

Skaters

Here is a missional story that is a direct result of attending The Present Future Workshop with Reggie McNeal in Menlo Park.

When Reggie asked for various ideas of community outreach one of the participants told of the skateboard ministry at his church in Redwood City. I run an after school youth program in Hayward in which there are about 80 kids who participate, the majority of who have no other connection to the church. I networked with Chris ("skateboard dude") and we have since had 2 events here in Hayward where he and his group brought their equipment and my group invited the local skateboarding community. It has been extremely successful on a number of fronts:

First: over 50 teenagers, many of whom had never been to our program, showed up as a result of word of mouth, and the efforts of some of my kids handing out flyers to their skateboarding friends.

Second: The families of our local community were astounded and impressed that a church would host such an event. Our community has a skate park, but it is a dangerous place to go due to issues of gang violence and drug problems. We were able offer a safe, positive place for kids to enjoy this activity.

Third: Local law enforcement was impressed and grateful for the same reasons - yes, we got the cops called on us by some concerned neighbors who became worried at the sight of so many teenagers in one place :)!

Most importantly, this provided a forum for us to give a gospel message in a context that was non-threatening and relevant to all. Through the event, several of the young men I have been working with, as well as some who I'd never met prior to the event, have begun to explore a relationship with Christ.

One of the interesting aspects of this endeavor is that the 2 churches are very different "culturally". The Redwood City church is in a wealthy, suburban, and very Caucasian neighborhood. The Hayward church is in an urban, lower middle class, incredibly diverse neighborhood (the local high school has 40 languages spoken), yet God was able to bring us together and use us to further His Kingdom together in a unique way neither of us could have done alone.

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