We are
A non-profit urban ministry dedicated to expressing the love of Christ to underserved children, youth, and families in Southeast Washington, DC, particularly at Potomac Gardens public housing.

Mission
To empower underserved youth and families in Washington, DC with the love of Christ. We seek to develop their God-given potential spiritually, socially, and intellectually through academics, life skills, the arts, and discipleship.

Vision
We envision a place where underserved children and youth in Washington, DC find compassion, empowerment, and resources to thrive and grow into young adults of character, emotional health, creativity, and responsibility.

We envision a place of racial and class reconciliation where diverse people come together to strengthen the community and support families in need.

We envision a place of learning, laughter, grace, and celebration where the potential of children and youth are realized where caring adults find community and purpose.

We envision lives transformed daily by hope, compassion, and the commitment of ordinary people doing extraordinary things.

IN THE SAME WAY, LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE BEFORE MEN, THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD DEEDS AND PRAISE YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN.
MATTHEW 5:16
Dear Friends:

To say that 2009 was a memorable and significant year at Little Lights Urban Ministries would be an understatement.

We moved into units inside Potomac Gardens at 1212 I Street, SE in January. We helped in an effort for Potomac Gardens to receive more than $2 million for renovations and improvements during the spring. We welcomed the Mayor of DC into our units in May and greeted the First Lady of Korea at 1212 I Street in June.

In August, we dealt with the tragedy of the shooting of a staff member in front of the ministry house, then buoyed in hope by his quick recovery and positive energy.

In November, we faced the shock of a break-in and burglary at 1212 I Street and were encouraged when two of the televisions were returned to Little Lights literally minutes after a prayer meeting.

We also helped two families grieve the death of their mothers this year.

So much happened in 2009 that cannot be covered in an annual report. So many stories and triumphs as well as heartaches. This is all in addition to our daily year-round programs!

What a privilege to have the opportunity to serve the amazing children and youth at Little Lights. Many of them persevere through hardships and tragedy and still have the desire to learn and grow and better their lives. Many seek faith and find hope and comfort in Christ.

We have an incredible group of donors (including a Bronx school teacher who donated more than $1,600!) as well as dedicated volunteers who sacrifice their time week after week.

Our staff also sacrifice more lucrative jobs to serve at Little Lights, many of whom live in Anacostia at the ministry house in community.

Changed lives are the bottom line at Little Lights, and we hope in some way your life was touched through Little Lights in 2009.

Blessings,

Steven Park
Executive Director, Little Lights Urban Ministries
Financial Overview

More than 400 individuals and dozens of churches and foundations made the work of Little Lights possible through contributions in 2009.
Foundation Support

The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation • Capitol Hill Community Foundation • Capitol Hill Community Foundation -The Arnold F. Keller, Jr. Award • Commonweal Foundation Fund of The Community Foundation for the National Capital Region • DC Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation • John Edward Fowler Memorial Foundation • From Here to There • Jurie Foundation • Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation • South Washington / West of the River Family Strengthening Collaborative/US Dream Academy Inc. • South Washington / West of the River Family Strengthening Collaborative • YouthPartners NET • Anonymous

Church Financial Support

All Nations Dream Church • Bridgeway 242 • Chesterbrook Taiwanese Presbyterian Church • Chinese Bible Church of Maryland • Christ Central Presbyterian Church • Christian Fellowship Church • Christian Layman Church • Corridor Church of The Nazarene • Gaithersburg Chinese Alliance Church • Grace DC Presbyterian Church • Korean Bible Church • Korean United Methodist Church of Greater Washington • National Community Church • National Korean United Methodist Church • New Life Church • Open Door Presbyterian Church • Seoul Presbyterian Church English Ministry • Washington Mosaic Church of the Nazarene

Board of Directors

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• Daniel Li: Web Developer, International Justice Mission
• Charla Everhart Lum: Human Resources Assistant, Community of Hope
• Mary Park: Deputy Director, Little Lights Urban Ministries
• Steve Yun: Attorney, Evergreen Law Group, PLC
YEAR IN REVIEW
THE UNITS

With the grant received along with the Keller Award from the Capitol Hill Community Foundation, we renovated two apartment units right inside Potomac Gardens, given to us by the DC Housing Authority at the end of 2008 to use, rent-free, for program space at 1212 I Street, SE.

