



What You Need to Know about CSM

What is CSM?

The cities of North America can be difficult places to live because of crime, poverty, homelessness, drugs, gangs — the list goes on and on. Many individuals and families that could be making a positive impact on life in the city have left to find a better, safer place to live in the suburbs or smaller cities. This leaves the city in a difficult position — the people that could do the most good are no longer present to fight for quality of life and the quality of their neighborhoods. Local churches, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, childcare facilities and youth facilities are active in the city, but they need volunteers to be successful. That's where CSM comes in.

CSM exists to bring students and adults in to the inner city for ministry. Although not a physical place, CSM is an experience in which students come to know God in a new way. CSM finds places in urban centers for students to use their gifts to promote the Kingdom of God. We do not create our own projects, but link with existing churches and agencies to help them with their ministries. By participating in people-to-people ministries, students make new friends and become involved in the lives of city dwellers.

Why should I bring my students?

65% of the world's population now lives in urban centers and that number continues to grow. It's time that the church turns its attention to urban centers. By bringing your students to minister with CSM, you will be educating them in the very place where God may call them to serve. The problems that exist in the urban centers and the way that Christians are going about solving them are also transferable concepts that students can take home and apply in their own communities.

What are the results?

CSM provides approximately 200,000 volunteer hours to help the poor and needy each year.

The experience opens young people's eyes and hearts to the needs of the poor in the city.

Students understand that they have more in common with the people of the city than they ever dreamed was possible.

Young people develop a lifetime interest in helping others.

Is it safe?

The media image of the inner-city is skewed. Often, when you watch TV, you begin to think that everyone in the city is out to rob or hurt you in some way. On the contrary, much of the urban center is made up of immigrant neighborhoods. These immigrants provide a sense of family and a sense of well-being in the city. Our strict guidelines, together with our reputation and experience, help to ensure the safety of our participants. We house students in secure areas, while still allowing students to experience the problems and challenges of urban life. Participants are also guided through the experience by our staff, who provide a full-time presence in the city.

What will our students do?

They will learn. Students will be exposed to new situations, opportunities and physical surroundings that will challenge their stereotypes and assumptions. By living in an urban setting, they will interact with people of the city. Participants are fed in small, family-operated, ethnic restaurants that provide an additional window into the cultures of the world.

They will minister. Participants minister in shelters, missions, children’s programs, clubs, churches, parks, residential hotels, food banks, soup kitchens, and neighborhood centers. By adjusting our efforts to the priorities of these ministries, we are able to help in ways most desired and needed by our urban partners.

They will process what they learn. Each evening, a CSM staff person will guide the group through a discussion to help them understand what they have been learning and experiencing.

What is the cost?

Cost: \$65.00 USD per person per night which includes lodging, three meals, all scheduling, and the services of a CSM Staff Host.

CSM will provide: All ministry sites, all housing, all meals, a CSM host.

Some important info...

Each Group is responsible for: All transportation (to, from, and in the city), one adult leader for every five students, a morning devotional/Bible study, any preparation for VBS or other specific ministry project. NOTE: When it comes to choosing your group’s transportation, please remember that buses and mini-buses can be extremely difficult to maneuver and park in the city. Please DO NOT plan on bringing a church bus or minibus on your CSM trip unless you’ve cleared it with city staff.

Who may participate: CSM is open to Jr. High (12 years and older), Sr. High, College age students, and adults.

CSM Statement of Faith

We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.

We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons:
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father and in His personal return in power and glory.

We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful people regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.

We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.

We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost;
the saved unto the resurrection of life
and the lost unto the resurrection of damnation.

We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Mission Statement

To provide an effective urban ministry experience that transforms lives,
influences churches and communities, and honors Christ.

CSM Current Projects

Boston

Founded in 1630, the city of Boston is rich in history and culture. The city is home to over 645,000 residents and 4.5 million people in the Greater Boston area. Boston has the fifth highest proportion of foreign-born residents (26% of the total population) in the United States. The city has seen an increase of individuals and families living below the poverty line in recent years. Many social service organizations and ministries have struggled to keep up with the ever-increasing needs. Groups will have the opportunity to serve with these ministry partners throughout Boston's diverse neighborhoods.

Chicago

This project operates in conjunction with North Park University (NPU) and the Evangelical Covenant Church. Located on the north side of Chicago, NPU is one of a very few Christian universities still located in an urban setting. Students are able to minister in a number of different neighborhoods with organizations involved in food and clothing distribution, children's ministry, tutoring programs, backyard Bible clubs, and housing project outreaches. Because of the ethnic diversity, students are able to experience many different kinds of cultures.

