

## Hope in South L.A.

*Find out how you can spread some hope to families in South Los Angeles this Christmas season*

Hope enrolled in Adventures Ahead in September. She was supposed to be heading to second-grade, but was held back. On every measure of reading she scored below kindergarten level. At school, Hope's teacher said she was so far behind that it wasn't possible to predict whether she would be ready for second-grade next year. She hated going to school, she hated her teacher, she hated doing homework. She threw prolonged temper tantrums each morning when it was time to get ready for school.

However, when she came to Adventures Ahead, she could barely wait for the car to stop moving before grabbing up all her things and bursting through the door. She made slow progress with her sight words and her phonics, but she pushed each day.

Every student at Adventures Ahead takes home a book on their level everyday. Kids who read at Hope's level can't read independently, but we hope that someone in their family will read with them, or that they spend time getting into the pictures and the words. After weeks of being read to, Hope discovered she could read the book. She kept that book and she practiced each day. One night, Hope's sister overheard her reading. In shock, she grabbed a phone and started to take a video midway through the book to memorialize the moment. Her sister didn't believe she was capable of reading like that.

Hope showed that video to everyone she met for the next two weeks. She also refused to bring the book, "Chicken, Chicken, Duck," back to Adventures Ahead. We were able to give Hope her own copy, which she often takes into her bed with her at night.

Last week, Hope's teacher at school seemed to think that the progress that was made in two short months was fairly miraculous. Hope has a ways to go, but she's made incredible gains and is on track to go to second grade. Hope's oldest sister cannot yet read. She worries about her inability to read signs and forms, get and keep a good job, and how she will help her child with homework someday. Because of your partnership, those are uncertainties that Hope will not have to face.

That one book made all the difference to this one child. You could put that book into a child's hand.

This Christmas you can share hope with the families of South LA. Your tax deductible year end gift will help us reach more families with life-changing literacy. We will send you a handmade ornament to remind you to pray for South LA, as a token of thanks.

Thank you for all you do for the families in South LA!

### Looking for ways to get involved?

#### Give!

*Give a tax deductible gift before December 31<sup>st</sup> and you will receive a handmade ornament*

#### Volunteer!

*Volunteer as a one-on-one Reading Buddy for those who live in the LA area, or find out how you can bring a group for a weekend or week-long service trip.*

*Contact Lisa at*

*[lisa@redeemercp.org](mailto:lisa@redeemercp.org)*

*or Lauren at*

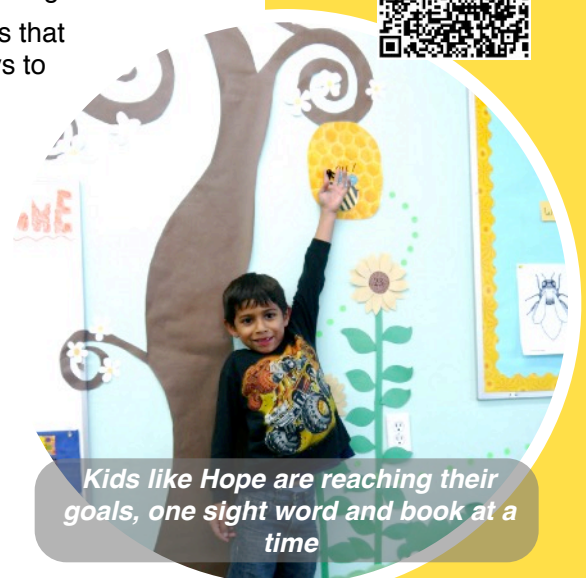
*[lauren@redeemercp.org](mailto:lauren@redeemercp.org)*

#### Pray!

*If you would like to receive regular prayer updates contact Lisa at*

*[lisa@redeemercp.org](mailto:lisa@redeemercp.org) or*

*use the QR code below:*



*Kids like Hope are reaching their goals, one sight word and book at a time*

# Neighborhood Solidarity, Thicker Than Oil

By Richard Parks

**Last Friday my neighbor was worth \$35.8 billion.** However, you would never guess it looking at his property. His grass is covered in trash and he leaves graffiti on his property for days on end. His trash cans sit on the street all week. Paint peels off his building.

Missing bricks in his façade have gone missing for years. Electric cords run across his roof. Instead of fixing a broken window, he boarded up all the windows with plywood.

Heavy diesel trucks deliver towering containers of chemicals. Since June 2, he has pumped 24,000 pounds of acid into the ground under our homes. My other neighbors report that their mature trees are dying. My neighbor has an active oil well just 10 feet from an apartment—the shortest distance in all of LA County. Last year his well ruptured and sprayed the house next door with oil and covered cars parked in the street. He calls it a “misting”, as if it was a fine French perfume. However, the frequent odious smell of petroleum is sickening.

Imagine our surprise a couple weeks ago when we learned this neighbor had applied to the City to drill three oil wells, 24-hours a day, 7-days a week for two months or two years! In his application he repeatedly asked the City to waive the public hearing. When the City refused he tried to sneak his plans through by not informing neighbors as required by law.

We learned about this threat on a Friday and quickly organized neighbors over the weekend. On Tuesday we won Round 1, putting a stop to the permit process. My neighbor—Freeport McMoRan Oil & Gas—is preparing for round 2.

I recently met with the company’s director of environmental health, safety, and government relations (which says a lot about

how the company sees the relationship between these three). He told me my neighborhood was not exactly the Ritz Carlton at Laguna Niguel, as if that made his disregard acceptable. We labor without illusions about the company’s greed and power, but also with hope that one day, with God’s help, we might win our enemy over to what is right, good, and beautiful.

Acidization and fracking are re-opening once abandoned oils wells in densely populated urban neighborhoods. LA is on the edge of a second carbon gold rush that threatens to overwhelm disadvantaged communities with devastating health consequences.

Would you like to get involved? We are looking for someone who could help us integrate social media tools to inform and engage residents. We need volunteers to help inform neighbors in door-to-door canvassing. We have heard moving stories from neighbors that we would like to capture on video. Please join us in praying for the closure of FMOG’s drill site and for God’s Kingdom to come and his will to be done in our neighborhood—even as it is in heaven.



## A Winning Season: Lego Robotics Update

Our team didn't take home a trophy this year, but the experience continues to be invaluable for our young students

If we judged our robotics seasons on awards won, this year would be a disappointment. But even without the accolades, this was a winning season for our team and for two 4th grade boys in particular it was a chance to feel individual success - something that they haven't experienced much in school.

Just two years ago, both boys were reading well below grade level. This put them significantly behind academically. Shame and fear had built up in them over time, though they responded to it differently. One continued to be a diligent worker, but shied away from the spotlight, spoke up little in class, and moved very slowly though each

homework assignment. The other often acted out, frequently got into arguments with other kids, and would hide his homework around the room claiming that his teacher had not assigned any.

This fall they were both introduced to the Lego NXT robots for the first time. In just a couple of months, the boy who used to shrink back every time you asked him a question rose to become a leader in our robot rounds showing a steady hand, attention to detail, quick thinking, and coolness under pressure. The other who would get in fights because he felt stupid, programmed one of our more complicated missions. It took awhile but when he finally got it to

work, he pumped his fist in the air with an emphatic “YES!” As long as kids are learning to overcome fears, being challenged to think critically, and discovering their own gifts in math and

