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HISPANIC COMPASSION MINISTRIES

College Prep Ministry in Boston

LEÓN DE JUDÁ

By Edward R. Davis and Amy L. Sherman



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Church Name:

Leon de Juda (Lion of Judah)

Location:

Boston, Massachusetts

Size: 800

Compassion Ministry:

Higher Education Resource Center

Year Started: 1999

Estimated Yearly Budget: \$296,000

Paid Staff: 2

Volunteer Staff: 4

Brief Description

Leon de Juda's Higher Education Resource Center (HERC) helps inner-city students to prepare for college. Its "Let's Get Ready" program focuses on strengthening students' academic skills while its weekly mentoring ministry matches urban teens with Christian college students who can help the high school students to grow more holistically. HERC offers classes to help prepare 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students to increase their scores on standardized high school tests and college entrance exams (the MCAS and SAT exams). The Center also provides assistance to students and their families in completing college admissions and navigating financial aid processes.

It is 7:00 p.m. on a Tuesday night and the third floor of Leon de Juda is full of the hubbub, bustle, and chatter of young people. Stylish college students in t-shirts and bell-bottom jeans stand scattered in groups of twos and threes around the rectangular, brightly lit room. Nearby a group of Hispanic and African American high school students, engulfed in bulky down jackets, sit casually in blue chairs around a low white coffee table, talking. On one side of the table stands a wooden bookshelf. Inside its closed glass doors are shelves packed with books in a variety of bright colors: *College Handbook 2002*, *Directory of Financial Aid for Women '97-'99*, *Barron's Top 50*. The book titles capture a large part of the mission for which these university students and urban teens are gathered. Here at the church's Higher Education Resource Center (HERC) are young people who will likely become the first in their families to attend college.

Outside the church building, multiple signs indicate that Leon de Juda sits in a neighborhood in transition. Located on the fault line between the Roxbury community and the more affluent neighborhood of South End, the church's surroundings are a study in contrasts, an odd juxtaposition of wealth and urban blight. Two lots on one side of the church are being transformed into upscale condominiums selling for \$600,000 each. Meanwhile, on the church's other side, a large liquor store does an active business and low-income residents make their homes in subsidized housing. Behind the church sits Rosie's Place, a prominent shelter for homeless women. Directly across the street, an eyesore bar has been closed down to make way for a clean new parking lot.

In some sense its physical surroundings mirror what HERC sees as its primary mission: mobilizing and equipping college students from some of the nation's most privileged schools to provide college preparation and counseling to inner-city Latino and African American youth struggling in urban high schools.

HERC's most readily visible mission is to get kids into college. But HERC also has a deeper, spiritual mission that it hopes to accomplish through its college prep and mentoring programs. It is to introduce the students to Jesus Christ. In the long run, HERC's leaders hope, these young people will then infiltrate their schools with the gospel, helping to transform these institutions from the inside out.

GENESIS

HERC Director Samuel Acevedo traces the beginnings of the ministry to a critical decision made nearly twelve years ago by Leon de Juda's leaders: to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit no matter the cost. As they listened, they heard God call them to make significant changes. One was to leave the congregation's comfortable surroundings of affluent Cambridge and its debt-free building and move into the distressed Roxbury neighborhood. As Acevedo puts it, the church leaders began to realize that it was time to stop making mere "forays" into the tough Roxbury and Dorchester communities, and then "running back to the fortress [in Cambridge] and saying, 'Gee, aren't we evangelistic.'" The word from God, Acevedo says, was: "Go out there and stay out there."

So, in 1993, the congregation did just that. It bought an abandoned warehouse in the Roxbury community. Then church leaders realized that they had been placed there in order to serve their neighbors with the tangible love of Christ. Thus began a new focus on what Acevedo calls "social evangelism." It meant reaching into people's lives with a healing touch and with practical ministries that met real needs.

The congregation was inspired by their new vision, but lacked an understanding of just exactly what they were supposed to do. Guidance soon came in the form of the Boston Education Collaborative. Originally created as a product of collaboration between Emmanuel Gospel Center, the Higher Education Information Center, and the Nelly Mae Foundation, the goal of the Collaborative is "to provide resources, develop programs, and build partnerships for meeting the educational needs of urban youth." One of the ways that the Collaborative was doing this was by partnering with local churches to assist them in starting Higher Education Resource Centers. In the summer of 1999, Leon de Juda was asked to become a site for a HERC. Senior pastor Roberto Miranda seized the opportunity and a group of lay people got to work transforming the third floor of the church into the future site of the program.