The Units made 2009 an exciting year for Little Lights, as we created a safe, convenient, state-of-the-art space for kids to come hang out, use the computer lab, play games, eat meals, and enjoy time together. Middle school Homework Club, Reading and Math Heroes, and Boys’ Night all take place at the units, as well as Urban DiP and Summer DiP.

Our renovation and re-purposing of these units was featured in an article in one of the non-profit world’s most prestigious publications, The Chronicle for Philanthropy.

CAMP HOPE

Camp Hope is a week-long, volunteer-run overnight camp held annually for 10 to 15 Little Lights students during spring break, led by Angelo Capili of Chinese Bible Church of Maryland. 2009’s theme was “No Compromise, No Regrets”, centering on God’s command to obey Him and love His children. Volunteers and friends from Chinese Bible Church organized Camp Hope and paired each counselor with a child for one-on-one mentoring sessions amid the fun-filled schedule.

Counselor Victor Chang recalls:

We emphasized that God’s love eclipses all fear and corruption. I can clearly hear... [the] kids singing these worship lyrics after we said goodbye: “Greater things have yet to come/ greater things are still to be done in this city/ there is no one like our God.”

Visit www.camphopedc.org for more information.

IMPACT CONFERENCE

This year five high school youth accompanied staff on a weekend trip out to Ocean City, MD to the Impact High School Conference. It was a great time of fellowship as we ate meals, worshiped and had small groups together. The Lord blessed us with lots of memories and laughs as we grew closer to Him and to each other.

COMMUNITY DAY AND TALENT SHOW

Little Lights partnered with the Potomac Gardens Resident Council to host a community day and talent show on Saturday, June 13 at Potomac Gardens, complete with a moon bounce, cotton candy, hot dogs, hamburgers, face painting, bingo, and a DJ. What a great opportunity for Potomac Gardens residents, our staff and volunteers, and other neighbors to come together and enjoy a day of food, fun, and fellowship! Little Lights students, as well as other members of the Potomac Gardens community, shared their various gifts during the talent show, including poetry, singing, drumming, rapping, and drama.
VISIT FROM THE FIRST LADY OF SOUTH KOREA

On June 15, 2009, the First Lady of South Korea, Kim Yoon-Ok, and other distinguished guests honored Little Lights with a visit at our Potomac Gardens Units. Students and staff were excited to share some things we love to do at Little Lights: the First Lady enjoyed a song performed by the LLUM Gospel Choir, played foosball, and talked with volunteers and Little Lights graduates Dwaine Brown and Ronada Hewitt.

In addition to the honor and blessing of receiving the First Lady as our guest, Little Lights was encouraged by her words: “I know that God is present here.” The First Lady also generously donated Little Lights uniforms and a flat-screen television! We are grateful to First Lady Kim Yoon-Ok for taking time to visit us, as well as to the Embassy of the Republic of Korea, the DC Mayor’s office, and all of the students, volunteers, and staff who enthusiastically welcomed the First Lady.

“I KNOW THAT GOD IS PRESENT HERE.”
FIRST LADY OF SOUTH KOREA KIM YOON-OK

ALIVE CONFERENCE

During the weekend of November 20-22, nine Little Lights students and five staff and volunteers attended the Alive Middle School Conference in Ocean City, MD. We enjoyed swimming, spending time on the beach, and most importantly learning about God’s love for humanity from great speakers and musicians such as Reggie Dabbs, Preston Centuolo, author of The Shack, William Paul Young, and the band Reilly. During the course of the weekend, three students made the decision to follow Jesus.

