



SLALOMING INTO THE NEW YEAR!



Happy New Year, Promise Partners! By now you're probably tired of hearing about latest "wave" of the pandemic, so let's change the metaphor up a bit, shall we?!

We're grateful to share with you that we have successfully navigated the Omicron "slalom" at UP -- maybe not with the same level of grace as our Olympic counterparts, but, nevertheless, we made it down the mountain!

Corny metaphors aside, THANK YOU for standing with us as our students, StreetLeaders, and their families persisted through another challenging moment in this pandemic. While we did experience some staffing shortages across all four of our locations in January, we never needed to close any of our sites due to lack of staff support or due to Covid transmission. We were incredibly thankful for the ability to remain a steady, safe place for students amidst another moment of uncertainty.

Also, all of this talk about skiing is **more than just a metaphor!** in January our UrbanTrekks crew was able to escape to the mountains for a much-needed day of play and fun. For most StreetLeaders this was their first time on skis, and the courage and tenacity they showed in embracing this new skill was unforgettable!

It's moments like these that you continue to make possible for students -- **the daily moments of stability you provide that add up in significant ways, and the bigger "landmark" moments like a day in the mountains skiing for the first time!** Thank you for your ongoing support!



PARTNER UPDATE: LET ME RUN



Whenever possible, UrbanPromise seeks to partner with other community organizations to provide meaningful opportunities for our students. One of our ongoing partnerships is with Let Me Run, a non-profit that inspires boys through the power of running to be courageous enough to be themselves, to build healthy relationships, and to live an active lifestyle.

These UP campers from our South Boulevard Site completed the 12-week program as an "options class" on-site at our AfterSchool Program last fall, and at the culmination of the program they completed a 5K with their coaches and supporters! Way to go, boys!

GET TO KNOW... Terri & George Hart



What inspired you to get involved with UrbanPromise? Our first exposure to UP was a video of Senior Signing Day sent to us by a friend. We could feel the joy of that group of young people celebrating their accomplishment and opportunity, surrounded by an equally joyful community of supporters! We met with Jimmy (our fellow Wake Forest alum – go Deacs!) to learn more about the program and were so impressed with his heart for kids, families and our city. George is a kidney doctor and works with many patients living in the communities that UP serves. He was encouraged by the hope offered through the UP investment in these communities.

What is a favorite memory you have with UP? There are so many as there are so many fabulous people connected to Urban Promise. One standout is coaching a Girls on the Run season at the Camp Hope site. We trained by running laps around the parking lot and through the surrounding neighborhood, often wearing crazy get-ups to make it fun! At the end of the season, there was a big city-wide 5K event. All the girls came out with their families in support, cheering them on. One girl's mom was worried it was going to be too hard for her to run the whole race. She was a very sweet, rather reserved girl, but she put her hand on her hip and told her mom, "Stop being negative – I can do this!" And she did! Her family was so proud of her! Another great experience was hosting three young men from Africa who were in the US doing an UP internship in Camden, NJ. They visited Charlotte to see the program in action here. We had deeply meaningful conversations with them and had a blast watching them splash around in our backyard pool acting like kids themselves!



If you could describe UrbanPromise using only one word, what would it be and why?

Transformational. Actually, what we observe happening in the Urban Promise community is "mutual transformation." It is relational, life on life impact that enlarges the lives and hearts of everyone who is engaged. It is an opportunity to serve each other and be supported at the same time.

Author of the *New York Times* Bestseller

Tattoos on the Heart

The Whole Language

THE POWER OF
EXTRAVAGANT
TENDERNESS



Gregory Boyle

Founder of Homeboy Industries

RESOURCE CORNER

This winter our UP staff is reading "The Whole Language: The Power of Extravagant Tenderness" by Greg Boyle.

"Boyle's moving stories challenge our ideas about God and about people, providing a window into a world filled with fellowship, compassion, and fewer barriers. Bursting with encouragement, humor, and hope, The Whole Language invites us to treat others—and ourselves—with acceptance and tenderness."

In the book Father Greg writes about our "unshakeable goodness" and the goodness of others. He quotes his friend who said, "Each of us is a word of God spoken only once". In reading and processing Father Greg's words together, our staff has reflected once again about what it means to view our students and their stories through the lens of unshakeable goodness.

In other spaces our students' actions might be met with punitive forms of discipline or they may even be seen as part of "the problem". As we ground ourselves in Father Greg's vision, we are compelled to respond differently and to place out focus on honoring the inherent dignity and light that each of our students possesses.

PARTING SHOTS: SCENES FROM CHRISTMAS AT UP!



YOU ARE...

80 Promise Partners collectively donating **\$9,247.86 per month** to UP.
Your average gift is **\$115.59 per month**. Your impact is **immeasurable!**