At the same time, several hundred miles away in New York City, God was telling a prosecutor in the juvenile justice system, named Samuel Acevedo, that it was time to return to Boston. A former member of Leon de Juda, Acevedo had attended the church for three years while in law school. During that time he had grown close to Pastor Miranda and formed a deep attachment to the congregation. Acevedo recalls thinking to himself that revival was coming to the congregation; that the church had an exciting future ahead of it. When he graduated law school in 1993, he told Pastor Miranda to save him a seat in the new building in Roxbury.

Acevedo then moved to join the New York City Law Department. For the next six years, his job involved prosecuting youths 15-years-old or younger for crimes ranging from narcotics arrests to robberies to attempted murder and manslaughter. Simultaneously, Acevedo was actively involved as a volunteer in youth and evangelistic ministries at a church in the Bronx. He also remained close to Pastor Miranda and made frequent trips back to Boston.

Eventually, Acevedo realized that God was calling him to leave his job as a prosecutor in order to enter full-time youth ministry. Pastor Miranda offered him the job of director of Leon de Juda's new HERC ministry, and he leapt at it. Acevedo actually returned to Boston on the day of HERC's grand opening. He remembers, "I arrived in town with my U-haul, went in to the bathroom, shaved, put on my suit and came out for the cameras and the lights. I felt like Saul standing among the baggage train while being presented to Israel as their new king."

HERC got off to a strong start because its leaders almost immediately made connections with a fledgling group of students from Harvard University that wanted to help inner-city kids prepare for the SAT—and they desired to partner with churches in doing so. "The timing couldn't have been more perfect," Acevedo smiles. Within weeks, the collegiates were teaching SAT prep classes at the church.

MISSION

HERC's mentoring program seeks to "cultivate integrity and excellence in urban youth" and to "empower them academically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually, thereby inspiring a vision for success in higher education." Acevedo explains, "The theory behind the mentoring program is to awaken a vision in these young people that college ... is both possible and desirable; that [it] is something that normal people go to—it's not just [for] astronauts and brain surgeons. That's important," he adds, "because we're working under the premise that most of these kids [are] the first to go to college. So there are no points of reference. The mentor becomes the point of reference."

The program focuses on youth from 8th through 11th grade and matches them with current college students, or recent college graduates, as mentors. Currently, twenty-eight teens are enrolled. Mentors commit to serving a full year. They attend a five-hour training program designed in collaboration with Mass Mentoring, an organization that helps foster faith-based mentoring programs. They also receive training from the Navigators in one-on-one discipleship. Meanwhile, HERC staff educate them in advising the students about colleges and financial aid.

At the beginning of the school year, mentors help their students to set goals for where they would like to be by the end of the year. These include relational, spiritual, social, and academic goals. Mentors then help each student work toward these objectives during the course of the year. They meet once a week with their students for at least 90 minutes and are expected to talk weekly with them by phone. Mentors and students usually meet at HERC but may meet elsewhere if it is more convenient. Mentor pairs also choose for themselves which day of the week is most convenient for them to gather.

PROGRAM

The basic structure for the academic preparatory work is provided by the "Let's Get Ready!" program. Let's Get Ready! mobilizes and equips teams of Harvard college students, or "coaches," to offer free SAT preparation and college peer-advising. Founded in 1999 by Harvard student Eugenie Lang, it functions as a student club and has since spread to other universities. During the school year, Let's Get Ready! offers SAT and MCAS prep classes on Tuesday and Thursday nights from 7:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Tuesday night's tutoring focus is on language arts while the emphasis on Thursdays is math. Throughout the semester the program also provides "college choices" sessions that cover topics such as writing college applications, interviewing effectively, and essay writing. These college sessions are held for an hour each week during one of the regularly scheduled Tuesday or Thursday night tutoring sessions.

To gauge students' improvement over the course of the semester, four diagnostic exams are offered on Saturdays from 10:00 to 1:30 p.m. The program currently utilizes 22 coaches and sees approximately 40 to 50 students each week.

The coaches for Let's Get Ready! also enjoy the benefits of excellent training. For four hours at the beginning of each term they meet with a trainer from one of the testing companies that produces the SAT or the MCAS. At this time, coaches are given the opportunity to both observe other coaches teaching as well as to practice tutoring themselves.