SUPPORTING FAMILIES

In 2009, two Potomac Gardens families with ties to Little Lights Urban Ministries lost their mothers. We had the privilege of being present with these children as they grieved, and, through the generosity of Little Lights donors, we were able to help the two families with funeral expenses and provide other practical assistance during difficult times of transition.
THREE TO ZERO

It’s hard to believe the time has gone by so quickly since the night I was shot. In fact, it’s still a little hard to believe it all happened period. I still remember that August night very clearly. I was outside walking up and down the street across from the Ministry House making a phone call. No danger there, right? So when gunshots rang out it caught me completely by surprise. I heard four or five loud explosions in rapid succession and saw the dirt at my feet evaporate into noisy puffs of smoke. I raced back across the street toward home but an exploding pain in my back hurled me to the ground only 30 feet away from my house. I could feel sharp pain in my left leg as well. After a few seconds I didn’t hear anymore gunshots and so I started to call for help. Before long I had drawn a sizable crowd from the neighborhood – the one time in my life I would rather not have been the center of attention.

Hearing people talk about me must have done something to jog my brain, because it wasn’t till then that I finally had the realization of “Good Grief! I really just got shot” followed closely by “Good Grief! This hurts!”

After that the night descended into a confusion of ambulances, phone calls, visitors and (finally) pain medication. Here are all the facts that we know:

1. It was a lone shooter advancing as he shot from the left side of the library. Motive unknown. I never saw the guy.

2. Most of the shots missed me, but of the three that hit:
   - One went through my left Achilles tendon and broke my heelbone.
   - A second hit me in my left calf fracturing my fibula.
   - A third bullet entered through my lower back, fracturing two vertebrae, and lodged itself in a mass of muscle tissue and fat (this bullet is still in me today).

3. I stayed in the hospital for less than two days, and needed NO surgery while I was there. Three bullets. Two days. Zero surgery.

4. God is extremely and utterly amazing. Multiple bullets flying past before I even have a chance to run? A bullet ricocheting off of my spine? I should be dead or seriously injured. A broken heelbone is what happens from the playground or when you fall down the stairs. GOD IS GOOD!

– Jerry Redfield III, Teen Intern Coordinator

“THREE BULLETS TWO DAYS ZERO SURGERY.”
JERRY REDFIELD III

IGNITE THE LIGHT BANQUET AND SILENT AUCTION

Friends of Little Lights gathered on October 23 at the Hilton Arlington to enjoy an evening of celebration featuring a message from guest speaker Virginia Ward, special music from Wendell Kimbrough and the LLUM Gospel Choir, and inspiring parent and student testimonies. Table sponsors, businesses, churches, and guests helped raise more than $30,000 in silent auctions bids, donations, and pledges to support our work. We’re so grateful for these friends who are committed to supporting and celebrating the kids at Little Lights. The event also launched Little Lights’ new Ignite the Light Monthly Partnership Program, made up of supporters who are committed to giving each month as an investment in the futures of the children we serve.

1212 BREAK-IN

Little Lights’ Potomac Gardens Units were burglarized on the night of Friday, November 13. Three flat-screen televisions and four game systems were stolen. Many students were upset about the violation of their after-school space, as were the staff members, since the purpose of the units is to provide the youth of Potomac Gardens a first-rate space right inside the premises. It was especially tough to see one of the middle school boys cry as he talked about what happened at the Units.

God was very present and faithful through the heartbreak of the burglary. Following the break-in, the staff had tremendous times of prayer, as well as numerous visitors praying with us and for us. Many members of the Potomac Gardens community and the surrounding neighborhood, both children and adults, rallied around Little Lights to offer encouragement and support.

Additionally, generous donors provided used televisions and video game systems to replace all that was stolen, as well as funds for security improvements and upgrades. And even more incredibly, a teen in the community returned two of the stolen televisions to our offices on November 17, saying that he had purchased them before hearing that they were taken from Little Lights. He felt convicted that he needed to return the televisions since he knew they came from a program he participated in as a younger student.

