

How I Do What I Do: After-School Programs

Edited from Articles by Tim Cummins, MSC Missionary

The Latino population is the fastest growing minority in America with 1 in 9 people speaking Spanish at home. The federal government has estimated that this ratio could be as high as 1 in 4 by 2010!

The North American Mission Board has estimated that 95% of the residents living in an apartment complex are unchurched. I'm sure this is correct because you can go to a complex on Sunday morning and you can't find a place to park. And they aren't walking to church!

Therefore, our church growth strategy must include a method for reaching immigrants living in apartment complexes!

Whirlwind Mission, Inc. helps congregations, "Take the Church, to the People!"

This document will help you get started in community outreach or increase your effectiveness.

I have two guiding principles for what I do:

1. **Everything is about relationships.** With managers, residents, cops, city government. No short cut to this. It takes TIME.
2. **Ministry is based on a scratch and itch mentality.** Find out where people are itching and scratch there in the name of Jesus --then you will have an effective ministry.

I operate a Needs Based Ministry. So should you. Language, education, and loneliness are three of the biggest needs.

Research First. What is the demographic color of the neighborhood?

Immigrants tend to be in construction, landscaping and service industry. Look for pickup trucks, vans with ladders. Most will also have bumper stickers in Spanish. Also most Latinos also have satellite TV--to get Spanish programs. So look for lots of those little dish receivers.

I look for signs (literally) that the property is having trouble: "Free Rent" or "\$1 moves you in" sort of things.

When I first go to a property I do a walk around. If there are tenants I ask them how they like the place, how long they've lived there, what the racial mix is, are there a lot of kids, what they think about the management (has the current manager been there awhile), and is there a community room?

I also look for maintenance men. They let me know what the general attitude of the management company is, if they have a lot of graffiti problems, and if there are lots of kids.

Another important question relates to the number of vacancies in the complex. The more vacancies, the more leverage you have to work there.

Every apartment complex "shops" its competitors. They know exactly how much money each is getting for a 1, 2, or 3 bedroom apartment. Every complex has about the same square foot floor plan with similar amenities. But the complex where you have ministry also offers an after-school program,

and English classes (even only once a week), as well as community events. Can you see how your ministry can be the selling point for a prospective resident?

The more you look at the apartment business from the secular point of view, the more churches working on site makes good sense to corporate America. Services by moral people for free!

My priority locations have:

1. Lots of children.
2. High percentage of immigrants.
3. A community room

And most importantly:

4. A positive manager.

I never talk to a manager unless I have something to offer. I have already communicated with a church in the area (Within 5 miles or 10 minutes drive time). They have confirmed with me that they are interested in community outreach and are ready to start immediately.

Then I go talk to the manager. I usually dress up--short of a tie. I hand them my business card, a brochure, a prayer card with my picture on it, some small gift and immediately tell them that I'm not there to sell them anything.

I start off with something like this, "Hi! My name is Tim Cummins. I've got great news for you--and I'm not trying to sell you anything. I've heard that you have a lot of kids on your property." (Wait for a response)

"I have work in 21 other complexes around the city. Most of them have a problem keeping the kids from wrecking the place." (Wait for a response)

"I work with a number of different churches in the area. We offer after-school programs, English as a Second Language classes, computer classes and community events. Even though we offer services to the community we are about the spiritual needs of your residents. It doesn't matter if they speak English perfectly, if they destroy the apartment and skip paying the rent." (Wait for a response)

"Where do you go to church?" (Note: I ask presupposing they do)

This is a very important question - it lets you know very quickly whether you will be able to work there. If the manager is pro-church you have a much higher chance of getting on campus. It's also important for you to be clear with the manager about your ultimate goal - sharing Christ! Don't try to sneak in the "back door" be upfront with them from the beginning.

If it sounds like they think working with churches is a good idea then say, "I represent /whatever church/ and they'd like to have a party and feed your residents. The church will pay for everything."

(For more info on how to hold an Outreach Event, check out the document "Menu for Success")

"We'd like to put up a few fliers around the mailboxes and the laundry rooms. Does this sound like a good idea?"
(Wait for a response)

"GREAT! I'll be back soon to give you more details about the party."

Then you go into longer term plans.

"One of the things we do is offer after school programs. Could we use the community room once a week to help the kids with their homework?" (Wait for a response)

Of course you should NOT even talk about that unless the church has mentioned an interest in helping with that type of ministry.

I always tell to my partners to "Keep the bar low."

Don't promise what you can't provide.

I've been working with apartment managers for over seven years and I've never had them tell me I wasn't doing enough.

BUT I have had partners promise things they didn't deliver. I ALWAYS hear about that. So keep the bar low as to what you and your church can do.

If you can only do one event a year--that's ok. If you can do things around Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving or Halloween even better.

