



**ASLAN**  
YOUTH MINISTRIES

# ASLAN YOUTH MINISTRIES

## A Presidential Point of Light

255 Harding Road, Post Office Box 270, Red Bank, New Jersey 07701-0270

Telephone: 732-741-7824 Fax: 732-741-3284

Email: [aslan@aslanyouth.org](mailto:aslan@aslanyouth.org) Web: [www.aslanyouth.org](http://www.aslanyouth.org)



*A higher standard.  
A higher purpose.*

S. Craig Bogard  
Chief Executive Officer  
Aslan Youth Ministries  
Red Bank, NJ



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Dear friends,

There has never been a greater need for Aslan Youth Ministries in our 39-year history than right now. It would be difficult to believe that any of you who live here in New Jersey have not heard of the horrific murder of a mother, Joan, and her 10-year-old child, Veronica, in Long Branch, NJ. What some of you may not know is Joan was one of our best friends, and Veronica has attended Aslan for 5 years.

From the moment we walked door-to-door in 1991 to start our programs in Long Branch, Joan supported Aslan's every effort there. She was always a diamond in the rough, but a diamond she was! When we first met her, she was raising her nephew, Ray, who had a life-threatening heart condition. He wasn't supposed to live beyond his early teens, but through Joan's loving care he did. As he reached his late teens, Joan had to make frequent trips with Ray to Deborah Heart Hospital close to Philadelphia. Ray was forced to lie down in the back seat of a small car, so Joan asked for Aslan's help to find a van. A gracious supporter donated a van in excellent shape to us, so we could give it to Joan and Ray. The young man fought valiantly and wanted to attend college, but his diseased heart finally stopped beating.

Joan was devastated, but she didn't stop caring for others. While Ray was still alive, she brought her sister's daughter, Markeya, into her home to raise. Markeya was a sweet little girl who grew up going to Aslan and has been a huge part of our lives. From the beginning, Joan became one of our best and most stalwart volunteers. She drove the Aslan van for tutoring, Bible classes and special programs. Whatever we needed, she was always there to lend a supporting hand. Joan also helped coordinate our Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter outreaches. Even though she was injured badly and became disabled several years after we first met, Joan fought through a lot of pain to be there for us when we needed her.

After raising Markeya, Joan took three-month-old Veronica into her heart and life to raise and nurture. Joan raised all three of these young people as though they were her own children - caring for them with great love and affection. And she literally gave her life for Veronica, trying to fight off the person who attacked and viciously murdered them both.

The gruesome and twisted details of Joan's and Veronica's murders are beyond the scope of this letter, but they involved a relative who was a prior sex offender and should never have been let out of jail. The courts and the "system" failed everyone - but especially Joan and Veronica - and there are no excuses good enough to justify

*Changing the world . . . one child at a time!*

this ever happening. Now Joan's and Veronica's families are left with a life-time of sorrow. And Aslan has lost one of our dearest friends and most precious children.

The loss of Joan and Veronica is like a stake through our hearts. But as Paul, a local pastor who has supported Aslan for many years and in a multitude of ways, said upon learning of this tragedy: "This is why the ministry of Aslan is so critically important. You have to keep pressing forward to help more children." And we know this is what Joan and Veronica would want us to do.

For over a year now, Aslan Youth Ministries has seen a serious drop in donations. We are not like some groups that spend all their time asking for more and more money. But there is a time to let you know, and that time is now. Aslan is currently serving 400 children in Monmouth County and in Haiti. And by serving I do not mean providing a few games for children to play and feeding them a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. We are laying down our lives, sometimes 24-hours a day, to insure these precious little ones have a chance at a happy and fulfilled life. If Aslan students graduate to jobs making hamburgers the rest of their lives, we do not consider ourselves to have succeeded. Thousands of Aslan graduates are teachers, college professors, pastors, international strategic trainers, engineers, nurses, military personnel and so many other wonderful professions.

To honor Veronica and her aspirations, Aslan is starting a U.S. Sponsor-a-Child program called *Veronica's Dreams*. This little girl had such dreams and such hopes. Although they were never realized in this life, there are hundreds and thousands of children Aslan can still reach with your help. For \$600.00 a year (\$50/month), you can make a world of difference through Aslan. We will send you the picture of your child, and you will know that (unlike some far away sponsorship programs) this child is actually being helped! Think of it - for the price of 2 or 3 movie tickets, popcorn and sodas, you can confidently know that your gift each month is truly being used for what you want: to change the life of a child. Since 1991, Aslan has been a member in good standing of the ECFA, a Christian coalition of organizations dedicated to the highest standards in fund raising and donor care. We have a full, independent audit of our books every year, and our financial statements and Form 990 are available upon request!

Respectfully and gratefully,



Craig Bogard

*P.S. Please don't wait. Please help us now through Veronica's Dreams. Since Lynn Ann and I left New Mexico in 1971 (43 years ago) to move to New Jersey and start this journey, we have never wavered from the mission God called us to. Although we have suffered greatly, we refuse to quit. The lives of children like Veronica are too precious to God for us to quit. But we need your help to do this. Please fill out the enclosed form and sponsor a child now: only \$50/month. Start today.*