

# December Update



**Home at last!**

**Dad:** After 38 days in the hospital and 100 days in rehab, Dad and Mom (who was with my Dad through the whole journey) came home on December 7<sup>th</sup>! It's been a great blessing to be able to spend Christmas break with them. Thanks for all your prayers and support!!!

**Coastlands:** We spent the first 2 weeks of December at our local Christian school, Mount Zion, in Manchester. Pam, Cassie, and I did the elementary week, and for the middle school week we were joined by Christen Nine and her 5-month old daughter Marya – Coastlands youngest team member ever! 😊

Last week we journeyed to Berkshire Christian School in western Massachusetts, where we were joined by Liberty University junior Stephanie Albert. BCS is located in the second least evangelical metro area in the United States, and being there is always a reminder that New England truly is a mission field! We are always very blessed by both schools.

## An Unexpected Text Message from a Parent of an 8<sup>th</sup> Grader (Shared with Permission)

*"I wanted to thank you for all your help and advice with \_\_\_\_\_. He recently came to us with a struggle and told us how you helped him and gave him guidance to come to us for help and to seek accountability. Thanks for letting him come to us on his own in his own time. He really wants to honor God and do the right thing. I've always appreciated the work that your team does but I'm just amazed at the concern and care you have for the kids - this impact may very well have changed the entire course of his life to a more positive direction. My husband told \_\_\_\_\_ he would give him the spiritual help with this issue that he never got himself. And he has the tools to guide him with God's help. Again, thank you for all you do for the kids! The work that's done by your group and the fact that the kids feel like they can go to you in confidence is so wonderful. It's just nice to see real life application. And also to know that even though we try our best, that the whole body of Christ is at work to accomplish God's purposes. Have a merry Christmas you and yours!"*

*"Hello, my name is Shekinah and I'm in 7th grade. I was born on 10-22-01. I was not intentional. What I mean by that is that when my mom and dad got together they didn't want a baby. As other people may say I'm a mistake which is sort of true but not entirely. My father left me when I was just around 3 weeks old and I've never seen him since, which is a terrible thing for anybody to go through. But Coastlands Consultants came along and they talked to me and it made a big impact. They come alongside you and talk to you on a personal level. They don't just talk, they pray for you and sometimes share their testimony with you and relate with you like Cassie. And all the Coastlands people are all great people. They have such a strong godly spirit that's almost impossible to not notice in them. And I love them all, they are just so amazing."*

Mount Zion Student



**6<sup>th</sup> Grade Photo Bomb at BCS**



# My Weeks with Coastlands

By Christen Nine

“I saw so clearly that the kind of mentoring ministry that Coastlands has developed was truly making a difference in students' lives.”

“Once upon a time, I was a young, single college student with lots of free time (or at least a lot of control over my own time) and with a deep passion for discipleship and youth ministry. I was studying secondary education with some youth ministry electives when I got my first chance to be a part of the Coastlands team during my college winter break. After only one week of pouring out every bit of love and energy I had, alongside the three other team members in New York City, and I was totally hooked. I saw so clearly that the kind of mentoring ministry that Coastlands has developed was truly making a difference in students' lives. Our team left the school at the end of the week nearly in tears because of the depth of ministry and the joy we felt over changed lives.

I was blessed to be able to join two more Coastlands trips before I finally graduated and began working full time as a high school teacher at a local Christian school where I continued to nurture that passion for mentoring and discipleship.

Over six years have passed since that time, and much has changed in my life. I now occupy my days taking care of my 2 year old son and my 5 month old daughter...and trying to keep our home as beautiful and welcoming as I can for my hardworking husband. It is a very special season of life, but I will admit that it is easy to get lost in the mundane, day-to-day chores that fill my life right now. I would be the first person to get up and describe the beautiful ministry of raising children, but I should also confess that I often lose perspective of my sense of purpose as I daily sift through mountains of toys, laundry, and dishes.

So, the idea was as surprising to me as anyone when I had a sudden nostalgic memory of my youth ministry days and thought, “Well, why couldn't I join a team for one week now?” My son is old enough to spend a quality week with his grandparents, and my daughter is young (and good natured) enough to travel with me. To my even greater surprise, the Coastlands team didn't think I was crazy either! Thus, within a few weeks, I found myself getting up bright and early, packing my 5 month old and I into the car, and driving to a school for the first time in years.

Words cannot describe what that week of ministry did for my heart. I started out feeling dry and out of practice...not just in ministry...but in the exercise of Living with Heavenly Perspective and Expectation. I had found myself so bogged down with my mothering tasks that I had ceased to really expect God to interrupt my days. But by the end of the week, I had not only been rejuvenated in my ministry of mentoring and worship to the local middle school students, but I had found that God was equally refilling me with expectation for how He was going to bring that spark back to my home and my family life. From the richness of the worship and messages to the delightful, refreshing team members' love for Jesus, to the sweet interaction between students and my 5 month old little girl--my heart just overflowed. Every minute of journaling, mentoring, and enjoying good conversation with the students ministered back to me.

And now that I am back into the rhythm of diapers and laundry and dishes, I am finding that I have brought back with me a renewed sense of God's nearness and his desire to interrupt my daily moments with Himself. Thank you Coastlands for letting me share in your faithful work...and thank you for sharing the love and life of Jesus wherever you go. It ministers to students...to school staff...and even to your very own team members. Let's do it again sometime soon.”