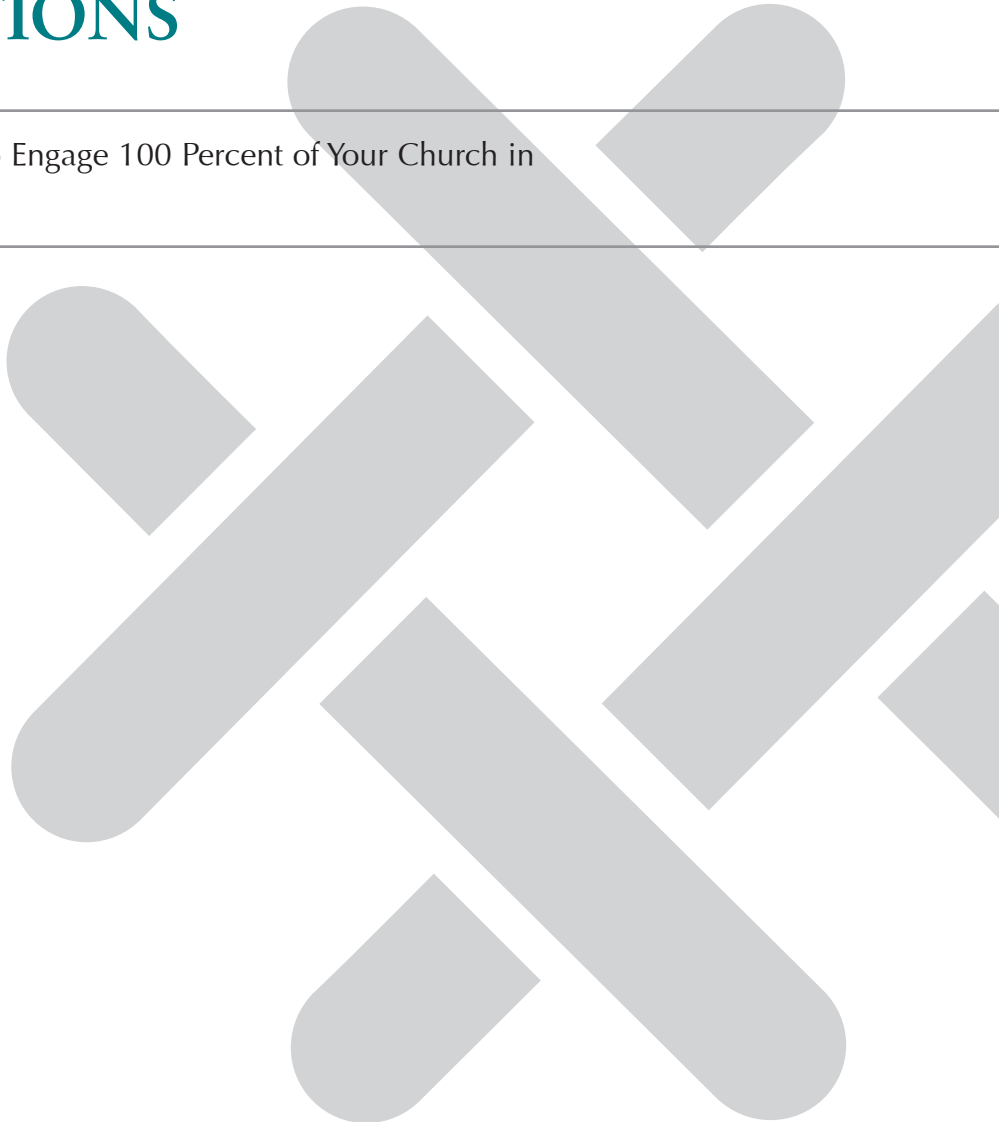


99 INNOVATIONS

Creative Ideas and Resources to Engage 100 Percent of Your Church in Externally Focused Service

by Alexandra McNabb



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“Why are you doing this?” is a simple, yet poignant question for anyone who has volunteered. Why are certain churches in a feverish pursuit of engaging 100 percent of their people in serving others for Christ? What significance is there in giving a birthday party to a middle-aged woman living day-to-day in a cheap motel? What impact does a man—already working three jobs—have digging out weeds on his “free” time at an urban garden? Why? Because simple works of service—the genuine practice of loving your neighbor as yourself—leads to unparalleled transformation in Christ.

For churches involved in externally focused work, inspiring 100 percent of their people to serve others is not optional. They pursue loving and serving people in need because Christ loved and served first. As formidable the challenge, it is far outweighed by the truth that God—the supreme innovator—has equipped all his people to serve uniquely, and that service leads to changed hearts and dynamically changed lives, both for the one who serves and the ones served. The eternal value of transformed lives for Christ is found in significant relationships built through hundreds of avenues of service. Rather than mechanically following another church’s program or success, externally focused churches seek to engage “100 percent” by equipping all their people to understand their God-given calling and purpose, and unleashing them to live their passion.

For Patty, withdrawn and exhausted, living off the weak remnants of a destroyed marriage and deflated confidence, a few hours spent serving with Helping Hands, a project of **Northland, A Church Distributed** in Longwood, Florida, changed her life. She met Sadie that afternoon, a woman living in an apartment complex with her five children, who liked to collect, sort and distribute used items to those in need. When Patty returned, she was excited and pursued a relationship with Sadie, returning on a regular basis to help. Patty has found her place; a whole new direction in life she did not know was possible or even available to her. Today, Patty is a team leader. She found purpose, redemption and healing from her grief, all initiated by the opportunity to fold clothes one Saturday afternoon.

Patty’s story is multiplied in as many different

ways as there are churches and different individuals. The following 99 innovative ideas—proven ministries from externally focused churches—are categorized into the topics of: Inspiring Others, Assessing and Placing Volunteers, Increasing Neighborhood Impact, Tutoring, Mentoring and Schools, Reaching the Homeless and Disenfranchised, Large Events and Sports, Other Unique Ideas That Work, and Bonus Ideas. Many of the ideas are taken directly from church websites (listed with each idea), where more details and contact information may be found. You are invited to dream about the possibilities, connect firsthand with like-minded churches and watch God effectuate limitless change through the innovation only he can bring.

Inspiring Others

1. COMPASSION KIT

The Idea: To have a resource of stories, facts and simple ideas to motivate the volunteer.

