

A note from our Children's Director, Sheila Kovats:



Angel Ingram

Charlie Woods

Joyanna Stockton

Elizabeth Reeves

What an exciting time to be overseeing Children's Ministry at Urban Grace! My enthusiasm has no bounds when it comes to thinking-up fun and inspiring stuff to do with our really terrific bunch of kids. Just a couple highlights recently...

I am so grateful to announce that Elizabeth Reeves will be joining the Urban Grace staff to assist with the coordination Children's Ministry. Elizabeth has regularly volunteered for over a year and has helped with multiple program events. She is well-liked by the kids and has the most contagious laugh. Once we get our rhythm down, we will share the coordinator role on Sunday morning and both be able to attend worship service from time to time...a much more sustainable arrangement than we have now. I will continue to provide oversight and direction for all of Children's' Ministry while Elizabeth will focus on the School Age Sunday School program, her specialty!

Additionally we now have two terrific class administrators, Joyanna Stockton and Angel Ingram and a warm and welcoming Nursery supervisor Charlie Woods. While a monthly rotation of volunteers is the heart of our programs, kids really benefit from seeing a consistent friendly face every Sunday morning. We achieve this by hiring competent, kid-loving individuals who greet, monitor safety procedures, set-up and clean-up classrooms, and support volunteers during the class time (and who do not worship at Urban Grace, so they don't mind missing our worship service every Sunday). This is a win, win!

The Christmas Pageant. The day of performance was delightful, but all the rehearsing and preparing was also delightful. Thanks to some very high-functioning volunteers, watching the kids work together, take their role seriously and patiently wait behind the scenes was more than precious. And the Preschoolers had free reign with the props for the next three weeks in Sunday School and it seemed they would never tire of the old story, using their imaginations to adapt liberally!

Vitamins for Cambodia Project. This project took on a life of its own as the kids worked diligently week after week creating stuff to sell to raise money. I kept waiting for the groans and "not again" comments, but I never did hear them. Only a few of the older kids really understand how amazing it is that they raised \$800, but I think they all realized that their efforts were a success when I had to tell them that the school in Cambodia said they have enough vitamins to last a long time so please don't send more.

That led to last Sunday's conversation concerning our next mission project. I asked for ideas and many hands shot up. The common theme was to help those who are experiencing homelessness. And more than one brought up the needs of people who are victims of domestic violence. During this conversation, one child reminded the group that "homeless people don't want food, they just want money so they can buy more drugs." Hmm. What a great opening for a meaningful conversation with the School Age class about homelessness. A full fifteen minutes of passionate, engaged dialogue about respect, dignity, mental health, unemployment, social services, drug and alcohol use followed. As our conversation was steered toward respect and grace, we discovered that some of us had close personal connections to those experiencing of homelessness. What may have been a 'dark secret' came into the light in the safety of a loving community. I look forward to the days ahead as we find an organization to partner with and start using our hands, heads and hearts to care for others. Our kids have empathy and a desire to make a difference that is rare and beautiful. And we have a high calling to shepherd them well.

Sheila Kovats