

# AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING 2019



CULTIVATING  
LEADERS  
EQUIPPING  
DISCIPLES

## HEALING COMMUNITIES

Galatians 6:9-10

### Neighborhood Center Reaching Teens, Transforming Community

By Jennifer Muniga

Cameron Community Ministries is a 34-year-old urban outreach center in Rochester, N.Y.'s Lyell-Otis Neighborhood, where violent crime is 6.5 times higher than in the suburbs. The school district's graduation rate is 47 percent. Fifty-one percent of Rochester's children live in poverty.

By embarking on a campaign to transform an abandoned, foreclosed rental property into a teen center, Cameron Community Ministries is not only meeting a critical need by creating a safe space for youth but also helping to heal the community, one property at a time.



The foreclosed property had become a dumping ground and hub for crime. Such properties can have a ripple effect.

However, while deterioration is contagious, revitalization is contagious, too. People take more pride in their own property when other properties in the neighborhood are rehabilitated.

*Jennifer Muniga is executive director of Cameron Community Ministries.*

Your gifts to America for Christ support American Baptist Home Mission Societies' Community Outreach Ministries, which includes neighborhood centers like Cameron Community Ministries.

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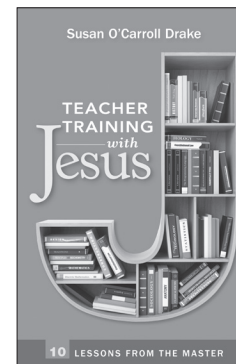
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### It's Never Too Late to Change the Story

By the Rev. Kyle Gardner

Since 2005, Delores Napoleon had shared a story with those she would meet. Her story of heartbreak and disappointment detailed how she put her faith in a contractor to restore her house after Hurricane Katrina, only to have her money taken and no work done.

During the first couple of days that our group of teenagers from Prairie Baptist Church, Kansas City, Kan., painted her house, I may have heard that story a dozen



times. Each time, I could feel the pain that she carried. Each time, my heart sank, realizing what she had endured.

For years, this was her story. Now she has a new story to tell—a story of those who traveled all the way from Kansas to New Orleans to make her house a home again. A story of hope and love. A story

of faithfulness in an awesome God that never gives up on us.

We originally believed that the purpose of our mission trip to New Orleans was to paint a house. While we completed our “job,” we learned that we truly came to New Orleans to provide a homeowner with a new story to tell. And she gave us a new story as well.

*The Rev. Kyle Gardner is associate pastor at Prairie Baptist Church, Kansas City, Kan.*

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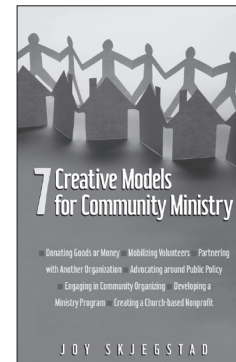
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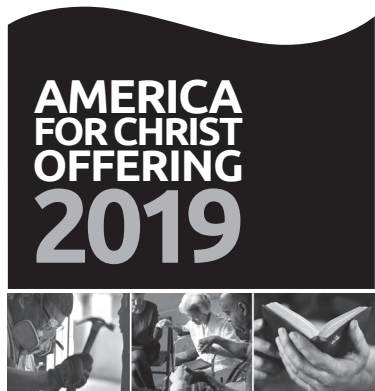


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### Making a Difference in the Lives of Children Affected by Poverty

By the Rev. Dr. Marilyn P. Turner-Triplett

Thirty million U.S. children live in low income-, poverty- or deep poverty-level family homes; 5 million of these children are infants and toddlers. Seven out of 10 low-income children belong to working poor families, in which at least one working caregiver labors at a job that offers little security and low wages.

Because of the conditions associated with such jobs, caregivers are likely to be absent on weekends and evenings. Therefore, no adult may be available to provide



homework assistance, cook healthy meals, offer life guidance, play, talk or pray with these children. Because they are growing up at a time when

the poor are often denigrated, it can be impossible for them to maintain a positive self-image, sense of dignity or hope.

Contrary to stereotypes, poverty affects children of all colors. More than one-third of the children living in poverty are white or Asian. However, even in 2019, ethnicity and skin color play significant roles. Children of color—Black, Hispanic and Native American—are nearly three times as likely to live in poor families as their white peers.

*The Rev. Dr. Marilyn P. Turner-Triplett is director of American Baptist Home Mission Societies' (ABHMS) Healing and Transforming Communities unit.*

Your gifts to America for Christ support ABHMS' Rizpah's Children, a network focused on strategically addressing childhood poverty in the mainland United States and Puerto Rico.

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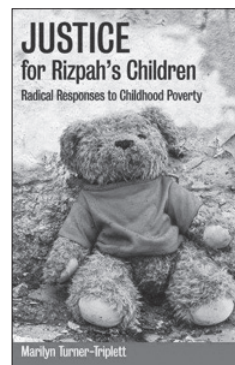
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By Marilyn Turner-Triplett

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### Showing Christ's Love by Serving Children, Families

By Kim Weaver

Weirton (W.Va.) Christian Center has been making a difference for 101 years. While it provides children and youth with computer access, homework help, tutoring, meals, clothing and school supplies, more than anything else, it provides them



with the lasting love of Jesus via mentors, Bible studies and prayer circles.

One 12-year-old girl came to the center with great emotional baggage. The center not only helped the girl but also aided her mom and siblings many times. The family counted on the center for dinner daily.

Although they moved away eight years ago, the seed that was planted has kept the Lord in their lives. Now

21, that "girl" thanks God for her good job and her own apartment. Her mother was baptized. A younger brother wants to attend church camp.

It is such a blessing to see the "center's kids" influencing their parents or raising up their own children in a way that shows that the center has made a difference by giving them Jesus, meeting their needs and showing them love.

*Kim Weaver is executive director of Weirton Christian Center.*

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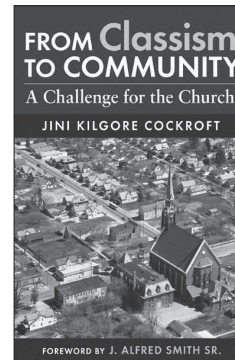
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