“The church in the United States is a strange organism. It is largely wealthy and well educated. We are connected to more resources—economically, socially and even programmatically with support like Bible study guides... A form of spiritual obesity looms over us. We are in the dangerous position of becoming people who know so much but do so little.” As illustrated by this excerpt from the Compassion Kit, Jim Martin, Compassion Ministries director at **The River Church Community** in San Jose, California, encourages members to transition from being served to serving. The Compassion Kit has had a great impact on the people at The River. In one example, a small group, after working through the curriculum, decided they needed to help a group of homeless kids in their community. Other small groups heard about their effort, and got involved, raising the number of volunteers to 20. These once homeless teens now have apartments, job skills, consistent mentoring and love. To download a PDF-format of the Compassion Kit, select the following link: (www.the-river.org/compassion.htm)

2. EVERY DAY, EVERYWHERE

The Idea: To utilize a powerful concept that inspires people to see every day as an

important ingredient in reaching people for Christ. Each week, the phrase “Every Day, Everywhere” is prominent at Northland, A Church Distributed of Longwood, Florida. By using this phrase, people are encouraged to look for daily opportunities to serve others in their jobs, schools, home and work. The result has been people serving in so many places, the effects are impossible to count!
(www.northlandcc.net)

3. WHAT DO YOU DO? WE CAN USE IT!

The Idea: To encourage people through a simple phrase to use their gifts, hobbies and talents to serve others. Mariners



Church in Irvine, California, called out to the congregation, encouraging them that their talents and interests—whatever they may be—can be used to further God’s kingdom. They received many innovative responses. From cake bakers to swim instructors, being open to other people’s gifts and talents has led

to the growth of many successful ministries.
(www.marinerslighthouse.org)

4. ONE HOUR PER WEEK

The Idea: To invigorate a spirit of worship and service through the commitment of one hour per week. At **LifeBridge Christian Church** in Longmont, Colorado, the congregation is continually challenged to commit to one hour of worship, one hour of personal devotion and one hour of service per week. The phrase “one hour per week” has been a rally cry to inspire people to personal devotion, service and worship.
(www.lbcc.org)

5. URBAN PLUNGE

The Idea: To provide a dynamic experience that challenges people’s perceptions about racial, spiritual and socioeconomic issues. In 1991, **Hope Presbyterian**, of Cordova, Tennessee, held its first Urban Plunge at a YMCA in downtown Memphis. Today, the Urban Plunge is one of Hope Church’s

signature ministries, as it provides the most significant life-change. The Plunge affords the adult members of Hope Presbyterian Church the opportunity to experience life and ministry in the inner city of Memphis firsthand through opportunities like participating in a racism panel with the National Civil Rights Museum, and experiencing worship with an inner city church. (www.hopepres.com)

6. THE CHURCH NEXT DOOR

The Idea: An innovative campaign to connect with harder-to-reach people who need tangible proof of God’s love. Families of **New Song Community Church** in Oceanside, California, participate in The Church Next Door by regularly accepting Next Door assignments that provide in-roads to nurturing their community. This is accomplished in three areas: As individuals, small groups and all-church projects. (For examples of Next Door assignments, see numbers 18, 22, 24)
(www.newsongchurch.com)

7. A TIME TO SERVE

The Idea: To give people time to serve by providing opportunities for service in the community during the months of November and December. A Time to Serve is an annual holiday outreach emphasis to help LifeBridge Christian Church members get involved in volunteering and connected to the community by serving. A Time to Serve has engaged 1,350 people—many who have never served before—in donating an estimated 6,000 hours of service, and opened the door to building the kingdom through new relationships. (www.lbcc.org)

8. THE HOLIDAY VOLUNTEER GUIDE

The Idea: To encourage people to volunteer during the holiday season. In partnership with well-respected agencies in the Bay Area, The River Church Community in San Jose, California, provides a Holiday Volunteer Guide to inspire individuals, families and small groups to serve during the holiday season. (www.the-river.org)

Assessing & Placing Volunteers

9. COMMUNITY TEAMS

The Idea: **Using teams to strategically mobilize volunteers to affect community transformation.** At **Perimeter Church** in Duluth, Georgia, Community Teams of 4-5 people facilitate volunteers to connect with needs in the community through local ministries and organizations. A Community Team can consist of a Team Leader, Communications Coordinator, Prayer Captain, and Volunteers Coordinator. Team members are typically passionate and/or skilled in a particular area of ministry. Each team serves as the primary contact for a local organization or ministry partner, helps cast vision within leadership/lay leadership staff, and provides a structure to recruit Perimeter volunteers. Shepherding and prayer are key elements of Perimeter's community outreach ministry. The Perimeter staff shepherds Area Directors who, in turn, shepherd the Community Team Leaders. Community Teams are organized into four common need areas: Women & Families, Internationals, Youth, and Elderly & Disabled. (<http://perimeter-community.followers.net>)

10. DISCOVERY TOOL

The Idea: **To provide would-be volunteers with an online assessment to match their interests with community needs.** Under the heading of "Volunteering" on the Mariners Lighthouse website, potential volunteers can select the Discovery Tool to search for specific ministries, volunteer opportunities, or take a quick skills assessment. (www.marinerslighthouse.org)

11. SERVING GRID

The Idea: **To help potential volunteers find a place to serve.** People at Perimeter Church who have a desire to serve, but aren't sure where to begin, are encouraged to take a look at the Serving Grid—a chart outlining the church's ministries. The Grid offers insight into a variety of specific opportunities to serve, and helps match a person's interests, skills and passions with those opportunities. (<http://perimeter-community.followers.net>)

12. COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION TEAM

The Idea: **To create a team that connects and establishes partnerships with community agencies and groups.** The Community Transformation Team of LifeBridge Church has built solid partnerships throughout the city to provide people with opportunities to serve and have a positive impact in the local community. (www.lbcc.org)

13. LIFELINKS VOLUNTEER SERVICE

The Idea: **To establish a team that can personally help people find opportunities to serve.** The LifeLinks Volunteer Services Ministry at LifeBridge Christian Church is about connecting people to build and support relationships that nurture volunteer services within LifeBridge and the community. The goal of the LifeLinks ministry is to involve 50% of the congregation in meaningful, regular volunteer service. To view LifeBridge's assessment tool, choose the Lifelinks Volunteer link on the main page. (www.lbcc.org)