I've found that the shoebox Christmas gifts are the best. Just wrap the gift and label it with the age and sex of the child. Normally an apartment complex of 150 will have about 20 pre-schoolers, 30 elementary children, 25 in middle school and 20 in high school. Kids in high school normally don't participate.

For Easter what I've found works best is to hide about 200 eggs. Let the pre-school through second grade go first. Give each child a bag, and tell them, "Gather as many eggs as you can and then bring them back to me." The children dump all the eggs back into your big bag. You then get the older kids to hide all the eggs again. I normally do this at least five times! Then we hide them for the older kids a couple of times.

I don't put anything in the eggs during all this hiding & searching. Now comes the fun part. I have what I call "The Great Candy Throw." I have all the kids spread out and then I throw candy to them. Make sure you make a line that they can't cross too close to you. You can keep track of about how much candy each kid gets. The really little ones you can basically throw right in their bags. The point of these games is to have fun. But also to make the fun last. Throw individual pieces! Make the kids work for it!

For Easter I also like to use sidewalk chalk and draw scenes from the story. I've also had the group split up into two--one says, "He's not dead," the other "He is risen," as we walk around the complex.

For Thanksgiving I have my partner churches collect bags of food to hand out. Check out the "Bags of Love" section in this document to know what to put in the bags. I usually involve the managers and ask them for the ten neediest families. If I have regular work at that complex, I focus on the families we work with the most.

I ask the managers so they feel in the loop and also realize how much we're benefiting the community.

So much of community ministry is marketing. It's important to take pictures of the events you do. I buy the large poster frames (24x36) at Wal-Mart for \$10.00. I usually make two displays: one for the complex and one for the host church. These pictures stay in the office of the complex until I bring them a new one to put up! This keeps your ministry in mind.

As a missionary involved in community development, I am constantly generating more volunteers. How do I do that? By keeping the bar low. I regularly host Outreach Events in the complexes where I work.

(Again, for more info on how to hold an Outreach Event, check out the document "Menu for Success")

This gives people an initial taste of on site ministry. Most people can handle two hours on a weekend where they're just handling out food and tracts. Usually about one out of twenty people will get involved in ongoing ministry.

I use a military analogy to illustrate this. There are two kinds of army: Regular Army & Special Forces. Regular Army has thousands of people all gathered together behind an impenetrable fortress with tons of supplies. Special Forces are made up of fire teams of eight people behind enemy lines. All of my work is a Special Forces operation. But that doesn't mean it's brain surgery! Our basic task is loving people in the name of Jesus!

Too many people get caught up in creating a curriculum for the after-school or ESL programs and forget what the main goal of the ministry is. Don't make that mistake!

My main criterion for a partner is Just Show Up! Get on site and you'll do fine.

I'm always in a learning mode. I try and be flexible.

Mobilizing Volunteers

Now that you have a place to do ministry, how do you get volunteers to help? This is a critical issue, unless you want to do it all by yourself (which goes against the "two adult" rule--check out the Training Manual for After School programs).

My strategy for reaching our cities for Christ is simple. "Take the Church, to the People."

It is important to "Keep the bar low."

Let me give you an example of how a church proposes a new ministry. Normally a church will call me and say, "We're interested in starting English as Second Language classes and we need your help. What we'd like to do is have beginning, intermediate and advanced levels. We'll offer child care, provide a small snack and we're planning on three nights a week. We figure it will take about 15 people to do this." I then reply, "Do you have any idea how many people want to get involved?" At this point they go back to their congregation and take a talent survey. A few weeks later they call me back and say, "I'm sorry but we only had four people sign up and none of them on the same day. So we decided it must not be God's will for us to do this ministry at this time." This is a very common scenario. Instead of offering a beginning class one day a week they do nothing. I believe this is spiritual warfare. The evil one delights in foiling a church's best

intentions. They make the critical mistake of making it too hard for a volunteer to get initially involved.

I have people come up to me and say, "I really want to minister in this area. When are your classes?" To which I reply, "When are you available? Let me know what you want to do and we'll base the program around you!" Most people assume that the two schedules could never match up. Basing the class around them forces people to really evaluate if they want to do the ministry or just think they want to do ministry.

It is important to offer short term opportunities. The potential volunteer may not be able to teach a class once a week till the Lord comes back but they may be able to help out one Saturday for a couple of hours.

It is important to follow protocol within a church's organization. If a church has a Minister of Missions he is the logical first stop. Keep your presentation brief. Tell him about the ministry you're involved in, your background and how his church can help and also benefit from partnering together. The best of all possible worlds would have you come back and also talk to the Missions Committee. The next step would be for you to make several short presentations to different Sunday School classes.

