



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS about Episcopal City Mission and its Programs

**Q: What does Episcopal City Mission do?**

A: Episcopal City Mission provides chaplains for the ongoing spiritual needs of children in St. Louis City and County Juvenile Detention Centers and at Missouri Hills, a Division of Youth Services facility. ECM also facilitates "Hope and Healing" - a community-based program focusing on grief and loss for court-involved children in St. Louis County. Through the generosity of our donor churches and volunteers, ECM is also able to provide holiday gifts, monthly birthday parties, hairstyling services, books (including Bibles and Quaran) and various small-but-important items such as games/playing cards, holiday-themed goody bags and sometimes even essential clothing that serve as reminders that these young people are loved and cared for.

**Q: Why is Episcopal City Mission important?**

A: Our chaplains help children in detention find hope. We help children recognize and claim their own unique gifts. We help children in detention grieve, forgive, and find peace in their troubling circumstances. We pray for and with them. Because we do not ignore or judge these children, they trust us with their gravest fears, their deepest regrets, and their most fragile hopes. We offer spiritual food for that part of each child that is starving.

**Q: How available are Episcopal City Mission's chaplains to the youth?**

A: Our chaplains provide a combined average of 70-75 hours each week.

**Q: Is Episcopal City Mission "Episcopalians only"?**

A: No. Episcopal City Mission is only partially funded by the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri, with most of our funding provided by dedicated congregations, generous individuals and grants. Our professionally-trained chaplains come from different denominations and from non-denominational Christian backgrounds. Our chaplains are available to address the spiritual needs of the children in the detention centers, regardless of religious background or affiliation.

**Q: Are children required to participate in Episcopal City Mission programs?**

A: No. All the services that our chaplains provide are strictly voluntary. No attempt is made or permitted to coerce participation in religious activities or to change a child's basic faith orientation.

### ABOUT THE CHILDREN WE SERVE

**Q: Why are the youth at these facilities?**

A: Offenses committed by the children that we serve range from chronic truancy to property theft/damage, parole violation, drug sales or use, assault, occasionally even homicide. Many of the children suffer from neglect or abuse, and many exhibit emotional and behavioral disorders.

**Q: How long are the youth confined to these facilities?**

A: The average length of stay at St. Louis City and St. Louis County Detention is 3 to 5 weeks. However, some children remain in detention for months. The Division of Youth Services' Missouri Hills residential center serves adjudicated children for a period based upon the individual's level of progress on his/ her own treatment plan, as well as community safety, and as a result of collaboration between the individual's case manager/service coordinator, treatment team, and administrators.

**Q: What age are these children?**

A: Typically, the children are 11 to 17 years old. Children as young as 8 have been detained. The average age of the children detained in the centers we serve is 15 years old. Youth that are 18 and over are classified and tried as adults. However, a youth under 18 can be certified as an adult by the court if accused of a violent or serious crime.

### ABOUT SUPPORT

**Q: How can I support Episcopal City Mission?**

A: Episcopal City Mission relies on individual donations to survive. You can donate money or time in fundraising activities to help ensure that our chaplains remain available to at-risk children.

**Q: How much does Episcopal City Mission spend on chaplain support?**

A: Episcopal City Mission requires approximately \$9,500 per month to support our Chaplains and the programs they offer.