

PRESS RELEASE

UrbanPromise Expands the Impact from Camden to Trenton

A young man who grew up through UrbanPromise programs in Camden is now at the forefront of an initiative to launch UrbanPromise in Trenton, New Jersey.

June 2011, Camden, NJ:

Carl Clark's life is one that truly captures the vision of UrbanPromise, to build a city of promise, one child at a time. As a six year old, in 1988, Clark was introduced to UrbanPromise programs when Bruce Main, President of UrbanPromise, came through the Westfield Acres projects in Camden, dressed in a bear costume, inviting children to a pancake breakfast. That initial connection ignited a life-long relationship that would see Clark involved in UrbanPromise programs the rest of his teenage years. Clark fondly remembers those early years as a camper:

"Going to camp was influential as the staff always made a huge impact in my life. As a child from the projects, meeting people from all over the world opened my eyes and prepared me for the world. At UrbanPromise I was exposed to all different races and learned that there is truly only one race, the human race."

Jodina Hicks, Executive Director of UrbanPromise Camden, remembers a "quiet, kind spirited child who quickly rose as a leader among his peers." Clark progressed through the programs and at 13 he was empowered with responsibility as a street leader. He is thankful that UrbanPromise set high expectations for him, realizing that students will live up to the expectations that are put on them.

Clark attributes improvement in his confidence and grades to his involvement in UrbanPromise programs. They helped him secure a full scholarship to Bishop Eustace Prep School. Graduating as school president, with a 3.8 GPA, Clark received a full academic scholarship to The College of New Jersey where he studied business marketing.

Upon graduating from college, Clark started working as a banker with First Choice Bank near Trenton. Over his years living in Trenton, Clark observed a beautiful city deteriorating due to increasing gang presence. He recognized that Trenton lacked the kind of afterschool activities that he enjoyed growing up in Camden. At first, the idea to bring UrbanPromise to Trenton started to stir in his mind, however, when he heard about the horrific gang-raping of a 7 year old Trenton girl, Clark knew that he needed to do something.

Main had always known him as a brilliant young leader, but when he listened to Clark share his heart and vision for Trenton, Main knew that he was looking at a young man with a vision. "What's been happening in Trenton is remarkable. A guy like Carl embraces a call, and all of a sudden churches and donors start coming out of the woodwork with strong support."

For Clark the vision is simple; no need to reinvent the wheel; Trenton and Camden are very similar communities and Clark wants to follow the UrbanPromise model that has served Camden for over 20 years. He is getting started by launching the work of UrbanPromise in Trenton with *Camp Truth* running through July and August of 2011. The goal is to grow the program, eventually introducing the same afterschool programs to Trenton that helped change the course of his life.

Clark understands how fortunate he was to have UrbanPromise offering him space to develop and leaders to look up to. "For me this is simply a pay-it-forward situation. I have benefited greatly from Urban Promise and now I want to focus on the kids in Trenton and show them that they have choices, that God loves them and there are people that will care for them no matter what."

Details for *Camp Truth* operating in Trenton in the summer of 2011:

- Hosted at Trinity Cathedral (801 West State Street, Trenton)
- July 11 – August 12, 2011
- Camp activities from 9:00am – 4:30pm
- 40-60 students divided into age groups: 4-6 yrs, 7-9 yrs and 10-12 yrs
- Daily camp activities: arts & crafts, skits, games, songs, Bible study and physical activity
- Join the Camden camps in their "All Camp Day" in August, when all camps gather at one location for friendly "competition" involving: camp songs and chants, design of mascot costume and games / contests.

For comments or to set up interviews please contact:

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