

Updates from...

The Boston Project Staff Team



December 2011

As a ministry team, we thoroughly enjoy the Christmas Season. It is a great time to reach out to neighbors in special ways. We're thankful for the many ways you bless us so that we can in turn bless others. One church's childrens ministry collected \$900 in supermarket gift cards to help hungry families. Our neighbors recently gathered gently used coats to help others keep warm. Above all, we appreciate the opportunity to share about Jesus' birth and life in meaningful ways. **We hope that you have a blessed Christmas Season!**



Recent Photos

More from the life of our staff



The Malkemes Family - Executive Director & Curriculum Director

When we ask our daughters what they are thankful for, they often say "our family." This month, we have served as a family in preparing food for a Christmas dinner for the homeless, and we also enjoyed our first-ever neighborhood *family* Christmas party. The sit-down dinner, making ornaments, a solo sung by a neighbor, and the reading of the Christmas story all set an atmosphere that was honoring to baby Jesus. Thank you for being part of our family!



Mayonne Thomas - Youth Outreach Worker

My first two months at BP have been full. I have led youth programs, connecting with children, parents, Boston Project staff, and have even become involved in a local church. Starting in January, co-worker Dana and I be leading a "tween" girls mentoring/empowerment group, and a Bible study with our teenagers based on the Alpha curriculum. Together we will explore Christianity as we study the person of Jesus and his relevance to our lives. I look forward to connecting with our teenagers as they learn about Jesus Christ.



Liz & Ben Cressy - Executive Assistant & Community Development

In our first Christmas as a married couple, we're establishing new traditions, like cutting down our own tree (a first for Liz!). However, we have come to realize that Ben's job with Ten Thousand Villages hasn't been the greatest fit for our family. Because of our differing hours, we haven't been able to put time into our own relationship or loving our neighbors. Please pray with us as we seek a healthier rhythm of life where we can pursue our passions together.



Dana Chepulis - Youth Outreach Worker & Greenspace

I love the Christmas season, not just for the nostalgic feelings, time with family, or many reasons to eat fattening food. I love the Christmas season most of all because of Advent - a period of reflection and anticipation of Christ's birth. It's a time when I can count all the blessings that God has given me the past year - and I sure do have a lot from 2011! I praise God for everyone that has supported me this year through prayer, financial support, and encouragement. Thank you all for your faithfulness!



The Riddle Family - Service-Learning Director & Hospitality

These last few weeks have been full of holiday festivities and precious family time. Keith and I have had a chance to be still and just marvel at the amazing gift we have in our boys. God has given us many opportunities to enjoy them and the amazing and complicated treasures that they are. We have enjoyed reading chapter books together (like *The Hobbit*), going to Christmas concerts, and of course, hearing everything Aaron (20 months) has to say (and it's a lot!).



Year-End General Fund Update

Our General Fund supports staff and program costs (it's important). All gifts postmarked or made online by December 31, 2011 are considered income tax deductible this year.

\$11,500 to go by Dec. 31st

2011 General Fund Need = \$33,500 (revised)

65% Raised to Date. Thanks!

(top-to-bottom) 1. Neighbors surprise Paul by selecting him as TNT's "Neighbor of the Year." 2. BP women at the Boston Christmas tree lighting. 3. Dana helps lead homework center. 4. Volunteers sort potatoes to put in Thanksgiving Baskets for local families.



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Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!



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The Malkemes Family Update

Merry Christmas!

December 2011

Contact us anytime
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“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” Ephesians 2:10

Family is really important to us. When we ask our daughters at random times what they are thankful for they often say “our family.” Sometimes we even like to imagine what it would be like to live as a family in the 1700’s. The thought of “no computer,” however, is a hard pill for the girls to swallow.

We are not a perfect family, but we have discovered the joy of living by God’s grace. Years ago I (Paul) read a liberating book called *Never Mind the Joneses* by Tim Stafford that encourages us not to compare ourselves to other families, even Christian families. Rather we should discover and live out God’s specific purpose for us.

