

Women's Ministries: Weightless Anchor Program

Her burdens were very real and very heavy. Weightless helped her lift them. Everyone in her family is either an addict or in jail. She's only been clean from drugs twice since the age of 12, when she began working the streets. By the time Jen began visiting our Weightless Anchor hospitality house, she was 3 months pregnant and an addict living on the streets. She came to Weightless for physical comfort – a clean towel and warm shower, a meal, a place to nap during the day, to be safe for the moment at least.

As she kept visiting, Jen experienced possibly her first-ever connection where she was respected and cared for. No one asked her to give anything in return. Our staff women were at the hospital when she gave birth to a tiny baby girl at 24 weeks. Through the months of uncertainty, Jen's seen we are there alongside her faithfully. A turning point came when she learned she could regain custody when the baby is released from the hospital, if she stayed clean and sober. That was all the hope she needed.

Jen's now 2 months drug-free and living in a sober living facility. She takes a bus or gets a ride with our staff to visit her baby girl every day. She's using this time to also fill the gaps in her skills through BLOC Industries, our arm of the ministry which offers paid job training. At BLOC Woodshop, she has a great work ethic and is training another woman. Step by step, we see her facing life strengthened by new hope and a team of sisters to support her along the way.

Our Weightless Anchor program has 2 sites, in East and Lower Price Hill. We focus on serving homeless, addicted, troubled, trafficked or prostituted women. Women experience rest and comfort during the day and practical support like hygiene products, a meal, clothing pantry and laundry services. By serving our sisters, we build connections one-to-one and offer resources for life change.



December 2017
Newsletter

BLOC
MINISTRIES
SERVING URBAN COMMUNITIES



CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

Family & Community Ministries: Cleves Garden & Community Festivals

Bringing the community together takes many different forms. In Cleves, this is our Garden Club's 2nd year. In addition to our regular summer student activities, they plant, water, pick and then taste test a variety of fresh vegetables. In turn, they get to share some with their family --sometimes in the form of homemade salsa or pickles they helped create. They can take pride also that some of their produce is given away at our pantry and our free Thursday dinners. Run by BLOC staff, the dinner brings together students and their families in Cleves to enjoy a nutritious free meal and relax together while being served by Taylor High student groups, teachers, coaches, the Cleves Kiwanis Club and churches.

Our Summer & Fall Festivals brings everyone together, and in addition to having a great time lets them tour our 'BLOC House' informally and see what we offer. Being a small village, we work together to pool resources and are grateful for the many businesses and community groups in the

Our Mission:

Building relationships with our neighbors and sharing hope in brokenness.

Our Core Values:

- B** - Believing in power of hope
- L** - Living where we serve
- O** - One to one relationships
- C** - Christ in us, in all we do

www.onebloc.org

Cleves area that sponsor our efforts, as neighbors helping neighbors.

Community ministries are our way of breaking down unseen barriers between different groups of people. These large group gatherings help demonstrate we're planted in their neighborhood as a resource and beacon of hope, especially during tough times in their lives.

Student Ministries: Sports Performance program

Failing grades and bad choices clouded his future. Joining The Tribe gave him clarity and a purpose. As a junior at an urban high school, Leondra had a felony record and grades of D/F's when his Probation Officer (PO) met with us. His home life had always been stressful, with his mom working a number of jobs to keep food on the table for the family and dad not in the picture.

But Leondra did have a passion – football. When his PO heard about The Tribe, a part of our newly launched Sports Performance program, she connected him to us right away. Leondra is The Tribe's 1st student. Every day he gets world class performance training (comparable to what the pros get). Aimed at changing inner city boys holistically, Tribe students also receive one-to-one mentoring, required tutoring, counseling and focused nutritional guidance. Leondra stayed with it, developing skills and tapping into resiliency he never knew he had.

His work has paid off in countless ways. Dra is on the A/B honor roll at West High. He's also successfully completed his probation, so showing up is no longer mandatory. But he's still coming, and continues to gain skills. Leondra will be part of offseason football conditioning for West High, another free service BLOC offers to local urban teams.

The prospects are great that he'll join the team next fall as long as he continues on this path. He's trusting us and sharing more about his life now. Our motto 'Train. Heal. Grow' describes him. For each student we train, our goal is an academic or athletic scholarship at a 4-year college or local university.