I use a phone log where I write down the name of everyone I call with a brief description of what was discussed. Just take a few seconds and jot that information down. I realize it's one more thing to do, but this one habit has proven to be invaluable over the long haul. I regularly look back through that book and re-call people that were not available at the time or to confirm something they said they would do.

The best way to mobilize church members is through their Sunday School classes. These are ready made groups many of whom want a service project. Ask for a few minutes to share a need in the community.

Once the group gets on site and gets a chance to meet folks at the mission, a few really fall in love with it. I've found that about 1 out of 20 people that have an initial mission experience get involved long-term.

Therefore it's very important to keep getting new people on site.

People who are called to outreach ministry are the Special Forces of God's army. We don't understand why everyone doesn't get involved in this life changing ministry. It can be frustrating when your pastor or staff at your church isn't interested in community work in apartments. They see these residents as transitional and poor. "What good can they be to our congregation?"

Churches today are frequently about establishing and running programs. If the family doesn't fit into the mold they are not targeted as potential church members. Everyone is busy and in an evaluation mode. If they think there's no benefit to working in these apartment communities they won't. Therefore it's important to keep the ministry location close to your church. With persistence many of these families do get involved with church---but it takes time. The more families get join the church, the more value the pastor puts on this ministry!

Americans generally want instant everything. They want to "make the sale" and "close the deal," right now. It's hard for church staff to see the benefit of their time spent doing

community missions. . . because it takes time. You have to earn the resident's trust and respect before they give their life to Christ. That doesn't happen overnight.

Therefore, don't get too frustrated when your church doesn't rush to come help you. The majority of the members are regular army and are not called to help. Which means you have to expand your base of potential volunteers. High schools are a good place to look for a couple of reasons: they know how to do the homework (when's the last time you had to do a quadratic equation?) and the honor societies are required to do community service! Why not with you?

Most college campuses have denominational groups such as Baptist Student Union, Campus Crusade, and Youth For Christ just to name a few. The University will have a list of the on campus organizations. Call the registrar for that information and for the leader of the group. Contact that leader and let them know that you have a ministry opportunity in their area. Mention the after-school program but start out by asking if you can come make a brief presentation to their next meeting. Tell the leader that your long-term goal is to have students come and help at the mission regularly, but that you'd like for them to participate in a one time event where they help you cook hot dogs and have a party. Remember the 20/1 rule, it takes about twenty volunteers coming on site to get one person that really gets committed to the mission.

Once you have established a relationship with the leader, tell them, "It's up to the leader to set the date for this. Like Solomon said in Ecclesiastes, 'If you wait for perfect timing you'll never get anything done,' so when can you come?" Try and get a commitment for a couple of dates.

Perhaps they can help you pass out the bags of food around Thanksgiving, or they can help you have a Christmas party, or help with the Easter Egg event. Give them a LOT options and as always fit into THEIR schedule!!

Motivating and mobilizing volunteers is a full time job. You need to be systematic with your efforts (call all the schools in the area) and follow up with your contacts.

Discipline

One of the most frequent challenges I deal with as a Mission Director is discipline. What do we do with children that are acting badly?

It goes without saying, but I'll say it anyway, under no circumstance do you ever hit a child. I have had volunteers tell me, "What that kid needs is to be taken out in the back yard and given a good whippin'." They weren't kidding, it was sincere advice! It may have been sincere, but it's also dead wrong.

One of the challenges I have with the kids I work with is comparing God to a heavenly father. Believe me, God is nothing like these kid's fathers. We have had to call DFACS on fathers because they had beaten their child so severely. That type of punishment doesn't work and builds real resentment in the long run.

The Chinese have a saying, "The wise man knows his limitations." Perhaps you're saying to yourself, "I would never

strike a child." These are not easy kids to work with. What if you told a child not to throw a crayon at another kid and they did it anyway - totally disrespecting you. Or even worse, throw it at you! What if they shot you "the bird" and told you to "f*** off?" How would you react?

I know what sets me off, it's when a big kid beats up a little kid. No matter how objective we try to be we will always have our favorites. I feel like they are my own kids. When I see them getting hurt it makes me see red. I realize the reaction I'm having, I break up the fight and then put myself in time out!

When I have guests come visit the mission sometimes they're taken aback by how rowdy it can be. Twenty kids in a two bedroom apartment can get pretty intense, especially if I only have one helper. They'll make comments like, "You need more discipline with these children."

Let's examine the situation. The children have just spent eight hours in class with little or no exercise. They jump off the bus and head straight for the mission. Do YOU think you'd want to, Sit still, be quiet and do your work?" I doubt it. So here's the rules I play by:

1. No fighting in the mission.

Play fighting, wrestling, horse play, whatever you want to call it, whether they're having fun or not is not tolerated AT ALL. And here's the hard part - I send both kids home. This teaches the whole group not to fight and not to constantly come running to you every little grievance.

