



MERGE

Where a vision for city impact meets a desire to serve San Diego

Vision San Diego is a part of the North American Mission Board's Strategic Focus Cities initiative



FAVOR.

fa-*vor* [*fey-ver*] -noun
 1. something done or granted out of goodwill, rather than from justice or for remuneration; a kind act: to ask a favor.
 2. friendly or well-disposed regard; goodwill: to win the favor of the king. 3. the state of being approved or held in regard: to be in favor at court; styles that are now in favor. 4. excessive kindness or unfair partiality; preferential treatment. 5. a gift bestowed as a token of goodwill, kind regard, love, etc., as formerly upon a knight by his lady. 6. a ribbon, badge, etc., worn in evidence of goodwill or loyalty, as by an adherent of a political party. 7. a small gift or decorative or festive item, as a noisemaker or paper hat, often distributed to guests at a party.

How do we explain the way government officials have opened their doors to us? Or the ways churches in San Diego County have united cross-denominationally under an umbrella of service?

One word: Favor.

Here in San Diego, "open doors" have become synonymous with "favor," as each week God breaks through our human limitations and works to further the efforts of **Faith in Action Xtreme** through new partnerships, resources, and volunteers.

Inside, you'll hear directly from the Faith in Action Xtreme management team as they share firsthand how they're experiencing God's favor in their area of impact (mentoring, elder care, tutoring, military, foster care). One thing is for sure, God's hand is upon Faith in Action Xtreme as we continue to press on!

HOW have you seen GOD'S FAVOR

ELDER CARE

Narri Cooper; ncooper@visionsd.org

In San Diego, there are 5,000 elderly who are disabled and need in-home help, and there are many more who yearn for outside contact. "We have tens of thousands of other seniors who are abandoned, living on their own, trying to have some connection with society. This is an opportunity where Faith in Action can play, coming outside of the walls, getting out into the community, making connections with these homebound seniors and those that are disabled," said Nick Macchione, Director of Health and Human Services.

Even though we know the numbers, it's difficult to pinpoint where these seniors are located. Thanks to open doors with key leaders, the county will provide Faith in Action Xtreme access to up to 24,000 seniors who are receiving assistance from Health and Human Services. This information will allow us to connect churches with elderly in their community so that they can visit them, build relationships and care for their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs.

as well. I believe that we're seeing great favor from the Lord as we communicate this service initiative to all the Christian churches in San Diego. We've formed a working partnership with the 48 Methodist churches, a Presbyterian network, and some of the largest non-denominational churches in San Diego. One church of 15,000 has asked us to help them lead their inner-city ministry with a focus on mentoring at-risk youth. I believe the Lord's favor is upon us as we live out his

prayer in John 17:23, "May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

During the last eight months we've tried to lay the ground work for our churches to be able to impact our community in new ways, but we realize that without

the Lord's hand on us, we can accomplish nothing of eternal value. Ultimately, God is the one who opens doors of favor and relationship so that his Kingdom can indeed "come" on earth. Our prayer is that many Christ followers heed his call to serve in our community. He said "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them." John 13:15-17

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MENTORING

John Gillette; jgillette@visionsd.org

We're on a fantastic ministry journey together! Faith in Action Xtreme is experiencing God's favor in so many ways as we reach out to our elected and government leaders, to community organizations serving San Diego, and as we join hands with churches intent on seeing God's Kingdom expand throughout our region.

God gives us favor as we build relationships with mayors, city councilmen, school board leaders, the Chief of Police, District Attorney, and many more. We're beginning to establish partnerships which will affect community transformation in the days and years ahead.

God's favor has been with us as we've reached out to the mentoring community in San Diego. During the last nine months, we've been able to connect with many organizations committed to mentoring our youth. They're excited about partnering with the Church. Asking the question, "How can we serve you?" has really opened doors of relationship and invited God's favor on our efforts.

