

INSIDE CLDI

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP & DEVELOPMENT, INC

SPRING NEWSLETTER | 2023

01 | Youth Works Feature

SHARING THE LOVE OF JESUS

Walking alongside students in their day-to-day lives makes an eternal difference.

Our gospel-centered, holistic approach to transforming the South Side community begins with building relationships. For youth, this includes meeting them where they're at – providing fun, engaging activities and opportunities to imitate and follow Jesus – while also creating environments for both one-on-one and group discipleship.

Studies show that even just one relationship with a trusted adult can make an enormous difference in a child's life, helping them steer clear of risk and influencing them toward positive growth.

Although we know that personal connection, genuine relationships, and discipleship can all be transformational, the timing of this impact can sometimes feel ambiguous. After all, there isn't a clear timeline for healing and personal development.

So as we disciple young people and work to equip them for a successful future, we wait on God's perfect timing. **Then, often in unpredictable moments, we catch glimpses of the "why" behind our work. When we are able to see young people feel more connected to God, it's invigorating and deeply humbling.**

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COMMUNITY
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“Earlier this month, I was chatting with a student that I regularly hang out with,” shared Youth Works intern, Anna Ostland, “She is a fun, question-filled seventh grader named Arora. The times that we hang out together are usually filled with fast food and talking about life and Jesus and the other day I asked her where she was at with the whole ‘God-thing’ on a scale of 1 to 10.



Arora gathering trash during the Warehouse Project kickoff

She looked at me, and after a moment, said, ‘Oh I’m definitely at a 10.’ I asked her why she had placed herself there and she replied with, ‘Anna, I can’t stop talking about Jesus to my friends— he just comes up in conversation, and I’m not even trying,’ she told me. I was absolutely floored.

“Only a few months earlier, I was explaining the gospel to her. I remem-

ber handing Arora her own Bible and teaching her how to read and navigate it. Seeing how much Arora’s faith has blossomed over these past few months of meeting has been amazing.”

Anna and Arora will be continuing their talks about faith and learning together as our Warehouse Project begins.

The Warehouse Project is CLDI’s Youth Works team discipleship and mentorship program. **Staff members intentionally walk alongside students for eight weeks and help them learn how to transition well into adulthood.**

The Youth Works team kicked off the Warehouse Project this month with a special Initiation Ceremony. The event began by picking up the kids after school and taking them to Rail//Line for coffee. There, leaders and students discussed the details, expectations, and commitments for the next eight weeks.

They talked over habits and goals they wanted to set and ways they would like to help peer-lead activities for Youth Works. After Rail//Line, everyone jumped in their car to begin a competitive scavenger hunt between the teams of leaders with their students. Everyone raced around picking up enough trash to fill a garbage bag; ordering an ice cream cone and grabbing it from the

worker; and taking pictures with statues around Billings. The scavenger hunt ended on top of the Rimrocks overlooking the city.

On the Rims, students selected rocks and wrote in sharpie something they wanted to leave behind as they transitioned from childhood to adulthood.

Kids wrote names they were known for, actions they no longer wanted to do, etc. Then the BEST part: everyone hurled their stones off the rims hoping to leave behind what the rocks represented. It was a meaningful moment.

To end the night, staff and students went to a fancy restaurant to celebrate the students commitment to doing hard things together for the next eight weeks. Every student received a sweatshirt and water bottle, Bibles with their name engraved, and a booklet that will help guide them through the workouts, bible reading, habits and goals, and a list of activities they will help peer-lead.

CLDI initiates one Warehouse Project per school semester, and, so far, has received such great feedback and responses from the students who have been able to attend. We are very excited about this next season and how God will move through the Warehouse Project.



Teen Engagement Coordinator, Layne Peters, kicks off a Warehouse Project initiation



Celebration dinner at the Windmill

REFLECTION ON DISCIPLESHIP

One of my favorite Youth Works icebreakers is **“When did you feel most connected to God this week?”**

There are several defining moments of my walk with the Lord that set me on a trajectory of following Him, rather than just being a fan of Him.

The common denominator of all of those moments was people. Whether it was people pursuing me as I continued to live in sin, helping me onto my feet, or speaking gentle truth into my life, God has consistently used people to remind me what His love is really about. To answer my own question, I'd say doing life with others (the good, bad, and ugly) is how I feel most connected to God.

In the same way that my mentors loved me into Jesus' arms many years ago, I now get to walk alongside students as they explore their own pathways to Him.

Youth Works Director, Jackie Patten plays with students in the snow on the South Side

Kailani is a student who I have disciplined since 2021. We've summited many metaphorical mountains over the years and have celebrated in ways you'd imagine a 13-year-old girl would.

All A's and B's? McDonald's, here we come! Memorized all the disciples' names? Coffee at Rail//Line! Gave up a bad habit for 6 months? Trampoline park!

As Kailani continues to grow up and work through the throes of peer pressure, I've been reminded of how my mentors leaned into the hard stuff with me.

They listened intently, didn't judge, and reminded me of my worth.

Their way of discipleship left a lasting mark on my life.

