



Ignite spiritually. Engage emotionally. Equip academically.

Those three charges are the foundation of everything we do at Fortress.

Through programs designed to provide hope and resources for children and families working hard to interrupt the cycle of generational poverty, Fortress is intentional about providing a safe, accountable and loving place for children 3 months-5th grade. But it's more than a place. Fortress is a family, and that family is comprised of Historic Southside folks, staff, volunteers, and donors who represent every economic class, every color, every age and every background. We operate from the belief that "we are all children of God with the ability to achieve our dreams", but also from the idea that "No significant learning occurs without significant relationship." (Dr. James Comer)

That's where UCC comes in. Maybe you volunteered at the monthly UCC-hosted birthday party and delight in the unfettered joy on our birthday kids' faces as they hear their name sung. Perhaps you'll sign up to provide lunch this summer for our hard-

working mission groups who spend a week at a time living at our building and loving on our kids. You might mentor one of our kids for an hour each week, building a relationship that will transcend time, age and privilege, preparing the soil for dreams, goals and success to take hold. Perhaps you'll join our parents for a Bible study or maybe you'll teach a parenting class. As a congregation, your generous quarterly financial support, your faithful prayers, and your generosity of time allows us to do what we do. In fact, we couldn't do it without you.

Truly, we couldn't continue this work without you. Thank you!

We can't wait to see how God continues to write the Fortress and UCC stories as he weaves them together in this chapter, and we're so ready to see how God uses you to help us ignite, engage and equip!

—Stacy Agee Martin, Executive Director of
Fortress Youth Development Center

Like many organizations, COVID-19 changed how Fortress cared for children this spring, but with UCC's gift, they have been able to deliver food and provide support in the face of this crisis.