We talk about our family purpose. We had a funny and serious moment wrapped up in one when Megan (at age 9) and Glenna were talking about why we live in Dorchester in light of some violence. As Glenna shared about God’s purpose for our family, Megan responded, “Well, what if God has called me to be a New Hampshire country girl?”

We wrestle together. Megan, Cady, Grace and I love to play wrestle. In a similar spirit, we work out our purpose together. Sometimes it’s hard and other times it’s fun. This month, we have served as a family in preparing food for a Christmas dinner for the homeless and then by making craft kits for our neighborhood Christmas party. The girls also decided to use their own money to buy a gift for a 6-year old girl through Angel Tree. It’s been a full and blessed Christmas season already!

Creating memories. On Saturday night, our first-ever neighborhood *family* Christmas party went much better than we anticipated. The sit-down dinner, making ornaments, a solo sung by a neighbor, and the reading of the Christmas story all contributed to an atmosphere that felt honoring to baby Jesus. As the party ended a new neighbor who is a Native American Christian came up to Glenna and said, “This is beautiful. You are creating memories for families and children that they will hold on to for a lifetime.” Then she prayed God’s blessing upon us.

Thank you for being part of our family. Our girls (and we) are keenly aware that there are many people, those we may not even know, who are praying for us and contributing towards our work in Boston. **Thank you for creating lasting memories for us and our neighborhood families.**

May you enjoy Jesus’ birth this season.

Fundraising Update

2011 Missionary Support = \$58,000

So Close! ... \$2,665 to go by Dec. 31st

95% Raised to Date. Thanks!

2011 Boston Tree Lighting with BP Family



The Girls



The Guys

Grace & Joseph as Princess and Knight



Megan preparing a turkey for the homeless.

Cady & Mayonne baking cookies for Pretty Tween Girls



Paul received the 2011 TNT Neighbor of the Year award. A surprise from neighbors.



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Merry Christmas!

The Riddle Family Update

LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you and praise your name, for in perfect faithfulness you have done wonderful things, things planned long ago. - Isaiah 25:1

“God is faithful!” seems to be a great phrase to sum up this year for our family. Though there have been some difficult times of stress, uncertainty, and family loss, God has shown us his goodness and guidance as we continue to seek Him.

These last few weeks have been full of holiday festivities but also precious family time. Recently both Keith and I have had a chance to be still and just marvel at the amazing gift we have in our boys. God has given us many opportunities to enjoy them and the amazingly beautiful and complicated treasures that they are. Now that they are older, we have been reading chapter books together and this fall have truly enjoyed sharing our favorites - *The BFG*, *Inkheart* and *The Hobbit* to name a few.

We have also had the joy of **exploring God and concepts of spirituality** with them recently, which is so much fun because their view of God is so uncomplicated. I was informed last week that if you take Jesus’ last name and put “mas” after it you get the word Christmas! **Joseph** just finished his first term of first grade and is doing great - he excels in math, just like his dad (and gets distracted by things in his desk just like his mom). **Tim** performed in a holiday concert this weekend with Boston Children’s Chorus. It was beautiful and he did a great job, but (in his own words) he would rather go home and take a nap than listen to everyone else sing. **Aaron** has discovered his voice and talks about EVERYTHING he sees. Our car rides are full of exclamations from the back seat as he yells out the names of all the things he sees. His favorite is the pizza sign we pass on the way to Joseph’s school.

We look forward to 2012 and the many more adventures that await us. Thank you all so much for your continued support and prayers, and from our family to yours, have a blessed Christmas!!

Prayer Requests

- **Continued Direction.** God is providing clarity for our next steps, but some large decisions still lie ahead. Pray for continued wisdom and specific direction for our family and the ministry.
- **Season of Many Celebrations!** In just 9 weeks from late November to early February, our family celebrates four birthdays, plus Thanksgiving and Christmas! Pray for time to *fully appreciate* and celebrate each person and holiday.

Year-End Financial Update

In early October, our family was far behind our financial goal, and we asked for your help. Since then, ***we have seen God’s hand provide in an amazing way!*** A special thanks to all those who gave for the first time and for those who committed to becoming regular supporters of our ministry in 2012. **Please consider how you might help us to meet our remaining year-end need of \$4,240.** Thank you!

