



ASLAN YOUTH MINISTRIES

A Presidential Point of Light

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*A higher standard.
A higher purpose.*

Dear friends,

Seth began coming to our Asbury program last year as a 10-year-old. We could tell from the start that he was going to be a special child with a lot of special needs. As a “preemie” he had started out life with a lot of problems, and his speech difficulties were only the beginning. The way he acted and interacted with other children was way behind most 10-year-old kids. It’s easy to understand why the public schools classify a child like Seth – communication handicapped, learning disabled, obsessive compulsive disorder. You name it - he has all these problems. Naturally, Seth has from the beginning been considered a “slow learner.”

I know that our public schools have quite a battle trying to work with special needs children like Seth. After 40 years of working with kids with varying degrees of the same kinds of problems, however, our approach is to begin with the belief that somehow, somehow we can help a child like Seth succeed. Please don’t get me wrong. Seth’s behavior can test the limits of anyone’s sanity!

Last year Seth’s mom asked Lynn Ann if he could join our tutorial program. Lynn Ann is always up for a challenge, but this even made her think twice. She had watched this young man in groups at our *Right Choices* classes, and she knew there was no way she could find anyone willing to tutor Seth (even one-on-one). No one, except her. So she caved in to her huge heart of compassion and began to tutor this very difficult 10-year-old. Sometimes just getting him to tutoring was the biggest challenge. He would constantly touch the other students in the car and cause problems and fighting. Then by the time we got to tutoring, it was difficult to get the other students calmed down to learn. Half of Lynn Ann’s tutoring time with Seth was just trying to keep him seated and focused. The other half was working on first grade materials with a 10-year-old! He hadn’t learned his basic addition facts or his colors and was woefully behind in everything.

In my last letter I said that “we fall in love with each child – some more than others.” What I didn’t say is it’s sometimes hard to really feel love for a child like Seth. You have to make a decision that that’s what is going to happen, and then trust God that somewhere down the line it will happen. As I mentioned, just driving to tutoring was a challenge. For the first several weeks, every time we arrived Seth would jump out and start running around the car spitting on all the windows. We always have a snack and juice for boosting energy at tutoring. All the kids love this, but Seth learned the hard way that he could lose snack if he kept spitting on the windows.

Over months of time last year, we began to see some positive changes in Seth. He started working harder on his schoolwork, trying harder to get it right and really

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

behaving better toward the other students. Now don't get worried. I'm not going to suddenly tell you at the end of this letter that Seth had a miraculous transformation and his behavior is perfect. Far from it! Remember from my last letter that it normally takes years and years (from age 5 – 18) for Aslan to have the kind of impact in a child's life that causes a total transformation. But if you walked into our tutoring session in Asbury today, you might not even know which child I'm writing about. Seth still has his bad days, like last week when he broke something that belonged to another student. Then he told everyone at tutoring that it wasn't his fault, when he knew good and well that he had caused the entire problem and was 100% to blame.

This year Lynn Ann was able to assign Seth his very own special tutor, an amazing young woman working towards her masters degree. She's absolutely perfect for Seth. He's made a good amount of progress in his schoolwork and his behavior. He may not ever be a rocket scientist, but there are two things that are changing Seth's life forever. He's understanding what it means to be loved and listened to and cared about by his friends at Aslan. And, Seth is beginning to understand the outer reaches of God's love and how he can be changed forever by the vastness of that love. At Aslan we are always thinking about the one child, and the power of how that one child can literally change the world.

As you peer into the depths of what we do at Aslan, I sincerely hope you will consider becoming a partner with us through your giving. Some of you who read this have helped us for many years. For those of you who aren't regular givers, please think about all the lives changed over the past 40 years through the ministry of Aslan. We can't do it without your help.

God bless,


Craig Bogard

P.S. This week at tutoring, Seth leaned up against Lynn Ann and three different times said, "Please don't die." Seth knows that Lynn Ann has been very sick for 2 years now, so this might be why he was prompted to say this. She kissed him on the cheek and said, "Don't worry, Seth. I'm not going anywhere." To which he laid his head on her shoulder and said, "But Miss Lynn Ann, I know how old you are." Now this brought a smile to her face! These Aslan children love being loved.



Lynn Ann ~ the heart of
Aslan