

ADVANCEMENT

Our Mission is to serve adults in the Cleaborn and Foote Community with knowledge, resources, and skills to be economically self-sufficient through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.



**Come through this door to
our open house on April 20th
from 4PM-6:30PM**

ADVANCEMENT

Dear Friends:

It's a new year. Has anything changed for you? Do you want anything to change? If so, do you have a model for that change? After all, everyone imitates something.

Advance Memphis experienced a change in location at the end of 2006. We expect more change ahead. We moved from Crump Avenue, outside our target community, to 769 Vance Avenue, inside our target community. If the address sounds familiar to you, that is because it is the former Streets Ministries building. Their work in this community established this location as a place of hope where the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ shined through their staff and volunteers. This history blesses Advance Memphis on a daily basis. We pray that we can continue to build upon the legacy of hope and trust in Jesus Christ left by our brothers and sisters at Streets.

It is great to hear the Cleaborn Foote community speak so favorably about our new facility. We have tried to make decisions that highly considered stewardship. We desperately wanted to create a space that would foster community, affirm adults' dignity, offer hope, and a look to a brighter future. The renovation has been our prayerful attempt to connect God's Word, this building, and the residents in the community. Becoming a property owner in our neighborhood has helped Advance communicate a sense of permanence. The building also helps us cast a vision with residents. We have asked them to pray with us that a for-profit tenant would occupy the 4,500 square-foot vacant side of our building. We want our neighbors to envision skilled jobs that pay more. Our new facility allows Advance to train people with soft skills on one side of the building and hopefully have hard skills training and employment opportunities on the other side. This building is very supportive of our mission: to serve adults in the Cleaborn & Foote community by helping residents acquire knowledge, resources, & skills to be economically self-sufficient through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

God graciously provided for us as our financial needs changed. Thanks to all who contributed in 2006 to the purchase and renovation of the facility! We finished under budget with our general contractor! Have you ever heard that before? I haven't! Come see our building for yourself at our open house on April 20th.

Advance had a perfect model in mind when we committed to all these recent changes. Friends, physical and personal change occurs to all of us all the time. God cares about it all; He created it all. God is the Object of every Christian life and the One who we must be imitating. But to imitate a holy God requires change. I would like to encourage you to think about what objects you are imitating and centering your world around. Please pray that Advance would strive to continue centering all of our decisions around God's truth. Please pray that God would become the center of change in the lives of our participants. Finally, know that we all can and will change as we work out Jeremiah 22:16 in our lives.

Please save some time on April 20th from 4:00-6:30 to drop by our open house. More information to follow.

To God be All the Glory,

Steve Nash

Executive Director



Jobs for Life

One year ago I coordinated my first Jobs for Life Class with many of you. Starting out with seven people enrolled in the class, we only graduated four. All four have found employment and two have held the same job for one year, this month. Geoffrey Bailey and Forrest Thomas are at National Guard Products, Inc. with full Benefits and 401K. God is good and gracious and I thank Him for the Love of Christ that you have shown by example. There will be many more names that will reach a first year plateau of steady employment this year, for which again, I am very grateful.

Out of the last six classes 46 out of 63 have found employment. That is 73%! A small amount were unable to keep their jobs because of transportation issues. Three of which have a criminal record of 3,10, and 12 years time served in the prison system. They are reported to be excellent workers. I guess that's pretty good, but it's hard for me to look at percentages when I am so greedy, and my passion burns still for the 27% of my people (products of the Memphis City School system and African Americans.) we work with that **just don't seem to get it**. This February, after one week, I lost seven males and three females, some by the first day. I believe that some were serious about changing their lives but found that it was not easy to let go of their sins.



Tim J. Keller wrote in **Ministries of Mercy:**

Some have spoken of a "culture" of poverty, in which poverty becomes a way of life that can even be passed from one generation to the next. The poor man may be poorly educated, cynical and distrustful of authority, preoccupied with the present, with no concept of "savings" or economic planning (in fact, on concept of planning or goals at all). There may be poverty-related habit patterns-addictions and crime, for example. Another way to distinguish between these two kinds of poverty the "broke" and the "poor" is to remember the three causes of poverty: oppression, calamity, and personal sin. The person who is "broke" usually has been brought into that condition by one of these causes. It is fairly easy to help him. But the person who is "poor" is usually in his condition because of a complicated, tangled interaction of all three conditions.

