



FAITH AND VALUES



Attending a computer dedication at the MAM Bethel LaBelle Neighborhood Youth Center were James Armfield (left), MAM President; Detria E. Bolton, Internal Revenue Service; Rosemary Austin, Upward Steps Ministries; Elizabeth Saxton, Butler Snow Foundation; Bob Alvarez, The Irvin Lansky Foundation; and Frank Austin, Internal Revenue Service.

YES MAM

Memphis Athletic Ministries youths benefit when organizations work together to provide computer lab for Bethel LaBelle area

BY ANNE CHAMBERS
Special to My Life

The Irvin Lansky Foundation, The Butler, Snow, O'Mara, Stevens & Cannada Foundation and the Internal Revenue Service are uniting with **Memphis Athletic Ministries** to provide urban at-risk Memphis-area youth with a computer lab to give them better access to academic tools and financial education. Both foundations awarded MAM grants that were used for infrastructure and the IRS, with the help of Upward Steps Ministries, donated the computers.

Through the generosity of these supporters, a computer lab at the ministry's Bethel LaBelle neighborhood center is now a reality. This lab is part of MAM's master plan to provide access to technology and high-speed Internet services to the youth of under-resourced neighborhoods at all of MAM's 12 centers. Since 2001, MAM has offered programs which address the physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual development of at-risk youth between the ages of six and 18. Program participants are mentored by Christian staff and volunteers through their participation in MAM's sports, academic enrichment, financial literacy program and Bible studies.

"MAM's aim to help produce successful citizens in our community works well with the vision that Irvin Lansky had for our city," stated Bob Alvarez, Trustee of The Irvin Lansky Foundation. "Any time our youth are exposed to the lessons taught at MAM can only better their lives, and we are happy to be a part of that effort."

One of MAM's primary goals is to improve academic outcomes of its served youth by providing access to fully equipped computer labs in each of its locations, while also requiring the youth to participate in the academic enrichment and personal financial management curriculum offered through the labs.

"Students depend on our ability to provide them with access to computers and the Internet because they typically do not have access to either at home, making it exceedingly difficult for them to keep up with school work," said James Armfield, MAM president and Chief Operating Officer. "Adding computer labs with Internet connectivity in our facilities greatly enhances the level of academic support we are able to provide."

"We are working with Memphis Athletic Ministries because of the inspirational work they do with the at-risk youth in the Memphis community," said Foundation President and Butler Snow Attorney, Tommy Williams. "We are grateful to be able to help MAM toward achieving one of its primary goals."

Frank Austin with the Internal Revenue Service knows firsthand the value this computer lab brings to the lives of the youth. His wife Rosemary partners with the MAM Bethel LaBelle center with her Upward Steps ministry program for neighborhood young ladies. "These kids need folks that care about them and resources, like the academic support made possible by the computer lab, to help them make their way out of poverty."

Anne Chambers is the communications director for Memphis Athletic Ministries.