Sports Performance Program's focus is on fatherless teenage boys who are at high risk of remaining in cycles of poverty, violence, incarceration, and fatherlessness. Through a partnership with Hamilton County Juvenile Justice Dept., we are now providing a fitness class to those currently incarcerated there. Twice a month, our staff coach and encourage another 180 young men, offering healthy input and the possibility of joining The Tribe upon release.

Want to support BLOC is super simple ways?
If you sign up for the Amazon Smile and Kroger Rewards program, and select BLOC Ministries, a portion of what you spend is donated to us!

For more info:

<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/31-1613471>

www.kroger.com/account/enrollCommunityRewardsNow



As a P.S. to our story --

Dra has moved into our 'EPOH' student residential program, giving his life added structure and stability. More on this in the next newsletter!

Student Ministries: After School Program- West Price Hill



Our Iliff afterschool site builds buddies, not bullies.

Donovan used to walk 30 minutes 3 times a week to be a part of our after school in West Price Hill (his family has since moved closer). As young as ten, he started asking to be a student leader. In his words, he wanted to “help other kids and have them look up to me.” Now age 13, he’s achieved his dream and is using his compassionate nature to help students feel welcome.

Darionn is also an 8th grader, and first visited BLOC last winter. It wasn’t long before he was always hanging out. The great part about BLOC is that our staff live where we work, so we can intentionally include the most faithful, available, and teachable in our lives beyond program hours. It’s as simple as including them on a grocery run, playing pickup basketball after hours when they are hanging around, inviting for dinner, or as involved as organizing and leading a small group field trip to expand their horizons beyond these urban blocks.

As Donovan and Darionn’s friendship grew, they realized they had a lot in common. Both have been bullied at school. So they became sidekicks, looking out for and defending each other. Darionn makes sure Donovan is included at BLOC, too. It’s almost like they are brothers, and it’s encouraging to watch them approach manhood from a positive perspective. Darionn’s now a student leader as well.

Compassion and empathy are not just taught; they’re caught. We strive to create an atmosphere of community where students of all ages are accepted yet challenged to grow socially, emotionally, spiritually. Through God’s love, we are creating a different vibe from the street life.

This corner has changed over the past 17 years, since we first opened our doors in Price Hill. From the site of a fatal drive-by shooting, it’s grown to be a recognized haven for students, offering 1-to-1 mentoring, student leadership training, homework assistance, games, video games, crafts and a fitness room. It’s one of our 4 after school programs, and we will be highlighting each site in upcoming newsletters.

Join Us

In many ways, it’s like planting a seed and watering, and waiting: watching for signs of new life. Sometimes there is wild and rapid growth, and we simply are there to be a framework to channel the upward progress. Other times, we continue to feed the dry ground in hope that roots are forming even though we cannot see.

As urban ministers, we know that the seed-root-sprout-blossom-thrive-cycle happens over time. Sometimes it takes months, sometimes years. BLOC is ‘rooted’ in urban neighborhoods for that reason.

If you’ve been encouraged by this newsletter -- a glimpse of some of the positive changes cultivated by BLOC – then join us. There are many ways to be a difference-maker (and most don’t even involve putting your work gloves on!):

- **Pray.** For God’s protection for those we serve and for us, For the right people/things we need will be brought/given to us, For the right spirit in everything we do
- **Volunteer.** There’s lots of opportunities. Check out our website and when you decide where to plug in, just click on ‘Get Involved’ in the top right corner of our website.
- **Give.** Your monetary donation is making a difference in our neighbor’s lives every day.

For your convenience, we’ve included 2 envelopes (maybe send the 2nd to us as a gift to BLOC on your birthday?). Or you can donate online at www.onebloc.org (Click on ‘Donate Now’ top right corner).

Want to know more? Need to contact us?

