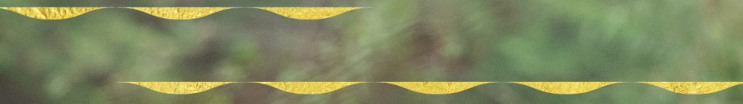


Provision at the Water's Edge



“Like a tree planted by
water, sending out roots
by the stream...it never
fails to bear fruit.”

JEREMIAH 17:8





RIPARIAN ZONE

A riparian zone is the area of land along the banks of rivers, streams, lakes, or other bodies of water that is transitional between aquatic and upland ecosystems. These areas have distinct soils and vegetation influenced by the presence of water, which enable them to function as a crucial buffer against environmental impacts.

Like a Tree Planted By Water

While I was hiking this summer, I glimpsed a trail sign that detailed how the edge of a river is more than a boundary; it's a natural sanctuary. Life gathers in abundance: trees root deep, creatures find provision, and the land is nourished. This sacred space by the river, sometimes called the riparian zone, is one of creation's lifelines — a place of balance, protection, and renewal.

Reflecting on that riparian image, the loss of a Woodlawn teen, and the work of Christ Health, I couldn't help but see it as a metaphor for our mission. Just as growth along the riverbank nurtures a habitat and buffers the land in times of storm, we are relationally present in seasons of plenty and turbulent times. Through physical, mental, and spiritual care, we are partnering with Birmingham's neighbors in need to build a flourishing community. It also reminded me of biblical imagery from Jeremiah:

"Like a tree planted by water, sending out roots by the stream... it never fails to bear fruit."

As our clinics become neighborhood strongholds, we have the privilege of nurturing rootedness in the communities we serve. Christ Health Pediatrics is now open in Roebuck, and new funding is paving the way for a project in Slossfield that we can't wait to share with you. On top of all this, we are training more young clinical leaders than ever.

What a joy to share with you in this flourishing work God is doing in Birmingham. Thank you for helping grow our ministries where healing and hope find each other and so many neighbors looking for both. This Christmas, we wanted to give you the gift of encouragement we have found at the water's edge. As you read about Kat, KJ, and R2, please know your generosity is bearing fruit and bringing life.

With Gratitude,

Dr. Robert Rex Record



"Like a tree planted by water, sending out roots by the stream ... it never fails to bear fruit."

JEREMIAH 17:7-8

Chosen Family: A Love that Does Not Wither

Picture the outlook of a high school boy whose birthday is forgotten year after year. Imagine a teen who has been told not to come home, or a kid for whom gun violence is an expected part of high school. R2, KJ, and Kat have lived these realities. For them, life has often been like treading water with no shore in sight.

Demitri Carpenter recognized the boys in the Christ Health Woodlawn parking lot getting picked up after school one day. Known for his intentional and humble yet magnetic presence, Demitri serves as the Chief Leadership and Development Officer at Christ Health Woodlawn. Still, Demitri's connection to the community runs deeper than his role. His vision for the leadership program is rooted in his personal experience as a Christ Health mentee.

Now, offering the same support that shaped his life, Demitri pours his time and energy into

Woodlawn's next generation, and he knew he had seen the boys at the Dream Center's summer sports camp. He even still followed one of them on social media. Noticing a sincere interest in God in the teen's posts, Demitri reached out to the boy called R2 and offered to be a mentor.

"What's a mentor?" asked R2. "Someone who holds you accountable, walks with you in your walk with Christ, and supports you as you draw closer to God and the purpose he's placed inside of you," explained Demitri. "I need that," admitted R2. *(continued)*





(Left to Right)
Demitri, Kat,
KJ, and R2

But Demetri knew R2 was rarely alone. He had a crew of guys always with him. Saying yes to mentoring R2 meant taking on more stories than one. Planning to take R2 out for pizza, Demetri stumbled upon KJ moping around after football practice. It happened to be the teen’s birthday, and no one was celebrating him.