One of the most exciting results of Faith in Action Xtreme is not only the enthusiasm of the Southern Baptist community, but the excitement and interest we're receiving from other churches and denominations

MILITARY

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Like the other Faith in Action initiatives, military ministry is experiencing an unprecedented openness in the community, as local churches work directly with military members and their families. If you've ever tried to minister on a military base, you know that it has been virtually impossible to work directly with military members.

In the past, a chaplain's job performance has been partially based on the number of people in his or her chapel service. This has caused a strong tendency to protect the numbers of their own flock. Recently, this method of evaluation has been repealed. There also has been a rise over the last few years in the number of evangelical chaplains in the military ranks. More and more chaplains are saying, "I don't care if they come to my service, but I want them to get fed somewhere." Because of policies and procedures, this would have been unheard of just a few years ago.

As a result of this new openness, we've been able to expand local church ministries on Camp Pendleton through a partnership with the chaplains of the South Mesa Chapel. The chaplains and staff of this chapel serve 8,000 residents and students in the southern housing areas on Camp Pendleton. With such a vast community, there are many opportunities for volunteers to serve. On May 28, volunteers from neighboring church Generation and Horizon Presbyterian from Phoenix will spend the day creating a prayer garden on the base and sharing the love of Christ with the Marines and their families. What favor we've seen through these open doors!

"Military ministry is experiencing an unprecedented openness in the community..."

FOSTER CARE

Jen Saunders; jsaunders@visionsd.org

It has been exciting to see the doors open for churches to become involved in meeting the needs of foster care. This favor has been shown through invitations to group home forums and other meetings where many representatives from the group homes and foster care agencies are present. These meetings give us a platform to share the vision of Faith in Action Xtreme, and how local churches desire to volunteer in reaching out to the parents and children involved in the foster care system.

As a result of these open doors, a volunteer team from Oregon was able to complete beautification projects for a group home. The kids in the home responded appreciatively by sending thank-you letters to the team after they left. This is just the first of many stories to come. With 7,000 kids in the foster care system here in San Diego, there are ample opportunities for churches and local volunteers to serve.

TUTORING

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God's favor has gone before us and opened doors to resources, partnership opportunities with key community leaders, and volunteers to respond to these needs.

The first door to be opened was through Cindy Dunlevy, Coordinator for the Everyone A Reader (EAR) program, who readily offered to come alongside Faith in Action Xtreme.

On February 18, 21 adults from several local churches gathered for a three-hour training for the EAR program. In the weeks following the training, each tutor was placed in an elementary school.

Although it has only been a couple of months since the training, here are just a few of the testimonials from tutors:

What a joy it has been to see these kids light up when we come in to work with them and to watch them go from dreading reading to getting excited about it! -Sunny & Donovan Lucas

It is amazing to see what a little bit of kindness and encouragement can do for a child. After just two weeks I am already seeing a change, and I'm excited to see how things progress. -Anna Dean

I'm amazed by the opportunity I have to make a difference in a child's life. God has truly blessed me in the ability to serve my community in many ways that I love. I get to serve children and I get to teach them how to read. What more could you ask for? -Amanda Mark

The 21 trained tutors are just the beginning of what God is doing in the area of tutoring. Since the training, a number of other volunteers and churches have shown interest in being of part of this opportunity.

So how have I seen God's favor firsthand?

Well, God's favor began with us--each tutor being willing to get out of their comfort zone, be trained as a tutor, and take time each week to go to an elementary school and help a student that is struggling to read.

But this is only the beginning of what God is going to do.

IN THEIR WORDS

County leaders respond to Faith in Action Xtreme and their desire to work together.

"We need people that are going to help those people who wouldn't otherwise have a chance...and take them and wrap your arms around them in your congregation."

Bonnie Dumanis, District Attorney

"Building a healthy San Diego means focusing on our children...We need help with youth more than ever."

Jerry Sanders, San Diego County Mayor

"Connecting volunteers to real service needs could have unprecedented results."

Nick Macchione, Director of Health and Human Services

"We can't take on all the crime issues by ourselves. We can't take on all the things that we're seeing our youth are getting involved in...We certainly would like to have the faith-based community be one of our partners."

David Ramirez, Executive Assistant Police Chief



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