

Sponsorship Success



The Ride of a Lifetime

At CI-UALR, we put a great deal of emphasis on not only encouraging our children and youth to become active participants in charitable work for others – we provide many opportunities for them to do so.

One of the more touching (and fun!) projects our youth recently participated in helps underprivileged kids experience one of the great childhood rites of passage: riding bicycles. Far too many families in Little Rock are unable to afford luxuries, and for them, a bike for their child falls into this category.

Partnering with two other organizations – YMCA and Recycled Bikes for Kids – a dozen of our youth received training in basic bicycle repair and helped fix nearly 40 bikes that were then given to sponsored children. Each child also received a new helmet and a bike lock.

Then, after completing some safety courses, everyone went on a group ride through one of Little Rock's beautiful river trails. Our youth loved working on this project so much that we are expanding it to provide more bikes to more children throughout the year...and hopefully, for years to come!

Field Notes

Little Rock, Arkansas

Benefits for a Lifetime

I'm proud to be a part of an organization that has the ability and knowledge to make a real dent in the challenges facing the economically disadvantaged. Children International's emphasis on building positive relationships and providing opportunities to learn important life skills just may be the ingredients that make our efforts successful year after year.

The generous contributions of sponsors provide crucial material benefits like warm coats for winter, new shoes and school supplies. These make a big difference for our struggling families. But the children we serve suffer more than a poverty of possessions, many of the challenges our families face are due to a poverty of opportunity.

Right here in Little Rock, many families know their children would benefit from tutors, sports leagues and other after-school and summer activities, but they simply can't afford them. This is where we see the long-lasting impact of your support.

Rather than fending for themselves on unsafe streets or behind locked doors until their parents get home, our children and youth have access to programs that help them build leadership skills, develop financial acumen in micro-enterprise projects, and



enjoy activities as diverse as singing or sports. These give sponsored kids opportunities to discover hidden talents and learn important lessons, while making friends and being exposed to positive role models.

"You can't be what you can't see" is a quote we use frequently in our Little Rock agency. And thanks to sponsorship, children and families see a way to forge a path that can improve their lives in significant and meaningful ways.

Julie Hall

Did You know?

Quick Facts: Little Rock Arkansas

- The latest records indicate that more than 23 percent of residents in Little Rock live below the poverty line.
- Our emphasis on health and physical fitness is working to address the fact that one in three public school students in Arkansas is either overweight or at risk of being overweight.
- Our CI-UALR agency has 16 employees.
- We have roughly 200 volunteers helping run various programs and activities.
- CI-UALR benefits from having approximately two dozen AmeriCorps members in any given year, lending their expertise and mentoring our sponsored population.



Program Highlights

Improving Individuals and Communities

The importance of positive peers and role models for underprivileged children and at-risk youth cannot be overemphasized. Providing after-school programs, summer camps and youth leadership opportunities is such a big part of our focus at CI-UALR.

While continuing to provide benefits that ease the burdens of children and their families, a growing emphasis on expanding youth involvement has been particularly exciting. These are just a few of the ways our kids have helped themselves by helping others:

- Our youth received permission from the city to paint murals on three large concrete towers along Fourche Creek. Colorful images of flowers, trees, turtles, birds and frogs now cover what was once ugly, bare concrete.
- Another group of youth adopted a public sculpture garden and committed to caring for the park it's in for an entire year. They were taught how to wash, dry and wax each sculpture.
- During Keep Little Rock Beautiful Day, a large group of youth resurrected a forgotten community garden. They spent the day lovingly bringing it back to life, uncovering rose bushes, a small fig orchard, and a grove of pomegranate trees. And, while tilling raised beds,

what they thought were weeds turned out to be dozens of radishes and sweet potatoes. Inside the nearby abandoned greenhouse, they planted flats of sunflowers, summer squash, sweet peas and herbs like mint and basil.

Noteworthy

Feeding the Poor: Youth packed nearly 14,000 servings of greens while volunteering at a local food pantry. The greens were then distributed as part of a full meal to impoverished Arkansas families.

Raising Awareness: Participating in a national effort to raise awareness about sexual assault, sponsored youth created a colorful exhibit in downtown Little Rock. They engaged passersby in conversations about respect and preventing abuse.

Getting Fit for Fun: Staff and fathers of sponsored children were among those who provided transportation, discipline, advice and plenty of encouragement to 54 boys, making it possible for them to play in a football league. Sponsored girls also got in on the fun, learning how to be cheerleaders for their favorite team – the CI Warriors!

Inside Perspective

Fighting His Way to the Top

Tony is a seventh-grader at a local Little Rock middle school. And he proudly tells anyone who asks that he earns all A's and B's on his report cards. Some of his pride comes from the fact that school hasn't always come easily for him.

But this young man also has the humility to admit that the personal attention and encouragement he receives from his family and the staff and volunteers at our agency has been a big factor in his improved

grades and his many other accomplishments.

"They will help you no matter what," he says of the people involved with sponsorship, "even if you struggle."

Tony credits his involvement with Kid's Clubs, a partnership with local schools, for helping him turn things around and become a good student. It was here that he first developed an interest in Tae Kwon Do, a discipline of the martial arts, and eventually earned a black belt. Tony's dedication not only provided him with more discipline in other areas, it also boosted his self-esteem.

Instead of spending his afternoons at home, Kid's Clubs introduced Tony to a number of new experiences and helped him develop important skills and a healthier lifestyle. He even went on to win the election to be president of our micro-enterprise summer camp program, Mind Your Own Business, three years in a row.

Under his leadership, the business team's recent successful campaign formed a bracelet-making company, selling the bracelets at the Little Rock River Market and donating the proceeds to the Make-a-Wish Foundation.

Tony tells us that without sponsorship support, "I wouldn't have known about Tae Kwon Do, and I wouldn't be doing any [of these] activities."



Your Sponsorship in Action



After-school programs



Increased self-confidence



Community-improvement projects



Dental care



Learning healthy habits



Educational assistance