



Monday, October 25, 2010

## Brad Cummins is something good!

Brad Cummins began coaching an inner-city basketball team two years ago because he wanted God to use him to make a positive impact. As empty nesters, Brad and his wife Becky knew God was calling them to invest their lives in the city. Combining this calling with his love for coaching his sons' basketball teams as they were growing up, Brad looked forward to sharing Christ with his band of 14-year-old boys and seeing life change. What he didn't anticipate was how much he would change.

"God allowed me to coach a team that's about a half mile away from where I work," Brad explains. "I've worked the same job for 20 years, and I would drive through this neighborhood every day not really paying attention to its residents."

All of that changed about a week or two after Brad began working with **Memphis Athletic Ministries (MAM)**. With 12 neighborhood youth centers across the city, MAM seeks to engage and mentor at-risk youth through sports and other programs.

"I was driving home from practice one night after being with the guys for about an hour, and I just started crying," Brad remembers. "I asked God to give me a love for the boys, and He basically did it overnight. These boys often refuse to listen to me a lot of times, but I can sincerely say that I love and care for them."

As Brad spends several hours with the guys each week in practices and games, he has earned their trust. The leagues are year-round with short breaks between seasons, so the team is together week in and week out. The guys know Brad cares, and they share parts of their lives with him.

"At 14 years old they have experienced more hardships than I have even thought about in my 50 years," Brad shares. "Frankly I started coaching thinking I have the answer, and I do have the answer. It's Jesus." Brad continues. "I still believe that, and I know that it's that simple. But it's much more complicated than that. Jesus is the answer, but it's a slow process. I'm thankful for the privilege to live it and share it as best I can when I'm with these wonderful young men." *Nominated by Greg Jackson.*