

"It's Our Pleasure!"

January is full of new beginnings. Many of us have spent this month reflecting on last year and making plans for this year.

Bighouse is no different. We entered January excited about 2011 but knowing we had a lot of work to do. Plans for mentoring, volunteers, building up keep, grant writing/fundraising etc. As we work, plan and pray about these things we ask ourselves, **"Are we on the right track?"** or **"Is what we are doing really making a difference in the teens and our community?"**

As Rosie (our co-chairman, grant writer, girl's mentor, tutor etc.) was researching some stats for our next grant she found some very interesting information.

As you read an excerpt of our most recent grant I hope you find yourselves encouraged as we did to know that we are filling a major gap in the lives of teens after school. Through your prayers and support we are able to spend quantity time with 245 different teens knowing that quality time will prevail to walk along side them as they struggle, cry, laugh, rejoice, work through anger, vent, play and love.

In the word's of employees at Chick-fil-A,
"It's Our Pleasure!"

Bighouse Youth Outreach is open to ALL 7th-12th grade teens. The teens we see most often: receive free/reduced lunches at school; come from nontraditional families; typically, go home to empty houses each afternoon; and attend Prairie Grove schools.

According to a report by the organization Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, "On school days, the hours from 3-6 PM are the peak hours for teens to: commit crimes, be victims of crime, be in or cause a car crash, and smoke, drink, or use drugs."

Bighouse steps in the gap and gives teens a fun, safe place to come after school. Teens don't have to be home alone unsupervised.

Paul Kelly, Senior Policy Analyst for Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, authored a report, "After School is Key." As quoted in his article, "A 2010 survey of registered Arkansas voters found that 88% of voters agree that quality afterschool programs are an absolute necessity. Voters understand and agree on the following benefits of afterschool and summer programs for children and youth: keeps them safe (90%), keeps them physically active (91%), exposes them to new experiences that broaden their outlook and gives them hope of the future (93%), prevents them from committing or becoming victims of crimes (92%), prevents them from using drugs (88%), prevents them from engaging in sexual activity (77%). They have access to caring adults and mentors (94%), homework assistance (95%), improving health by providing healthy

snacks and/or meals (90%), offering access to technology or computers (93%), doing better in school (95%)."

Once again, Bighouse is filling a need of teens (and their parents) in the Prairie Grove area for a quality after-school program by addressing all the above perceived benefits of a quality program.

"Students and parents are not interested in after-school programs that are an extension of the classroom. Students are more interested in recreational activities, and parents would like recreational activities and life skills lessons." ("The Demand for After-School Programs in Arkansas" by the Clinton School of Public Service and the Governor's Task Force).

Bighouse is not an extension of the classroom, even though we do offer free tutoring. We want to reach the teens on a more personal and individual level. We want to encourage them to dream big and help them in variety of ways to create and ultimately reach their goals.

Another statewide survey, America After 3pm, conducted in 2009 found that parents cited affordability (67%), child enjoyment (58%), and convenient location (57%) as their top three reasons for selecting an afterschool program.

Bighouse meets these 3 needs completely. Our program is totally free for the teen, the teens love Bighouse (at least, that's what they tell us), and teens can walk to Bighouse from school. These teens are seeking love and self worth, as most teens (and adults) are. Through our relationships with the teens, we show them where we find our ultimate love and worth: in Christ.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Introducing... & our Volunteers:

our Board of Directors:



Co-Chairman, Joe & Rosie Elledge



Member, James Patterson, wife Jennifer & daughter Kylee



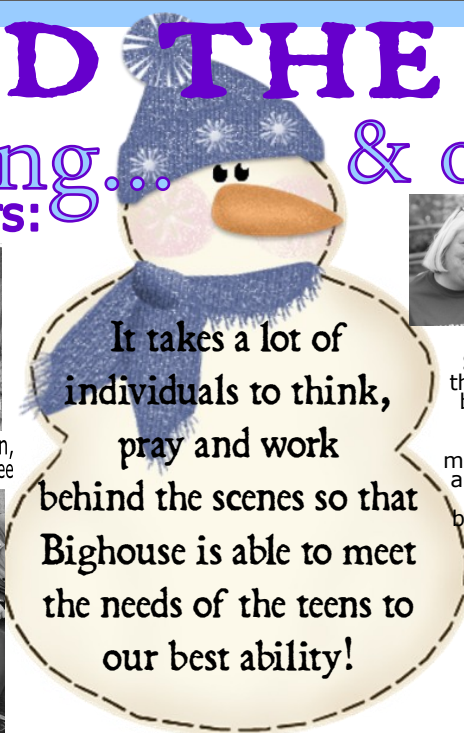
Director, Jay Gresham, Secretary, Melissa JT (14), Clair (10)



Member, Chris Akey wife, Tiasa & children Maria Luisa, Noah, Lucas & Maya



Treasurer, Ken Childress, Member Leah Samantha (14), Grady (13)



Ralph & Ginny Sparkman and their small group bring meals for our mentoring nights twice a month. They have also help us with fundraising & building a fence!



Women of the GFWC bring Birthday cupcakes once a month!



Matt Tibbit (youth pastor at PGCC) & Chris Marsh (youth pastor at FBC, PG) are volunteering 1-2 days a week during the hours afterschool! There energy and excitement about teens is a great addition!



Corey Thomas & Taylor Surly are both college students at the UofA who spend 1 afternoon a week building relationships with teens.



GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.
BIGHOUSE IS FUNDED BY INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS THAT ARE 501 C3 TAX DEDUCTIBLE.



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