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He wanted to be picked for everything, and he turned out to be good at most of them.  In 1998 we formed a group of teens called “Youth Leaders.”  Every month they'd turn a Bible parable or personal experience into a 5-10 minute drama which they would present to hundreds of kids at our weekly Kids Church services.  Angel often found himself playing the role of Jesus, and the words of Jesus began to form indelible pathways in his mind and heart.    In addition to the weekly teen-led skits we attempted to visit 500 children in their homes, organize a live game show for them, run a high-energy, rock band-driven worship service, and then share a message of hope in the person of Jesus Christ.  To do all this, we needed a lot of help.  And one of the most important and yet invisible jobs was the role of 'the sound guy.'  Sometime in his first few months of coming to New City Kids, Angel became our designated sound guy. While other teens took turns at the soundboard, Angel thrived on it.  'Where does the signal start? How does the sound get from the microphone to the speakers? What happens if I touch this button?' | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | | For five years, Angel was a faithful member of our Youth Leaders team—learning, working, praying, serving.  And then he disappeared.  This has happened many times, with many teens over the last 25 years.  Normally, we only have our own version of events to reflect on regarding what happened.  But last month I was given a gift: through a series of God-ordained coincidences, Angel reconnected with Linda and I, and we found ourselves sitting with him at a table at the New City Kids 25th anniversary Gala in Jersey City.   With the other hand-picked guests at the Founder’s table, including the city’s former mayor and other executive business leaders, he began to share his story.  “New City Kids changed my life.  Remember that time we went down to Mississippi to meet civil rights legend, John Perkins? I remember you had us wear our 'Youth Leader' shirts.  Well, Mr. Perkins asked all the youth groups present to send all the youth leaders to room 101 for an organizational meeting.  Looking back, I’m quite sure he was referring to the adult leaders.  But we didn’t know any better—so all the New City Kids teens went to the meeting!  There we were: 20 adult leaders and the New City Kids teens.  It was cool.  No one kicked us out.  That moment has never left me. New City Kids believed we were as important as the adults and that we could do things only adults were 'supposed' to do. That became my mindset.”    “Those years at New City Kids shaped who I am. Everything I learned about morals, I got from you guys.  In every situation, I was taught to ask ‘What would Jesus do?’  That’s what I always think now. That time you had us do a foot washing—that was so gross!  But I’ll never forget it.  It was the first time in my life I’d been asked to do something incredibly uncomfortable for no reason other than to benefit another person.  That has stuck with me. But you know, my whole mindset from New City Kids formed my career.  After New City Kids I began to go into New York City and hang around a music studio.  I asked the owner if he would teach me.  He said, ‘I won’t pay you, but if you’re faithful and work hard I’ll teach you sound engineering.’  I hit it hard.  One day, the main guy was sick and we were recording a famous musician who was on a schedule.   He looked at me and said ‘Can you run the board?’  I said ‘Yes!’ The rest is history.  Within a few months, I was flown out to Los Angeles.  I began to engineer sound for people you’ve heard of: Beyonce, Jay-Z.  Within a few years, 70% of the songs on the Hot100 song chart were songs I had my fingers on.” | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | | At this point in the story I interrupted. I was dying to know why he left New City Kids. He was very forthright.    “I was getting tempted by the streets.  My friends were dragging me in the wrong direction. That’s why I eventually left.  But you don’t know how New City Kids saved me.   One night, I was scheduled to hang out with two of my friends.  But I was also scheduled to go to Bible study with you.  I stick by my commitments, so I actually came to New City Kids.  That night, my two friends were arrested and if I had gone with them the whole rest of my life would have been ruined.”  Reconnecting with Angel has been an incredible gift, but it’s also been a revelation. As Linda (quoting Mother Teresa) always says, “every act of love done in God becomes eternal.” Nothing is lost.  By reconnecting with Angel, we were able to time travel back to 1998 and revisit what all those moments meant for Angel and for us. This is so affirming. But I’m reminded that 1998 or 2008 or 2018 is no different. Each moment in time contains a web of relationships where God is working—through you, through us—to touch the lives of many, many people whose stories we usually don’t get to hear.  If you’re reading this letter, you’ve touched our lives too. You have either signed up to receive prayer letters or updates, or you’ve contributed financially to support this vision of Loving Kids for Change. Today, on our 25th anniversary, we want to thank you with all our hearts for making New City Kids happen. Think of the thousands of stories you’ve been a part of shaping! Moments where a teen was asked to ‘press a button,’ where foot washings made an impact, where a Friday night Bible study changed a life trajectory, where a leadership mindset was born.  Thank you!   Rev. Trevor Rubingh, Co-Founder and President, New City Kids | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | If you have already made your contributions to New City Kids this year, we thank you! If you would like to make a year-end gift to us, please do, knowing that your gifts will be used to change lives!  **To get a 100% dollar for dollar match for your gift (up to your first $1,000), through December 31, you can give through our partnership with the Stand Together Foundation by giving through their portal at** [www.newcitykids.org/standtogether](http://www.newcitykids.org/standtogether). | | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | [**Donate Today**](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fnewcitykids.us2.list-manage.com%2Ftrack%2Fclick%3Fu%3D22f1741381dd3a5299975da24%26id%3Dc10b94fb28%26e%3D2f63e6a59a&data=02%7C01%7Ckymker%40romanmfg.com%7Cf2cdece383a643c6fd4b08d78a728c58%7Cf598fbb2165f4a80ac1b7b731e056ce2%7C0%7C0%7C637130096926320154&sdata=CoR5lzWBIGDxq6qp1FvkP8VRUzDdH5OIOngnx3LB1Qg%3D&reserved=0) | | | | |