

# Lillardconnect



We are coming to the U.S this summer! See page 4.

December 14, 2011

## Dear family and friends,

This year is winding down again, and we have a lot to share with you from the past six months! God is so good and we are so excited about what he has done this year! November marked our 6th year here in Prague, and we are so grateful for you, who have supported us with your finances, love, prayers, and encouragement. Thank you for continuing to be a part of this ministry team. We are always blown away by your hearts and generosity.

- MERRY CHRISTMAS EVERYONE! - GOD'S BLESSINGS IN THE NEW YEAR!-

## Ministry Updates

### Celebrate Recovery



We are close to completing the full year cycle of the CR program! This year has been the most successful run through the program so far. We are not counting the success in the number of people attending, but how many people are actually completing the entire program. The CR program has in place two key relationships: an accountability partner and a sponsor. This means, someone that can challenge them and walk beside them, and another who has been through the program and can speak into their life. For the first time, this year, not only have we had people committing to these essential relationships, but also committing to go through a

more detailed study of the steps called "Steps Studies." The steps studies are for people who are really serious about becoming free from their past and want to have a group of people around them that can support this decision. We have seen the most fruit this year in the program, because of these true commitments from people to turn their lives and will over to God's care and control. It's been exciting to be a part of it! Another amazing thing happened just a few weeks ago, when four guys walked in to CR with a church member, three of them being homeless. In the group time they all shared about the hardship they have endured. Through the group we got to share about the hope we have found in Jesus, and that he can be their strength and power to become free. **All four of them prayed that evening to make God their higher power!** We are praying that these four young men continue on this new path to recovery. Just as a reminder, Celebrate Recovery is a 12 steps program that operates within the church, and helps people focus on God as their power to overcome hurts, hang ups, and habits. It's a program that has spread all around the world and used as a powerful ministry tool in thousands of churches.

## Youth Ministry



### Upside Down

Upside Down youth trip to Brno

First New Hope youth weekend

So much has been happening in the area of youth and student ministry! Upside Down has been going great, and we are so amazed and thankful to God to see the growth in the lives of these young people. We've had the opportunity to go on a few trips with the youth, which has strengthened the friendships in the group, and created a true community. **On our trip to Brno, a group of kids we met on the street accepted Jesus after we had the chance to share the Gospel with them! That was awesome!** At Upside Down, we are constantly challenging the youth to become people that will turn this world upside down for God. All of our discussions and topics focus on how we can make that happen. We have discovered this past year at Upside Down, that the youth don't want to do the half-hearted Christian thing, but that they want a life with God full of substance, power, and action!

### New Hope youth

Parallel to Upside Down, I had the privilege to lead the youth meetings at this past summer's New Hope church camp back in July. All of the eight New Hope churches in the Czech Republic came together for a summer camp, and this year was the first camp where we had youth meetings. It was exciting to finally meet youth from different parts of the country from all these different churches! It was a great time for getting to know each other, worshiping together, and of encouraging each other. Many of the youth go to churches where they are just one of a few youth, and go to schools where they are the only Christians. Any opportunity to meet other young people that are believers is huge! We promised the youth at the end of the camp that this was just the beginning, and that we more was to come.

Together with two other youth leaders, we planned the first New Hope Youth adventure weekend at a place called Podskali. Podskali is a Restaurant and Hostel near a city called Olomouc, It is owned and run by Mark Bruner, one of the New Hope pastors and also one of the youth leaders that made the youth weekend happen. **The big event was scheduled for October 28th-29th and 40 youth and 6 youth leaders attended!** This weekend was a great encouragement to the youth/college students, that they are not alone, and that God hasn't forgotten about them. The theme was, seek and you will find. We spoke with them about seeking God's kingdom, seeking the will and voice of God, and seeking the lost. The response from the youth was so far above what we could have dreamed, and God deserves all the praise for it. Teenagers gave their lives to Jesus for the first time, others rededicated their lives to Him, and all were strengthened in their faith. The weekend had a direct impact on our Upside Down meetings. Kids that never expressed much during worship, were lifting their hands and singing out loud, and the discussion times have become deeper and deeper. We believe that this was the beginning of something special that God is doing in the Czech Republic. Thank you for your prayers for us and this country!

