

Having trouble reading this email? [View it in your browser.](#)



TUESDAY, JANUARY 24, 2012



### Christmas Store Success

On the surface, it was all Christmas. The warm smell of hot chocolate and peppermint permeated the air hung thick with decoration and the excited cries of children dreaming of presents. Parents bought and crossed items off of a wish list sent to Santa, colorful paper keeping secrets until Christmas morning.

But below the surface, it was Christmas too, as those with little to spend at the holidays were given the dignity of buying Christmas gifts for their kids. Volunteers and donors worked and gave to make sure everyone had a Merry Christmas. And the profits, which so often drive this time of year, won't line the pockets of corporate stockholders, but will be reinvested in the community, by giving a young teen a job this summer working at the C.A.T.C.H. Camp program.

The McLaughlin Healthy Neighborhood Project Christmas store was a place where neighborhood families could buy donated gifts for a fraction of their normal cost. Some were even able to earn credit by volunteering at the store. This year we were able to serve 52 families. A big thanks to everyone from New Life, Hart First Baptist, Journey Church, MNA, Pastor Dave, Tom & Renee Pastoor, Bethany CRC, Muskegon Surgical Association, Kainay Church, and Salon Mia Bella for making this year's store a success.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

### Donate to Community enCompass

We assure you it is a Safe, Secure, & Simple way to contribute.



You can download our most recent enPulse newsletter here for offline reading: [Fall 2011 enPulse](#)



1105 Terrace St,  
Muskegon, MI 49442.  
ph 231 728-3117

[info@communityencompass.org](mailto:info@communityencompass.org)  
[www.communityencompass.org](http://www.communityencompass.org)



*McLaughlin Healthy Neighborhood Project an asset based community development partnership that seeks to identify, mobilize, and equip neighbors to begin, grow, and sustain positive projects that strengthen community. It is a partnership of Agape Christian Fellowship, Bethany Church, Community enCompass, the McLaughlin Neighborhood Association, New Life Christian Center, and the PTO of the McLaughlin Elementary School*



[back to top](#)

---



## Neighborhoods Transforming.....

Check out this [video](#) about our work with neighbors in making life good in the Downtown Muskegon Neighborhoods.

[back to top](#)

---



## Neighborhood Youth At Work

"Before you can teach them the skills of a job, you have to learn where they're coming from," B says, sitting on the other side of the desk at the Community enCompass offices. I'm the only thing keeping him from lunch, and he's the only thing keeping me from sleep. I've forgotten my digital recorder; I scratch phrases on a piece of paper, oblivious to the fully functional computer 18-inches to the right of me.

They come from a maze of barriers; they have to in order to qualify for the Youth Employment Program.

They might have no home, or dropped out of school, or have a child at a young age. In an economy where college graduates can't find a job, what chance do they have?

That's where YEP and B Anthony come in. The program gives these kids a paying job where they learn outdoor beautification, maintenance and rehab, and urban farming, as well as classes in interviewing and job readiness.

But, as B said, he first has to learn where these kids are coming from. They come from places you have to be tough to survive, where kindness is taken for weakness. B tells me about a trip he took with his workers to the cemetery. "Right across the street is life," he told them. "Houses, people, everyday things. And here is death. There are people in here who didn't expect to be." Then he had them say the names of the most successful people they could think of, people whose lives they admired, wrote them on slips of paper, and had the kids imagine throwing the crumpled up slips into Lake Michigan. Because that is how much our lives matter compared to eternity. When the people at CenC, Sarah, Kimi, and B are nice to them, it isn't weakness. They're living out a choice to bring the Kingdom to a corner of Muskegon.

Community enCompass has a motto: Neighbors building community from the inside out. These kids are coming out from behind their barriers, becoming neighbors, and building something good. As Sam Beam once sang, "It was always the broken hand we learned to lean on after all."

"In one year, of the 27 kids that have gone through the program, we have a 60% job placement rate," B says. "You have to be patient, but the rewards keep coming."

[back to top](#)

.....