It doesn't have to be formal and complicated. **And if kids have taught me anything, it's that they just want us to be real and consistent.**

I hope to emulate their process, both in giving and receiving, for years to come.

P.S. If you're reading this and have been a mentor to me, thank you for modeling godly love and truth to me! Your support changed my life.

PRAY WITH US:

“We are seeing a lot of violence amongst our youth on the South Side. Physical fights, stabbings, and shootings are happening on a weekly basis. Please pray for protection and peace over them.”

— Jackie Patten, Youth Works Director





“From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”

- Ephesians 4:16

03 | Hannah House Spotlight: by Jessica Smith, Hannah House Supervisor

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY “HOLISTIC?”

If you're like me, the first time I heard the word “holistic,” I basically tossed it aside because I had no idea what it meant.

By definition, holistic means to be characterized by the belief that the parts of something are interconnected and can be explained only by reference to the whole. When talking about the whole person, it refers to the physical, emotional, and spiritual components.

I've only been able to embrace the understanding of this definition since working for CLDI over the last 2 years. As a community, we take a holistic approach to reaching the messy and broken. On a daily basis, we work with people and the repercussions of the trauma they have endured throughout their life.

Often, the general public will look at the person for their diagnosis. But underneath all of that, there is a lifetime of hurts such as abuse, neglect, addiction, etc. It's much easier to see a person's actions, rather than the reasons for those actions.

When approaching trauma at the Hannah House, we first have to start by laying a foundation for the women. We start by simply getting to know them. We just listen. As I've come to learn about addressing trauma, connection is a big part of it. So by connecting with each woman and child individually, we can build a relationship of trust.

The next step to healing their trauma is empowerment; letting them know that their trauma doesn't define them and that they are not alone as they go through this healing. We point them in the right direction to get help with counseling and therapy so that they can physically and emotionally heal from the past. We directly work with the women, spiritually, to help them heal. We hold small group Bible studies, offer discipleship programs, and have our Thursday night Bible study for them to attend.

We also require them to work through a relapse prevention book called “The Genesis Process”. In the duration of five months, the process helps women work through their past and all the lies they believe, and instead, they begin to embrace the spiritual truths that God promises. Recovery is about a complete lifestyle change, meaning it must be approached holistically.

I've recently been doing a Bible study on Ephesians. In Chapter 4, it talks about the body of Christ and all the gifts that God gives to people to equip them for works of service. **Every role at CLDI is important and needed for us as a community to work together. When we look at the actual body, every part and piece plays an important role.**

The same applies in ministry; we all holistically have something to add to our community. Whether it's spirit, mind, or body, we are all important when working together to glorify God and His good work.

ADVENTURES BUILD CONFIDENCE & RELATIONSHIP

Youth Works spends a large portion of their time mentoring students in the school system on the South Side.

We offer before-and after-school programs and work closely in the school system as coaches, substitute teachers, and teachers' aids. **We also recently launched something we're calling the Warehouse Program: an intensive afterschool discipleship program for middle to high school students transitioning from childhood to adulthood.**

One of my favorite things Youth Works provides is sponsored outdoor activities. Camping, hiking, fishing, ice skating, and skiing are some of the outdoor activities they offer.

For most of the students, this is the first time they've been able to participate in these activities, and I got to help with just that!

During Spring Break, for middle and high school students, we took 12 available students skiing. We stayed at a church in Bozeman, MT, skied for two full days, took a relaxing dip in the Bozeman Hot Springs, and ate A LOT of Takis.

While this trip may sound fun (and it was!), it was also extremely challenging and exhausting. There were so many unexpected challenges, including a popped tire on the van on the way home. Yet, the staff handled all the difficulties patiently and gracefully.

Watching the kids learn to ski or snowboard was so rewarding. From taking beginner lessons on the first day to going down the ski lift by themselves at the end of the second day, **it was so rewarding to watch them grow in confidence and experience success. So many wonderful memories were made with these kids.**

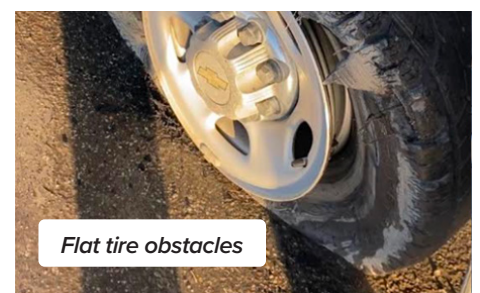
The most rewarding part was hearing all the stories at the end of the day. No matter how sassy the kids were or how discouraged they felt from the difficulty of skiing, **they couldn't stop talking about their adventures on the mountain. No phone distractions – just friendship and memories. From epic crashes to huge jumps, the kids just wanted to share the adventure with us.** How special it is to be a part of their world.



Youth Works Staff & Students
hit the slopes in Bozeman



Enough snow
gear for everyone!



Flat tire obstacles



05 | Rail//Line Spotlight: by Josiah Ramos, Assistant Manager

HERE TO LOVE

Discipleship cannot be accomplished without love. During his time on Earth, Jesus modeled a beautiful picture of what it looks like to practically disciple others: simply sharing His love in everyday life.

