

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

BUFFALO DREAM CENTER | BOL 2016



PASTORS
ERIC &
MICHELLE
JOHNS



BUFFALO DREAM CENTER HAS OPPORTUNITY TO PURCHASE BUILDING AS BOXES OF LOVE SEASON BEGINS!

Twenty-three years ago, after being married less than one-year, Michelle and I planted the Buffalo Dream Center. We began in a hotel conference room across from the airport. When the opportunity

came to move into the city we were excited. We always felt that God had called us to reach out to the broken and hurting people of the inner city.

Now we are a part of the neighborhood and it is incredible.

We now have several individuals and families who walk to church from the surrounding streets. Many of them were touched in some way by the outreaches we did this summer. We still run the bus to neighborhoods across Buffalo. However, sometimes the children attending Kidz Club from the neighborhood outnumber the children riding the bus.

More than seventy languages are spoken in the upper west side of Buffalo. God has placed us in a strategic place as we reach out to hundreds of refugee families who have settled in our community.

Now we have the opportunity to purchase our building.

We have prayed for a place in which we could house all of the ministries of the Buffalo Dream Center. Teams from across America and Canada volunteer at our ministry every year. There is more than enough space to accommodate them. We could be a permanent beacon of light on the west side.

As you read this article, we are in the beginning stages of negotiating with the owners and banks. But I believe in my heart that we will not have to borrow money to purchase the building. We have been offered the building for a good price. We are trusting God to do a miracle.

Everything God has done with the Buffalo Dream Center has been a miracle. When I look over the past twenty-three years I am amazed at his provision of vehicles, buildings, food for families in need, and even thousands of toys during the Boxes of Love season. When we have had a need on the mission field, God has always moved on the hearts of people and the needs have been met.

The purchase of the building is just one more miracle we need.

Hopefully, if we timed this right, you received this newsletter as I am living with the homeless on the streets of Buffalo. It is hard for me to believe it was

came to move into the city we were excited. We always felt that God had called us to reach out to the broken and hurting people of the inner city.

Most people associate our ministry with the Buffalo Christian Center, a building on Pearl Street in the heart of downtown Buffalo. For two decades our ministry called this place our home. We were not the owners of the building, so when it was sold it took us by surprise. Where were we going to find a place? We had been at the Buffalo Christian Center for twenty years.

During that season I knew that God's plan was to move us to a new location. To be honest, our church had been praying and fasting. We were asking God to give us a building of our own. Even though this was our prayer, I probably would have never decided to move unless we were forced to move. We were comfortable. Things were working well. But God had other plans.

Many of you reading this newsletter helped us move into our new location. It took a lot of work. Volunteers worked day and night. We put up dry wall, threw out trash, painted, cleaned, and did electrical and plumbing work. Later we put on a new roof and painted the church auditorium. After ten weeks, we moved into 286 Lafayette Avenue in Buffalo. We did not purchase the building. We are currently renting a large portion of the building, while other organizations share other sections.

I have absolutely loved having our church in the heart of the west side of Buffalo. For twenty years I never knew what it was like to be a pastor in a neighborhood. Although we reached out to neighborhoods successfully, the church building was downtown.

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CONTACT US

BUFFALO DREAM CENTER

Worship Service
Sundays at 11:00 AM

Located at:
286 Lafayette Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14213

Mailing Address:
Buffalo Dream Center
P.O. Box 934
Buffalo, NY 14201

Phone: (716) 854-1001
Fax: (716) 829-7390
information@buffalodreamcenter.org
www.buffalodreamcenter.org

eighteen years ago when I began my week-long journeys with the homeless. I recently read that pastors who have been at the same church for twenty-five years make up less than five percent of pastors in America. Michelle and I are almost at that milestone.

One reason I believe we are still here in Buffalo is because we never felt that God called us to pastor a church. We believe he called us to pastor a city. Our calling is not just to "look after" the people who attend on Sunday mornings. Our calling is to show the love of Jesus to an entire city. We love our city. God loves our city. Now we have

an opportunity to put our roots down even deeper – sending a message to Buffalo that we are here to stay.

