



December Update



Dear friends of Bethel Neighborhood Center,

The miraculous birth of Jesus as God's present to us more than 2000 years ago, makes this season the most exciting season of the year! Thank you for enabling us to continue our tradition of giving gifts and showing God's love to our neighbors this Christmas. We had just given out Christmas presents to 55 Bethel families, all after school students, adult ESL program participants, and all our senior citizens. A refugee family that received Christmas presents for the first time was so touched by the presents his family received and he repeatedly asked, **"All of these for my family? I have a small car and I will have to call my friend to help me."** Thank you for your generosity to our families!



I was so happy to see a former Bethel kid, Nadia and her mother attending our Children's Christmas program on December 12th. She is a second year student at KU and she was thrilled to see me as well. Nadia's younger siblings participated in our Christmas program. While we were waiting for the program to begin, she wrote about her experiences at Bethel. She gave me permission to share her reflection: *"I was a shy girl and didn't really have friends during my childhood. But Bethel really helped me get out of my comfort zone and meet people that I can truly say made amazing friendship bonds. I remember that after school, I was very excited to see the white van pick me up from Whittier Elementary. The teacher that I remember so well was Mr. Matthew. He was full of energy and made the simplest card game so fun. **Bethel has played a major part in my life because it was not only a part of my childhood but also I spent the best years of my life in a simple room doing art or even learning new computer skills that later on has helped me.***

I am proud to say that Bethel was and has been a part of my life and has played a role into the person I am today. I am very happy to see my siblings enjoying the way I enjoyed my childhood and I can't thank the staff enough for what they did while I participated. Bethel has also opened my eyes to see that there was more to life than just high school and work like my parents did. I was exposed to new ideas and many different opportunities to learn materials that I had not known before. I remember the first time I learned about the Holocaust was at Bethel and I learned things my classmates did not know. I also met a TV news reporter for the first time at Bethel, not sure, but his last name was Busby (channel 9). Because of him, I wanted to be a news reporter, but now I can say that I am in my 2nd year at KU pursuing my nursing degree."

Thank you very much for your continued prayer and financial support of our ministry. Stories like Nadia's excites me and I look forward to touching and transforming many more lives in the future in a remodeled and expanded building! May God bless you for your generosity!

We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year!

Rev. Mang Sonna, Executive Director