14. SERVING SURVEY

The Idea: **To provide potential volunteers with a personal serving profile of their interests, gifts and skills.** The Serving Survey is one of several mobilization tools available on Perimeter Church's Community Outreach webpage. The Serving Survey allows potential volunteers to fill out and submit an online questionnaire that explores their personal interests, gifts, skill, and availability. Once submitted, staff or lay leaders follow up with a personal call to provide the potential volunteer with several serving options to explore. In addition to the Serving Survey, potential volunteers can view web pages that categorize the best serving opportunities for families, small groups, youth and children. (<http://perimeter-community.followers.net>)

15. QUEST

The Idea: **To inspire people to understand and fulfill God's purpose for their life.** Quest is a six-week small group experience used by **Irving Bible Church** in Irving, Texas, to help people determine and act on God's purpose for their life. "Quest is the most important study I have done in my life. It covers in detail

all aspects of our lives as Christians. It is absolutely life-changing if you are willing to commit to both the study and the life application.” - Sandi Beck (www.iringbible.org)

16. PLUG IN @ HOPE

The Idea: Use real people to make personal connections that inspire others to get involved. At Hope Presbyterian, a team of volunteers makes monthly phone calls to members as part of the Connecting Ministry. The goal is to make volunteer ministry opportunities easily accessible to everyone. (www.hopepres.com)

Increasing Neighborhood Impact

17. MR. WARNER’S NEIGHBORHOOD

The Idea: To maximize the impact you can have in your neighborhood, just start small. Drue Warner is just an ordinary guy at Perimeter Church who decided to do a little neighborhood outreach. Beginning with a neighborhood food drive, Drue encouraged people to meet each other, and enjoy a little coffee and donuts when they dropped off their donations. People who were interested in creating community were asked to sign a clipboard. 10 people signed up. After casting vision for community service and neighborhood relationships at the next homeowner’s meeting, 15 more people signed up to participate. The result: from the 140 homes in the neighborhood, 200 people attended a Halloween “Meet and Greet.” *“All it takes is stepping out. Our community, our country is ready for it. People are hungry for a sense of community but nobody knows what to do to do it. It just takes somebody to stand up and say ‘Let’s do something!’ We’re seeing people come around us like crazy. Through those relationships we’re building it’s going to give us a great avenue for sharing the gospel; in our lives, in our words.” - Drue Warner (<http://perimeter-community.followers.net>)*

18. HALLOWEEN NEXT DOOR

The Idea: To provide a simple alternative to the all-church Halloween carnival. New Song Community Church has found that Halloween is one of the easiest nights of the year to get to know one’s neighbors. By

forgoing the church sponsored carnival event, families are free to stay at home where they can interact with their neighbors. As one of the Next Door assignments of New Song’s “A Church Next Door” campaign (see number 6), members commit to bringing plates of cookies to five houses on the left and right of their homes before the Halloween festivities begin. Instead of the traditional trick-or-treat *taking*, members surprise their neighbors by *bringing* something, often with an invitation to the church. (www.newsongchurch.com)

19. CAR CARE

The Idea: To provide cars and car-care for those in need plus special opportunities for the car-fixing enthusiast. Irving Bible Church demonstrates Christ’s love through meeting the transportation needs of those in need. Generous people donate their running vehicles. Faithful volunteers prepare the cars for giveaway; that includes screening, mechanical issues and paperwork. Every other month, Car Care events allow faithful volunteers to perform light repairs and preventative maintenance. (www.iringbible.org)

20. ADOPT A NEIGHBORHOOD

The Idea: To inspire greater depths of service by adopting a community. Hope Presbyterian in greater Memphis, Tennessee, has adopted a neighborhood named Caldwell. Though only miles away, it is a long spiritual and emotional journey for many in the church who begin to serve in Caldwell, as Eli Morris explains: *“Once they get there, they realize they can navigate the ropes and that’s revolutionary for them. Especially given Memphis’ history and racial issues, and Dr. King’s assassination there. That is one huge journey to take, those 22 miles. It is such a privilege to drive that bus with them on it. They are scared to death, terrified, or think they are going to fix everything. It is an incredible experience, day-in-day-out to take people through that.”* Serving Caldwell results in life-on-life relationships, spiritual transformation and racial reconciliation. (See also number 41) (www.hopepres.com)

21. PEACOCK HILLS HOME REPAIR

The Idea: To build relationships by offering home repair and yard care for a retirement



community. Some of the residents of a retirement community near **North Coast Church** in Vista, California are not able to do home repairs due to health issues or a low fixed income. Volunteers help these residents with small home repairs, painting and yard work. (www.northcoastchurch.com)

22. NEIGHBORHOOD CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE

The Idea: To inspire people to host block parties in their neighborhoods by providing tools and training. Not assuming that people are at ease with entertaining their neighbors, New Song offers resources and training to inspire people toward a spirit of generous hospitality. (www.newsongchurch.com)

23. INCARNATIONAL APARTMENT MINISTRY

The Idea: Serve where you live. For maximum gospel impact, serve where the greatest needs are, and, if possible, move in! Two women from Perimeter Church, Mary Lee and Sherry, had a passion to serve the needs of international immigrants in their community. With the help of Whirlwind Missions, Perimeter's apartment ministries partner, they narrowed their focus to one local apartment complex in which 95% of residents are from the same small town in Mexico. Mary Lee and Sherry decided that the best way to develop influential relationships with the families and children was to live among them. They sold their homes, packed their bags and moved in! Even though the local police warned against the decision because of gang activity, God has protected and used them in a powerful way. The ability to provide ministry programs from their own apartment has been great (i.e. After School Tutoring, ESL, and Bible Clubs). The complex decided to provide free rent because of the positive impact they were having on the children. Another family from Perimeter followed suit. Ben and Julie rented out their house and moved into a local apartment complex with their three children. (<http://perimeter-community.followers.net>) (www.whirlwindmissions.org)

24. MILITARY MARRIAGE SEMINAR

The Idea: To offer military officers and their wives the opportunity to strengthen their

marriages. Convinced by the chaplain of Camp Pendleton in Oceanside, Pendleton superiors agreed that marriage readiness was just as important as tactical readiness. A month before the base redeployed, Marines had the choice of staying on duty or attending a 3-day seminar on marriage with their wives, hosted by New Song Community Church. (www.newsongchurch.com)

25. NATIVE AMERICAN PRAYER TEAM

The Idea: To serve the Native American community through relationships and prayer. A prayer team from North Coast Church is currently building relationships with pastors and their congregations on various reservations. It is North Coast's hope to partner with them in their evangelistic efforts and work together for the expansion of God's kingdom both on and off the reservation. (www.northcoastchurch.com/special.htm)