In the midst of the drama, we believe that God is using what was meant to be evil for greater good. Rather than causing us to give up, this difficult experience compelled us to recommit ourselves to prayer and to showing the love of Christ to the children and families at Potomac Gardens.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Not even three inches of snow could keep the festivities away! At the Little Lights Annual Christmas Party this year, family and friends gathered to remember the reason for the season. The Gospel Choir and our K-4th grade Homework Club students performed, followed by guest performances from the Praise and Worship team of Faith Tabernacle and a message from guest speaker Warren Smith, Youth Pastor at The House DC. Many volunteers and supporters contributed time, funds, Christmas gifts, and food for 300 people to make it a memorable evening.
PROGRAMS
ELEMENTARY PROGRAMS

Homework Club • Reading and Math Heroes • Gospel Choir

We provided some very exciting and enriching programs for our elementary students in 2009. At Homework Club, students received help with their homework, ate nutritious snacks, and got to participate in different activities. Some of the activities offered in 2009 included art, Bible study, and world culture. About 40 elementary students participated in the Homework Club program.

At Reading and Math Heroes, students received one-on-one help with various literacy and math skills. Students were assessed at the beginning of the year, were given lessons based on their needs as indicated by the assessments, and worked with the same tutor every week. About 23 students participated in the Reading and Math Heroes program.

Through these programs, we provide a safe place for elementary students to spend their after-school time.

– Michelle Osborne, Academic Program Developer

MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Homework Club • Reading and Math Heroes • Gospel Choir • Boys’ and Girls’ Night • Mentoring

One of the greatest strengths of the Little Lights program is the privilege of walking beside students daily as they navigate adolescence—a season of life with plenty of challenges under the best of circumstances. Our students have learned ways to cope with harsh realities—realities that require a tough outer shell as a means of self-protection. I often try to visualize my own behavior at their age if I were walking in their steps each day—I am convinced I’d gear up with many of the same survival skills. One problem with these “survival skills” is that they come at an emotional price for our students—for themselves and all with whom they come in contact. Such was the case in October 2009, when I sat in the kitchen in the Potomac Gardens Units with a female student who had just made a wrong choice. During an activity, she had called a staff member “ugly” (among other things) and was removed from the group to meet with me. The student sat at the far end of the table, working very hard to keep a stone-hard countenance and rigid body language. I just sat in silence, praying silently and waiting.

After a short conversation about how when we are here at Little Lights, it’s not OK to hurt each other with words—and that means it’s not OK for anyone to hurt your feelings, either—it was clear that the student felt she could not tell me what she’d done without her armor falling away and revealing the pain and strong emotions behind it. She wasn’t ready to disarm that far yet. Instead, I asked her to write about what happened and, if it was sincere, to apologize for her choice. Here is a paraphrased portion of what she wrote:

Dear Miss [X],
I’m sorry I called you ugly,
You aren’t ugly.
I shouldn’t have done that
and I’m sorry.

Looking at her face and body language, there was no evidence of this student’s contrite heart—but it was there. She just needed a survivable way to lower her shield enough to risk contact with the rest of us. And that’s where the reality of God’s grace and love can roll down and into the deep battle-scars in our students’ hearts—that’s where the healing and character-building many of our students so desperately need can start. Living life-on-life provides so many moments like these which, over time, are discipling our young adults in taking risks towards successful relationships, academic progress, and beyond.

– Beth Dewhurst, Academic Director

IN 2009
100% of our students mastered math objectives identified in their learning plans.
70% mastered 4 or more of the math objectives identified in their learning plans.
59% of our students improved in reading.
44% of our students can read independently on grade level.
Almost every Friday night he wanders into Youth Night. This young man has been involved in our programs since he was a boy and is now falling victim to the streets. He will be the first to run with the wrong crowd and then the first to stop by during the week to say hi to me as he’s passing by.