Over time I've come to realize that the worst punishment I can give is to send them home for the day. If their "crime" is really bad (someone is really hurt) I tell them they can't come in the mission for several days or a week. In a few cases I've had to ban them indefinitely, until I really see a change in attitude.

Make sure you apply the "cookie rule" to the injured. Unless the child is really hurt, which is doubtful, offer a cookie and most little hurts will be forgotten or ignored.

Usually a short suspension does the trick. If they are caught stealing or breaking mission property I also go talk with the parents. Most of my volunteers can't do that because they don't speak the parent's language.

2. No eating or drinking in the mission.

Time is precious. Do you really want to spend your cleaning up a big mess every day? The kids I work with have the idea that gravity doesn't apply to them. So only fill up the cups half way, and make them go outside to eat. Cleaning up messes can lead to real resentment over time, so it's much better to establish and enforce this simple rule than to constantly be telling kids to be careful.

3. Work first, play/eat later.

Working with kids is all about leverage. People are motivated two ways, either with a carrot or a stick. Obviously, we're not going to whack them with a stick, but generally the threat of being sent home or having a talk with their parents is enough to get them to change their behavior. But remember, if they were fighting the time for talking is over. Send them home!

The ironic part about discipline is that the kids who need the mission the most are usually the ones we send home first. So there has to be a balancing act between forbidding them to come in and their naughty behavior.

I have had some success with giving them the choice of standing in a corner or going home if they've done something naughty (like eating in the mission, or cussing).

There is no room for tolerating fighting.

Although we are there to help with homework, the primary reason for our presence is to build relationships with the children which results in more Christ-like behavior. Therefore I do let them into the mission even if they don't have homework.

Some of my partners are against video games. I have found that the Nintendo 64 game system is nearly indestructible and that that Mario games are entertaining and not terribly violent. I buy the games used from places like Game Stop for cheap. I buy four controllers to let the maximum amount of children play. Many times getting to play games with their friends is an excellent "carrot."

Girls love doing crafts and the promise of an art project can have wonderful results on their study skills.

For the children who have done something naughty but have been allowed back into the mission (the next day) I also insist they help with the cleaning jobs: sweeping, gathering and taking out the garbage, etc.

There is no perfect answer for how to deal with the behavior problems of certain children. We have to temper our discipline with love. However, it's my feeling that if one child continually causes problems, then they must be suspended from the program for increasing amounts of time. If you have enough volunteers, perhaps one of them could work with that child individually, but I don't allow them to harm the whole group for weeks on end. It causes too much stress for our volunteers and for the other children. I am also a believer in keeping the parents in the loop on your decision. The sad fact of the matter is that their parents probably have as bad or perhaps even worse behavior.

Pray for guidance. Love the children. But be firm in your decision.

Marketing

Marketing is basically raising awareness of people about a product. In our case ministry is the "product."

So how do we get people to think about your ministry?

There is another adage I heartily endorse, "Out of sight, out of mind." Most people are visual creatures. "What you see is what you get" works on many levels. If a person sees evidence of your ministry they have a much higher chance of getting involved and supporting your work. So remember to make your material visually appealing. IE: photographs.

Many ministries make one basic mistake: they assume people read. I realize people know how to read they just don't like to. Most brochures have way too much information. One buddy put it to me this way, "If it's longer than I can read when I go to the bathroom it's too long." I think most people

are similar. I'm sure you've also heard, "A picture's worth a thousand words." Ask yourself this, would you rather look at a picture or read a thousand words? So make sure you design your marketing campaign with visuals in mind.

Use lot of pictures with a caption. Focus on close ups of individuals and small groups. It is an art form to get good pictures. Have the person look straight at the camera. Make a big, ultra happy face and your subject will usually mirror that emotion.

Avoid the candid wide shot that "gets all the action." It may give information but usually evokes no emotional response. It's the close ups of two or three kids looking straight at you with big smiles that makes you feel all warm inside. Sponsors support people not programs.

Your camera may be the most important tool for marketing your work. It's important that you understand its limitations. The single biggest mistake beginners make is they stand too far from their subject. Get in close! Focus on the waist up. Be aware that the flash may over expose what you're shooting. With experience you'll be able to tell what the picture will look like.

It's important that the contrast is correct or the picture won't look right when you photocopy it. That means you don't want too much difference between the lightest and darkest areas in the photo. For example you would never shoot a dark skinned person with a light background.

Consider copying them onto colored paper. Avoid darker colored paper (especially red) because it's too hard to read. I like the pastel colors for my copies. I normally only print on one side of the paper because many of my partners post the letter on a bulletin board.

