



July Update



Dear friends of Bethel Neighborhood Center,

Thank you for your recent donation to the Bethel ministry. My heart is filled with joy from the laughter of our Bethel children and seeing their excited faces every morning as they come to our summer program. Many of them expressed gratitude in returning home (to a renovated/expanded building) since our youth program was conducted at a different location for the last two years during construction. Everyone is happy to be back in our building. Ngi, an eighth grader said, ***"The whole building is better. Everything is upgraded, and I love it."*** Thank you once again for enabling us to serve as the hands and feet of Christ in our community for over 108 years!



We enrolled 113 students in our 8-week long summer program. Our students are learning about freedom and are doing life-giving activities under the guidance and supervision of caring adults. Flor and her friend Ngun are happy to see each other again at Bethel. Coming to our summer program, Flor said, ***"I finally have a life again. Bethel is a fun place as I get to learn and experience a lot of things that I will not learn or experience anywhere else."*** They enjoy seeing each other and meeting new people who come to Bethel for the first time. Among the field trips we have done, our students enjoyed swimming, the Deanna Rose Farmstead, and Kaleidoscope. Nico, a staff member said, ***"The reflections we do at the end of the day are meaningful to our students and staff. It gives us the opportunity to reflect on how the day goes. The 'Shout-out' to someone for doing something good has encouraged everyone."***

As we begin to experience growth in the number of people we serve, we added new staff members, and one of them is Vernita McMurtrey. Vernita is a seasoned nonprofit executive and consults in the areas of strategic planning, grant funding and nonprofit management. She has more than 25 years of executive management expertise serving over 13 years as the chief executive of the Missouri Health Insurance Pool. She served as the President of NAIC (National Association of Insurance Companies), a national organization leading nonprofit "high risk" health and insurance programs. Vernita has extensive experience in grant writing, planning, volunteer engagement, major gift development and stewardship, family philanthropy and strategic planning including matters of governance. She is passionate about helping nonprofits, family foundations and individual philanthropists improve their practices effectively and joyfully impacting the causes to which they are committed. She is committed to community service and has presented on numerous topics to professional, community, donor and volunteer audiences across the country. We are blessed to have her join the Bethel team.



The Bethel Open Golf Tournament, a fundraiser to cover program expenses is scheduled for Saturday, August 24th at 7:30 a.m. at Painted Hills Golf Course in Kansas City, Kansas. You may register online at www.eventbrite.com or print a registration form from www.bethelcenter.org

May God bless you abundantly for your love and care for our community!

Rev. Mang Sonna, Executive Director