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**Celebrating 15 years of God's Faithfulness**

by Dylan Priddy

In 1996 Trinity Presbyterian Church stepped out in faith to found Charlottesville Abundant Life Ministries in order to carry out the great commission among a struggling local community and to practice Christian community development in the Prospect neighborhood. This took place after more than a year of prayer and study by a small group searching for the right community to serve while at the same time a few Christians in the Prospect area were asking God to provide a center to serve neighborhood children. Now, after fifteen years and partnerships established with more churches and organizations, the community gathered to celebrate the ministry's first 15 years and to look forward to how He will work through us in the future.

The celebrations began with a fundraising banquet at King Family Vineyards on the night of June 17th, where over 150 people gathered to reflect on the journey CALM has taken over the past fifteen years and the impact it has had on the collective community. Executive director Rydell Payne, who has served for 11 years, spoke about the history and future of CALM. The night was accompanied by music from Eli Cook and the House Band as well as presentations on AmeriCorps and the property development of CALM. The evening was a special time to sit back and reflect on the work God is doing in this community. At the end of the evening, guests were given the opportunity to offer support to CALM.

Saturday, June 18th was a full day of fun on CALM's property. The day began with a competitive basketball tournament of 14 teams, 10 adult and 4 youth teams, in the morning that showed off the local talent and was followed by a field day at the property on Prospect Avenue. Bouncy houses, tug-of-war, soap carving, and face-painting entertained families for the afternoon. The evening continued with an outdoor

worship service with CALM staff, volunteers, friends and neighbors thanking God for His faithfulness. Ms. Dorothy shared how God has provided a home for her to own and how He continues to work in her life. The celebrations ended with a summer potluck dinner. It was a great way to celebrate the community that has formed through this ministry.

If you missed out on this celebration but would like to become involved in a personal ministry to our families, volunteer in other ways or financially support our work, please fill out the form on the back, call us at 434-970-2077 or go to [www.charlottesvilleabundantlife.org](http://www.charlottesvilleabundantlife.org)

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I would like to help support &/or volunteer for Charlottesville Abundant Life Ministries (CALM).

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Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Gift enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Can we expect

regular gifts? (\$\$ / month or quarter) \_\_\_\_\_

I want to Volunteer; my preferred area of service is: \_\_\_\_\_

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**

Mail this form & gift to:

CALM  
P.O. Box 71  
Charlottesville, VA 22902

**To donate to CALM via CVC  
(for Va state employees),  
use code #3070**



**Prospect Community Garden cont.**

teaching and learning, while enjoying conversation and company. Community gardens can serve as a vehicle for strengthening relationships, and thus the community. Not only do we desire to see the garden grow, but the people in the community grow also. We hope our garden will serve this purpose as well. Thank you to Lowes, Southern States, Settle Tire, and Marilyn Bartoes for their generous donations of plants, seeds, tools, and other gardening materials. For more information on the garden, donations, and working, please contact [liz@charlottesvilleabundantlife.org](mailto:liz@charlottesvilleabundantlife.org).



## Prospect Community Garden

by Elizabeth Moore

On Friday, May 20th, the Prospect Community Garden was reborn. The garden, located off 5th Street behind CALM's 784 Prospect Avenue property, was first begun in 2005, but has lain fallow for the past few years. A ground-breaking attended by CALM staff, Blue Ridge Commons staff, CALM AmeriCorps members, and several local residents held a work day to put up fencing, clear beds, and begin planting tomatoes and peppers. The work day coincided with the celebration of National AmeriCorps Week and the impact the AmeriCorps Program has in local communities.

This year, Charlottesville Abundant Life Ministries and Blue Ridge Commons are partnering together to work on the garden project. As we revive the garden, we hope that it will serve many purposes. We will have weekly garden times three days a week during which residents in the neighborhood can come to garden. Many residents have expressed interest, some with a lot of gardening experience, and some with little experience at all, but a lot of desire and curiosity to "learn something about growing some plants." Many international families look forward to the possibilities of growing some of their favorite vegetables and greens for cooking, which are not found in local grocery stores. In addition, the garden will be used in CALM's and BRC's summer programming for kids as a space for service work and an outdoor classroom for learning. Already it has been visited and worked in by CALM's Bible Club girls and the neighborhood Girl Scout Troop. Both of these groups attended the Friday ground-breaking event and planted flowers.

