

How to Pray & Help the Victims of St. Louis School Shooting

Yesterday, six of our LIFT students were involved with the CVPA School shooting here in St. Louis. One of our students actually saw her friend get shot and even though all of our LIFT students are physically okay, they are obviously struggling. My phone had a steady stream of texts and calls with questions and I had time this morning to write down 3 points of how to pray and act.

Unfortunately, this kind of trauma is not new, it's actually normal.

I talked to the grandma of one of our students last night and she said "these kids are gonna be alright, they are resilient." She's right, but that doesn't make it easy or good. Our students face a daily reality of trauma and for many this was not their first shooting incident.

PRAYER: God, we are asking for YOU to bring healing and peace that passes understanding to all of us who need to overcome past wounds. Bring about a spirit of willingness to open up about pain and bring in the right people to listen (with words from YOU.)

ACTION: Insert yourself into the lives of these young people. We have availability to bring a meal every Tuesday and Thursday. Beyond that we have room for van drivers, small group leaders, tutors, and enrichment leaders (teaching a skill.) These are all positions where you can surround our neighbors with loving actions.

There is a stigma to counseling in the city, but we need to start receiving help.

It's not easy to convince kids (or adults) in the city to sit down for any therapy session, but opportunities like this are highly publicized and bring awareness to our need more than ever. Free counseling was offered yesterday to everyone involved and this helps push the effort to begin a healing process. This is a good start.

PRAYER: God, we are asking that you move in all of our hearts to receive wisdom. Please send the right people and allow us to quickly build trust. We need YOU to change our hearts and minds.

ACTION: We have been partnering with counselors throughout the last two years, but our biggest problems have been consistency and cost. We need consistency to get students and counselors to the same place each week. Once again, rides are a big issue and ideally we need funds to purchase a van (for liability and insurance sake.) While we have budgeted for students to go to counseling, we need to double or even triple that budget for next year.

Our children need safe spaces.

One of the most frustrating aspects of yesterday's events was that this was a good city school. The students there are working hard and I would say they are the cream of this generation's crop. This makes it extremely difficult when one of the only safe places they have for them is taken away.

PRAYER: Father, protect these children and allow them to grow strong in a harsh environment. Do not allow the birds to snatch up YOUR seed of truth and love. Prune back the thorns. Give these neighbors places of peace.

ACTION: Our Tuesdays and Thursdays at theBLOCK are essentially becoming a place for kids to let down their guard and actually "be kids." We need people to help create this environment by painting, organizing, cleaning, and setting up. We need donations of soda, bottled water, snacks, and meals.

At some point the news cameras will stop rolling and this story will be out of sight and out of mind. But the pain and trauma does not go away that quickly. Pray for the endurance of parents, teachers, and LOVEtheLOU (and other non-profit) leaders. Pray for a community of health and resources to surround every student throughout our city. Let us be a people that are quick to pray AND act.

All because of Jesus,

Lucas Rougely