\$4,240 to go by Dec. 31st

89% Raised to Date. Thanks!

Goal for 2011: \$38,000



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Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!



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Aaron helps with the Christmas tree lights! ▶



◀ Tim proudly shows his soccer medal.
Joseph and Grace at his “knights & princesses” birthday party - he’s 7!



Boston Project guys at the Christmas tree lighting on the Boston Common.



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Liz & Ben's Update

Merry Christmas! 

December 2011

*"You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."
– Jeremiah 29:13*

Tis the Season

This time of the year is a favorite in the Cressy household. From Christmas decorations, smells and foods, to more importantly taking time to reflect on the birth of Christ – we love it all. We went to New Hampshire to chop down our tree (a first for Liz!) and have taken time to decorate it (with fairly traded Ten Thousand Villages ornaments, of course).

Since it's our first Christmas as a married couple, we've wanted to establish new traditions that reflect the things we care about and focus on what the season is truly about. Ben has committed to reading the birth of Christ story every day until Christmas. We are choosing to give simple gifts to each other to allow for more creative expressions of our love. Our hope is to not get caught up in the materialism of the season and take time to focus on the greatest gift we have been given.

40 Days of Prayer

As we've shared previously, this summer Ben was offered a full time job with Ten Thousand Villages as the Assistant Manager and he accepted. However, we've come to realize that even though there are a lot of wonderful things about this job and the organization, it hasn't been the greatest fit for our family. We often have a mismatch of our work hours (Ben getting home very late, often having to work full weekends, including Sunday) and Liz continuing in full time ministry with its own demands. Sometimes we go multiple weeks without a day off together. Additionally, we haven't been able to spend time loving our neighbors or pursuing other passions together, something we feel strongly about.

This reality is often overwhelming, and in light of this, we recently decided to spend 40 days in intentional prayer. We are seeking God about our future and are trying to determine what questions we need to be asking about changes in our life routines. We have taken a lot of time to think about who we are, the things we are passionate about, and the various giftings we have. Please join us in praying as we make some decisions that will ideally lead to a healthier rhythm of life where we can pursue our passions together. As we seek the God who has all wisdom, we trust that we will find the answers we are looking for.

He is Faithful

Not all is bad! We serve a God who is faithful beyond comprehension. We have been blessed by words of encouragement from God's word, as well as from his people. We are so thankful for our community, here in Dorchester, and also far away, that supports us in so many different ways. There are moments where we are just so awestruck that God should show His faithfulness through our humble community of friends and family. Thank you!

As we end this year, we are still short on our fundraising. Please prayerfully consider being a part of God's work through us in Dorchester. We couldn't do it without you!

\$7,805 to go by Dec. 31st

Goal for 2011: \$20,000

61% Raised to Date. Thanks!



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Executive Assistant &
Community Development

12 Elmhurst St., Dorchester, MA 02124

Recent Photos



We chopped down our first Christmas tree together in New Hampshire.



Liz and all the Boston Project ladies (staff and girls) at the Boston Christmas Tree lighting.



Ben volunteers regularly at The Spot, our monthly anti-violence teen café.



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Dana Chepulis' Update

Merry Christmas!

Oh come let us adore Him!

I love the Christmas season, not just for the nostalgic feelings, time with family, or many reasons to eat fattening food. I love the Christmas season most of all because of Advent - a period of reflection and anticipation of Christ's birth. It's a time when I can count all the blessings that God has given me the past year - and I sure do have a lot from 2011! Here are just a few that come to mind...

