

The Children of Camden Need Your Help

Dear Friend:

No child should have to grow up without hope.

But for too many years, the kids here in Camden have been doing just that. Many come from broken homes, with parents who just aren't involved.

They wind up on the street, desperate and angry. It's only a matter of time before they're sucked into the world of drugs and crime. And in a small town like ours, that affects us all.

The saddest part is that **these aren't bad kids** – at least they don't want to be.

That's what I learned in December when I started the Christian Sports Association at the neighborhood school gym. The kids were lined up to get in, starved for something constructive to do.

I did the only thing I could think of at the time – I organized a basketball team. ***The Soaring Eagles.*** Right away, the kids responded to the positive attention and discipline.

But I wanted it to be more than fun and games. So I took them out to do yard or house work for elderly neighbors who can't do what they used to. The kids are learning respect for themselves and those around them. They're learning what it means to be **responsible members of the community.**

And even though the Christian Sports Association has only been active for seven months, we're already seeing some wonderful changes. Kids who didn't care much about school are working hard and bringing up their grades – so they'll be allowed to play.

Most importantly, **we're starting to see hope in their eyes.**

Take Michael* for example. Though he's only a child himself – a junior in High School – he's already got a child of his own. Now, most boys in his situation just go on with their lives, leaving the young mother to deal with a fatherless baby.

But Michael is a Soaring Eagle. He's learning to take responsibility for his actions. So he's involved in his son's life, often bringing the seven-month-old to basketball practice. And even though Michael is so young, **he's giving his son something few other boys in this neighborhood have – a Dad.**

Over, please...

* Names of minors have been changed.

Then, there's Darius.* He's a bright young man, ten years old. He used to play basketball for the Boys and Girls Club before they moved out of the neighborhood, but his mother never came to see him play.

Since he's been a Soaring Eagle, though, he can't stop talking about how much fun he's having. So guess what? She's started coming to his games. And now, **this single mother has become very involved in her son's life.**

We may not be changing the world. But I think we are making a big difference right here in Camden.

But to continue making that difference, I'm going to have to do something that's difficult for me. I'm going to have to ask for your help.

Since our basketball teams have been so successful, we decided to start a football team, too. The kids are real excited about it – we won't have any problem filling the 70 slots we'll have for a league.

The only problem is, they've got to have uniforms to play – it's just not as safe without all the padding and such. And a full set of padding, the helmet and all – runs \$200 per player. That means it will take \$14,000 to buy all the uniforms we need.

Will you please help us help these kids? Any donation at all would mean so much. Whether you can give \$50, \$25 – Even \$10 would be appreciated. Or maybe you or your business would be willing to sponsor one or more of the kids, and buy them a uniform for \$200 each.

So if you will, please make your check out to the Christian Sports Association and drop it in the enclosed envelope. You'll feel so good knowing that you've helped keep a child off the street, and **helped Camden be a safer and better community.**

On behalf of the kids of Camden, I thank you.

Rev. Jacovis Davis,
Christian Sports Association

PS – Time is really slipping away from us. We'll need to start practice in August if we're going to play this year, and it'll take some time to order 200 sets of padding and helmets. So please, don't delay. Your contribution will truly make a difference in the life of a child **right here in Camden.** Send your check made out to the Christian Sports Association today!

PPS – **Hope is such a fragile thing.** If we don't have the money for these uniforms by August 15, we'll have to tell the kids we can't play football. Please don't let that happen. Send us your contribution today!

* Names of minors have been changed.