

## Missions in Action – Ellyn Snyder Imani Christian Academy

For Ellyn Snyder and her husband Steve, volunteering weekly with Imani Christian Academy in the East Hills of Pittsburgh came one small step at a time. About 10 years ago, their son was asked to park cars at Imani's annual fundraising gala. From there, Ellyn and Steve also started volunteering at the gala, little by little, first by helping with setup for the event and for the silent auction. After doing that several times, they began staying the whole night to help with the rest of the event. After helping with the gala for about 8 years, Ellyn and Steve decided they could help fundraise further if they had a better idea of what the school is like during a regular day. That's when they began volunteering with the school every week.

Both retired teachers, Ellyn and Steve jumped right into life at Imani. They tutor students, help the teachers in the classrooms, sit with the kids while they eat breakfast, set up bulletin boards, paint, and do other odd jobs; whatever the school needs help with. When asked if there is a need for additional volunteers, Ellyn says that there is a need, but there isn't a clear-cut job description. Ellyn believes that what the school needs is people to just love on the kids and jump in and help wherever they are needed. "Let yourself be a vessel," Ellyn says, "Let God work through you while you're there, then be exhausted when you're done."

Imani Christian Academy is a private Christian school in the East Hills of Pittsburgh that enrolls potentially at-risk children and operates primarily on donations. There are currently 194 students enrolled in Pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Imani has been a mission partner of NCC for many years, meaning that the church supports the school each year with earmarked mission funds and encourages volunteer participation. Many in the congregation have been involved with Imani over the years. Those who are interested in learning more about the school and the students they serve are encouraged to watch the following video: <https://vimeo.com/216452307/058acaabf6>. Information about the school is located at [www.ImaniChristianAcademy.org](http://www.ImaniChristianAcademy.org).

In the coming months, Ellyn and Steve will be planning the annual Christmas party for the students, including an opportunity for interested NCC-ers to purchase presents, as well as contribute money towards students' uniforms. Another need at the school is support for the teachers. Ellyn speaks very highly of the teachers, mentioning that there is a potential for behavioral issues at the school. "The teachers run a tight ship," Ellyn says, "and there have not been any issues." With more than 70 years of teaching experience between Ellyn and Steve, they know the job these teachers have is not easy. With only one forty-minute break away from the students each day (the teachers eat lunch with the students), it is an exhausting day for the teachers. A group of the teachers even meet each morning and pray for the students before school starts. One way to support the teachers is to donate gift cards for them to be given at the Christmas party. For more information on how to get involved, contact Ellyn Snyder at [ellyn.j.snyder@gmail.com](mailto:ellyn.j.snyder@gmail.com).