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## Project Connect—Support for the Underserved and Homeless

As part of the Arizona CityFest season of service, First New Life Missionary Baptist Church hosted Project Connect, an outreach to homeless and other underserved individuals in the South Mountain Village community. History was made because no such event had ever taken place in this community. 200 volunteers and providers served. Although the December 21st date was close to the Holidays, we were able to come together and find a way to make the day special for the children while also focusing on serving those experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness. Those involved included churches, elected officials, social service providers, employment counselors and many more. Over 600 meals were served. Each guest at Project Connect was assigned to a guide for the duration of their visit, giving individual attention and opportunity to build relationship with those being served. Many guests said the best part of their experience was the caring interaction with their personal guides and that they were made to feel special by the individual attention they received and the loving respect shown to them.

**Teaching/Training** Wholistic Ministry Training is the title of the new elective class for FPC Sunday morning. We are studying from [If Jesus Were Mayor](#). The class moved into the newly renovated Community Center for its session on December 26th. The renovation and use of the Community Center is a seed project for this class. Network cables are scheduled to be laid in the coming week after which computer equipment will be set up to link the computers to the church building. Tables, white boards, bulletin boards, desks and chairs have been purchased for classrooms for the Children's Church. During the week and on weekends, the facility will be used to serve the community in areas of food, social services and health. I will attend City of Phoenix homeless count TOT and lead in-house training at FPC and will teach evangelism lesson for FPC discipleship class using wholistic ministry concepts.

**Publications** We continue to review lessons from "On Earth as it is in Heaven." Progress has been slow because of ministry obligations. Our goal is to complete the revisions by July 2011.

**Networks** I continue to serve with the South Mountain W.O.R.K.S. Coalition, the Central Corridor Ministries Consortium, Arizona CityFest and the African American Christian Clergy Coalition.



**Project Connect Guest Guides from FPC**

## Upcoming Meetings & Events

**January 4** Along Side Ministries  
Women's Retreat planning meeting

**January 4** South Mountain  
W.O.R.K.S. Coalition Media Subcommittee meeting

**January 7** African American Christian  
Clergy Coalition meeting

**January 8** FPC Nursing Home Outreach,  
Suncrest Nursing Home

**January 11** 2011 Homeless Street  
Count TOT

**January 12** South Mountain  
W.O.R.K.S. Coalition Meeting

**January 13** In-House (FPC) Homeless  
Street Count Training

**January 15 & 22** CPR Training at  
FPC for Children's Church Ministry

**January 22** FPC Ministers' Board  
Meeting

**January 29** "Operation Clean Sweep"  
Neighborhood Revitalization Street

## Facebook Finds a Family Christmas Present

Christmas came early for me and my sister Cori. Son David became a Facebook super sleuth and discovered the whereabouts of our niece. She is our brother Eugene's daughter and lives in Blacklick, Ohio. After assuring that David wasn't some kind of weird stalker, LaVada decided to accept Cori's invitation to visit Arizona. Unable to come for Thanksgiving, she opted for Christmas, becoming the most exciting Christmas present ever.

Although LaVada and Cori had not met before now, LaVada's education and career choices mirror her Aunt Cori—both have masters degrees in social work and psychology and both work in community colleges.

LaVada's brother, Parris, lives and works in Los Angeles. Although we have connected with him on Facebook, we hope to meet him in person someday.

LaVada said that the Arizona family reception made her feel like a celebrity, and we felt her presence worth celebrating! We talked incessantly, gathering decades and generations of information in a futile attempt to fill in the blanks for LaVada regarding our dad, her Grandpa George. LaVada is a vivacious, witty, loving and respectful young woman who values family connections.

An added bonus was LaVada's maternal family member who resides in Phoenix with his family. Shortly after meeting this beautiful family, the lines merged. Robert, his wife Angela and his two young children joined us for some of the festivities.



**Cori, Linda and LaVada**

### **Praises & Prayer Requests**

Thank you, Father, for the holidays to spend with family and friends.

I thank You that the FPC Community Center is close to its grand opening and opportunity to put in social services for the community. Thank you for those who have donated time, talent and treasure to make this a reality.

Praise God for the spirit of collaboration among churches and agencies.

Please pray that the volunteers will continue to be available and willing to serve the community.