

ROCHESTER YOUTH OUTREACH

May 2007

Dear Friends,

What a whirlwind this year has been! It seems as though we just began our friendships with the young people we see each Thursday. With the conclusion of both the Elim Bible Institute and Roberts Wesleyan College academic calendars, our outreach also concluded for the summer.

At the end of April we were so blessed to receive a large donation of personal-hygiene kits from the First Congregational Church of Riga. The church made over 35 kits for the kids, full of toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo, deodorant, lotions and other goods. The idea for these came out of the observation that many of the young children we serve seem to lack such items at their immediate disposal. The missions committee at Riga Church responded so generously, and we are so grateful for their donations to our young people! ☺

The end of the year was definitely full of challenges! Taking finals, preparing for a trip to the Philippines, attending medical school interviews, working part time, and moving to a new house kept Greg on his toes! Jess fought valiant battles with end-of-the-year presentations and finals, RA responsibilities, and teaching English to refugees from Burma. We are so thankful that we have such a dedicated group of volunteers at RYO! Surely the last several weeks of the program would not have been possible without such dedicated and diligent workers!

With our trusty volunteers returning to their hometowns for the season, RYO will be taking on a new form in the summer months. We hope this time will be useful for coming up with more recruitment strategies for Rochester-area colleges, formulating new ideas for the program, and building up support within the neighborhood.

There are also some pretty exciting things happening at 350 Arnett Blvd. this summer! On August 4th, there will be a Block Party for the neighborhood organized by The Arnett Block Neighborhood Association, chaired Susan Morehouse. Last year's block party was a huge success, and this year it's even bigger with the Arnett Branch of the Rochester Public Library getting involved along with the RPD, Rochester Fire Department, church choirs, Christian rap artist Cuevas, local businesses, and a host of residents running games, cooking food, and painting a lot of faces! It's sure to be a great time! Check out pictures from last year's block party at: <http://www.hisbranches.org/caba/album>.

Leading up to the Block Party, a team from Allentown, PA will be visiting His Branches for the second year to offer a backyard Bible club for the children in the neighborhood during the last week of July. It's free for all children and their parents and runs each afternoon, continuing into the early evening.

Please pray for our kids throughout the summer, as this tends to be a very exciting time for them but also a dangerous one. We all pray that the spike in violent crime that occurred last summer will not return to Rochester.

We are so excited to announce that Greg was accepted to medical school at SUNY Albany, and is waiting on a response from the University at Buffalo! Praise God! However, before he can suit up in his white lab coat, he is headed off to a two-month internship in the Philippines as a requirement of his medical missions degree from Elim Bible Institute. What an exciting time! Please pray for him as he makes his journey across the world and then back into the intensity of medical school.

Jess has accepted a one-year fellowship position with the University of Rochester in their Urban Fellows/Rochester Youth Year program. This is a program designed for recent graduates of area colleges to be matched up with a site in Rochester where they will work to find innovative solutions to social problems. Not surprisingly, her site is His Branches, Inc.! While there, she will work to start an STD testing and education initiative for youth in the area, as well working with Noah and Kelly on RYO for the coming year. Please pray for Jess in her new endeavors.

Also, Jessica Meigel, one of our most enthusiastic volunteers, is headed to Africa with the Peace Corps this fall. We have no doubt that her diehard intensity, sincere love for people, and undaunted positive attitude will be just the right combination for her unique set of challenges there. What an amazing opportunity! Please keep Jess Meigel in your prayers as well.

Thank you so much for your prayerful support! Remember to visit our website (www.rocyo.org) for more updates over the summer!

Blessings and Joy to you this Summer!

Jessica & Gregory - for the RYO team