On January 27th, all the youth leaders from New Hope are meeting again at Podskali to pray and plan for more events in 2012. Please pray that this will be a meeting that brings unity among youth leaders and that we will have the ability to serve the youth of this country to the best of our abilities.

## English Camp



This year's English camp was all focused on being a true hero, what it means, and how you can become one! Carol and I had the privilege of organizing this year's camp, and it was our biggest one yet! **53 kids attended and it was action packed from beginning to end!** This is a brief summary of the daily themes that we discussed with the kids:

We are all made to be Heroes, and that every Hero has a power source. Our power source is God, but we've been cut off, disconnected. A true hero is selfless, humble, loving, and stands for truth, but we cannot be a true hero on our own, without our power source. So, how do we reconnect? That is the greatest hero story ever told! God made a way through his son Jesus to reconnect with Him, our power source. Now our mission is to love God and love people.

We were so surprised at how much easier it was this year to start talking about spiritual things with the kids, and how well they responded. The kids that attended were from age 6-16, and many of the kids have been attending the camps for several years. For one teenager, it was his fifth camp, meaning he was at our very first camp in 2007! Many of the kids have heard a lot about God in past camps, and many seeds were sown. When we got to Thursday, and presented the gospel message, God gave me the idea to set a lamp on stage, and have several different plug adapters from different countries. I explained, that we desperately are trying to connect with God, but because of our sin, we cannot connect. One of the plug adapters represented the sin that comes between us and God, and that no matter what we try, our plug just doesn't fit into the power outlet. I continued to explain, that only Jesus can take away that sin, and through him, we can connect to God. We then gave the kids some paper and a nail, and asked them to write down sins that they know they do and don't want to do anymore. Then we asked them to take the papers and put them on the cross in the front, with a nail. We explained that Jesus took our sins and died for them, and now can forgive us of our sins. So, I took off the wrong adapter, and put the right adapter that would fit into the outlet, and plugged in the lamp. Now the lamp is connected to the power, and we can turn the light on for everyone to see. I explained that when we are connected to God, our power, that He shines in us, like a light to the world, showing everyone around us, that He is with us. Now, we can be True Heroes in this world. With all eyes closed we gave an opportunity to accept the gift of salvation and forgiveness. **20 kids gave their lives to Jesus!** WE ARE SO AMAZED at what God is doing in the hearts of young people in the Czech Republic! God deserves all the praise and glory! Please pray for these precious young people, that their commitment to follow Jesus remains strong. Just to add some more info: Four of our youth at Upside Down are kids that got saved in past camps! God is good!

## Coming to the U.S.A

We are planning on making a trip to the U.S this summer to visit our supporting churches, supporters, family and friend. It will have been 3 years since we've been back together, and it's definitely time. We hope to see as many of you as we can! The cost for tickets will be around \$5000 for all of us to fly, plus more funds to travel across the country. We will need to raise a big part of the funds to make the trip happen. If you would like to help us with the cost of this, then please mark any gifts with **"Lillards - project travel."**

## Family News

A lot of family news to report! Sophie started first grade this year at Czech school, and Will started Czech kindergarden! Sophie is speaking fluent Czech, and has officially left mommy and daddy in the dust. She makes a great translator :-). Will has had some trouble at school at first, but since we moved him to a different class, he is doing much better in school please pray for him during this time of adjustment. He is also learning Czech really quickly! Our little guy Max is now 15 months old, and is as cute as ever. He is taking his time with walking, probably because everyone brings stuff to him, so why should he walk? :-) Please also pray for Max, because we did find out from the doctor that his muscles need to get a bit stronger in his legs and arms around his joints. To help that along, he will be starting swimming class in January! Regarding Carol and myself, we have been keeping ourselves quite busy between family, ministry, and teaching English. Until September, I was working part time for an IT company, but quit that job so we can be more flexible for ministry opportunities. Teaching English allows us to do that.

### How to partner

#### Financial Info:

All gifts sent through Faith Community Churches Intl are Tax deductible.

Checks should be made out to:

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Please note that your gift is for Jerry and Carol Lillard



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### Prayer points:

- Health, particularly Sophie's eyes, and Max's muscles. Both need to get stronger.
- Youth leaders meeting on January 27th and 28th.
- Upside Down: For these precious young people to grow stronger in their faith
- Celebrate recovery: For lives to be changed, and people set free