

Service

Let There Be Mom

PSALM 103: 14 For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we [are] dust. 15 [As for] man, his days [are] as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. 16 For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.

It is a sobering fact to realize that our life here is brief. Caught in the hustle and bustle of it all, we often do not realize the brevity. We all leave a legacy whether we are ready or not. Created in October 2006 as an outreach to families, "Let There Be Mom" offers a chance to prepare. Founder and President, Kipra Anderson recently shared some details about this wonderful service with "Greenville In One Accord."

GIOA: What is the mission of "Let There Be Mom?" Kipra: Let There Be Mom was created to preserve the legacies of moms and dads with life threatening illnesses.

GIOA: How do you accomplish that mission?

Kipra: Once a mom or dad submits an application for services, complete with Physician's Signature, we will set up a time to interview them. The interview lasts approximately 2 hours - it is a time designed for us to "get to know" them. At that time, we also brainstorm on projects that we can do to put their talents, hopes, and dreams in tangible forms for their child(ren). We spend approximately \$3,000 on each family that we serve, completing a variety of projects for each child.

GIOA: What kind of projects does your organization do with the families? Kipra: It is different for everyone, and we try very hard to have projects that are unique to each family, however there are some that are very popular, such as thumb print charms, scrapbooks, photo sessions with photographers, quilts made out of their clothing, recipe collections, and gifts for the future.

GIOA: What kind of demographics do you have with your families? Kipra: The only criteria to qualify for services is that the applicant must have at least one child 18 years old or younger, they must be able to communicate their desires for the legacy with us, and their Physician must attest to the fact that they have a "life threatening illness" (not necessarily a terminal diagnosis.) We have had the honor of serving families in a variety of economic classes with various ethnic backgrounds, as well as quite a variety of religious beliefs.



The families often participate in projects, such as pottery, to remember their loved ones by. (Photo courtesy of "Let There Be Mom")

GIOA: Do you ever have to turn down families?

Kipra: We have not had to turn down any family that has met our criteria.

GIOA: What kind of demographics do you have in your volunteers? Kipra: Volunteers come in all shapes and sizes. :) We have had volunteers as young as 8. We ask that all projects involving handling of precious mementos, such as scrapping sessions, are adult only, but students volunteer quite often by hanging posters about an event, or bundling marketing materials.

GIOA: What kind of emotional toll do the volunteers face when dealing with the families, and how do they handle it? Kipra: So far, it appears that the benefits outweigh the emotional toll - I believe that in most cases our volunteers are Christians - I imagine to be called into this type of work you would almost have to believe in something greater than yourself.

GIOA: Does "Let There Be Mom" stay in touch with the families after their loved one has passed? Kipra: Many of them, yes.

GIOA: What is God doing through "Let There Be Mom"? Kipra: He is opening doors... Faith is one of the topics we discuss with our applicants - many times we have the privilege to hear the stories of how they came to believe in the Lord, other times, sadly, we hear about a lack of belief - at those points we wait to see what God wants us to do, if anything.

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Many times charms are made from the parent's thumb prints.
(Photo courtesy of "Let There Be Mom")

GIOA: What is your personal testimony? Kipra: I grew up knowing about God - I finally stopped to notice God's love for me when I realized He was interested in me. He has given me an entrepreneurial spirit, I was a little lost in what I wanted to do/what I wanted to start. Business ideas were not lacking, but the passion I know I needed to have to pursue any of them, was. So when He, not so subtly, urged me to start Let There Be Mom, I felt a one-on-one attention from Him; a clear direction and feeling that lead to my relationship with Him.

GIOA: How have you seen faith (of the families) effect the families that are served? Kipra: Those who believe in the Lord as their Savior have a calmness about them, much of their fear is gone.

GIOA: How does the organization deal with families from different religions and cultures? Kipra: We serve everyone regardless of their religion or culture - and we treat them all the same with open hands and loving hearts, always with the prayer that if they do not yet know the Lord as their Savior that our kindness will help clear a spot in their heart to allow someone to plant a seed.



GIOA: Where did the idea for "Dine Out For Mom" come from and what is involved in it? Kipra: There are many "Dine Out for (insert your cause here)" events throughout the country - I remember attending one where I grew up (Tampa, FL) when I was young - it was a very popular event. During Dine Out for

Mom our restaurant partners (this year we had 42 different restaurants, in over 60 locations, participating) agree to donate 20% of their sales from the entire day to Let There Be Mom.

GIOA: What businesses are involved? Kipra: All Restaurants are listed on our website at: http://lettherebemom.org/Participating_Restaurants.html in addition to the restaurants we have corporate sponsors (Cancer Centers of the Carolinas, Greenville Gymnastics, Peek Performance Insurance, Goldsmith Property Management, Drum Creative, Interim Hospice, Greenville First Bank, Entercom Radio, Embroid Me, Cowart Awards)

GIOA: What other fundraisers does "Let There Be Mom" have? Kipra: Our organization also holds a Spring Fundraiser, called Seek and Snap (Sunday - April 15, 2012) - it is a digital scavenger hunt. Teams of four race (on foot) throughout downtown Greenville and using a digital camera they snap pictures that they believe are the answers to the clues they provide.

GIOA: What is the biggest need for "Let There Be Mom"? Kipra: Monetary donations are LTBM biggest need. The number of families who are applying for services is increasing rapidly, (recently we received 5 Applications for Services in a 12 day period - that will cost approximately \$15,000). we are extremely thankful that the word of our organization is



Families from all walks of life are sponsored through the program.
(Photo courtesy of "Let There Be Mom")

spreading, we also know that to continue to serve families we will need to have the funds to do so. We are trying to staff tables at each of the Dine Out for Mom Restaurants with volunteers that can tell the patrons about LTBM and be there to collect donations for us.

GIOA: How can somebody help "Let There Be Mom"? Kipra: Donations can be given on-line at LetThereBeMom.org or through the mail: 407 Parker Ivey Drive, Greenville, SC 29607. Those interested in volunteering at our events or of learning of future volunteer opportunities should contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Jill Cody by email: jill@LetThereBeMom.org.

www.LetThereBeMom.org

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"Greenville In One Accord" is a magazine aimed at uniting the Christian community in Greenville County, SC. This unity has the ability to strengthen, inform, mobilize, encourage, and grow God's people.

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