



SURVIVING THE ECONOMY AND KEEPING FOCUSED *Financial Update*

Dear Friends,

I wanted to talk to you about our finances and the economy. So many of you ask me about this when you see me. It is the great solidarity within which we all find ourselves. Everyone is affected and everyone is concerned. Thank you for your concern for us.

Before I tell you what we are doing to keep going, I wanted to tell you a story that reminds us why we are here in the first place.

Loving this community is something we need to talk about more.

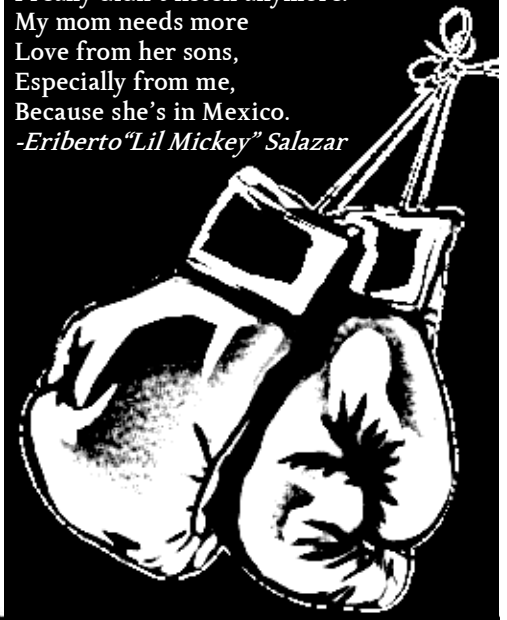
Not too long ago, a young man was shot in the trailer park (in front of his trailer) just blocks down from The Neighborhood Center. His name was Mickey; he was always around. He was a troubled kid and in trouble a lot of the time. But we had seen below the surface and liked him a lot. We grew to love his young girlfriend and their baby, who are next door neighbors to us.

One night, when Mickey was still alive, his oldest brother walked powerfully into our youth programs. Recently out of prison, and now the newly appointed head of the family, he was looking for his younger, wayward brother. He thought Mickey lied about his church attendance; either that or we were the dumbest folks in town to allow Mickey to run amuck here with us. The conversation that ensued was a great one.

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A Poem by Mickey

In the morning of my childhood
I was a big boy or a boxer
My mom said I kicked a lot
So that's what I thought I was.
My mom showed me to be respectful,
Not to do bad things
When I grew up,
I really didn't listen anymore.
My mom needs more
Love from her sons,
Especially from me,
Because she's in Mexico.
-Eriberto "Lil Mickey" Salazar



A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIRMAN

Friends, you might note that in 25 years, this is my first letter to you. My hope is it might cause you to imagine that as Chairman of the Board, this letter must be important. And it is.

Last November, the board began to recognize our responsibility to seriously consider the economic crisis in America. Consequently, we have reduced our budget from \$1,900,000 to \$1,400,000, and still this is not enough. Because this year's monthly giving has dropped lower than we expected, we must now cut deeply into our key personnel and programs.



Bill Thrall, Sr.

I am writing to remind you that NM is, for the vast majority of those we serve, their only resource. They have no others to help. We know your giving is challenged. Yet, I ask you to pray for wisdom in giving and to join us in praying for the NM team. They are a closely knit group and they are closely knitted to the community. You can imagine the effect on all, as some have been let go.

Based on the giving so far this year, we will need an additional \$200,000 over this level of giving to meet our projected expenses for the year. We don't know where it is going to come from. But we are trusting God and we are trusting you. God bless you in all your decisions.

-Bill Thrall, Chairman of the Neighborhood Ministries Board

We explained to the older brother that this difficult young man really was known to us, that we liked him a lot, but we also required that he cooperate when he was on campus. That night, just as he often did on youth night, Mickey went to the poetry class, calm, cooperating, and chatting with friends.

It was a few months later, just this past January, when one of our neighbors called me. Mickey had been shot dead. We gathered there in the dark trailer park, the lights of the forensic unit creating an out of place fluorescent presence. We cared for Mickey's family that night and his family was amazed by how many people loved him.

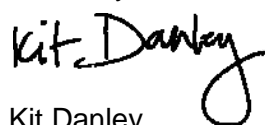
But even in our pain, God again created something beautiful. Last Sunday, the older brother, his wife and their daughters came to church—Their first visit to a church, ever. They walked right in, to the place that loved their brother, knowing they were welcome.

That is why Neighborhood Ministries is here...for love. God's love has poured into our hearts and is expressed through our programs, relationships, and sacrifices. **I sat there during the funeral, and wondered what that week would have looked like if the part we, Neighborhood Ministries, had played was missing. We belong here.**

As an organization, we are doing everything we know how to do in order to stay here. We are fully invested in the work the Lord has given us to do. Our board of directors and leadership team have spent countless hours pouring over our budget and expenses. We have made difficult decisions. However, we believe the Lord has all of us in His hands and those hands have put us right where we are supposed to be. We are learning to trust Him for His provision and guidance.

I want to thank you for your support over the years. I know your lives are very challenged at this time. But I also know that the solidarity of this time makes your hearts more tender to the difficult lives of the poor we serve. We open our mail each day, prayerfully. Stand with us if you can.

Sincerely,



Kit Danley
President



Above: Baby Mickey with his mom

Below: Mickey with his son



NEWS & EVENTS

Summer Interns

Begin May 26, 2009

Kids' Club June 29 - July 10, 2009

Contact Emily Fankhauser at
Emily@nmaz.net to get involved in our
summer programs. Volunteers needed.