Tell them what's going on. Most of my stories focus on the evangelism work going on in the missions, but don't be afraid to share your frustrations as well. When things are going badly I remind my partners, "That's why they call it missions. . . If it was easy everybody would do it."

Once year do a "family issue" and focus just on pictures of the volunteers. Your supporters aren't just praying for your work, they're praying for you!

Also, consider a prayer card the highest priority. Make a bunch of them on postcard stock. They're sturdy and look great. Hand them out like business cards. I consider it a home run if I end up on their refrigerator. I can almost be guaranteed that they'll pray for the ministry and volunteers many times over.

Have business cards and carry those with you. Get used to handing them out. Leave them wherever you go. It's amazing how God can use that simple networking to great advantage.

Remember that no amount of technology will ever substitute for the good ol' fashioned hand shake and a smile. The best way to market what you're doing is to make regular rounds of the people interested in your ministry, or those like yours. There's no short cut to this, it takes TIME. So it's best you get started right away. As Jehovah told Moses in the desert, "Quit praying and get the people moving." This is the time for bold action! Be known for your passion and people will reward you with their support, both in time and in material resources.

Get a plan, stick with it and work it.

Tracking Data

Track your data!

I realize it takes time to keep a record of what goes on in your ministry, but it's absolutely necessary.

When you work with people your job is never done. It's easy to get frustrated when you don't see immediate progress in your ministry. By tracking what you do each month you can see how God is at work. It's like relatives that haven't seen your kids in a long time. "Wow! You have really grown!" I don't see much change but they sure do.

I also track people resources. How many volunteers, when they came, where they're from, where they worked and what they did.

The result of their work is the most important information I track: who made a decision, where do they live and what their telephone number is. It's critical that your teams who lead people to Christ gather that data, otherwise we have no way to follow up and disciple them! (NOTE: Please read the hand out on "**Names in Spanish**"! You need to know how names are done in Spanish-speaking countries so you do not make a mistake when working and filing Hispanic people's names.)

Your supporters are vitally interested in people getting saved. Let them praise the Lord for His goodness and generosity! So track your data!

Partners

The best part about being a missionary is working with other missionaries. The hardest part about being a missionary is working with other missionaries.

Strange, but true. Having a partner is similar to being married. The relationship can be very intense - after all we're concerned with people's eternities!

The hardest issue to deal with revolves around turf. To me arguing about who can work where is complete nonsense. It's like a man unloading a two ton truck of sand with a shovel. Someone else walks by and offers to help. Are you going to say, "No, thanks. This is my sand truck?" That's crazy. Yet I see that attitude regularly.

The longer I work in the community the more I realize that we are just scratching the surface of what must be done. People need the Lord. And they're not going to church! So we must take the church to them.

When I first start to put a team together at a mission one of the questions I hear is, "But what happens if two different church teams show up at the same time? Where will the kids go?" That presupposes that there will be a lot of people who want to work in the community. There aren't.

Remember how I compared regular army and Special Forces? By far most church members are regular army. They are satisfied with going to a worship service once a week. The idea that they should, "Take the Church to the People," is completely foreign to them.

Field operatives recognize each other. We are not as concerned with denominations as evangelism and discipleship. The issue of competition doesn't occur at the volunteer level, but with organizations.

Some people have said that I am "the most intense person they've ever met." Could be true. I give new meaning to the word "passion." I realize that what makes me good, makes me bad. The same intensity that enables me to push the edge of the envelope, also pushes some people away. I guess that's why they make chocolate and vanilla. I am an entrepreneurial missionary. I am the "can opener." I'm the person that "goes where no man has gone before."

At the same time I realize that I can't do this work by myself. Currently I work with Campus Crusade, Youth With A Mission, the Family Heritage Foundation, Friends of Refugees, Kids and Teens 519, Me and My House, the Atlanta Youth Project, Youth For Christ, and the North American Mission Board along with over a dozen major evangelical churches in Metro Atlanta. I hesitate to even write down this list because I haven't included all of my partners. But you get my drift, I work with a LOT of organizations.

There is no way to expand the work without expanding your team. If you go to any of the over fifty apartment complexes where I have worked you will not see my name anywhere - except on the lease agreement. I am happy to be secretly famous, although that is harder to do after I was named, "Missionary of the Year" by NAMB.

The bottom line is that I'm not the bottom line - Christ is! Adopt a spirit of humility and you will preserve your ministry.

Let me give you an example. About a year ago I had a person call me up and wanted a tour of our work. I spent the day with them, explained our methods and strategies and got them started at one of our best locations. I had a terrific relationship with the manager. I had completely outfitted the mission with school supplies, tables, chairs, computers and regular volunteers.

