

FOCAS EXPANDS

GREETINGS FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Lord's Gym Opens Family Activity Center in Price Hill

By Erica Monttinen

Lower and East Price Hill has seen its share of changes since the Over the Rhine area began its gentrification process over a decade ago. The violent crime rate is on the rise, but hope and restoration are on the way courtesy of FOCAS. The Lord's Gym Family Activity Center has recently opened its doors in the heart of Price Hill. The activity center aims to provide a place for school aged children to enjoy time with friends and fellowship while becoming involved in a host of activities. According to Director of Ministry Operations, Bob Clarke, the center has a grand vision to offer a men's program as well as youth activities. It will run baseball, football and wrestling programs, as well as spiritual programs called Joshua trainings. Larry Spellman, Youth Chaplain in charge of the activity center, has designed these trainings to get children physically and spiritually in shape. The children will be active, but also have devotional time where they can reflect upon their faith, family and life. Focusing on school work will also be a priority. FOCAS will partner with City Gospel Mission's, Whiz Kids, to provide



Baseball clinic participants

tutors for children. They've been working with a local ministry, BLOC, to help provide volunteers for the program. Currently, the center is hosting a wrestling program and baseball clinic. In August, it will open for "recreation time" where children can play pool, board games and interact with fellow kids and staff members. Additional programs and hours will be added as the center gains momentum. Spellman's main focus is to see the center help produce future leaders in Price Hill that can help their peers, bring crime rates down and break the generational poverty that exists in the area. Please pray for The Lord's Gym Family Activity Center as they strive to bring hope and healing to a community in need.

God's Favor Abounds

"I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor 6:2 NIV) The word "Now", meaning, at this present time, sums up the hand of God as He directs FOCAS ministry and uses it to bring hurting souls to an understanding of who Jesus Christ is and how He can change their lives. This is evident in James and Jamila's testimonies (left) who recently gave their lives to Christ. We also see God's favor now as He leads us into Price Hill to launch The Lord's Gym Family Activity Center. After Pastor Al Mosley took the SportsCenter under his own ministry last fall, FOCAS remained committed to both providing a place for the SportsCenter to continue



Scott Bowers

operating while seeking God for a new neighborhood to reach additional at-risk youth and their families. As a result of an increase in violent crimes, poor educational outcomes, availability of a vacant gym, and opportunities to collaborate with other ministries, we sensed God leading us to begin a new operation for youth and families in Price Hill now.

We'll be showing how God is working in Over the Rhine, Price Hill, Covington, Ky and on the streets at our Lord's Gym Community Awareness Breakfasts and fundraisers this fall. They are Sept. 17th, 30th and Oct. 15th. I am personally inviting you to join me to attend one of these three informative and inspiring events and to bring a friend(s) to see how God is changing lives...one at a time!

FOCAS IN ACTION

Saved from a Life of Prostitution and Drugs

By Erica Monttinen

For eight hours James sat and prayed on a hard, cold bench in the hospital. He found his wife, Jamila, passed out two blocks from their house. She overdosed on heroin. Now it was up to the doctors and the Lord if she would make it. James vowed to get clean while she recovered so they could both lead a new life. That is, if she made it. He went cold turkey from drugs. James began attending church, reading his Bible daily and keeping busy to overcome his cravings and demons. Those demons were what started his drug addiction. A troubled and dark childhood led him to experimenting with drugs at the age of 13. He met his wife while abusing prescription pills and together they spiraled downward into an expensive heroin habit. Out of work, broke and addicted to drugs, James began pimping his wife out to support their habit. For three long years their daily routine was prostitute to get money, get drugs, get high and repeat. It

was a dark place that he despised but felt there was no way out. Pastor Jim Turner met James' wife, Jamila, while she was prostituting. Turner has a ministry that aims to get prostitutes off the streets. James was furious



James and Jamila

Jamila was talking instead of "working." James said it almost came to blows before Pastor Turner backed off. Turner didn't give up on the couple. He came back to speak with them often. A few months passed, and James was ready for a change. He began attending the Lord's Pantry in Covington where he discussed the Bible with others and prayed with Pastor Turner.

When his wife was hospitalized due to the overdose a few months later he wholeheartedly committed himself to the Lord, getting clean and starting a new life. He now serves at the Lord's Pantry in Covington and Cincinnati several times a week. James has been clean for almost four months and grows closer to God on a daily basis. He's currently looking for a job and praising the Lord for another chance to live life for His glory.

MEET THE FOCAS STAFF

Pastor Larry Spellman

After holding jobs as a youth pastor and elder at his church, Spellman found himself volunteering at The Lord's Gym on a regular basis. He was a perfect fit for the role of Youth Chaplain when FOCAS opened the activity center.



Title: Youth Chaplain of Price Hill Family Activity Center

Favorite part of the job?

How The Lord's Gym makes a significant impact in the mens' lives during trying times

What are you looking forward to at the Center?

Connecting and interacting with children on a fun, active level and a deeper spiritual level