HERC leaders eventually recognized that while Let's Get Ready! was an excellent tool for strengthening the urban teens' academic skills, they longed for a more holistic outreach that was evangelistic and could complement the academic program. Consequently, in February 2000, HERC added a "drop-in" center for the students, with help from Chaletta Clark of Cambridge Community Fellowship. (Chaletta had been familiar with HERC's work after hearing a presentation from Greg Bishop, Leon de Juda's associate pastor, the year before.) Initially, Chaletta recruited ten volunteers who made themselves available weekly for any students who might drop by HERC. But she and Acevedo realized within a few months that

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TESTIMONY

Manuel Andujar is a sophomore at Hyde Park High School in Boston, Massachusetts. Lanky and still growing, he is a shy young man who loves to play baseball. School has not come easy for him, however, and he has struggled in several subjects, especially math. His long term goal in life is to join the navy after high school. His current goal is to ensure he doesn't strike out before he gets there.

One person who is committed to seeing that he doesn't is his mother, Ana. Although like any mother she wants to see her son succeed in school, her ability to help Manuel is limited. An immigrant from the Dominican Republic, she is a single mom who dropped out of school at an early age. And while she is currently taking English classes through her church, Leon de Juda, her English is still somewhat shaky. She therefore is not able to help Manuel with his homework as much as she would like. She also admits to having some difficulty understanding the public school system or knowing what her rights as a parent are within it.

Because of this, when Samuel Acevedo approached her two years ago and asked if she would consider enrolling Manuel in HERC's mentoring program, she jumped at the chance. For his part, Manuel thought the program sounded interesting and was willing to give it a try. Shortly thereafter, Brandon Bayne—the husband of Nidia Flores-Bayne, HERC's office manager—was assigned as Manuel's mentor.

Because the goal of HERC's mentoring program is to help students to grow intellectually, spiritually, and emotionally, Brandon and Manuel's weekly meetings over the past two years have included academic tutoring, Bible study and prayer, push-ups and sit-ups, and discussions about a variety of topics. Along the way, a strong and deep relationship has developed between the two.

Manuel feels his friendship with Brandon has helped him in several areas. Though still struggling at school, he credits Brandon with helping him to improve his academic performance, especially in math class. It's not just helped him improve academically, though. "It's gotten me closer to God," he points out. His deepening relationship with Christ was expressed by his decision to be baptized four months ago. Manuel



HERC's director, Sam Acevedo, speaks with students at one of HERC's open houses.

looks forward to his weekly meetings with Brandon because, as he puts it, "It's pretty good. [Brandon] helps me with my work a lot and some times we just hang out. It's a lot of fun!" Over the past twenty-four months, the two have gone to movies, attended baseball games at Fenway Park, and spent hours talking about life.

Brandon is positive about their time together as well. He remarks, "Though the mentoring has had its ups and downs, I think the long commitment has helped [me] to earn the right to speak into his life to both motivate and challenge him to grow into maturity."

For her part, Ana has no doubts about what Brandon's relationship has meant to her son. Having an older male who can speak into her son's life has been a tremendous blessing. "My boy doesn't talk a lot to me about what's going on [but] he talks to Brandon. Brandon is like a big brother or a best friend. They understand each other." Over the past two years as a direct result of HERC's mentoring program, she has seen her son grow academically, relationally, and spiritually. As she puts it, "I can see a future for Manny...and I am so glad and happy!" No mother could ask for more.

PROGRAM continued

this approach was not working. “The volunteers were there but the kids weren’t; sometimes [the kids] were but [the volunteers] weren’t. It was like two ships passing in the night,” Chaletta explains. So, the two leaders abandoned the drop-in center idea and began designing a more intentional mentoring program that would connect Christian college students to middle and high school students.

Chaletta remembers being struck by the realization that this new approach “upped the ante.” The mentoring ministry would facilitate real relationships—friendships demanding the volunteers’ investment in prayer and weekly contact. “You can’t just go and run,” Chaletta explains. “There’s more responsibility.” The original drop-in center volunteers were asked whether they would take on this higher degree of responsibility, and Chaletta also contacted associations of Christian college students to ascertain their interest. Soon, ten mentors were matched with students.