26. DELTA TEAM

The Idea: To implant a community-serving team right into the neighborhood they are serving. The River Church Community has a small group whose mission is to commit to investing the resources entrusted to them by partnering with their neighbors. They seek the welfare of their neighborhood as they work for justice, share lives, give and receive, welcome and serve. They currently have one Delta Team in the downtown area of San Jose. (www.the-river.org)

27. SHAREFEST

The Idea: To unite local churches to demonstrate the love of Christ through tangible acts of service. Fellowship Bible Church of Little Rock, Arkansas, partners with approximately 100 churches in the greater Little Rock area to demonstrate the love of Christ to the community over an entire weekend. Activities include a food drive, a coat drive, a blood drive, prayer, a community service work day, a Celebration and more. Their collective efforts have benefited over 40 schools, raised nearly \$700,000 in cash for over 20 nonprofit organizations, and helped countless individuals. (www.fbcl.org) (www.sharefest.org)

Tutoring, Mentoring & Schools

28. S.T.A.R.S. (STUDENTS AND TUTORS ACHIEVING REAL SUCCESS)

The Idea: **Target key areas that impact at-risk youth through mentoring, prayer, tutoring and parenting.** Lake Avenue Church of Pasadena, California began S.T.A.R.S. in the fall of 1996 with 20 students and 10 tutors meeting just one hour per week. They now have four evenings of tutoring every week, a Creative Arts Program, and Bible Club targeting first grade to high school at-risk



youth within five blocks northwest of LAC. They encourage the S.T.A.R.S. students to attend church, and they seek to nurture students' spiritual lives. S.T.A.R.S. is made up of four essential components for long-term success: tutoring, mentoring, prayer and parenting. (www.lakeavefoundation.org)

29. APPLE TREE OF HOPE

The Idea: **To contribute much needed school supplies to inner city children.** Each July and August, Hope Presbyterian provides backpacks and school supplies for the children of their inner city Vacation Bible Schools. (www.hopepres.com)

30. NEIGHBORHOOD STUDENT MENTORING (NSM)

The Idea: **To establish barrier-free pathways for students to become college-educated.** NSM, a program of the Lake Avenue Community Foundation, exists to provide neighborhood students an obstacle-free opportunity to become college-educated, responsible citizens of their community. By establishing mentoring relationships with positive role models, participants in the foundation can focus on students at a convictional level, bringing about a positive change in behavior and lifestyle. The NSM program works in partnership with S.T.A.R.S., Pasadena Unified School District, Lake Avenue Church, and other existing programs and ministries in the area to better

communicate and bring about change in the lives of students.

(www.lakeavefoundation.org/article.asp?id=lacf_nsm)

31. MENTORING

The Idea: **To provide life-relationships, and long-term mentoring for at-risk youth.** Through one-on-one relationships, mentoring contributes vital encouragement to foster children, emancipated foster youth, single mothers, families living in motels, and others. The goal is to establish support through friendship, encouragement and positive life modeling. (www.marinerslighthouse.org)

32. HOSTS (HELP ONE STUDENT TO SUCCEED)

The Idea: **To design a mentoring program for children that will significantly improve their learning skills.** The River Church Community provides weekly one-on-one tutoring for 2nd–5th grade students. Once a week, volunteers read with students, practice vocabulary and writing with them, and complete language arts activities. Over the course of the year, each child who participated in HOSTS improved his or her reading level by at least one grade. (www.the-river.org)

33. CAREERS IN MOTION

The Idea: **To provide career coaching for young adults.** Careers in Motion is a ministry that supports career-minded young adults from the community by providing help with interviewing, résumé polishing and other skills. (www.marinerslighthouse.org)

34. MOMS IN TOUCH INTERNATIONAL

The Idea: **To create a prayer cover over children and schools.** For mothers worried about their children in school, there can be no better cure than prayer. It is North Coast's vision to have two or more mothers praying specifically for every school in their community, and to be a positive encouragement to public and private schools. (www.northcoastchurch.com/special.htm) (www.momsintouch.org)

35. WHIZ KIDS TUTORING

The Idea: **To create a tutoring partnership between churches and local elementary schools.** Originally initiated by Greenwood

Community Church, Whiz Kids Tutoring has grown to become a thriving nonprofit that encompasses multiple churches in urban Denver. Volunteers are trained and provided with a handbook focusing on remedial reading and math, as well as ideas on how to effectively spend one-on-one time. Whiz Kids Tutoring is able to provide a comprehensive package to assist groups who desire to replicate the program in their city. (www.whizkidstutoring.com) (www.greenwoodcc.com)

36. ONE CHURCH – ONE SCHOOL – ONE NEIGHBORHOOD

The Idea: Implement a model that will use a local school as a connection point between the church and the community to lead to significant community transformation. Fellowship Bible Church in Little Rock, Arkansas has developed a three-phase model to build a healthy community using concentrated resources. Springboarding off ShareFest (see number 27), the first phase is to help both schools and children by providing tutors and mentors. The second phase is to relationally connect, serve, and strengthen families through school-based parent groups, after-school programs and LifeSkills classes. The third phase is to create a growing synergy that leads to significant transformation by strengthening leaders, mobilizing resources, and facilitating greater community connections. Affordable housing, economic development, and other infrastructure initiatives will be implemented in this last phase. (www.fbclr.org)

37. METRO KIDZ PASADENA

The Idea: To use a special truck equipped to share the gospel and build relationships with children and families. Neighborhood Children's Ministries sends teams of Lake Avenue Church volunteers to neighborhoods and schools to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with Pasadena children and their families. Using a Metro Kidz truck equipped with sound and a fold-out stage, they find where the kids are and go to them. Their hope is to become a real part of their lives by becoming friends and introducing them to Christ. (www.lakeavefoundation.org)

38. BROTHER'S KEEPERS

The Idea: To provide boys in single-parent households with positive male role models. Through BROTHER'S KEEPERS®, **Calvary Baptist Church** of State College, Pennsylvania, seeks to provide positive male Christian role models for sons of single mothers. BROTHER'S KEEPERS® is composed of men in the church who build strong, Christ-centered, long-term relationships with these boys. (www.calvarysc.org)