Denver

Nestled at the base of the Rocky Mountains Denver is recognized much of the time for its sports and recreation. Although the city has a small population of only 566,000 residents it is surrounded by a much larger metro population of 2.4 million. Denver has as many social issues including homelessness, lack of affordable housing, prostitution and gang violence. Fortunately, there are many remarkable ministries and organizations advocating on behalf of those affected by these issues. Students will have the opportunity to not only learn more about these issues but to actively participate in the solutions. Their time will be spent both with hands on ministry as well as relational ministry. They will not only serve meals to the homeless or assist with an after-school program, but will have the opportunity to share life with Denver's marginalized.

Washington, D.C.

The U.S. capitol provides an amazing set of contrasts between the grand monuments and government buildings and the residents of the District, who have the highest rate of poverty (20.2 per cent) in the nation. Although upwards of 2 million people work in DC, the population is only 579,059 (April 2000), which means ministries are scattered throughout the city and are smaller than in some of the other cities CSM serves. Students will be challenged to learn from those they serve in homeless prayer breakfasts, children's programs, rest homes and feeding programs.

Houston

A sprawling metropolis of over 2 million people, Houston is similar to many urban centers, where the poor and homeless, while not so noticeable, are all around. Students serve in ministries such as food distribution, home repair, backyard Bible clubs, tutoring, and neighborhood gardens. Through food, students experience many diverse cultures, eating in Vietnamese, Mexican, Cuban, Middle Eastern and Cajun restaurants.

Current Projects, cont'd.

Los Angeles

Since 1988, CSM has taken students into Los Angeles. Students are involved in ministries all over the Los Angeles basin, including Skid Row, South Central, East LA, Watts and Hollywood. Students may participate in ministries that involve young people, the aged, and the homeless. Evening meals are in ethnic restaurants reflecting the Thai, Salvadoran, Indian, and Filipino cultures, among others. A prayer tour of the city allows students to see first hand some of the contrasts of the city.

Nashville

Nashville is considered to be the “Buckle of the Bible Belt” and the “Athens of the South”. There are more people within a six-hour driving radius of Nashville than any other city in the U.S. Nashville is the country music capitol of the world, as well as a growing recording site for many other styles of music. The city and surrounding counties have a growing economic and industrial side, which is drawing many refugees and immigrants from around the world. As part of this ministry site, students will participate in food and clothing distribution, children’s ministries, as well as tutoring programs.

New York City

NYC is often considered the most cosmopolitan city in the United States with residents from over 180 different countries. Immigrants of Irish, Italian, Chinese, Korean, Puerto Rican, Mexican, Dominican, Jamaican, Iranian, Arab, Greek, African, Jewish (and more) origin all have enclaves within the city. The glimmers of light are all the churches, ministries, social services and justice organizations comprised of hard working, passionate people who labor daily to create change in the lives of people and change in oppressive systems. They are people who are living out God's call to be his hands and feet in practical ways and they are willing to let us help!

Philadelphia

Known as the birthplace of liberty, Philadelphia is a city of contrasts. In the home of the Liberty Bell you find a poverty rate of 77%, a high school drop out rate of 50% with estimates of 40% of the population addicted to illegal drugs. Despite these dire statistics, many ministries and churches are working to serve these populations. Students will assist with food distribution, children’s programs and homeless ministries and get a chance to taste an authentic Philly cheese steak sandwich!

San Francisco/Oakland Bay Area

San Francisco (SF) is home to approximately 750,000 people of diverse culture, religions, backgrounds, and economic status. “The City by the Bay” covers less than 50 square miles, with a population of more than 15,000 per square mile. 16,000 people in SF are homeless, twice as many as 10 years ago, and 25-30% of the homeless population is families with children. The city has the third largest homeless population behind New York and Los Angeles.

Oakland was founded in 1852 and is the eighth largest city in the state of California. The 2005 estimated population is 395,274 people. Oakland has more than 50 distinct neighborhoods, but not all are recognized on a map.

Looking through Jesus’ eyes at the people and issues that make up the San Francisco/Oakland Bay Area, we see great hope for the future of these cities! Because “space” is at a premium, work sites are fairly small, but crucial to serving the needs of the poor and marginalized.