STUDENT RECRUITMENT

Students are recruited into HERC’s mentoring and Let’s Get Ready! programs in a variety of ways. Within Leon de Juda, the programs are heavily publicized. Seemingly every week there is some announcement about HERC during the Sunday service. HERC is also active in promoting its ministry at other churches serving urban youth. Shortly after he assumed his role as HERC’s director, Acevedo invited 30 youth pastors throughout the city to a meeting to hear more about the new ministry. A few months later, HERC sponsored its first open house. Some 200 kids and their families showed up and had opportunities to meet one-on-one with university admissions representatives from about 20 different colleges. The open house also included workshops on financial aid. At the open house, students could formally register for HERC’s SAT preparation classes. Thus, the majority of teens initially involved in HERC’s college preparation ministry were from area congregations. HERC has continued to host two open houses each year at the beginning of the school semesters.

To expand participation to youth outside the Christian community, Acevedo has also intentionally joined the boards of several community organizations where he can spread the word about HERC. He also has worked hard to develop positive relationships with nearby high schools. This has required much perseverance. “Our first year, I virtually gave up on trying to outreach the schools,” Acevedo admits. “I didn’t know anybody and they didn’t know HERC from Adam. [So they would say] ‘Sorry, give us a flier,’ and I knew the flier would end up in the circular file.” But he continued to try, by identifying access points through whom he could gain entry into the schools. “In one instance,” Acevedo reports, “the head master of a particular middle school was a member of our congregation and that provided access.” Let’s Get Ready! program staff also give presentations at area high schools. Over time, as HERC’s reputation has grown, Acevedo has been able to forge relationships with three public high schools: Madison Park Vocational High, Tech Boston High, and Brighton High. Today, HERC is the primary agency helping to prepare students from these schools for the SAT.

ENGAGING THE FAMILY

After establishing their college preparation programs, Acevedo and other leaders at HERC began to realize that if they were going to make a difference in the lives of the urban teens, they needed to engage entire families. While the youth were learning English in school, their parents often lagged behind. “The majority of the people we work with are Latino,” Acevedo explains. “We discovered one of the major barriers these folks have is their lack of proficiency in the English language.” The teens were also becoming proficient in computer skills through classes at school and at HERC, but parents lacked such skills. And, as noted earlier, many of the students’ parents were not college graduates, so they lacked knowledge of the preparatory steps required. For all these reasons, HERC decided to institute various initiatives to try to more fully engage parents. For example, HERC now offers ESL classes and computer literacy courses for adults.

KEY RESOURCES

What does it take to create an effective mentoring/college preparatory program? HERC leaders identify several important elements:

<1> A Church with the Right Theological Chemistry. In order for such a program to be successful, Acevedo believes, the pastor needs to appreciate and understand “social ministry” as a legitimate form of evangelism. This kind of ministry is neither a Bible study nor a merely secular after-school program, he explains. It’s “social evangelism.”

<2> A Team of Fearless Leaders Committed to Collaboration. Acevedo has a deep compassion for kids, believes strongly in the work HERC is doing, and is willing to invest large amounts of time in it. He is also an incredibly articulate and tireless advocate. To listen to him is to become a true believer in HERC. As Chaletta Clark puts it, “you need a fearless leader like Sam, with lots of energy and vision.” Acevedo is joined by several other highly talented and committed leaders who understand the mission and exhibit a collaborative spirit. Collaboration has been at the heart of HERC’s efforts from the very start. As Acevedo emphasizes, “We’re not going to go it alone and it would be foolish to think that we could.” HERC partners with Christian para-church organizations such as InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, as well as area churches, to recruit and train mentors and coaches for its programs.

It's not enough to recruit people and then focus on the mentees. You've got to have a support and accountability system for the mentors themselves.

— Mentor coach Brandon Baynes

<3> Quality, Self-motivated People with Whom You Can Work. HERC’s leaders are very busy and do not have time to chase after or badger volunteers. They find it critical to recruit self-motivated people who are reliable. HERC has discovered that the large number of college students in Boston has proven to be a wonderful source for just such volunteers. As Leon de Juda’s associate pastor Greg Bishop points out, “Here in Boston we have thousands and thousands of students who are idealistic and who want to serve and help in some way, who have the availability and the flexibility in their schedule to do that. And [here in Boston], generally people know that helping inner city kids is important. [They] think, ‘I should be doing that.’” The leadership team at HERC also looks for people with whom they “mesh” well. As mentoring coordinator Chaletta Clark points out, “There is far too much work to be done than to [have to] worry about personality conflicts.”