39. HERITAGE HOUSE MINISTRIES

The Idea: To provide stable, nurturing support for at-risk teenage girls. Heritage House Ministries is a treatment home for teenage girls in Louisville, Colorado, run by Mike and Jeanne Jones, a Christian couple who has fostered 32 children in the past 17 years. Believing God was leading them to provide a stable and nurturing environment for Boulder County girls, Mike and Jeanne began Heritage House. Heritage serves girls who are either court ordered to a treatment home, or are in the custody of Social Services because of neglect. The home is funded by Colorado Social Services and private donations, and is the first Boulder County home of its kind in over 30 years. **Calvary Bible Church** members have volunteered hundreds of hours in mentoring, tutoring, and cooking meals for the residents and staff. (www.calvaryboulder.org)

40. HOPE MENTORS

The Idea: To provide opportunities to mentor at-risk children, foster children and seniors. Hope Mentors is a team of people from The River Church Community who want to deepen relationships with one another and with Christ in their community. The members commit to mentoring an at-risk child through partnering with a local nonprofit or by building Generations of Hope, a nonprofit with a mission to serve foster children and seniors. (www.the-river.org)

41. V.I.P. VOCATIONAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The Idea: To create job opportunities for teens in a low-income neighborhood. V.I.P. is a six-week summer job program for young boys and girls between the ages of 14 and 16, who live in Caldwell, Tennessee (See number

20). V.I.P has formed a partnership with local business owners and managers who provide summer employment and mentor interns in the areas of work ethics, job skills, self-determination and good decision making. (www.hopepres.com)

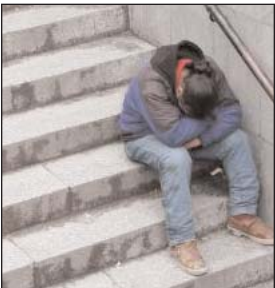
42. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

The Idea: To support a local elementary school by providing tutoring, school supplies and clothing. LifeBridge has a Homework Club and Reading Program, and provides mentors, children's books and coats for students. (www.lbcc.org)

Reaching the Homeless and Disenfranchised

43. BUD'S WAREHOUSE

The Idea: To create a business that would employ and assist ex-offenders. Bud's Warehouse is a resale business that sells new and used home improvement items with the goal of employing at-risk adults and ex-offenders. Marcos, an ex-offender and former drug dealer, employed by Bud's for 8 years, has experienced a personal transformation through this partnership between Bud's and Greenwood Community Church that has led to his entire extended family finding Christ. (www.budwarehouse.org) (www.greenwoodcc.com)



44. MIRACLES IN MOTION

The Idea: To spark transformation through relationships with families living in local motels. Miracles in Motion reaches out to families living in local motels, connecting them with Mariners Church families to experience life together and develop deepening relationships. (www.marinerslighthouse.org)

45. SPRING COAT DRIVE

The Idea: To create an efficient process to collect and distribute winter coats to the needy. The teens of LifeBridge Christian Church partnered with the Longmont Rotary Club and local dry cleaners to collect coats in the spring, clean and store them through the

summer and have a distribution day in the fall with vouchers for coats provided by OUR Center (see 55). The number of coats collected was approximately 1,200. (www.lbcc.org)

46. MANY HANDS

The Idea: To establish a resource for those in the community who have no family to meet their needs. Many Hands is for those who have no other alternative...those who have no family who live close by, no resources to hire help, or they do not belong to a small group at Irving Bible Church. Many Hands is not a "service" to meet wants, but a ministry to meet needs. The five categories of provision are: food, housecleaning, visitation, handyman work and unique needs. (www.irvingbible.org)

47. NORTH COAST PEN PALS FOR PRISONERS

The Idea: To facilitate communication, spiritual support and mentoring for prisoners through letter writing. Volunteers from North Coast commit to writing letters twice per month to prisoners who express interest in corresponding with a Christian in the community. (www.northcoastchurch.com/special.htm)

48. IBC JOBS.COM

The Idea: To connect job seekers with potential employers. The purpose of IBCjobs.com, sponsored by Irving Bible Church, is to allow those who are seeking employment to post an online ad indicating the type of position they are looking for. It is also a place where businesses that have a particular job offering, or lead, can post information. Both types of ads are posted and displayed on the same page under the appropriate job category. (www.ibcjobs.com) (www.irvingbible.org)

49. COMMUNITY MEAL & BIBLE STUDY

The Idea: To provide a healthy meal and Bible study to the homeless once per week. Adult classes, small groups and individuals from Lake Avenue in Pasadena, are working hard to provide superb meals for their homeless friends every Sunday night. (www.lakeavefoundation.org)

50. LAMB'S LUNCH

The Idea: To offer bi-monthly meals and worship services for the homeless. Calvary Bible Church serves up meals and worship services for the homeless twice per month. (www.calvaryboulder.org)

51. IT'S A GOD THING

The Idea: To create a food drive and fair that is a collaboration between the community and churches. Northland, A Church Distributed, began a ministry, It's a God Thing, that has become a food drive held every spring and fall. More than 42 churches, ministries and businesses set up booths. There are activities, puppet shows, games and prizes as well as the most important feature: the opportunity to reach out to people, share the gospel, and replenish the city's much-needed food supply. (www.northlandcc.net)

52. PRISON MINISTRY

The Idea: To connect volunteers with inmates at a local juvenile hall. Volunteers visit inmates at a local juvenile hall to encourage them and also share the gospel. (www.lakeavefoundation.org/go/prison)

53. SAN JOSE FAMILY SHELTER/THE GIFFORD HOUSE

The Idea: To create an environment for seekers and new Christians in local shelters to grow and be spiritually nourished. The purpose of this small group ministry of The River Church is to serve the community while providing a safe and nourishing place for Christ-followers or seekers to grow in their relationship with God. During their meetings, time is set aside for prayer, Bible studies, community building and worship. (www.the-river.org)

54. RESOURCE NETWORK

The Idea: To assess and streamline a process that matches the needs of nonprofits with resources in the community. Because the effectiveness of social service organizations is often hampered by shortages of resources, Lighthouse Resource Network matches surplus goods from the business community with critical needs of nonprofits. (www.marinerslighthouse.org)

55. OUTREACH UNITED RESOURCES CENTER (OUR CENTER)

The Idea: To combine the resources of area churches within an effective system to meet needs. More than 50 churches from the Longmont area of Colorado have come together to provide basics such as clothing, food and childcare. Rather than each church duplicating a program, they pull together resources and strategies to meet these needs. (www.lbcc.org)

56. RIDES AND SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR THE HOMELESS

The Idea: To give homeless people the opportunity to come to church by providing transportation. Using small vans, Calvary Bible provides rides to church and Sunday School for the homeless. (www.calvaryboulder.org)

