



Bethany Lutheran Church in Chicago lovingly donated their building to the English District. This gift was a legacy to the church, meant to further the work of the Gospel in the Chicagoland area. The District made improvements and ultimately sold the building when it became clear that the cost of upkeep was not in line with good stewardship.

The sale has allowed the English District to set up grants to help local churches in their important work. The first featured parish to receive these funds is Trinity, Villa Park, IL who is using the money for a youth program.

We thank the saints at Bethany for their love for the District and the Gospel and their desire to help others in their ministries! What a sacrifice and legacy, and what a lasting mark on the community and other churches.

TRINITY, VILLA PARK, IL

“The Projects” was initiated by youth workers at Trinity Lutheran Church in Villa Park who wanted to create a place in the afterschool hours for junior high age kids to engage in activities that meet their specific developmental needs, introduces the unchurched to the Gospel and increases the faith of already practicing Christians.

Research on the outcome of after school programs indicates that adolescents participating in programs saw a significant improvement in their perceptions of themselves, an improved positive social conduct, and a decrease in problem behaviors. The Projects addresses the need of adolescents for physical activities, competence and achievement, creative expression, positive interactions with peers and adults, and meaningful participation. This goal is accomplished by offering 3 different projects per week in 4-week sessions, appealing to different interests and skill levels. Examples of activities include woodworking, cooking, scrapbooking, and crafting. Items made during the program are used for charitable causes or will be sold for revenue to further fund the program. Time is set aside for supervised interactions with friends, a homemade snack, and devotions with the pastor.

A crew of volunteers that spans all generations, direct, lead, and mentor. These volunteers are a vital part of the ministry, as a study of young people who dropped out of church showed that those who stay were twice as likely to have a close personal friendship with an adult inside the church. Additionally, providing meaningful opportunities for adults who are looking for ways to share their gifts is an important mission of The Projects.

The Projects is the only afterschool program in the community that offers an appeal to multiple interests, provides faith growth opportunities through devotions and a connection with a pastor, and interactions with multiple adult mentors who model Christian values and ethics. Our mission is to keep kids safe after school, teach life-skills, and most importantly to help them connect with the Church.

Judy Bruschuk
Youth Director
Trinity, Villa Park, IL