday, April 20, 2013
Cleveland, OH
Elizabeth Baptist Church
Registration is open at city-vision.org

WAYS TO HELP URBAN CONNECTIONS

NEEDED ITEMS FOR THE UC HOUSE

Paper Towels
Toilet Paper
Drink Mix
Ranch Dressing
Spaghetti Sauce
Canned Fruit
Microwave Popcorn
Mustard
Ketchup
Sugar
Drink Mix

UC STORE ITEMS

Playdough and Playdough Kits
Craft Kits
Bubbles
Sugarless Gum
Lego's
Nerf Items (No guns please)
Other miscellaneous items

Beginning in 2013 UC will not be mailing our bimonthly newsletter any longer. Twice each year you can look forward to an update in the mail. For more regular updates and more pictures, sign up for email newsletters on our website, www.urban-connections.org or FaceBook page, <https://www.facebook.com/urbanconnections>.



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