57. DAY LABORER OUTREACH

The Idea: To connect with day laborers, offering assistance, Bible studies and community meetings. The Day Laborers outreach team from Lake Avenue, Pasadena, gives coffee and sweet bread to dozens of Day Laborers along Villa Street waiting in hope of a job to provide for their families. "This is a time were we get to know and have fellowship with our Day Laborer neighbors. We also incorporate our Day Laborer Outreach Program and Spanish Bible Study with our homeless meal on Sunday evenings at Lake Avenue Church." (www.lakeavefoundation.org)

58. SALT ON THE STREET

The Idea: To offer support to the homeless who are transitioning from a life of addiction. Cornwall Church in Bellingham, Washington, seeks to extend the love of Jesus by helping people find their freedom from the bondage of drugs and alcohol, through developing relationships and meeting practical needs. They are a Christian presence to the homeless community in Whatcom County. People can be involved in Salt on the Street through prayer, food donations, meal serving trailer support, clothing donation/distribution, cash donation, set-up and tear-down. (www.cornwallchurch.com)

59. CALVARY JOB CONNECTION

The Idea: **To connect the unemployed with work.** At its inception, The Calvary Job Connection sought to connect potential employees with employers within Calvary Boulder. Job seekers are counseled on possible career moves and offered assistance in networking with prospective employers. Two years ago, The Calvary Job Connection expanded to include other churches on the database. Last year, it was opened to help people from the community find employment. (www.calvaryboulder.org)

60. COMMUNITY OUTREACH ENCOURAGEMENT MINISTRY

The Idea: **To create a location where the homeless and needy can go for assistance.** Every Friday, many people from the community come through the doors of the Villa 500 Community Outreach Center to see the Parish nurse, take a shower, receive food from the pantry, and enjoy a fresh, hot breakfast or lunch. Volunteers from Lake Avenue listen to these friends, share the love of Jesus with them and pray for their needs. (www.lakeavefoundation.org)

61. HOPEBUILDERS

The Idea: **To improve the physical needs of people in need.** HopeBuilders is a ministry of Mariners Church that “builds hope” by improving the physical living conditions of people in need in the name of Jesus Christ. HopeBuilders selects disadvantaged families and individuals living in deteriorated housing conditions and marshals volunteers and resources to transform the house over one spiritually-charged weekend. (www.marinerslighthouse.org)

62. SHEPHERD’S HOPE

The Idea: **To provide access to primary healthcare for the uninsured through a partnership with a local clinic.** Shepherd’s Hope is a faith-based organization of volunteers who provide primary healthcare for the uninsured. Northland, A Church Distributed sponsors a clinic every Tuesday and Wednesday evening. (www.northlandcc.net)

63. PROJECT WORK TOGETHER (PWT)

The Idea: **To help people transition from**

welfare to self-sufficiency. Project Work Together (PWT) is a Boulder County Social Services organization committed to mentoring families from welfare to self-sufficiency. It holds various workshops for 90+ Boulder County families to facilitate economic and social stability. Convinced of the need to assist the poorest in Boulder County, Calvary Boulder began working with PWT by opening its doors to a number of PWT events. Calvary members donated \$17,000 to PWT—all of which came from possessions they sold over the previous two months. This money was used to provide grocery store and Target gift certificates, along with holiday gift baskets to PWT beneficiaries for Christmas 2004 and 2005. Each year, Calvary members have worked in conjunction with Calvary’s children’s ministry to purchase, wrap and personally deliver these gift baskets. (www.calvaryboulder.org)

64. HOLIDAY FAMILY SPONSORSHIP

The Idea: **To celebrate Christmas through the generous sponsorship of families in need during the holiday season.** At Perimeter Church, families or small groups have a wonderful opportunity to bless a family in need during the holiday season. Duluth and Norcross Cooperative Ministries provide names of families in need, from which Perimeter families can choose to sponsor by donating food and Christmas gifts. Families can choose to give anonymously or they may contact their sponsored family to meet them and begin building a relationship. Through these relationship opportunities, several sponsored families have attended and joined the church. (<http://perimeter-community.followers.net>)

65. CHRISTMAS GIFT GIVING

The Idea: **To partner with local ministries to provide Christmas gifts and clothing for those in need.** Imago Dei of Portland, Oregon, makes Christmas a little bit brighter by getting gifts and warm clothes for 6 ministries whose teams from Imago Dei serve year round. They are: the homeless ministry, the Street Youth Outreach, a local recovery center, the Refugee Ministry, the AIDS hospice ministry and Big Brothers, Big Sisters. (www.imagodeicommunity.com)

66. COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS STORE

The Idea: To give low income families the opportunity to purchase Christmas gifts at a cost they can afford. Struggling families have a chance to purchase new gifts for each other through the donation of items such as sports equipment, toys, clothing, etc. for adults and children. (www.lakeavefoundation.org)

67. CHRISTMAS TREE GIVEAWAY

The Idea: To connect with local families by giving away Christmas trees. On Thanksgiving weekend, some residents of a local neighborhood are the recipients of free Christmas trees and tree stands provided by Cornwall Church. (www.cornwallchurch.com)

with 5,000 participating in the closing ceremonies. (www.mykidsgames.com) (www.northlandcc.net)



Volunteers both young and old came together for a common cause on National Make a Difference Day.

Large Events & Sports

68. HELPING HANDS

The Idea: To provide a church-wide opportunity to impact the community in practical ways. Northland, A Church Distributed participates in an all-Saturday service day three times a year. They paint and repair poor churches, do home improvement, yard work, youth center renovation, food collection and, this past year, assisted with repairs following hurricane Charlie. Of those surveyed, 40% had never served before and 100% said they would do it again. Through Helping Hands, Northland was able to have a large impact on neighborhoods hit hard from the hurricane, an influence that continues to this day as teams continue to meet people's maintenance needs and build relationships that often lead straight to Christ. (www.northlandcc.net)

69. KIDSGAMES

The Idea: To participate in an international program that combines sports, mentoring, values instruction and outreach. In 2002-2003, over 75 countries held KidsGames, a citywide outreach for children ages 6-14, with over 600,000 children involved. Over 100 countries have participated in 2004 and the number of children was over 2 million! Northland, A Church Distributed began with a mini KidsGames that brought in 900 children, then organized a KidsGames for Central Florida where 3,000 people attended

70. NATIONAL MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY

The Idea: To make an impact on the local community through one day of service.