<4> An Intentional Training and Support System for the Mentors. As the mentoring program grew, Chaletta realized that she was unable to spend adequate time with mentors, encouraging and shepherding them. She conceived the idea of recruiting “mentor coaches” who could assist with this crucial on-going support. As one of the mentor coaches, Brandon Baynes, explains, “It’s not enough to recruit people and then focus on the mentees. You’ve got to have a support and accountability system for the mentors themselves.”

Not surprisingly, given the academic nature of HERC’s ministry, leaders have come up with the creative name “mentors²” (mentors squared) for the mentor coaches. Each mentor² is responsible for supporting and encouraging his or her mentors. They receive regular reports from them as to how their mentoring sessions are going. The mentors² then report weekly to Chaletta, so that she can address any outstanding issues.

LESSONS LEARNED

HERC's leadership highlight several lessons learned as they have grown their college preparatory ministries:

► **Start Small.** One of the most important lessons is that ministry leaders seeking to imitate this program should start small. Although the tendency may be to try to start with a big splash, it is safer to begin small and grow gradually. This should also encourage those churches that feel that they do not have many resources available to invest. As Acevedo reminds pastors, "Don't despise the day of a small beginning and start with what you can, start with what you've got...."

► **Plan for Growth.** Have a game plan of where you want to go and what you're going to do when the program grows. As Chaletta remarks, "Sam always wanted the program to grow but I wasn't thinking about it." Consequently, when the mentoring program began to grow rapidly, Sam and Chaletta found themselves scrambling to keep up, rushing to put systems into place to handle the increased numbers. Chaletta suggests having triggers or benchmarks that would indicate to ministry leaders that they might need to institute specific changes to account for growth. For instance, a director might plan to begin looking for a co-director when he or she has fifteen pairs of mentors.

► **Ongoing Evaluation is Important.** When the drop-in center proved unsuccessful, HERC's leaders did not give up. Instead, Sam and Chaletta sat down and reevaluated. This led to the creation of the current, successful mentoring program. Today, HERC staff continue to evaluate their initiatives on a yearly basis. This process can help prevent what mentor coach Brandon Baynes calls "missional drift." A church in a distressed neighborhood can become "a catch-all for every need that gets identified," Baynes explains, "whether it lines up with original vision or not." He encourages ministry leaders to recognize that a balance must be struck between being holistic and responsive to the needs "while remaining true to the original vision/calling [that God gave you]." Regular evaluation helps to prevent such drift and keeps the ministry focused on its primary goals.

► **Look for Young Mentors and Coaches.** Let's Get Ready! uses solely college students as coaches, while HERC recruits only adults under thirty years of age as mentors. Why? Acevedo explains: "Here's this person who isn't much older than [the student] is. The idea is that they see someone they can relate to—who knows what's on the radio. At the same time, they've adopted study habits the kids don't have. They know where the land mines are planted and they also project this idea that it is 'cool' and normal to be a Christian and to be in college." The few times that HERC utilized volunteers in their fifties as mentors, it flopped.

► **Focus on Students in 11th Grade and Under.** Initially the mentoring program accepted youth from 8th grade through 12th grade. Through sad experience, though, HERC's leaders have learned that students who have waited until their senior year to get serious about entering college had waited too long. There was just no feasible way they were going to get into college immediately out of high school.

Through its open houses held twice a year, HERC gives parents and students the opportunity to meet with representatives from 20 different colleges.



CHALLENGES

As noted earlier, one of Samuel Acevedo's greatest initial challenges was gaining access into the public school system. Another challenge the ministry faces is the lack of men to serve as mentors. HERC's leaders strongly desire to recruit more men, since many of the students in the college prep program lack a positive male figure in their lives. A third challenge is tracking kids once they've left the program. A fourth is the fact that HERC shares space with Leon de Juda's children's ministry. The increased use leads to wear and tear on the facilities. As Pastor Bishop admits, "[These] classrooms get beat up pretty quick." Sunday School classrooms are not always left in pristine condition following HERC's program, and this can frustrate the children's ministry leaders. Finally, security has been an issue. Because of HERC, literally hundreds of people pass through the church every week. Inevitably things turn up missing. One of the mentors, for example, had items stolen from her pocketbook during a MCAS class.