CSM Ministry Site Descriptions

Following are brief descriptions of some of our ministry sites in the cities we currently serve in. While this list does not include every ministry site, it will give you a general idea of how your group might serve during your mission trip with us.

Boston

Seafarer's Friend provides much needed services to the folks who come through Boston's ports on large ships. Due to high security restrictions, few ship workers are allowed to get off their vessel while staying in the harbor. SF is able to board the ships, bring the crew calling cards and conduct church services.

St. Luke's-San Lucas Episcopal Church provides food to over 800 families each month. CSM groups have the opportunity to partner in preparing and handing out groceries to neighbors in need.

American Chinese Christian Educational and Social Services (ACCESS) serves the Boston Chinese community. They provide crucial services such as ESL, an after-school program for kids, and more.

Chicago

Good News Community Church operates a soup kitchen in the Rogers Park neighborhood on the far-north side of Chicago. They serve an evening meal seven days a week, 365 days a year. Last year, they served more than 59,000 meals. Our groups help with meal service.

Cornerstone Community Outreach (CCO) is a ministry of Jesus People USA and is located in Blood Alley of the Uptown neighborhood. The alley used to be very dark and was a haven for gang violence, prostitution, and drug dealing. CCO came into the alley and brought light (both figuratively and literally). They installed streetlights to make the alley safer and also bring the light of Christ to the people of the neighborhood. Our groups help serve meals to clients and also lead a VBS program throughout the summer.

St. Thomas Soup Kitchen is a feeding program that serves the Uptown neighborhood. Homeless and low-income people receive meals and other services. Our groups help serve and clean up evening meals.

Denver

Denver Rescue Mission- Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing. This ministry offers food, clothing and lodging to Denver's homeless. They have an overnight shelter with 200 beds for men. They also have 2 residential housing programs; one for men and families and the other for single women with children. Also connected to this ministry is Harvest Farm, which is a 100 acre rural rehabilitation program for men.

Denver Urban Gardens was founded in 1985 to encourage community and neighborhood pride in Denver's low-income areas. DUG is connected with over 80 gardens throughout the Denver metro area. The gardens not only produce food, but allow for a place of education and social interaction for the community. Many of the gardens also assist local soup kitchens and food banks by contributing fresh fruits and vegetables.

Washington DC

S.O.M.E. (So Others May Eat) - This organization contains many buildings with services that include drug rehab, medical services and several transitional homes for people to move into as they progress through the program. Clients get job readiness training, prepare resumes, and tune up basic life and household skills. Our students work mainly with the food distribution program. The students help prepare, serve and clean up.

Martha's Table - Soup Kitchen. This organization is two-fold: They run a youth and children's ministry that includes tutoring and other activities and a mobile food distribution program. This is a great time for a youth pastor or leader to spend one-on-one time with a couple of kids as well as having the students really get to know some of the people that have committed themselves to ministry in the city.

Ministry Site Descriptions, cont'd.

Washington DC, cont'd.

Bread for the City – This organization provides vulnerable residents of Washington, DC, with comprehensive services, including food, clothing, medical care, and legal and social services, in an atmosphere of dignity and respect. CSM groups help in the pantry and whatever other needs there may be.

Houston

Kids' Meals is a meals-on-wheels program that feeds hungry children who are 2-6 years old. From two locations, they deliver over 1,200 lunches daily (5 days a week) to kids in the community whose siblings are part of the free-lunch program in the public schools, or whose families have a very low-income. CSM groups help to make lunches in one location, and deliver them from a second location.

The Harbor Light Salvation Army, a men's shelter and rehab center, houses over 200 homeless men each night and has 180 men involved in their Christ-centered recovery program. CSM groups enjoy hearing testimonies from men who are experiencing victory over addictions before serving dinner to transitional clients and to those in the program.

Lord of the Streets is an Episcopal Church that strives to meet the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the homeless in Houston. They provide clothing, counseling, vouchers for food, and referral services. On Sunday mornings Lord of the Streets worships together in a service that is organized and attended by the homeless. CSM groups participate in the weekday morning bible study that is open to anyone coming in off the streets, and then complete a work project on site.

Ujima - Gulf Coast Arms is a community learning center that works to improve computer access, promote health, advance literacy and educational attainment, and create employment/volunteer opportunities for disadvantaged, minority adults, children, and seniors living in low-income and Section 8 apartment communities. CSM groups support the efforts of the very small site staff by engaging with the kids in the program relationally. Be prepared to be creative & high energy!