"You shall give to Him freely, and your heart shall not be grudging when you give to Him, because for this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, 'You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor in your land.' Deuteronomy 15:10-11"

I could cry when I see God's mercy upon people's lives as they begin to walk toward the light, and I could cry when I hunger to see God's mercy and deliverance, as people struggle to walk toward the light. Let's keep doing what we do!! Let's not faint. If this mess is to be untangled, it is only because the truth of God is true!!

Think about it: we do not have to worry about the outcome, that's up to God alone. Isn't that Great!! We just have to be faithful,

Be encouraged and please keep encouraging us,



Rod Williams

Jobs For Life Coordinator

GED - Adult Education

Our volunteers are great! Venturing out to tutor adults, some without previous teaching experience, each seem to find their groove fast. Because of them we now have 3 nights of tutoring during the week: English and Writing on Tuesdays, Mathematics on Wednesdays, and Social Studies and Science on Thursdays. We are also thankful for the tutors willing to stand by as more participants come and we try to keep the classes small.

In order to show the importance of what our tutors are offering, I would like to boast about two participants - Joe Hallom and Derica Jones.

Joe usually arrives early for every subject that is offered. He is in his early 50's and employed fulltime for the Shelby County Government. Even so, he still desires to earn his GED.

When asked why he is pursuing this goal, he simply states, "Because I want it." He continues to say that it is something he has wanted for a long time and it will give him credibility. Joe understands the importance of having a certificate on hand to show and believes it can contribute to his chances of receiving a promotion or higher wages.

One tutor describes his character as: very dedicated, attentive, motivated, and interested. Of all the participants asked to get a library card over Christmas break, he was the only one to do it. It takes dedication to come down to Advance Memphis after a long day's work and sit in class for an hour, two hours on Thursdays, learning and re-learning science, grammar, history, and math. It is obvious: to him it is worth it.

Derica agrees that a GED is worth it. Unlike Joe, she is in her early twenties and just beginning her employment career as a recent JFL graduate. So what will it offer her? According to Derica, a chance to further her education and acquire better opportunities in life, including a better job. The tutors have refreshed her on things she has forgotten since High School and she is even learning things she didn't know before.

A strong testament to her dedication is the fact that, even when she was sick, she was determined not to miss a JFL class. Derica hopes to have her GED in the next couple months; however, she claims there is a downside to the program: the classes are not long enough. She wishes each subject were two hours long, which would get her to her goal faster. We will definitely take that into consideration.

Without the tutors, Joe and Derica's dreams may never come to pass. Please continue to lift both the tutors **and** participants up in prayer for steadfastness and that both will be able to celebrate together when the day arrives that they have achieved what they set out to do.



Ann Brainerd

Financial Freedom/IDA/GED Coordinator

A.L.L. STEPS (Advance Living Life)

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."
Jeremiah 29:11

Advance Memphis has created a program entitled A.L.L. (Advance Living Life) Steps. The purpose of A.L.L. Steps is to continue the community and natural support that develops during Jobs for Life, Financial Freedom and G.E.D. Tutoring among peers. The question we asked ourselves was how Advance can continue to help our brothers and sisters carry the heavy burdens of life, similar to the pressing weight of the cross that Jesus carried to Golgotha.



What's next after our brothers and sisters of Cleaborn and Foote Homes complete a G.E.D. Course, finally getting a job or even opening up an I.D.A. Account after completion of a Financial Freedom Class?

We're hoping that A.L.L. Steps program will provide the opportunity for our residents to learn from and encourage each other through testimonies of past success and even past failures from residents who have participated in one or more of Advance Memphis' programs. In addition we would like to be able to assist past graduates in their next endeavors as they pursue them. A.L.L. Steps is a special, by invitation only, Dinner for Graduates and Current Participants from Jobs for Life, Financial Freedom, and G.E.D. Tutoring. Advance Memphis will host A.L.L. Steps the first Tuesday of every month.