This loving attitude and welcoming atmosphere is exactly the environment Rail//Line Coffee House aspires to maintain. While providing leadership and job training, the individuals at Rail//Line work to reflect God's heart to every person who enters the shop.

We strive to show love and grace every day and we have seen the way that God works in each person's life. For example, our friend Harold, who is a regular, has had an incredible journey starting in the Montana Rescue Mission to now getting a job that he

loves and an apartment. Another exciting celebration is with Aleiah who began in the apprenticeship program and recently launched into a job as a dental assistant.

Learning about each person and getting to live life with them is one of the greatest blessings I've had working at Rail//Line. Continual growth is one of the biggest aspects of discipleship that we incorporate here at this amazing little shop.

This past month, Rail//Line Apprentice, Promise, welcomed her baby boy into the world! His name is Lennox and it was amazing to finally meet him in person after so much anticipation. We also welcomed Elle Thompson as Director of the Apprenticeship Program who's hard at work in her new role mentoring the staff.

08 | Internship Invitation

NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS!

The CLDI Internship is an experience that will change your life. There are only 5-8 spots available so apply or submit your interest ASAP for Fall 2023.

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 11-Month Paid Internship | Build Lifelong Friendships |
| Housing Covered | Hands-on Job Experience |
| 14-Day International Trip | Resume Building Experiences |
| Explore Gorgeous Montana | 1:1 Mentorship |



LEARN MORE & APPLY:
www.cldibillings.org/internship



WHY HOUSING IS SO IMPORTANT

Here at CLDI we strive to have well-planned and developed pathways between our ministries for the purpose of empowering individuals and families.

We understand that the limitations keeping someone in the cycle of poverty or addiction can only be overcome through holistic care. That's why we believe in investing in all the steps along that pathway, from youth mentorship to job training to long-term addiction recovery and affordable housing.

As you may know, we are in the middle of a major addition to the affordable housing step in the pathway. I am thrilled to let you know that Tapestry Apartments is making great progress. Our construction team has just put up the third-floor walls, and we are on track to finish the project by the end of January 2024. **The need for safe and affordable housing in our community is significant, and we are proud to be part of the solution.**

We believe that our Tapestry workforce housing project will make a real difference in the lives of people in our community.

Housing is a fundamental aspect of holistic care for families. Affordable housing allows parents to provide their children with a sense of security and gives them a place to rest and recharge.

For many kids, having a good night's sleep is critical to functioning and thriving, whether in school, in sports, or when engaging with our Youth Works team. The parents also have a little extra money in the bank to buy healthier options of food for kids to have the energy to engage.

Housing also enables us to effectively mentor and support women in recovery who need a stable and supportive environment to heal and grow. The journey of recovery takes baby steps into independence. When women leave the Hannah House, they now have

more options for housing close to their recovery community. Community support and affordable housing are integral and essential to the long-term sobriety and developing the next generation of workers.

Housing is a piece of our Rail//Line apprenticeship by providing our apprentices with the opportunity to have margin in their budget to afford the education and training for the career of their dreams.

At CLDI, we believe that housing is not just a basic need, but an essential component of holistic care for families, enabling them to break the cycle of poverty and create a brighter future for themselves and their communities.

Thank you for your support and commitment to this project. Together, we can make a real difference in the lives of those we serve!



KALEB PERDEW
CLDI Executive Director

Rendering of the new Tapestry Apartment Complex coming soon to the South Side





JOIN AN UNSTOPPABLE COMMUNITY OF MONTHLY GIVERS

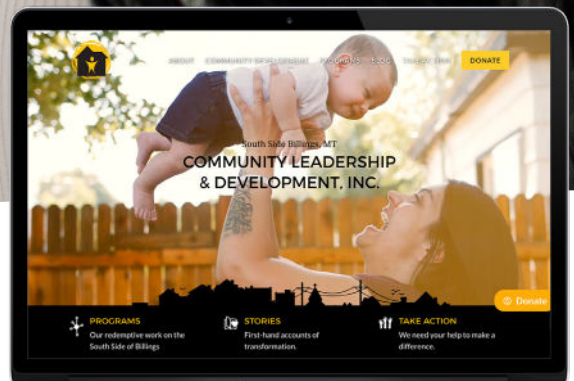
Our community of monthly givers, who give anywhere from \$5 a month to \$500 a month, is known as The 100Fold because, like Jesus tells his disciples in Mark 10, we believe that when people live lives of generosity and sacrifice the blessings returned to them will be one hundred fold.

The 100Fold is a group of people who are passionate, courageous and committed to seeing the South Side be restored through a gospel lens. You belong here.

Visit www.cldibillings.org to join 100Fold today.

LEARN MORE

Want to get involved or financially support the work of CLDI?
Give us a call or visit our website for more information!



MISSION

CLDI seeks transformation through the gospel by rebuilding lives, restoring families, and re-neighboring communities.

BOARD

Dave Goodridge, PRESIDENT
Nate Oakley, Jim Koessler, Bob Terwilliger, Kendra Moran, Kyle Young, Josh Gilligan, Linda Deavila, & Diane Morledge-Hampton

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