Please consider giving a gift to make this miracle possible. Even though we are asking for a miracle from God, we know he will use people to pull it off.

IT'S TIME FOR BOXES OF LOVE

"I will never forget that Sunday eighteen years ago," said Pastor Eric Johns. "I stood in front of my church and told them that I was going to live on the streets with the homeless for one week to raise money for Christmas gifts for inner city children."

Pastor Eric and his friends, Keith and Paul, hit the streets for one week. Keith and Paul were recently saved. Keith had just been released from prison and Paul knew the streets. They dedicated the week to protect their pastor. They had no idea the movement that would begin from their week on the streets.

The story made the front page of the newspaper. Every day Pastor Eric could be seen on the news or heard on the radio as multiple media agencies covered the story. That year, a few hundred children received Christmas gifts. For the next couple of years, the Buffalo Dream Center invited people to the "Biggest Christmas Party in Town". The crowd filled the auditorium and the doors had to be closed – leaving a line of people outside who could not fit in the building. It was then that

Pastor Eric knew the Christmas outreach had to be taken outside of the church walls.

Since then Boxes of Love has grown every year with many distribution sites throughout Buffalo and Niagara Falls. Each year more than one thousand volunteers give their time to wrap gifts, pack bags of food, and help give the food and toys away in neighborhoods.

Hundreds of businesses, churches, organizations, and families have held food drives, collected toys, and donated things like freezer trucks, forklifts, turkeys, wrapping paper, and even batteries for certain toys.

Boxes of Love is unique. Many charitable Christmas programs require families to make their way to a central location to receive assistance. When someone signs up for Boxes of Love it usually means that a distribution is scheduled to take place in their neighborhood. They do not have to go far. When people receive their food and toys, volunteers are ready to help carry everything back to their homes. This is greatly appreciated by people who cannot manage to carry a turkey, toys, and food four or five blocks. It also makes Boxes of Love more personal.

Before a big distribution begins, Michelle Johns always tells volunteers that it

does not matter if everything runs perfect. What matters is that everyone is showing the love of Jesus to people. People are not meant to be just another person with a number standing in line. Boxes of Love shows people that they matter.

This year many refugee families are being registered through the Buffalo Public School system. They will be directed to the Boxes of Love site nearest to their homes. Sometimes these families are so new to the country that they have yet to receive any kind of identification. Translators will be available to help with several languages at many of the distribution sites.

This year there will even be a special distribution to the homeless near the downtown bus station and a Christmas party for senior citizens living in a Buffalo Municipal Housing building. As always the season ends with a massive meal served to the homeless and families in need on Christmas Eve at the Dream Center.

This newsletter contains flyers with information you need to be a part of Boxes of Love. You can also visit our website at www.buffalodreamcenter.org for more information.

Please consider volunteering your time or giving a financial gift to make Christmas special for an inner city family. Together we can make a difference.



