



an Unlikely Community

Dear Friends,

Merry Christmas from the staff, board, students and families of Redeemer Community Partnership!

This fall was a rich one for us. On October 31st we helped to host "Light the Night," a harvest-themed block party near our tutoring center. Hundreds of our neighbors came to play carnival games, take photo booth pictures, pet farm animals and try out our homemade cider press.

In the center of all this stood two information booths. One was for a new charter school that will serve 4th-8th graders starting next year. The founder plans for her students to be reading Shakespeare by 8th grade, and she has a strategic, research-based plan to get there. That night she gathered a stack of interest forms from local families, helping her qualify to use space at an existing district school. One hurdle cleared. The booth next door, decorated with skulls and a fog machine, educated families about the health hazards of an oil drilling site up the street. For three hours our staff and volunteers showed pictures, explained data (mostly in Spanish) and signed up neighbors to be part of a protest effort.

One of the biggest vulnerabilities of neighborhoods like ours is fragmentation. People don't know each other well enough to tackle the problems in our school system together; or to take a united stand against a predatory oil company. When families gather in the street on Halloween night it is a step toward knowing, trusting and belonging to one another. Light the Night is a small-town kind of event, designed to nurture a small-town mentality within the sprawling metropolis that surrounds us.

On November 20th we held our annual benefit dinner, which raised over \$60,000 for RCP's programs. Our keynote speaker was a freshman at UC Santa Cruz who grew up in the apartment building next to our tutoring

'tis the season to give...and receive!



card with a message from a student

Give a tax deductible donation before December 31st and you will receive a special gift handcrafted by one of our students!



snowman magnet

You can also give online at www.redeemercp.org Don't forget to include your address so we can send you your gift!



Kids in costumes enjoy games, crafts, and jumpers at our annual harvest block party.



center. She shared about attending Adventures Ahead from kindergarten to 6th grade, then returning as a volunteer, and eventually launching a club at her high school to recruit classmates to volunteer. As she remembered her 5-year-old self sitting on the carpet waiting for snacks, she wondered at how that little girl became a confident reader, a college-bound teen and a leader among her peers. One thing she knew was foundational: Adventures Ahead was place of belonging and trust. Our staff were people she could trust, and who trusted that she had important gifts to share with the world. Adventures Ahead was Diana’s small-town within the metropolis. A network of caring grownups, outside her family but right there on her block, who believed in her and supported her dreams.

On November 25th the city scheduled a public hearing regarding the oil drilling at Jefferson and Budlong, a few hundred yards from our tutoring center. Our community outreach paid off. Neighborhood residents packed the hearing room, forcing a move to a larger space. Then they packed an overflow room. When the zoning administrator asked who would like to speak, hands shot up around the room. And many of those speakers wore bright gold Light the Night t-shirts. The oil company was unprepared for such articulate and forceful opposition, never expecting it from a low-income, immigrant neighborhood. Fragmentation is being replaced by cohesion.



At Christmas we celebrate the arrival of a savior. But he didn’t arrive solitary on a white horse. Our nativity sets portray a community, commissioned to carry salvation into our world. A newlywed couple facing big marital challenges. An understanding older relative. A property owner willing to offer space in his stable. Shepherds called away from their work. Wise men making a long journey from their seats of privilege to deliver a unique set of gifts: powerful validation, by their very presence, of Mary and Joseph’s angelic tidings; and costly off-the-registry items that may have helped them survive their abrupt immigration to Egypt. Salvation was entrusted to an unlikely community, patched together across age, race, class, language, educational background and degrees of social respectability.

As we nurture our own unlikely community, which you are part of, may God’s deliverance arrive just as powerfully. *Oh come thou dayspring come and cheer, our Spirits by thine Advent here. Disperse the gloomy clouds of night. And death’s dark shadow put to flight!*

Rejoicing,
Anna Parks

neighborhood mom and board member

Robotics Update

Three cheers for our robotics team, FLL Team 1970 (a.k.a. The Gearheads)! After spending the spring semester gathering and honing skills in engineering and programming, our robotics team took a great leap forward during the tournament season this fall. They built a sturdy robot that performed consistently (not an easy thing to do!), programmed 7 out of a

possible 14 missions, and created a fun educational game using Scratch programming and a MaKey MaKey device which they taught to our Kindergarten class at Adventures Ahead. Led by 4 returning 5th graders, this team showed much grace and professionalism throughout, taking home the Judges' Choice Award. The judges said that they expect great things from this team in the future... we couldn't agree more!



...and their robot, Master Hand