Los Angeles

Las Familias del Pueblo - Children's Ministry. Las Familias is a daycare facility for low income parents. The majority of helpers here are volunteers and our youth groups are always welcome. The ages of the kids are from four to 12 and the number can range from 30 to 90 during peak hours of the day.

Faith in Christ Ministries - This South Central Church welcomes the poor and oppressed in their neighborhood and ministers to them holistically. Groups are involved in their food ministries, children's programs, and physical work projects on their buildings.

Central City Community Church is located in Skid Row. Its vision is to be a church where homeless and poor neighborhood residents can be welcome, feel comfortable, and worship alongside other believers. CCCC also hosts S.A.Y. YES! Center for Youth Development, an after-school program for children who live in nearby Skid Row hotels. CSM groups help to lead S.A.Y. YES! Bible times, tutor neighborhood children, participate in the Karaoke Coffee Club and assist CCCC with its ongoing maintenance needs.

Nashville

Nashville Cares - They offer the community many services focusing on the issue of HIV/AIDS. They deliver hot meals, operate a food pantry, education program, and 24-hour phone counseling.

East Nashville Cooperative Ministries is a coalition of 20+ area churches in the East Nashville area. It offers assistance to area low-income residents as well as the homeless, distributing food and clothing to those in need. They also run a thrift store where clothes and shoes can be bought for a very small price. They distribute food through lunches that are passed out to the homeless and emergency food boxes (from Second Harvest Food Bank) for families. CSM groups have assisted in organizing the thrift store, cleaning the bathrooms and outside of the store, sorting food boxes and handing out food to those who come in.

Ministry Site Descriptions, cont'd.

Nashville, cont'd.

The Salvation Army provides breakfast to many homeless in conjunction with East Nashville Co-op. The Army takes a large bus that is actually a “kitchen on wheels” and serves a warm breakfast to those who are hungry. CSM groups assist by helping prepare the meal, serving the food, and fellowshiping with the guests.

New York City

God's Love We Deliver is the largest HIV/AIDS meal delivery program in the country. They have now expanded their mission to working with people with other life-threatening illnesses. CSM teams will work either in the kitchen packing or preparing meals, or with on-foot delivery routes.

Salt & Sea Mission is a ministry in the Coney Island neighborhood. For the community, Salt & Sea provides a worship service, food pantry, and a hot meal program. CSM teams will lead their worship service, assist with the food pantry, and serve the hot meal.

Philadelphia

Philabundance Food Bank works to end hunger and malnutrition in the Delaware Valley by providing agencies with inexpensive food products. These agencies are then able to provide people in need with nutritious food that they would not be able to afford otherwise. Our groups assist the Food Bank with this process by sorting and organizing all of the food donations.

Sunday Breakfast Rescue Mission provides chapel services, meals, short-term emergency sleeping, men's recovery/discipleship program, and a thrift store. Sunday Breakfast is 126 years old, the second oldest rescue mission in the nation. The mission started by serving meals on Sunday and now they do three meals a day. They provide food for the body and the soul with a noon and evening chapel. Our groups help prepare lunch and attend the chapel service.

Hands of Hope is an outreach ministry to homeless. The goal is to scripturally meet physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of hurting people in a practical way. Hands of Hope meets the homeless where they are and in whatever condition they may be. Our groups get to hand out lunches, talk to, and pray with people on the streets.

San Francisco/Oakland Bay Area

The Salvation Army Turk Street Central Corps – Serves the people of San Francisco's Tenderloin District. “The Tenderloin” is an eight-block area that is home to many elderly, immigrant families, homeless individuals, and most of San Francisco's SRO's (single room occupancy) hotels. CSM works primarily with the After School Program and the Summer Day Camp. Groups will be asked to help get the children from school, help out with homework, play a game of dodgeball, and generally encourage the children that attend the program.

Project Open Hand - Delivers hot meals and groceries daily to over 2,000 people living with HIV and AIDS in San Francisco and the East Bay. CSM volunteers help cook meals in the kitchen, shop for clients in the Grocery Center, and deliver food on daily routes.

St. Vincent's Day Home – A non-profit organization, located in West Oakland, that provides comprehensive programs for toddlers and pre-schoolers, a licensed full-day kindergarten, and before-and-after school programs for older children. St. Vincent's serves primarily single parent families who struggle at or below the poverty line. CSM volunteers have a great time assisting the classroom teachers in playing with the kids and helping the kids learn new skills.