1. **Deeper Relationships.** Throughout 2011, I have become closer to the youth in our neighborhood, which has led to more trust between us. More specifically, I've had a deeper mentorship with a few teenage girls on our street that has allowed me to pour into their lives full-heartedly and create long-lasting bonds.
2. **Guidance.** God has blessed me with incredible women in my life who have helped guide me through the tougher situations in life. Because of them, I have grown tremendously this past year and have become more of the woman God has created me to be (you know who you are :)
3. **Stewardship.** From being a good steward of my money, to the earth I live on, to the food that is provided for me, to the way I spend my time, God has taught me to worship him through stewardship in all areas of my life.
4. **Safety.** God has protected my family, friends, and neighborhood through physical illnesses, mental and emotional stress, violence in our neighborhood, and everything in between.
5. **Provision.** In 2011, God has provided me with a new apartment, a new church, great friends, financial help, a supportive family, and a job that allows me to discover my God-given purposes. That's a whole lot of provision!
6. **Community.** The Boston Project community is a family like no other. My co-workers and their families have poured greatly into my life and mine into theirs, truly displaying the community that God yearns us to have.
7. **Faithfulness.** Often times I find myself unsure about how needs are going to be met or how I'm going to get myself through a situation. However, God always remains faithful and sees me through all situations, no matter the circumstances.

I praise God for everyone that has supported me this year through prayer, financial support, and encouragement. Thank you all for your faithfulness!

Please Join Me In Prayer

- Pray for my financial support throughout the 2012 year. God has blessed me with so much, but I need to continue to seek provision for my financial needs.
- As 2011 comes to an end, I'm excited to see where God takes me in 2012. Pray that I have a listening heart to God's direction in my life.

\$1,830 to go by Dec. 31st

49% Raised to Date. Thanks!

Goal for 2011: \$3,600



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December 2011

Neighborhood
Youth Ministries &
Green Space



Stay in touch
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Dorchester, MA 02124

Recent Photos



The BP ladies braving the cold with smiles at the Christmas tree lighting downtown



People always say my dad and I are like 2 peas in a pod - I couldn't agree more!



Seven-year-old Paul reads me a Dr. Seuss story at Homework Center



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Mayonne Thomas' Update

Merry Christmas!

The disciples woke (Jesus) and said to Him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be Still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey Him!" - Mark 4:38-41

Quiet Reflections

I recently read a study, which said, "Boston is one of the nations most highly-educated cities, but in some census tracts within the city, as many as 50% of adults do not have a high school diploma." It is startling to see percentages like this one. As I interact with students on a daily basis, I have to face the reality that these numbers are often accurate.

In light of statistics such as these, it definitely feels like I am in a storm at time, as I wonder if I am making a difference even in the smallest way in the life of our youth. As I continue to ponder these things and the passage above, I am humbled by Jesus' words "Why are you afraid?" "Do you still have no faith?" It's not the strength of my faith that decides what results are produced, but its object, which is Jesus Christ.

Coming Events

Starting in December and January, I along with my co-worker Dana will be leading a "tween" girls mentoring/empowerment group. This will allow us the opportunity to connect with the girls in the neighborhood, some of whom come to our homework center. The hope is to invest more one-on-one with the girls through food, fellowship, games, prayer and scripture study, as well as have in-depth conversations about life as a tween girl.

Also starting in January 2012, we will be leading a Bible study with our teenagers. We are doing an Alpha course where we will explore Christianity as we study the person of Jesus and his relevance to our life today. This study gives the youth a chance to ask lots of questions about what it means to truly follow and live a life for Jesus. I look forward with eager anticipation to connecting with our teenagers as they learn about Jesus Christ. Please join me in prayer.

Life Adjustments

Life here at BP has been busy and full; I have had the opportunity to not only participate in the youth programs, but have been gradually making connections with our youth, some parents and the BP staff. Since my last newsletter I have been able to start attending Hope Fellowship Church over in Cambridge.

Praises & Prayer Requests

- Praise the Lord that I was able to find a church to attend, a chance to connect with some old and new friends since being here, and growing relationships with our youth.
- Pray as I continue to adjust to live in Boston and at The Boston Project Ministries.
- Pray for the youth who will be involved in Pretty Tween Girls and Real Life groups, and for God's guidance as I prepare the materials to lead our youth.



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Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

November - December 2011



Youth Outreach Worker

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Recent Photos



BP Staff women at Christmas tree lighting on the Boston Common.



Teenagers make bracelets together at The Spot teen cafe.



Having dinner with neighbors at our most recent neighborhood meeting.



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