Across the country and across Hawaii, people were making a difference on Saturday, October 23, 2004. On that day over 350 volunteers joined Spirit of Aloha Outreach—a ministry of **New Hope Christian Fellowship**, Honolulu, Hawaii—beautifying ten Kalihi-area schools. Within a few hours, the schools looked beautiful. However, the most beautiful sight of the morning was seeing New Hope members with other people of the community, working side-by-side. (www.enewhope.org/outreaches/islandwide04.php)

71. RUNS-BATTED-IN PROGRAM

The Idea: To return baseball to the inner city. In a partnership with the Memphis Redbirds Baseball Foundation, Hope Presbyterian provides volunteer coaches and instructors for this summer youth baseball and softball program. (www.hopepres.com)

72. WALK ON WATER (WOW)

The Idea: To provide swimming lessons for children living out of motels. Also responding to the "What do you do? We can use it!" campaign (see number 3), a young man stepped up with the desire to teach kids to swim. Mariners partnered him with children who were living in local motels and provided lessons in the motel swimming pools. (www.marinerslighthouse.org)

Other Unique Ideas That Work

73. SCRUB TEAM

The Idea: **Volunteers who love to clean serve twice per month for anyone who needs a cleaning service and then donate moneys earned to missions.** From business professionals to teachers to moms to retirees, there's one thing that we all have in common: we all must stop and clean sometimes. At Hope Presbyterian, they put this "experience" to work by cleaning 1-1/2 hours twice per month. At the end of 2003, the SCRUB teams had provided \$435,000 to Urban and World Missions instead of paying a private cleaning company to complete the same tasks. (www.hopepres.com)

74. OPERATION YELLOW RIBBON

The Idea: **To thank Marines and their families by providing lunch, necessities and toys for their children.** In a partnership with Saddleback Church, New Song Community Church, along with the Camp Pendleton chaplain, provided lunch for 3,000 Marines and their families. In addition to toys for the children, each family received a box of household goods as well as an invitation to attend a church service in their honor. (www.newsongchurch.com)

75. BEAR MINISTRY



Handmade bears from Irving Bible Church give comfort to cancer patients worldwide.

The Idea: **To show worldwide compassion to children living with cancer by creating and delivering handmade teddy bears.** An Irving Bible Church "Bear Ministry" was started in 2003. Handmade, stuffed bears are created and distributed to those suffering from cancer all over the world. The ministry has delivered over 350 bears to date and is well on the way to delivering a donation to St. Jude Children's Hospital. (www.irvingbible.org)

76. MOVERS AND SHAKERS

The Idea: **To create a clearinghouse that picks up and delivers good quality, donated furniture to those in need.** Perimeter Church's Movers & Shakers Community Team serves the furniture and appliance needs of single moms, families and refugees. Working closely

with ministry partner World Relief, Movers & Shakers has been able to completely furnish apartments for refugee families as soon as they arrive in the United States. Many of the refugees often arrive with a single suitcase or trash bag containing the only belongings they have. Many are Muslims. These Christian volunteers, as the first people in the U.S. to serve and meet the refugees' needs, make a very strong impression of the power and truth of the Gospel.

(<http://perimeter-community.followers.net>)
(www.wr.org)

77. CAMP AUNT & UNCLE

The Idea: **To provide an added touch of love and care to children at camp.** For many children who have never had an extended family, having a special Aunt and Uncle at camp provides added comfort and love, as well as temporary relief and added support for camp counselors. (www.marinerslighthouse.org)

78. ARMS OF HOPE

The Idea: **To partner with your local hospital to provide the gift of touch to babies and children.** Children's hospitals need volunteers to hold and nurture children. These volunteers are screened and trained for the task. Contact your local hospital or visit the Hope Presbyterian website to find out how they started Arms of Hope.

(www.hopepres.com)

79. PET PALS

The Idea: **To spread the joy of canine fellowship with patients at nursing homes.** Pet Pals is a ministry comprised of dogs and their caregivers who visit local nursing homes and assisted living facilities once a month.

(www.northlandcc.net/ministries/community_care/community_care.htm)



Even pets can be involved in service opportunities, as members of Northland, A Church Distributed demonstrate.

80. SENIOR PROM

The Idea: **A creative and fun way to socialize with senior citizens.** Dust off those dancing

shoes! Senior Prom gives seniors living in local retirement homes a party and opportunity to socialize with new volunteers. Senior Prom is a perfect first-step event for someone who has not volunteered before. (www.marinerslighthouse.org)

81. BIRTHDAY MINISTRY

The Idea: To provide birthday parties for needy children living out of motels, creating an in-road to other services. The birthday ministry was born by a woman with a talent for baking and a desire to serve. A child living in a motel would be presented with a cake, card and Bible; a gift often received with tears because the Mariners' volunteers were the only people who had remembered. As the ministry grew, Mariners began doing monthly group birthday parties that included games and crafts. Most importantly, as the party came to a close, each child would be placed on a chair, sang to and prayed to. (www.marinerslighthouse.org)

82. COMMON THREAD QUILTERS

The Idea: To enjoy the craft of quilting and provide quilts to charities. A group of women of all ages and skills come together twice per month from September to May to stitch and provide quilts for local charities. (www.northcoastchurch.com/special.htm)

Angeles Flower Mart and purchase dozens of flowers to create bouquets for multiple sclerosis patients at a local home. Visiting twice per year was not enough; the volunteers now aim at four flower visits per year. Half the team members have since developed friendships with patients and visit them each month. (www.hflb.org) (www.gracelb.org)

84. GIFT FROM GOD COMPUTER FOUNDATION

The Idea: To collect and distribute used computers to those who need them. On an ongoing basis, a couple who attends Northland, A Church Distributed, collects old computers. Many volunteers from Northland have joined them to refurbish and deliver these computers to individuals, charities and schools. (www.northlandcc.net)

85. CROCHET CLUB

The Idea: To pair people with a common interest—crocheting—with a worthwhile need. Crochet and Knit Club is a group of volunteers getting together to make handmade garments for area-based nonprofit groups. The Crochet and Knit Club was started with a vision for different people to gather and do what they love while making items for those in need. They work on projects year-round, as there is always a need for the items made. They are currently creating 800 hats and scarves for orphans in Penza, Russia. (www.irvingbible.org)

86. KIDS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

The Idea: To empower children to reach out to their communities. Create a kid-powered ministry with kids planning and carrying out quarterly service projects to support the local community. (www.marinerslighthouse.org)



Volunteers from Hope for Long Beach deliver flowers to multiple sclerosis patients four times a year.