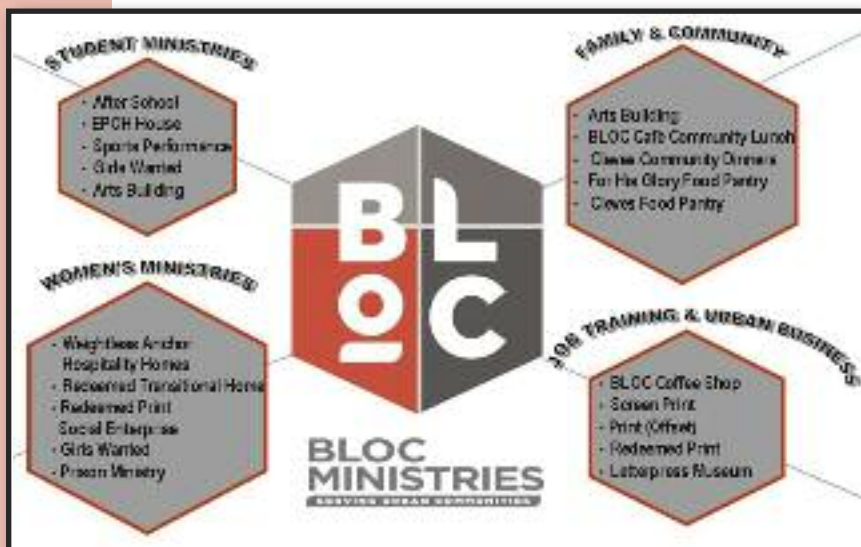
Office Address: BLOC Ministries, Inc. • 911 W. 8th Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45203 • Email: info@onebloc.org

Phone: (513) 250-5722

Website: www.onebloc.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/blocministries/

Instagram: [bloc_ministriesbloc_sports_performance_weightless_anchor_](https://www.instagram.com/bloc_ministriesbloc_sports_performance_weightless_anchor_)



Jobs Training & Social Enterprises: BLOC Screen Print & BLOC Woodshop



He walked in off the street, homeless and sleeping in an alley downtown. Justin was desperately trying to find a job, but with a felony no one would hire him. His probation officer told him he had to find a job before the next visit or else violate his parole. But God's timing is good: two of our guys were leaving within the week, have completed our training at Bloc Screen Print Shop. Justin is sharpening his general jobs skills and learning new ones and is eager to learn.

BLOC Industries, as we call our social enterprise wing of BLOC, grew out of conversations at our free community meals or when neighbors would see our construction crew working on renovating a BLOC center. We'd be approached by people eager to start over but with few opportunities. Over the past several years, we've started 3 small businesses in Lower Price Hill to equip adults and give 2nd chances.

Need some t-shirts or sweatshirts printed with your family motto, church or sports team name or company logo? Or want a unique farm table, Adirondack chairs, or a decorative item for your home? We do custom orders too. Visit our website or Facebook pages for more info.

BLOC Coffee Company Relocating

Our lease is up at our current location, so the doors are closed for now. Stay tuned – before you know it, we will be open at our new location at 801 Mt. Hope in East Price Hill in the Incline District.

Women's Ministries: Redeemed Residential program

It's still a struggle, every day. But overcoming drug addiction, as Amanda knows, is tough work. Over the last year, she's taken steps to get clean - and when our Redeemed Residential House opened in January, she asked to be a part.

As one of our 'sober sisters' (their chosen nickname) who's lived at Redeemed, Amanda's learning new life skills – like how to budget the money she earns working through BLOC Industries. She's also enjoyed making hot meals and discovering nutritious choices. Using a crock pot to make dinner when her 7 year old daughter visits and getting a packed lunch prepped when Emma spends an overnight are all crucial life skills growth. All Amanda is learning are foundational to a new life, one she anticipates will include regaining custody of her daughter.



Recently, Amanda has had another weighty emotional struggle to work through. She's learned that her father is dying. But as she shared during the Redeemed House Bible study, there has never been a time before in her life when she's had so much chaos going on but didn't revert back to using drugs. She seems to be handling each day, each situation out of a new, inner peace. It's not easy, but she has the encouragement of Redeemed women and hope.

The Redeemed Residential program is a place to heal holistically from trauma and addiction. The aim is a nurturing accountable community of 'sober sisters,' who are mentored and instructed by our women staff in practical skills, fitness and nutrition, required counseling, social and volunteer activities. Job training is also a vital part, through one of BLOC's social enterprises.