

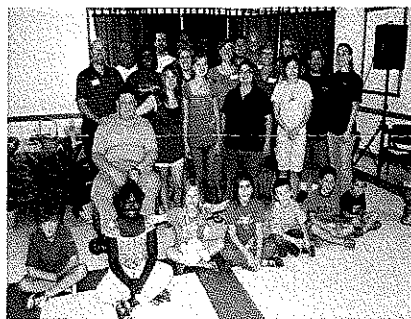
Sacramento, California
December 2010



Growing in Grace...Transforming Communities

Highlights of 2010

- * Our very own Roy Shin is enjoying theological training through the Sierra Leadership Network. He is honing his gifts preaching, leading our Bridge of Life Teens (BOLT!) and worship team. Go Roy!
- * Men's and women's small groups met throughout the year for in-depth Bible study. Several youth are being mentored.
- * 120 kids from the neighborhood played basketball through Sports 4 Life. This completed our fifth season!
- * Our summer intern, Kristen Soule became part of our BOLT family! (See her article)
- * We continue to meet our budget in a difficult economic environment, thanks to your generous support.



Some of our Bridge of Life family

CALLING ALL SHEEP by David Lindner

Psalms 23. "The LORD is my shepherd" hints at an ancient truth for all Jesus-followers: "We are not our own, but belong body and soul to our Lord and savior Jesus Christ..."

We tend to approach life, and the question of God's call, with another presupposition: "I am my own, and I will voluntarily give a part of my life to serving God...isn't that good of me?"

"So, God, I am all yours: Wednesdays, (after soccer season), (most) Sunday mornings until 12, three hours of prayer and Bible reading a week, (give or take three hours) and three light relationships of your choice (pending my approval) with: tiresome family members and/or needy people who don't have my cell number."

We make decisions weighed down by prerequisites we don't know we have. God calls us on a radical journey of self-emptying, and we tentatively start out, but drag with us a large duffel bag full of these good things which our desire turns into idols:

* "Common" sense expectations; affirmation, recognition. (Serve others only out of my **excess** time, energy, and resources; certainly don't let it get in the way of career advancement and "success")

BOLT! by Justin Lindner

BOLT, or Bridge of Life Teens is a youth group led by Roy Shin at Bridge of Life. It gives teens a chance to hang out and learn about new things. Recently, we have been learning the basics of who Jesus is. He is God, a human just like us, a servant, a healer and much more. When we first get to BOLT, Roy starts

*Need for concrete details (Just **how** are you going to care for me, God? Show me the money!)

* A comfy home in a "safe" neighborhood and an income level that I deserve...or that I am used to, with enough diversion (toys, vacations, entertainment) and a solid future assured for me and mine.

* Comfort. (My best life, now!) Control. (Help me with **my** life, God)

These can all be good gifts from God, but only if we "seek **first** God's kingdom and His righteousness! THEN all these other things will be given to us as well." Mt. 6:33

Bridge of Life is a uniquely diverse ministry where nothing less than community transformation is God's mission and our calling. It's big. How to start? John Perkins says that we must respond to the brokenness around us with compassionate action, the way Jesus did, and we can best do that **with** our neighbors. Just being in the neighborhood or doing it "for them" will never cut it. He notes in *Beyond Charity*, "... it is only when we really come shoulder to shoulder with the people at a specific spot ... that we can begin to discern ways that the gospel will become meaningful in that context."

us off with a fun game which he relates to the lesson. We play games like fishing in alphabet soup with our hands to form words or a game about being polite with hand signals. Since we have such a small group, it is very personal and you know everyone. I enjoy learning new things and hanging out with other peo-



At Bridge of Life, we are learning more and more to live the gospel **with** each other on a daily basis. We are asking questions and praying, sharing lives and drawing closer to God and each other in some amazing ways. Some questions we are exploring together, with brief answers: Who are you? Loved Child of God. Whose are you? All His. Then what is He calling you to be and do, really?

We all like sheep have gone astray, but we have heard our Shepherd's voice and followed him in fits and starts, dragging our bag of idols, leaving it at times and running headlong after Jesus, who provides for us so well...then we fearfully run back to gaze at our idols, often setting up camp there among them. Let us pray for each other in this struggle as we continue on the journey! Do you recognize the voice of our graceful Shepherd? Then we can say together, "Surely goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our lives, and we will dwell in the house of the LORD forever!"

ple my age. We have even started on projects to go out into the community and serve. This is a growing and changing group.

