

## What You Need to Know about the Center for Student Missions

What is the Center for Student Missions?

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 the Center for Student Missions 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 over 125,000 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:** \$57.00 per person per night (\$85.00 Canadian) which includes lodging, three meals, all scheduling, and the services of a CSM Staff Host.

Some important information.

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

**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.

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

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