83. FLOWER TEAM

The Idea: To create connections between local residents and multiple sclerosis patients by arranging and delivering fresh flowers. A small team of volunteers from Hope for Long Beach Ministry of **Grace Brethren Church**, Long Beach, California, head out early in the morning to the Los

Bonus Ideas

The following ideas were created at an innovative brainstorm with an Externally Focused Churches Leadership Community.

87. OUTREACH MACHINE

The Idea: To spark curiosity and connect needs with volunteers through the creative use of a vending machine. Imagine a vending machine with tons of first-serve opportunities. The volunteer places a quarter in the machine and chooses a category—opportunities can be grouped together in like categories—a little packet of information drops into the bin below and informs the volunteer of his or her task. Each packet provides a ministry opportunity, contact information and details. After serving, each participant fills out an online survey and shares his or her story.

88. STORY OF YOU

The Idea: To bridge the intergenerational gap by giving seniors a step-by-step way to tell their story. There is no better way to bring history and experiences to life than through the telling of a personal story. Everyone has a unique story to tell and untold stories are lost lessons about life. The Story of You could provide a process for documenting the tremendously underutilized benefit of telling our stories and forming connections that cross generations.

89. FAMILIES ADOPTING FAMILIES

The Idea: To pair church families with single-parent families. Single-parent families in the community are shouldering an enormous burden alone, buffeted relentlessly by the pressures and stresses of life. Families Adopting Families would provide support to the single-parent family by pairing them with a family from a local church. The long-term goal would be to adopt them as an extension of their own family unit. One month per year, all church activities will be replaced with service opportunities and activities for these families to do together.

90. COMMUNITY CAFÉ

The Idea: To create a café that would provide jobs, job training and a place in the community for mentoring and community fellowship. A community café would provide

an ongoing presence and resource for community interaction, food for the needy and a safe place for youth to belong. The management, entertainment and wait staff would come from local churches and be trained in job skills and relational evangelism.

91. OVERNIGHTER COUPLES NEIGHBORHOOD RETREAT

The Idea: To provide opportunities for couples to serve together and become educated about the needs of the community. Couples have an increasing need to connect amidst the busyness of life and there can be no better way to spend time together than serving. Couples can stay at a motel in an underprivileged area. That weekend, they will be provided with neighborhood projects and group interaction. The goal is to build stronger couples for God's Kingdom who are sensitive to the needs of the community. The Couples Retreat could be a good springboard for the Families Adopting Families idea (number 89).

92. INVESTMENT BANKING

The Idea: To capture and develop the underutilized talents of senior citizens. All people have unique abilities and talents, many of which, in the Golden Years, are underutilized. The Investment Banking idea seeks to encourage retired adults to invest their gifts and talents by offering one-on-one coaching, Call to Service opportunities, and a team of "Bankers," people that would connect the "investors'" talents with those in need.

93. L2T2: LIVING LEGACY / TIME & TALENT

The Idea: An innovative pledge campaign to capture and develop the underutilized talents of senior adults and church members. Want to provide multiple innovative opportunities for service? Would you like to develop opportunities for underutilized talent? Develop a L2T2 campaign. Each year, people can pledge their time and talent, either for a one-time event or for a weekly service opportunity. Living Legacy targets the senior population, Time and Talent seeks to involve those who have never volunteered before. Pledge month can include stories, vision casting and classes for first-time

volunteers to help them see what opportunities are available. The L2T2 pledge drive is a time to innovate and dream big.

94. ROCK THE BLOCK

The Idea: To get to know your community by providing neighborhood block parties. Local churches can get to know their neighborhoods by partnering together to provide block parties. Beginning with prayer walks, intergenerational teams can adopt blocks beginning with their own neighborhood. Teams can partner with local churches to provide food, decorations and entertainment. This could be a great first-step opportunity to learning and providing a community's deeper needs, and to connect local churches with the neighborhoods that surround them.

95. AMAZING RACE

The Idea: To stimulate small group service opportunities and invest in worthwhile service projects. Small groups will get a \$1000 grant to do work in the city for one month. The goal is to use the money toward projects that will have maximum impact. The team with the most momentum and impact will be rewarded \$10,000 to continue their project.

96. LIFE SWAP

The Idea: An innovative way to give two people, who would never have crossed paths, an opportunity to connect. Life swap connects people from different walks of life—such as age, ethnicity, occupation and education—all with the goal of developing a better understanding of people different than you. Each participant would be provided with a list of ideas and simple activities to help the exploration begin and these new friendships develop.

97. SURVIVOR IN THE INNER CITY

The Idea: To develop a compelling urban plunge experience based on the television show, Survivor. With the tagline Outreach, Outgive and Outlove, people would be invited to take a weekend plunge into the inner city for a short-term challenge that would compel them to look differently at the city. Teams would be challenged to complete

service tasks and given opportunities to put to action their understanding of biblical mercy and justice.

98. REALITY VIDEO

The Idea: To demonstrate the transformation of serving others by filming the daily life of a team of volunteers living and volunteering in the inner city. Just like reality TV, a 24-hour-a-day camera will record the reality of living and serving together in an inner city home. After performing a needs assessment, the people in the house will do community service projects and communicate to those watching what it means to serve each other in daily living and in the neighborhood. Every week, some highlights can be shown at the church. Those in church can then know what is going on and can immediately get involved. Youth can participate through email and weblogs.

99. MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

The Idea: To provide an innovative way of involving high school teens in volunteer service. The cell phone rings after school. The text message begins "This is your assignment if you choose to accept it." Following that weekly message are instructions that lead the student and his/her small team to the week's service location. Mission Impossible is formed of small teams, each with a cell phone, car and adult team leader. The students venture out in what can be called part car rally, and part volunteering to serve and be challenged with unique opportunities.



ALEXANDRA MCNABB

Alexandra McNabb is self-employed, dividing her time between a graphic design business, writing, and promoting Hope for Long Beach, Grace Brethren Church's externally focused ministry.



ERIC SWANSON

Leadership Network welcomes your response. The primary writer is **Alexandra McNabb**. Editorial advisors were **Eric Swanson**, Director of Externally Focused Churches Leadership Community for Leadership Network; **Warren Bird**, Director of Intellectual Capital

Support for Leadership Network; and **Dave Travis**, Senior Vice President for Leadership Network. Contact them via gary.dungan@leadnet.org

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