This person started a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization. They decided that this was "their" mission. They went behind my back, talked to the manager and insisted the lease be changed to their ministry's name. When the manager called me to let me know what was going on I was aghast, but kept my feelings to myself. I did not want the manager to feel the Christians were fighting amongst themselves. What kind of picture would that give? I discussed the situation with a few of my other partners. They were outraged and told me, "You've got to nip this situation in the bud. You can't allow them to take the mission away from you. What if other groups start to do the same thing?"

My friend if you don't hear anything else, please listen to this: Kingdom building is not a competition! These are not your missions---they are Christ's.

One of the most important things I've learned is patience. I am one of the most aggressive, impatient people you'd ever want to meet, yet I have learned how to wait. I was concerned that this new ministry would not last, that this person would quit and the work would stop. As I thought about the situation, I had to wonder what the down side was. If they were able to do what they thought they could do, PRAISE THE LORD! If they couldn't, then I would step back in.

In their first year they have accomplished most of what they promised to do. Unfortunately, the church that was helping me in the mission directly across the street stopped. So I take great pleasure in the success of their ministry, even though it was not one of "my" missions. Because it was not my mission. It's the Lord's!

Now check this out--at the same time this situation was happening I was starting new work in another area where I have partners. I had talked with them about what I was doing. However, one of my partners began to have bad feelings about me. They perceived me as if I was taking over "their" work in "their" city. I was guilty of the same thing I had been so upset about! Missions is full of irony.

The key to successful partnerships is this: keep the lines of communication open! The evil one delights in creating tension. Talk your problems out. Clear the air. Simply talking about the situation resolves most misunderstandings.

As soon as I heard one of my partners was frustrated with me, I set up a meeting to talk. I listened, and I backed off from that mission start. It is more important to preserve your relationships than "your" territory. Have patience!

With God on our side we will overcome together. Over time that location became a symbol of our partnership. A Hindu man became the new manager and the new mission to this day has not come to fruition. But our partnership is stronger than ever.

Unity is beauty.

The Father has spoken to me clearly about this. There are so many people who have never heard the Good News. Does it make sense to fight with other Special Forces missionaries? I have heard it said, "It is our nature to fight. It is our choice who we fight against." Who are you fighting against? Are they one of the "good guys?"

I have found pride to be the center of spiritual warfare behind enemy lines. Are we more concerned with reaching the lost or building our own little kingdoms?

It is better to start new work than start a fight with a partner. Give it up. Give it to Jesus.

Bags of Love

Thanksgiving:

- 2 pound bag of Mahatma Rice
- 1 pound dried beans
- 5 pound bag of cornmeal or flour
- 3-6 oz cans of canned fish
- 4 packages of ramen noodles
- fresh fruit
- Gift certificate for meat (optional)

Christmas:

- Toothbrush/Toothpaste
- Gloves/Mittens/Socks
- Books/Crayons/Pencils/Stickers
- Small Toys/Stuffed Animals
- Candy Canes/Gum/Candy
- No toy guns or knives, please!* Wrap and label the box with age of child or for a boy or girl.

Menu for Success

Christians! We are called to "Take the Church, To the People!" Hosting an Outreach Event is just one simple way. Here is what I have found to work. This can be held at the church, but it is BEST if it's right in the middle of the apartment complex.

Bathe the event in prayer. For me, "Prayer is not a strategy, prayer is THE strategy." Understand that what we are engaging in is Spiritual Warfare. Be prepared for logistic difficulties. The evil one hates outreach. The harder it is for you to organize and expedite the more successful the event is likely to be! A good size team is around eight people. Too many more than that and you get your own team talking to each other instead of to the people you're trying to reach.

Survey the area of apartments. Find out two things: where are there the most children, and is the apartment manager a born again Christian. Let them know that you are Christians. If they say, "Sure you can come and have a party, but can't share stuff about your religion" tell them, "God bless you" and leave. Wait for the busses to drop the children off from school. Count everyone. Use that number as a basis for everything you do. Ask the manager for a rough population count based on number of apartments. 90% of the children will show up and about 30% of the other residents.

Once you've been led to the right location, look for an open area with maximum visibility. Shade is also important.

There are three things people love: sports, music and food.

Sports: These can be organized, such as basketball or soccer. (Portable basketball goals cost as little as \$100. Goals for soccer field. can be made from PVC pipe for next to nothing. The children like active sports. Kickball and relays are also positive. If you play kickball, you have to use soft balls! Otherwise tell them they have to touch them with the ball not throw it at them. Chasing games are good. The girls tend to like the art stuff, sidewalk chalk being perhaps the most popular along with making beaded bracelets.

Music: Most youth groups have musicians. Take advantage of the talent the Father has provided your church. Jesus didn't need a big sound system, neither do we. Singing and clapping goes a long way. Please, not a lot of "churchy" music. Bring a jam box with fresh batteries and ask your youth what they like to listen to.