Justin is one our super awesome teens and leaders in training!

The goals of the day were to have some fun, get to know people in our neighborhood, and to show the love of God to all of those who came. In July we invited the children and families from the immediate area to join our church for a special Sunday filled with games, songs, drama, and ice cream.

As the intern this past summer at Bridge of Life Church, one of my projects was to help plan and put together this special service. We wanted to get everyone from church involved in one way or another whether by making food, leading a game, or making water balloons. When the day came, everyone from the Bridge of Life community as well as friends from the neighborhood was helping in some shape or form, ready to show these children and families the love of God.

When that Sunday morning began it seemed that Satan had his own plans to shake the focus of our servers. When we

came together the people who volunteered their time to serve these families seemed stressed. So when I left church to go pick up the children at the Greenhouse, I prayed that first God would provide us with families and children, so that people would come and second, for us to be filled with his peace as the afternoon began.

God knows what we all need, and in this situation where I was feeling pressure for the day to turn out well, he provided us with strength, love, and peace. For me, God provided this through the smiles and hugs of children. As soon as I walked through the gate of the apartment complex, where the GreenHouse, our local community center, is located, I saw a group of children waiting; and out of this group a little boy yelled out my name and ran to give me a hug. Instantly the stress left and was replaced by an inner peace that can only come from God.

As we made our way to the church we were blessed with two families that had never come to our church before. As the games ended we had the children and families come inside for songs and drama. Some of the older girls from the Greenhouse and our church were able to participate; they were so excited to have the chance to appear in the drama.

Then Pastor David proceeded to have all the people in the sanctuary read with him a confession and asked the people there that if they believed what they read and wanted to give their lives to Christ to talk with him afterwards.

The power and love of God was present. As I saw the parents and children alike standing and singing together, I was reminded of the goals and how we weren't entertaining these people but presenting them with the Gospel whether in words, or in our actions.

Bridge of Life is located in a place where broken families and relationships can plague our community. It was a beautiful triumph to have the opportunity to come together, learn together, and serve together to spread the love of God...and the ice cream was pretty great too!



Kristen was our wonderful intern from Calvin College who we were blessed to have this summer!



The Person I am Because of God by: Deidra Norman

Hello my name is Deidra Norman and I'm a mother of three girls (Nene 15, Laney, 13 and Earri 11) and God has done so much in my life. He has made me a happier person and a very loving person and He provides for us. He's a loving God and His love for me and my daughters is so great!

He provided a good family for us at BOL. We are very active and I am able to use my gifts at my church. I give my whole to God and he gives me his love. He lets me sleep at night and wakes me in the morning. I am blessed.

Here we live close to our Bridge of Life family, I am learning to read the Bible through our women's bible studies, I am a

member of our leadership team, Bridge Stones, and I go to monthly meetings and classes!

I am learning to pray out loud but usually when I pray it's silent, so he is helping me with my shyness. He is there for me all the time and I relate to the famous "Foot Prints" story, when asked why there were only one set of foot prints in the sand, God replies because "I was carrying you." He has been there with me the whole time when I thought no one was there; He was there. He's been there through my journey of being homeless, living in transitional housing, getting sole custody of my girls and when we were in crisis. He put good people in my life (BOL) and I love them all and I would not be the

person I am today if it were not for God. He is a forgiving God, and a loving God. He is mighty to save. I am happy to be born again I am happy to have God in my life and he has done so much for us.

My oldest daughter Nene is very active in Bridge of Life She attends BOLT and she has also been to several bible camps. Earri attends our children's church and at times she has a hard time focusing but God still has her in his hands and he watches over Laney and touches her heart.

I TRUST God and I know he will provide for me and my daughters, he knows what I need and I will never doubt Him.



Prayer and Partnership Opportunities

- Thank God and please pray for our new Youth Group- BOLT
- Thank God for our continued financial and prayer support!
- Thank God for our great interns, Kristen, and more to come!
- Pray for growth of our worshipping community
- Pray for a space for our Community Dinner
- Please pray for our newly forming Vision and leadership teams- Bridge Stones 2.0
- Please pray for our upcoming 6th Sports 4 Life Season!
- Pray for wisdom as we consider how to steward our resources.
- Please pray for and consider giving to BOL for our children's area which is in desperate need of some new carpet and paint!

Please consider partnering with us by filling out the enclosed pledge card. We are in need of monthly givers but whatever you are able to give, we are appreciative. Thank you!

Financial gifts to:

Bridge of Life

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