

## Meet the craftsman and his apprentice

I'm thrilled to announce that, after years of planning and prayer, our Freedom and Mobility apprenticeship program is now off the ground! Starting this month, Randy Stoltzfus will be mentoring Charvez Williams in the craft of kitchen and bath remodeling. Randy is a retired contractor with over 30 years of experience as a kitchen and bath installer. He and his wife Marlene (she works for Firm Foundation, the RSL tutoring program) attend New City Fellowship and live in the West End neighborhood, where we do much of our work. Charvez also lives in the West End and attends New City Fellowship West End (where his dad serves as pastor). He studied for a couple of years at the University of Missouri-Columbia before returning home to St. Louis. This past summer he served as a Workday intern and did a great job. We're blessed to have Randy and Charvez aboard. They'll work together 20 hours a week over the course of 40 weeks, and will complete around 20 bathroom and kitchen remodels for disabled seniors. After that time, Charvez will need another year or two of training in the for-profit world, and will then be ready to strike out on his own in the building arts.

There's a huge need for safe, accessible bathrooms and kitchens (I knew we had a handful of folks on our waitlist for this type of work, but after consulting last week with fellow Workday staff, I discovered the number is closer to twenty; the more work we do, the longer our waitlist will grow)! The poor cannot take this on themselves, and Workday can only do so much. My prayer is that, as some of our apprentices eventually go into business for themselves, they will take on some of these jobs. In any event, the unshakable fact is that God sees the disabled, the elderly and the poor; he knows their need; and he is committed to caring for them. By his grace, he is using Workday--and you, our supporters--to do just that!

By *Paul Patterson*



**The apprentice:** Charvez Williams



**The mentor:** Randy Stoltzfus

# The Thursday Debrief

One of my favorite parts of the summer was debriefing with our volunteer teams each Thursday evening as they processed their week with Workday. The teams shared stories from the kids and ladies they spent time with that week--stories of new friendships and tearful goodbyes, of lessons learned, and new viewpoints to consider. My favorite stories are usually the ones where the students learn just how wise the ladies that we serve truly are.

After the teams shared their experiences with us we moved into processing the meaning behind their experiences. What is it like to spend quality time with people in a community so different from your own? What impact does it have when you come face to face with people whom you had only known as a stereotype? One student illustrated this well with a story about a little boy he had befriended during the week. The student and this boy were talking during Bible Club one night and the boy told him, "My

friends call you 'the white people' but I call you Ben (not actual name)." While we often don't summarize it this well, we at Workday always hope to help both our volunteers and those we serve start to see people who aren't like them as equals to be known and loved.

In addition, we want our teams to take these experiences back home with them--to take what they learn about the history, communities, and people of St. Louis and to see the similarities in their own towns and cities. We want them to realize that God calls us to love and serve one another as fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, regardless of background or income level.

We at Workday don't always model this well, but I ask that you pray that God would use us, even in our brokenness, to help bring about this vision for His kingdom.

*By Kelly Bronson*



Summer team high school students help JOY Group seniors enjoy a walk in the park.

# The God of Second Chances

This was my first time helping coordinate the summer program and I'm grateful God gets His good work done, even in spite of our mistakes! We'd been working on a few projects that included hanging drywall, mudding, & taping. I'd learned to do it by watching others, YouTube videos, and trial & error—but as I tried to explain it to interns and volunteers, I missed the mark entirely! After a few days on two projects, I'd come to find out that our team was mudding and taping entire walls (rather than the joints where drywall sheets met). If you don't know what that means, just know that we did it all wrong and had to start over. I was sick about it, because I hadn't made things right for the homeowners, the team leader, or the volunteers.

God is a God of second chances! Drywall, mud, and tape are relatively inexpensive materials (especially with free donations). Our team member, Rhiannon, worked extra to fix one site—Thanks Rhiannon! Tearing down the work at the other site showed a roof leak that wasn't repaired (as we previously thought) – so in the end it was good to double back. Ultimately, *in our mistakes we were able to dig deeper and begin to deal with greater damage for a more complete restorative process.*

I believe God does something similar with us. The Holy Spirit works in our hearts to excavate the depths of our sin. Christ shines His light of forgiveness and the Father receives us in Him. We are restored for Kingdom Service. Thanks be to God who turns our sin to purity, mistakes to correction, and brokenness to restoration.

My hope and prayer is that God continues to use my weaknesses as a means to get at the deep areas of my heart. I'm humbled by my first summer at Workday, yet excited and empowered to move forward assured that God is at work!

I've always appreciated how brutally honest God is about the story of humanity revealed in the Bible. Rather than sugarcoated to make God's people the heroes, the Scriptures are full of accounts of human blunders, errors, and outright rebellion. I'm comforted to know that God still loves, pursues, and appoints flawed people, like me.



The walls came down!

**“Our performance is no match for God’s merciful restoration, equipping, and appointing.”**

*By Steve Schaper*

# Interns share their impressions of Summer Urban Missions 2019

This summer we had the privilege of hosting 11 college-aged interns and two seminary-aged interns. They were a wonderful addition to our team and I was greatly blessed by them. They sacrificed an entire summer to serve their neighbors by working with the Workday teams in manual labor jobs, and teaching summer classes with Firm Foundation. Here are some reflections from three of our interns:

*By Marissa Irakoze*

Over the summer I had the privilege of serving as an intern for Firm Foundation tutoring and Workday. Although my experience was certainly an adventure with ups and downs, I loved the internship. The high points were the relationships formed; the lows were the conflicts with different personalities. Even with the discord, I grew spiritually, emotionally and mentally. My co-workers were incredible, and the staff always showed concern and interest in our lives. We became like a family, which was something I desperately needed after a very difficult year. I still continue to keep those relationships. We also had a lot of necessary discussion around race and the effect it played in our relationships. It was a summer of hard work, but I thank God and New City Fellowship for giving me this opportunity to serve.

*By Joshua Williams*



Joshua Williams (left) celebrates with his Godmother.

My summer, in a nutshell, was life-changing. As God walked alongside me and my fellow interns we all grew in unique ways. My relationship with God has gotten much, much stronger. Being exposed to people from so many different backgrounds, cultures and upbringings has opened my eyes to a world I had never seen before. The children of Firm Foundation tutoring and the employees of Workday have truly affected my life. I established a rapport and a deep connection with many of the students I had the pleasure of teaching, and with many of the lovely people that I was able to share life with, even if for a short moment. The staff was amazing, exercising sound judgement and doing their best to be open and receptive to controversial dialogue and perceived racial barriers. I am proud to have served God with them. I can honestly say being a part of Workday put me on a trajectory I never expected. I am thankful for every minute of it.

*By Onya Bell*

My internship this summer with Workday was one of the greatest experiences I have ever had. My favorite part was meeting new teams and having family dinners. I also got to learn skills such as dry walling, building ramps and painting. The Bible stories I liked were about the rich man and Lazarus, and the prodigal son.



*By Bukundababo Felicien*