As part of Abundant Life's mission to engage in transformation with people, community gardens have the potential of bringing residents together to spend time working side by side, sharing,

## 5/8 Club, Transforming Hearts

by Dylan Rosenthal

Abundant Life seeks to bring about change in the Prospect Avenue neighborhood through people, programs, and partnerships. While I strongly believe that personal transformation most often happens through relationships, most of my paid work hours with children are spent in programs (specifically the 5/8 Club and 5/8 Discipleship Group). Yet it's programs like these that earn me and other staff and volunteers the right to spend mutually-transforming time with the kids outside of club time.

A few months back I was at my church small group, and the leader asked everyone to share where we saw Jesus that week. I thought back to the previous Tuesday night, when two of the boys in Discipleship Group showed up at our house an hour early to hang out and play video games (Richard Feero and I co-lead and co-host the group). I told them that they had to recite the memory verse we had given them a few weeks prior before they could play. I then proceeded to watch two unchurched 8th graders, who didn't have bibles in their homes before we loaned them ours, practice memorizing Matthew 22:36-41: "*Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?*" Jesus replied: "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.*"

The whole scene was remarkable. Why on earth would two unchurched 8th graders, unrelated to me, be on my living room couch on a Tuesday afternoon memorizing bible verses when they could be anywhere else, doing anything else? Only because of Jesus do I even live in the same neighborhood as these kids let alone know them. And lest you think it was to play video games, you should know that they brought the game over themselves. Only because of Jesus do I have the privilege of watching these kids celebrate successfully memorizing bible passages and playing Xbox with them. Only because of Jesus. By the way, you can watch candid video of Shaka and Ernesto reciting their memory verses at the 5/8 Club facebook page.



All the new dishes we've tried led us to center several of our special events this year around food. For Thanksgiving, the girls cooked their own Thanksgiving dinner including teaching Arley and I how to make pan-fried chicken. On MLK, Jr. Day, the girls participated in a service project where they cooked a large meal at The Haven, leading to discussions on the issue of homelessness in Charlottesville. During the Festival of the Book, we went on a long-awaited Saturday lunch trip to Mel's followed by attending a poetry reading on teen issues. Alas! Mel's was sold out of chitlins when we got there, but we still had a great time bonding over lunch and listening to the poetry performances, including many that one of our LQ girls performed in. A trip to the Smith Aquatic and Fitness Center later in the year gave us a chance to check out the new neighborhood pool facilities and enjoy a night of relaxation and relationship building while floating around the lazy river.

Our bible study discussions this year have focused on growing in our identity in Christ – leaving behind the old and stepping into the newness of life God has for us. Throughout the year, we have been exploring Paul's claim, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone and the new has come!" Our discussions have been wide ranging from thinking about the language we use to speak about others to examining how we can move beyond harmful internal thought patterns



## All Things New

by Sarah Malpass

It's been a year of exploring new things at LQ, Jr.! From dinners to field trips to bible study, we have been challenged to try eating new things, build new relationships, serve in new ways and grow in the new life God has given us.

On Wednesday nights from 6:15 to 8:00, our middle school girls meet for dinner, bible study and fellowship at the Abundant Life house. Over dinner, we share about the highs and lows of our weeks and catch up on the news from Buford Middle School while trying new dishes and foods. At the beginning of the year, we learned about the importance of eating local food and caring for the earth by trying an apple crisp made from local ingredients. Other new foods, we've tried include hummus, squash soup and apple butter pork chops. (One of the most requested foods so far has been chitlins – not new to the girls, but new to my co-leader, Arley, and I! It's still on the "to do" list as we haven't yet found a restaurant that serves chitlins on Wednesday nights.) One of the biggest joys has been seeing the girls develop new relationships with each other over our meals together as they share the ups and downs of middle school life and trade advice about how to get through!

into the freedom Jesus offers through our new identity as children of God. We've also wrestled with the ways in which we fall short of living in our new identity – at school, at home, with our friends – and with how the brokenness all around us makes growing in Christ a gradual process that requires persistence and faith.

As we continue meeting through early June, my hope is that each of our young women leaves this year with a sense of God's love for her – expressed through the goodness of creation we have been exploring through food, fun and fellowship, as well as through her ability to teach others new skills and to give back through serving people in need – and with a growing faith in the One who promises us, "Behold, I am making all things new!"

