

*"Whoever says to the guilty, 'You are innocent,' will be cursed by peoples and denounced by nations. But it will go well with those who convict the guilty, and rich blessing will come on them." - Prov. 24:24-25*

## Paths of Justice

### Receiving & Giving

For me, school never came easy. In fact, it was downright hard! I have a learning disability with language and Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). With these disabilities, the traditional method of learning simply does not work for me. But I was fortunate. A team of caring tutors and loving parents gave me the necessary tools and disciplines necessary to overcome my disabilities.

Much like how my disabilities will never leave me, so the temptation to sin is ever present in our lives. And much like the caring tutors gave me the help I needed to overcome my disabilities, so God has provided us with a tutor to teach us how to overcome the sin in our lives: "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you" (John 14:26).

The way that God teaches, convicts, and blesses us with other people encourages me to engage in our justice mission. There are many people who, through no fault of their own, are victims of serious forms of injustice. If you have received help from other caring people and God paid the ultimate price for you, why not take a step outside of your comfort zone to make a difference in the lives of those in need? - Shaun Brainard

### Helping Children Become Literate

It was lunchtime on an October day when Billy and Tyler first met in the school's library. It seemed to be a divine appointment. Billy was one of a number of second and third graders in a Franklinton elementary school who were not reading at grade level. Tyler was there along with a dozen other volunteers to tutor the students in reading.

Billy came from a broken home in a neighborhood plagued with poverty and crime and where many parents did not model the value of reading and education. Both of his parents were involved in drugs and often left their children to fend for themselves. Billy was a handful. At first, he didn't want to be tutored and he refused to cooperate. But after several months he became convinced of Tyler's commitment to him and he began to look forward to his visits. As a result,

Billy's reading skills began to improve.

Then one night, a few months later, several young men came to the door of his apartment. Billy went to the door with his father. The men began to argue with Billy's father about a drug deal. Angry words gave way to pushing and shoving and then one of the men pulled out a gun and murdered Billy's father.

The horror of watching his father being killed further disrupted Billy's life. However, Tyler was one person Billy could count on—he always showed up at the school to meet with him at the appointed day and time. In the ensuing months, Tyler was able to play a part in stabilizing Billy's behavior. Tyler's influence on Billy was also a witness to the principal and many teachers of Jesus' steadfast love.

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Definition of injustice:  
Injustice occurs when someone with greater power deprives someone with lesser power of freedom, dignity, treasure, or livelihood.

"Then he taught me, and he said to me, 'Take hold of my words with all your heart; keep my commands, and you will live. Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words or turn away from them.'"  
- Prov. 4:4-5

**(Continued)**

Tyler Flynn is the executive director of Mission Columbus and the co-director of the Columbus Tutoring Initiative (CTI). He is passionate about helping under-performing children learn how to read so they can succeed academically and have the opportunity to fulfill God's purpose for their lives.

Over the past twelve years, the CTI has grown to over 350 volunteers serving nearly 400 students in twenty-two central Ohio elementary schools. The volunteers, who come mostly from churches, receive training in how to teach their student basic literacy skills. During each tutoring session they work from a folder with

materials prepared by the student's teacher. Just as important as the tutoring is the relationship between each tutor and his or her student. This is the perfect service opportunity if you love children. Of course, public schools don't allow volunteers to initiate conversations about their faith or religion. However, they are free to respond to their students' spiritual questions, and this can lead to a discussion about Jesus.

While this might not seem to be a ministry of righting an injustice, we are convinced that it meets our criteria because of the benefits it brings



to the students. For instance, studies have shown a correlation between the number of African-American male children reading at grade level in the 4th grade and the eventual adult prison population. Tutoring of this nature has far-reaching benefits for our society.

Here are results of the program:

- The reading proficiency of students improves on average 1+ reading levels per year.
- Students experience hope that they can succeed academically.
- Children who learn to read will be able to read the Bible.
- Kids sense the love of Jesus in their tutors.
- Tutors can respond if their students' discussions veer to spiritual matters.
- Tutors have the opportunity to model compassion and faithfulness.
- Churches and Christians are put in a good light with the school's staff, the students and their parents.
- Sponsoring the program gives churches a connection that can open the door for the church to serve the school in other ways.

### **Opportunities / Activities**

- There is a pregnant mother who is new to the area and lacks all support who we've learned about through PDHC. She is due in November and we will host a baby shower, provide meals, etc. for her. More details are forthcoming.
- For our Soccer Clinic on Aug. 27, we really need help right away to make personal contacts and invitations to those we've served through Angel Tree.
- Columbus Tutoring Initiative is looking for volunteers during the month of August for their 2017-18 program. Go to [www.tutorcolumbus.org](http://www.tutorcolumbus.org) for more information or to volunteer. If you have other questions contact Tom Castor. This is a way to give dignity back to children.
- Do you want to get more involved with righting injustice? Come to our Justice Team meeting. Our next one is on Wednesday, August 9 at 7:00 pm.
- Check with Tom Castor ([tcbus7@att.net](mailto:tcbus7@att.net)) or Doug Dunsmoor ([dwdunsmoor@hotmail.com](mailto:dwdunsmoor@hotmail.com)) for more information about these and more opportunities.