

Angel Tree Prison Fellowship and LIFE Community Groups

Angel Tree Prison Fellowship is an international Christian ministry that strives to reconcile the relationship between child and incarcerated parent. Prison Fellowship serves the invisible population from offering Bible studies and materials to imprisoned parents to the purchasing of gifts with a personal message attached from the parent at Christmas time,

Grace Chapel has been involved with Angel Tree Christmas for over 25 years and has grown from serving five Boston area children of incarcerated parents at Christmas to serving approximately 250 children in Massachusetts. Furthermore at Grace Chapel we believe in sharing the good news and providing opportunities to these children year round. We have expanded the original Christmas connection to include Christian Summer Camp and mentoring opportunities.

Angel Tree Christmas offers the opportunity to purchase and wrap a Christmas gift. Tags are typically available the last week of November and the first week December each year. Christmas volunteer opportunities are also available for small groups to assist our party coordinator to host parties at our inner city partnering churches or for small groups to home deliver gifts with our inner city partner churches. Although these positions may intimidate some folks, the most rewarding stories have come from people who have assisted in these areas and are the "feet" bringing God's message to deserving and grateful families during the season and during some very difficult times. Each year Angel Tree will be asking LIFE Communities to sponsor a child or children in their zip code area. Depending on individual LIFE Community participation, sponsors can purchase, wrap and deliver to Angel Tree families in their own communities.

Angel Tree Summer Camp starts with purchasing tags during our Christmas tag distribution (late November and early December). Tags are available at \$65 each and with the discount our Christian camps offer Angel Tree children, we have been able to send 15 children to two weeks of Christian summer camp. Summer camp tag purchasers are then contacted in April the following year and asked to fill a provided backpack with \$25 worth of bug spray, sunscreen, and various sundries for the attending

children. We need volunteers to also transport children to and from camp during the summer months.

Angel Tree "**Mentoring Children of Promise**" has expanded and we will be offering orientation and training in March of each year. In 2010 we will be offering this program to directly mentor children of incarcerated. This one-on-one relationship offers many benefits to children who are at risk to themselves becoming involved with the justice system. We ask the mentor to commit to a two year relationship with their mentee as research has shown these children are less apt to participate in taking drugs, stay in school, and build better relationships with peers.