



# ASLAN Youth Ministries

P.O. Box 270 Red Bank, NJ 07701 [www.aslanyouth.org](http://www.aslanyouth.org)



Changing the world, one child at a time...

March/April 2010

## How We Do Things

When I walked into the room I was shocked at what I saw. A fist-fight was unfolding in one corner while a group of girls were screaming at each other in another. As if there weren't enough chaos, several of the younger kids were running circles around the room. When I looked at Lynn Ann I was stunned. She was calmly standing in front of the room holding her finger in the air patiently waiting for the chaos to

See: **How We Do Things** below

## Making a Difference

I believe at some point in our lives we all experience a strong desire to make a difference in the world. Whether it's a grand ambition like becoming president of the United States, a superb general, a famous athlete, or something more down-to-earth like becoming a teacher, a police officer or an inner-city youth worker, many of us have imagined changing the world.

See: **Making a Difference** page 2

## Celebrating 35 Years

This year Aslan celebrates 35 years of "changing the world, one child at a time!" In honor of this occasion, we will be hosting a concert Saturday, 7 PM on April 17 at First Baptist Church in Red Bank. The concert will include performances by former Aslan student and professional singer Sheldon Edmond, as well as a special appearance by the West Side Christian Academy Student Choir! We'd love to see you there!

## How We Do Things *cont'd*

subside. My training as a new Aslan staff person had just begun.

I first started working for Aslan in late 2000. I was just out of college and didn't have much experience working with kids, not to mention urban, at-risk youth. I figured, how hard could it really be? After all, it wasn't that long ago when I was in youth group myself.

As part of my initial training, I tagged along with some of the other staff members to familiarize myself with the Aslan approach to ministry. I quickly found out I had no clue what I was getting into. Worse, I began to doubt that the other Aslan staff knew what they were doing. After all, Lynn Ann was standing in front of the room

with her finger pointed to the sky as if she could somehow magically bring order to the chaos!

I waited for her to start yelling at the kids to shut up and sit down. I waited for her to send the worst kids home. I waited for her to threaten and cajole. I waited for her to do something!

As I contemplated what I could do to gain control of the room, I began to notice that something had changed. The girls in the corner were no longer screaming, the two boys were no longer fighting, and everyone else was seated.

I looked up to see if Lynn Ann had done something to initiate this change in behavior. I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw her still standing there, patiently pointing her finger in the air!

If random strangers drop in on one of our programs they would most likely have the same impression of Aslan that I had my first day of training: chaos. However, if these strangers stuck around long enough, they would begin to see something beautiful lurking just beneath the surface. They'd begin to see that each Aslan staff person and volunteer never allowed the chaos of the moment to overshadow the glorious potential of each child. They'd begin to recognize that cultivating and nurturing a deep reservoir of love and grace for these kids was rooted in the long process of building relationships and not a program. They'd begin to see that without Aslan, most of these kids would continue to be

overlooked and discarded by the world.

The Aslan kids need people who will take the time to look beyond the chaos and recognize that they are unique gifts worthy of our interest and time. Kids like Kenny,\* whose high school guidance counselor told us that we were wasting our time bringing him to Haiti. He was, according to this school official, beyond help. Now, years later and after two trips to Haiti with Aslan, Kenny is nearing completion of his seminary degree and hoping to serve God as a pastor! Or kids, like Latecia,\* who have no one waiting for them when they get home from school to provide them with the loving guidance and care that young teenage girls need in our world. Were it not for Aslan she would never have been given the support and guidance she needed to finish school, go to college, and become a teacher!

Thinking back on my first day of training I see things differently

now. No amount of yelling or threats would have done anything except generate fear. The children that day weren't responding to Lynn Ann's finger pointed towards the sky. The kids were responding to the love she demonstrated for them week in and week out.

**Making a Difference cont'd**

At Aslan, our publicly stated goal is to "change the world, one child at a time." The reality, of course, is that we're never really sure if we're making any difference at all. At Aslan, we do our best to come alongside each child and bear witness to the transformative power of God working in the world with the hope that the children we work with will be changed.

When we do actually get confirmation that we're making a difference we are greatly encouraged. Recently, our entire staff received an email from a teacher at a school where many

of the Aslan kids attend. She wrote the following:

*"I just wanted to tell you... I am a student teacher in a first grade classroom and one little girl in our class goes to Aslan. We were doing a project about times we felt strong emotions (happy, sad, upset) and hers said "I feel happy when I go to Aslan" and she drew herself and a blue van that comes to pick her up. Anyway, she loves the program. Every Tuesday she runs to that van. Anyway, thank you for what you are doing. It's definitely making a difference in her life. :)"*

More often than not, we will never fully know the impact we have on those around us. At Aslan, we see our work as that of a farmer preparing the field and planting the seeds. The rain, the sunshine - all that's up to God. We continue to trust that if we provide the opportunity He will show up and continue changing the world, one child at a time!



**ASLAN Youth Ministries**

Come visit us at our new office in Tower Hill:

255 Harding Road  
Red Bank, NJ 07701

Please send any donations to:

Aslan  
PO Box 270  
Red Bank, NJ 07701

or donate online through our secure PayPal account at [www.aslanyouth.org](http://www.aslanyouth.org)

\* We've changed the names of Aslan children to protect their identities.