CHURCH CONNECTION

Leon de Juda's leaders view HERC as an integral part of the church and say the ministry is crucial for ministering effectively in their urban context. As Pastor Bishop notes, "In the Latino inner-city context you just can't ignore social issues, because they have all kinds of screaming needs, housing, etc. Latinos' lives are not as compartmentalized and they look to the church to meet more of their needs."

Pastor Bishop believes that HERC benefits the church in several key ways. First, it is an effective means of evangelism. Most of the people who utilize the resources HERC provides are not members of the church. Yet, for those from the congregation who do take advantage of HERC's programs, it is an aid to discipleship. Bishop explains, "You get people who become Christians who are then putting their lives together. HERC is one practical tool to help them do that." He continues, "It's important for people's discipleship for them to feel the confidence that they can get an education and get a job; how they view themselves [is important], and that's going to influence all kinds of other decisions in their lives." Ana, a single mother in the church who never finished high school, is one such example. Through HERC and the church's discipleship classes, she has gained the confidence to learn English. Now she wants to go back to school to get her GED (high school equivalency degree). At the same time, HERC is providing a mentor for one of her sons. In addition, having the resources of HERC right at the church has been a blessing for the pastors. As they counsel people and learn of their different needs, they do not have to send them elsewhere for help. HERC is a "huge resource right at my fingertips," Bishop says enthusiastically. Finally, HERC has also helped Leon de Juda to foster productive relationships with other local churches and it has raised the church's profile in the community.

We knew we wanted to work with inner-city kids, primarily black and Latino kids. We knew we wanted to help them get into college. And we knew we wanted this to happen through the church. — *Samuel Acevedo, HERC Director*

ADVICE *For Other Pastors/Church Leaders*

HERC's leaders offer several pieces of advice for pastors or church leaders who are considering beginning a college resource center in their church:

- ▶ Work with other churches. As Bishop puts it, "You can't view this as your territorial thing but as belonging to the kingdom of God."
- ▶ Don't burden the director with numerous other responsibilities. Initially, Leon de Juda asked Samuel Acevedo to serve as both the youth pastor and the director of HERC. "We thought, 'he'll connect with the youth and it will be great,'" Bishop explains. But they soon learned that this was not a viable strategy. "This is a huge, hard ministry. It needs to be someone who is exclusively devoted to it," Bishop says.
- ▶ Encourage the director to invest time in building relationships in the community. Acevedo serves on many boards of directors and attends innumerable meetings. This networking leads to connections that benefit HERC's work in practical ways.
- ▶ Recognize that the ministry requires space, and that other church program leaders may initially feel impinged upon. Pastor Bishop counsels ministry leaders wishing to implement a similar program to think through those ministries and people that might be affected by the new initiative, and to strive to get them "on board." He reports, "We had some serious issues early on with children's ministry that probably could have been avoided had we sat down earlier with them and shared the vision of HERC."
- ▶ Consider hiring a grant writer. The one HERC uses is expensive, but, as Pastor Bishop notes, "She pays for herself through the money she raises." He thinks her services are definitely worth the investment. HERC has been successful in obtaining grants from a variety of sources with this woman's help.
- ▶ Build in accountability for the director. One of the biggest fears Leon de Juda had when it introduced HERC was that the center would become its own "break away republic" and misrepresent the values and kingdom principles that Leon de Juda was built on. Therefore, Samuel Acevedo was intentionally made a pastor in the congregation so that he would be accountable to the congregation's senior pastor and leadership.

The theory behind the mentoring program is to awaken a vision in these young people that college ... is both possible and desirable; that [it] is something that normal people go to—it's not just [for] astronauts and brain surgeons.

— *Samuel Acevedo, HERC Director*

Who Could Do This, Too?

Leon de Juda's creative and effective college preparation ministries are ripe for imitation by others. As Pastor Bishop reflects, "There are hundreds, maybe thousands of educated Christian college students in InterVarsity, Campus Crusade, Navigators who want to help and just don't know how. There are inner-city kids whom we have learned will respond to virtually any adult who will love them. It's only an issue of connecting these two groups. It's as easy as providing a place and a structure to come together. It doesn't have to be so complicated." Chaletta Clark agrees. For her, the key thing is to find the right people. Then, as she puts it, you just "give them structure, give them a vision, and let them go."