Food: Always plan to feed people. There is no better way to show love than to offer food. I always shop at Kroger. I've found their store brands to be the best tasting and cheapest. If you use their "Plus card" you help cut costs as well. ALWAYS tell the manager what you're doing and ask if they're willing to donate items before you start buying. ALWAYS shop at the same store for every event you host. They will get to know you that way and your sincerity for reaching the community. Take a lot of pictures of the event, especially focusing on close ups of the children. You can buy a large picture frame (2ft X 3ft) at Walmart for \$10. Paste the pictures and mount them in that frame along with the name of your church, the community/apartment complex you reached and the store's name. Give that large display to the grocery

store. This gives them some points with the community, increases visibility of your church and assures more help in the future.

Block Party Supply List

Here's my list based on 100 people:

- 150 hot dogs. (I use Kroger's Gwaltney brand, either turkey or chicken. Avoid pork products because of the possibility of there being Muslims in the community.)
- 150 buns
- 2 large bottles of squeeze ketchup
- 1 large bottle of mustard
- 1 jar of relish
- 1 jar of mayonnaise
- 5 large bags of potato chips
- 2 large bags of tostito-type chips
- 2 jars of salsa - mild
- 1 box of 100 spoons
- 1 box of knives (25 - for spreading relish and mayonnaise)
- 1 set of 100 napkins
- 100 paper plates
- 2 bottles of waterless hand cleaner
- 8 three-liter bottles of Big K drinks (Favorite flavors are cola and orange)
- 4 bags of styrofoam cups (51 each - 8 oz) Use the smaller cups, with lots of ice. They have to keep coming back which equals more contact with the people. Have the kids scratch their names on their cup with their finger nails. For smaller kids only fill up the cup about 75%. For some reason they don't realize gravity applies to them. Most of it ends up on the ground.
- 1 box of large tie-type trash bags. ALWAYS leave the place cleaner than you found it! This is the #1 concern of the manager. They have enough for their maintenance and grounds people to do as it is. Value your relationship with the manager - it is golden.
- 5 large bags of ice
- 5 Styrofoam coolers
- 1 portable grill - During the summer Kroger sells these for \$10.
- 1 bag of charcoal
- 1 can of lighter fluid (Make a big deal about starting the fire. "OK kids we're starting the fire. . . here we go . . . WHOOSH!" Great stuff! Always my favorite job.)
- 1 box of matches
- 3 large buckets of ice cream (Chocolate, orange sherbet are the favorites.)
- 150 cones
- 2 scoopers
- 2 squeeze bottles of chocolate toppings.
- 5 bags of cookies - Kroger brand for about \$1 each. Oreo types are the favorites but get a variety.

All this stuff costs around \$125.00 or a little more the first time, less on each following event.

If money is a problem, go with just drinks and cookies and double the amounts of both. Remember to ask the

manager of the grocery store for donations. Invite the manager to the event.

At least two people need to be in charge of getting everyone's name and where they live. The best thing is to get a picture of every individual with their name.

Flyers are great, but not the only way to get people there. Post a few flyers in high contact areas a week before the event. (Like at the mailbox and washeteria) Give out flyers to every tenant two days before the event. The next day, go back and look for your flyers on the ground. We do NOT want the reputation for trashing out the place. Most times the management will hand them out for you. Many managers have a monthly newsletter to residents at the first of the month. They normally produce that a week ahead. Get in that newsletter. As soon as you enter the complex on the day of the event, split your team up and have them start knocking on doors.

Go to the Dollar store and buy enough little toys for everyone. At the end of the event, have all the children gather around and say "We have a surprise for everyone, but you have to be really quiet to get it." At that point, share a five-minute plan of salvation with the children. Pray with them and then have them raise their hands if they prayed something like that for the first time. Make sure you get their name, give them a Bible, and have the Sunday School teacher contact them and offer to pick them up.

This is not brain surgery, my friends! Basically you're getting out into the community and loving on people in the name of Jesus. There is not one right way. The Father has shown me time and time again that the most basic element of an Outreach Event is to "JUST SHOW UP!"

I consider Outreach Events to be ground breaking in an area. Short-term strategy will be to use their club-house or community room. Unfortunately, most complexes don't have these community rooms. Long-term strategy should be to partner with the management to get an apartment there. Start after-school sessions with the children (info on how to do these in other documents), Back yard Bible clubs in the Summer, English as Second Language Classes, health events and nutrition classes, opportunities for Bible study and worship in the complex. I call these ministries on site a "Mission" usually with the name of the apartment in front. I put a large sign with the name of your mission in the window. Make sure you put the times when you offer services in the window too. All your signage should be in Spanish and English.