Advance Memphis held their first meeting, Tuesday, February 6th of 2007. 10 of our former graduates attended this meeting. There were 5 Financial Freedom Graduates, 3 Jobs for Life Graduates and 2 residents who are receiving G.E.D. Tutoring from Advance. Our guest speaker was Mrs. Mary Kay Oyler of the Hope & Healing Center's Preventive Health Department. Mrs. Oyler gave pointers on maintaining good health whether it's physical or mental. She also promoted the Hope & Healing Center several activities that they offer to the community. Her presentation was very refreshing.

We held our second meeting Tuesday, March 6th of 2007. We had 11 of our former graduates attend this meeting. There were 8 graduates from JFL Class, 2 receiving G.E.D. tutoring and 5 Financial Freedom Graduates. Out of the 11 people that attended 2 of them had completed two separate programs at Advance. The guest speaker was Mr. Clay Harrington who is a counselor. He did a presentation on stress and how it affects your everyday well-being. The presentation was very informative and well received from the group. Three of the young ladies that attended the meeting are now seeking one on one counseling.

A.L.L. Steps group has created a list of concerns that they would love to receive information about. The list is as follow:

- + Purchasing Property in the Community
- + Open up Business within the Community
- + Bringing Better Businesses to the Community
- + Continuing Education (G.E.D., College)
- + Better Job Opportunities
- + Importance of Voting (expressing your voting rights)
- + Encourage community support from our political representatives
- + Nutrition (How food affects my mood and health)
- + Staying Fit
- + Buying a Car
- + Car Maintenance
- + General House Upkeep: furnace, etc.
- + Legal Advice
- + Buying a Home for the first time
- + Managing Debt & Stress

A.L.L. STEPS (Advance Living Life) - continued

This list is not listed in any certain order. We are looking for volunteers who can give their time and talents to give presentations on one or more of the above topics. Just as Simon from Cyrene, who shouldered the heavy wooden cross with Jesus (**Mark 15:21**), we're asking our volunteers to step in offering support to our family and friends of Cleaborn and Foote Homes Community.

It's ironic that in our culture it is acceptable to get excited about anything except God. However it's a blessing to see residents of Cleaborn and Foote Homes Community rejoice when they are able to find employment when it seemed hopeless, receiving their G.E.D. considering they had little or no education or even completing a Financial Freedom Course that teaches better ways of budgeting your finances among other things and being able to open an I.D.A. Account once they have completed the Financial Freedom Course. **"Because the Sovereign Lord helps me I will not be disgraced. Therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame."** Isaiah 50:7

Our act of love and support completes the **"Grace of Christ."** We're better together as we help each other face the troubles in our homes, our careers, our marriages and our health. We build our lives on the promise of the Father, who will never leave or forsake us (**Deuteronomy 31:6**), and we offer that same promise to our families and friends of Cleaborn and Foote Homes Community. **"I will lead the blind by ways they have not known; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them."** Isaiah 42:16

Your Sister in Christ,

LaTonya Farmer

SOUCT & A.L.L. Steps Coordinator

How You Can Help

Dear Friends & Supporters,

We are absolutely elated to have purchased our new building with cash and to have a donor that has been so kind to give us a 0% interest loan for the renovations! As Steve has already mentioned, these renovations were completed on time and under budget. Those of you who know anything about construction know that - for this - we can only boast in the Lord. Needless to say, being under budget is a rarity. Steve has been a fine steward of our resources and has closely watched every penny that we have spent.

We only have \$22K left in debt on this loan and would like to repay it as quickly as we can. I would like to ask for your consideration in helping make Advance debt-free. If you did not donate at year-end, please consider doing so. Our focus is to expand our monthly donor base.

Lastly, I would like to invite you to join us at the Advance Memphis Open House on April 20th from 4:00PM-6:30PM to see and hear all of the great things that the Lord is doing through our fine staff and facility. Put it on your calendar!

As always, if you have any questions at all about the ministry, please do not hesitate to call me directly at 901-289-6400. Keep praying and keep donating! **Please send any donations to P.O. Box 2201 Memphis, Tennessee 38101.** Also, visit our website at www.advancememphis.org for the latest happenings.

Stuart Harris, Chairman of the Board