One night as we were closing up Youth Night, he called me over to his computer to show me something. He handed me the headphones as he played a video on YouTube. He was watching videos of our opening assembly during Camp Heaven that he used to be involved with as a boy. Then he showed me a video that a previous staff member had posted of him when he was younger. They were dropping off the kids after programs but he refused to get off the van. He never wanted to go home because he loved being involved in our programs. At that moment I looked at him out of the corner of my eye. There was such a peaceful spirit upon this young man as he sat and watched these videos. I asked him how he found these. He turned and looked me straight in the eye and said with a slight smile: I watch them all the time.

It was at that moment that my heart broke for this young man. I began to see the struggle he wrestles with outside of these walls and the battle that is taking place within his soul. Each Friday when he comes to Youth Night he leaves his way of life at the door and is able to escape for a brief moment. It’s during this time I pray he would truly experience God’s love for himself.

– Leah Archer, Program Developer

URBAN DIP

Urban DiP is a Saturday drop-in program (DiP) that started this year with the help of two small groups from one of our church partners, Grace DC. For three and a half hours on Saturday, kids registered with Little Lights can come “drop in” to our fully-stocked Potomac Gardens Units to play games, use the computer lab, hang out with volunteers, and enjoy lunch. The program is run almost totally by volunteer groups, with only one or two full-time staff present, and is a great way for our church partners to build relationships with our students.

SUMMER DIP

With the changes brought on by Little Lights’ acquisition of our Potomac Gardens Units, along with an increasingly longer school year of after-school programs, we made the decision to replace our traditional summer activity, Camp Heaven, with a Summer Drop-in Program (DiP). Every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday in July we spent time hanging out at the Potomac Gardens Units, going swimming at the pool, playing basketball, doing arts and crafts, and generally just having some quality time with students. Each day was packed with fun and excitement from 2 until 5 o’clock pm. A favorite activity was going swimming and cooling off from the summer sun! Summer DiP provided great opportunities for our students and staff to get to know one another more personally and do things we wouldn’t be able to do in a large group setting.
It has been an honor and a blessing to serve as a Reading Hero volunteer for the past five months. I am embarrassed to say that I have received so much more than I have been able to give back. The most important lesson I have witnessed is the power of hard work and determination. The student I work with each week has been assessed as being several grade levels below where he should be in reading. Reading does not come easily to him. The kids who come to Little Lights have long days. A full day of school is followed by Homework Club, dinner, group activities and Reading Heroes. A long and tiring day for anyone, much less kids who are between the ages of 5 and 10. It would be so easy for him to become discouraged or embarrassed and simply give up. Rather than giving in to temptation, he works exceptionally hard each week to learn to read. He never stops trying and is unafraid to make mistakes. His will to improve is nothing short of amazing. His hard work has paid off and his reading has improved measurably.

If and when I get discouraged, I think of his effort and it inspires me to work as hard as I can. I am lucky to have been given such a gift!

The staff and other volunteers at Little Lights are amazing. Selfless, hard working, talented, loving, and sincere are just a few words that come to mind when I describe them. The staff has built an amazing environment where kids can learn and grow socially, academically and spiritually. Volunteering every Tuesday night is a highlight of my week. It is fun, rewarding, and occasionally challenging working with the kids. More importantly it is very fulfilling coming to a place where I can feel evidence of God’s work in the lives of the kids and the community Little Lights serves. I have sincerely enjoyed my time volunteering at Little Lights and I look forward to being involved for a long time to come!

– Ryan Pemberton, Reading Heroes Volunteer
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*Employees who worked under the Americorps Vista Program [www.americorps.gov](http://www.americorps.gov)

**ACT JUSTLY. LOVE MERCY. WALK HUMBLY WITH GOD.**
“I LIKE LITTLE LIGHTS BECAUSE I FEEL RESPECTED HERE.”

BRYANT AGE 13