I work primarily in the International Village in Metro Atlanta. Chamblee is home to 145 different countries and 90 different languages. The world has come to us. Currently one out of nine people speaks Spanish as their mother tongue in America. In 10 years estimates are as high as one in four! Notice how the ATMs are in Spanish and English? The USA is going to become more and more international.

Team Tips

- 1. LOVE THE KIDS!**
You represent Jesus in the unchurched villages where we work. Loving the kids is the reason we're there.
- 2. NUMBERS DOESN'T EQUAL SUCCESS**
The evil one wants you to be discouraged because there "weren't a lot of kids." The chance of the kids you'll work with going to church is close to zero. That's why we "Take the Church, to the People!" You'll see that the days when there are smaller numbers of kids will also be the days when they pay attention and have the best behavior.
- 3. PUT YOURSELVES IN THEIR SHOES**
Imagine you're at your house and you hear a commotion outside your window. You look out and there are a group of Guatemalans putting up a tent near your front yard. They knock on the door and say, "Buenas tardes! Me llamo Mario. Nosotros tenemos muchas cosas para sus niños, como globos de animales, galletas, pinturas. Todo es gratis. Queres venir?" Do you think your mom would shove you out the door and say, "Go play with the nice Guatemalans?" It takes a lot of trust for the mothers to let the kids go with complete strangers.
- 4. SMILE BIG AND SHAKE HANDS**
The International Village is an oral culture. You may not speak Spanish, but everyone understands a big smile.
- 5. SPEAK THEIR LANGUAGE**
You need to learn a few simple words:
Hola (Oh lah) Hello!
Fiesta (Fee es tah) Party
Gratis (Grah tees) Free.
Ninos? (Neen yohs) Children? The last word is said as a question, where you're asking if they have kids.
- 6. WEATHER HAPPENS**
You are a Special Forces soldier. Can you imagine your team being dropped off in Afghanistan and it starts to drizzle. Do you think you'd call the chopper back to come get you? If you have fun in the rain, so will the kids. It's all about your attitude.
- 7. RELATIONSHIPS ARE #1!**
Getting to know the kids is the main reason you're there. Spend time with a few children and really find out about them. Ask them where they're from, what they eat, do they go to church? Don't worry about getting through everything in your program if the kid has a real problem he wants to talk about.
- 8. FIND THE KIDS**
Be a detective. As you and your partners go around the complex, look for kid's toys. Knock on those doors first. Then ask the kids who live there to help you find the other kids.

9. TAKE NOTES

To be the most effective ministry possible we need your help. Take a roll of who is there every day. Take names and find out their apartment number. That will help you the following day, will help the teams that come later in the summer and will help our missionaries keep track of the decisions that are made during the week you're there.

10. HAVE FUN!

The kids at the missions look forward to "the Teams" coming all year round. You are the high point of their summer. You and your team are making the difference in hundred's of kid's eternities. Take your job seriously, but have fun and LOVE ON THE KIDS!

Sample Promo Flyer

**¡Fiesta!
Party!**

**Free Food!!
¡Comida Gratis!!**

Juegos/Games

**Saturday/Sábado
1-3 pm
October 9th**

**Sponsored by/Patrocinado por:
(Name of the apartment complex) & (Name of
Church)**

Vocabulary:

- Monday = Lunes
- Tuesday = Martes
- Wednesday = Miércoles
- Thursday = Jueves
- Friday = Viernes
- Saturday = Sábado
- Sunday = Domingo

Put the date in English. People will be looking for the day of the week and that will be in Spanish. That also keeps the office staff in the loop, since they probably don't speak Spanish.

Feel free to add to the flyer whatever artwork you'd like. This is just the basic info that most people use.

Greetings in Spanish

Learn these and practice them with your friends. The children will speak English. Their parents probably don't. Encourage your kids to study Spanish in high school.

Hello! = Hola! (OH lah.)

My name is Tim. = Me llamo, Tim. (May YAH moh, Tim.)

What's your name? = ¿Cómo te llamas? (Koh moh tay YAH mahs?)

My name is Juan. = Me llamo, Juan.

Nice to meet you. = Mucho gusto. (MOO choh GOOSE toe)

Nice to meet you, too. = Igualmente. (Ee gwahl MAIN tay)

Bye! = Adios! (Ah dee OHS)

God bless you. = Dios te bendiga. (Dee ohs tay bayn DEE gah)

The Father is working ahead and around us. He is already planning for us to have a successful event. People want to get into the battle, especially our youth. So do it!

This is not a competition thing. This is a JESUS thing. So partner with other evangelical churches in your area. We are all the body of Christ! This helps cut down on costs and increases the chance that the people who accept Christ will actually get disciplined.

Count on Whirlwind Missions to help you in anyway possible. Let us "Take the fear out of Outreach!" Currently we are working in 52 apartment complexes in Metro Atlanta. This is the largest ministry of its kind in the world.

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