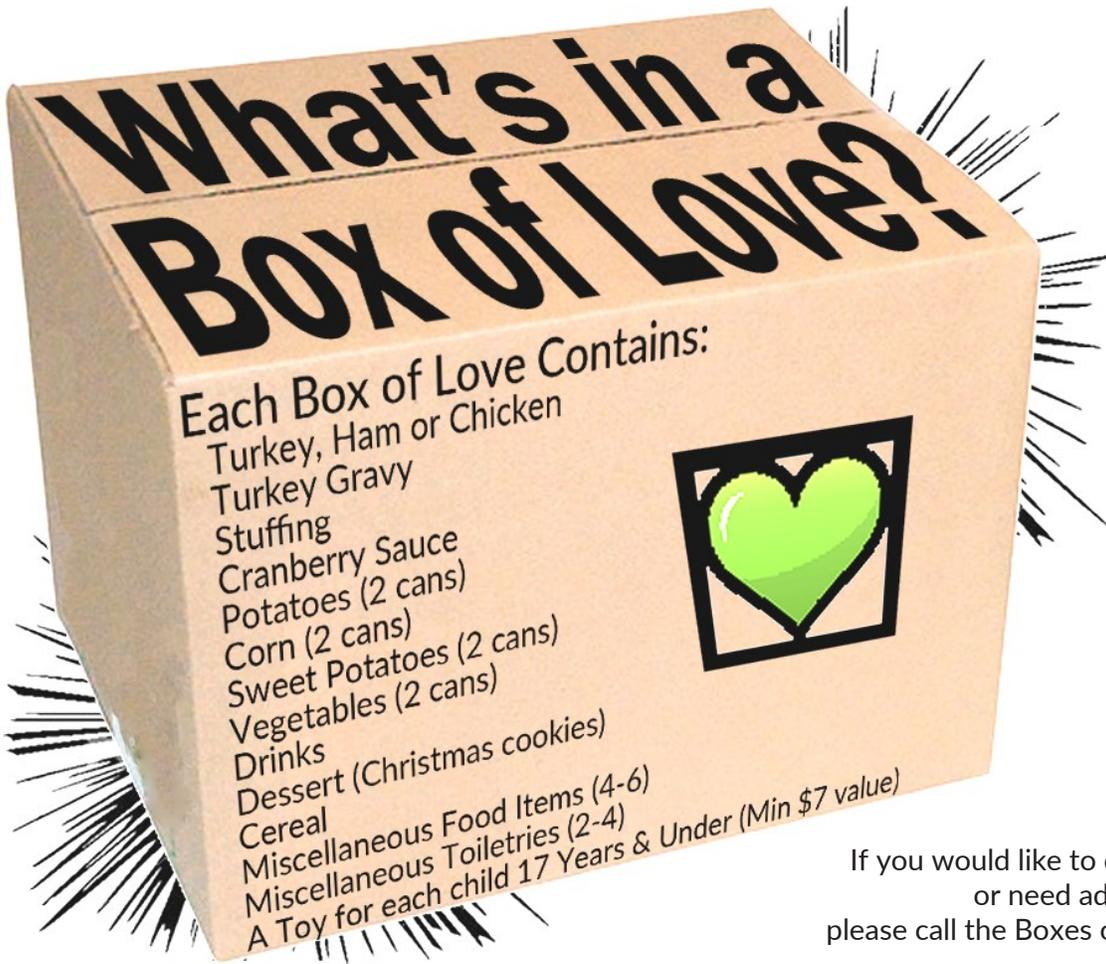
How Can You Help?

You can help by donating any of the items listed or any of the following:

Wrapping paper

Paper & plastic grocery bags

Finances to purchase needed items



If you would like to donate any of the above items or need additional information, please call the Boxes of Love Hotline: (716) 854-1001

KIDZ CLUB BEGINS FALLS SEASON AT THE BUFFALO DREAM CENTER

Kidz Club kicked off October with a new and expanded bus route. More children are riding the bus and even more are walking to the Buffalo Dream Center from the surrounding neighborhood.

When Kidz Club began twenty years ago, there were very few after-school programs in the city of Buffalo. Today, nearly every school has some kind of after-school program. The initiative to run these programs within the walls of the individual schools has affected others throughout Buffalo. However, many of the parents of the children who attend Kidz Club have decided to excuse their children from Thursdays at their regular programs. Instead of staying at their schools on Thursdays, they make their way to the Buffalo

Dream Center.

When children arrive at Kidz Club they first enjoy a hot meal or snack. After eating, they fill the auditorium to learn God's Word during a fun and exciting program filled with

games, music, skits, and an object lesson. The final part of their afternoon is spent building relationships with volunteers as they play sports, learn how to cook, or hang out in the game room. Many of the children come from high risk neighborhood and are in desperate need of adult role models. The time spent with the children at Kidz Club allows these relationships to develop.

Many of the volunteers at Kidz Club were once children who attended the program. They now ride the bus, prepare the snack, and oversee games and activities. Kidz Club is changing lives and impacting generations of families living in Buffalo, New York.





BUFFALO DREAM CENTER
P.O. BOX 934
BUFFALO, NY 14201

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BOXES OF LOVE

INFORMATION
INSIDE!

