

## Using Spaces



### Arts ministry rejuvenates.

Two years ago, Galloway United Methodist Church in Memphis had 44,000 square feet of empty space. The church's 40 members knew they needed to use it or lose it.

So, when Memphis native DeWayne Hambrick, a former cast member of the children's TV show "Barney and Friends," came to the church looking for a place to run Graffiti Playground, his performing arts ministry, Galloway UMC seized the opportunity.

Now, approximately 60 youth, ages 8 to 18, receive instruction in voice, dance, drama, art and photography four afternoons a week—with performances for the community on weekends.

"I was tired of seeing talent go to waste," Hambrick says. "And I wanted to give an affordable Christian-based program back to my hometown."

Hambrick not only oversees the fine arts instruction, but also uses the program to strengthen his students' faith. Although many come from religious

backgrounds, they need direction and a creative outlet, he says.

Since Galloway began teaming with Graffiti Playground, 15 new members have joined the church, and Galloway has launched additional outreach programs, including Celebrate Recovery and DaGalloway, a Friday night coffeehouse.

Says Pastor TroyAnn Pouloupoulos: "Our congregation was about to close its doors, but now we've almost doubled our attendance."

—John Hillman

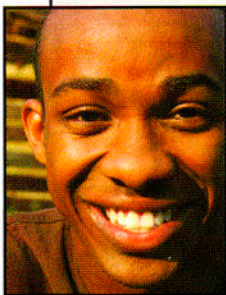


Photo: Dustin Nelson

## Special Agents

High above Hollywood, a team of boys recently repainted the famous Hollywood sign; later, they prayed over the letters and the city below.

The young men are members of a unique youth ministry called "The A-Team"—agents training in evangelism and missions. Leading The A-Team out of his Bay Cal Commercial Painting business in San Diego, Jim Codde helps high school and college-aged males—while working as painters—experience the love of Christ in fresh ways. He also connects them to local churches including his own, North Coast Church in Vista, Calif. ([northcoastchurch.com](http://northcoastchurch.com)), and hosts a weekly Bible study called "Agents of the Most High."

Begun four years ago, The A-Team works as Bay Cal's residential division, in which all profits go toward mission trips the agents can take together.

"God really just brings these guys to us," Codde says. "Just last week, a guy walked in off the streets and said he'd

heard we might be able to help him."

So Codde will put youth like him on The A-Team, which is 70–80% Christian, to work as a painter on projects like the Hollywood sign. He will also partner him with other agents who will hang out with him outside of work and invite him to church.

"I've felt a sense of camaraderie and a challenge to be active in my faith," says 19-year-old Nathan Funke, now a North Coast attendee and one of the ministry's 160 agents. "I feel like a soldier for God. It has also been a time to meet other Christians who are 'on fire' for the Lord."

North Coast Teaching Pastor Chris Brown, an agent himself, believes the ministry is working well: "In a day and age when many youth lack community and a sense of belonging, the agents give youth a healthy and Christ-centered way to be part of something they respect and that makes them feel significant."

—James Rodder