“I leaned in, invited him out with us, and made the night about him,” Demetri recounted, grinning. And soon, he had collected a brotherhood: R2, KJ, Kat, Cornealius, and Reggie, five young men who became bound to one another, not by blood, but by faith.

“Every day! Every day in life he shows up. We need something, he’s there. Meat shows up every time.”

R2, MENTEE CLASS OF 2026



common to see them walking around campus or chatting with Dr. Record in his office. Christ Health had become their safe haven: a place where they found peace, dreamed about the future, and experienced deep love.

When asked to share a time that Demetri had shown up for him, R2 said emphatically, “Every day! Every day in life, he shows up. When we need something, he’s there. Meat shows up every time.”

For example, as Demetri got to know the boys, he discovered Kat’s mother had taken in R2 and KJ. A single mother with 6 kids of her own, Demetri was moved that this woman, already working in ministry, was now also ministering to two extra children at home. With the leadership of Christ Health, Demetri worked towards a plan to lighten her load financially.

Describing living with Kat’s family and meeting with Demetri, KJ, age 17, shared that for the first time since his mom went to prison when he was 8, he felt like he had a normal life. “At first, I thought Christ Heath was a hospital or clinic, but it’s more,” said KJ, “It’s got a lot of things to offer, and everybody is a child of God. It’s like a big family.” (continued)

THE MENTEE CLASS OF 2026

Right away, Demetri introduced the teens to church. Kat was already deeply involved in his family’s church, but R2 and KJ were not and fell in love with the experience. Demetri also began a small group bible study alongside Dave Anderson, a figure at Christ Health who had played an instrumental role in his own life.

As they attended church and studied the Bible, God began to knit them together. They spent time going out to restaurants and local attractions together or just drove around laughing and talking. Soon, Demetri knew their teachers and coaches like a parent would. It was

WHEN STORMS ROLL IN

During the summer of 2025, Reggie was tragically lost to gun violence. Describing the unthinkable event, Dr. Record recalled arriving to comfort the boys, only to find that Demitri had been there even before the police had arrived.

“Meat was one of the first to arrive. He was obviously their first call. To these boys, he is the definition of the father they never knew,” said Dr. Record.

Providence often looks a lot like relationship, and the loss of Reggie did not see the boys swept away in the current of unexplainable pain. They weathered the tragedy, rooted deeply in Christ alongside Demitri. They clung to faith, to each other, and to the Christ Health community, a rooted protection for them in a time of storm.

“Meat, we want to change our families,” they told him. “We want to make real plans for life after Woodlawn.” Although Kat had already been baptized, the situation spurred KJ and R2 to make plans for baptism. Now, R2 is thriving

and will enter trade school after high school. KJ has been offered a full athletic scholarship to play football, and Kat interned with Christ Health with dreams of coming back to work there one day.

Reflecting on their experience with Christ Health Woodlawn, KJ expressed, “Christ Health and Demitri changed how I look at everything. I have learned how to have a relationship with God. Before Christ Health, I took life as a joke. As I got older, it changed how I look at things. But it’s not all serious now. I can still be a kid. But Christ Health grew us up and taught us we can do things on our own. It challenged us to dream bigger.”

Knowing their story would be told, the boys said to share this message with readers and donors alike: “Continue doing what you’re doing with Christ Health. They are wonderful and professional, and they’re making an impact on the community. There are a lot of people who need to be helped. They give out a lot of opportunities to men and women for a better life. For a better future. For a healthy life.” ■

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17,374

PEDS VISITS

1,787

OB VISITS

175

BABIES DELIVERED

Where Renewal Takes Root

Christ Health is planting hope in a vital corridor of Birmingham that was once considered a healthcare desert. For families in the Roebuck area, the new pediatric clinic is a much-needed oasis of care.



Dr. Natalie King

It is also connected to the newly renovated YMCA and a part of a much larger community development project centered on bringing whole-person health and wellbeing to the community. Pediatrician Dr. Natalie King said new patients have walked in, wide-eyed, using words like “beautiful” and “so clean” to describe the space.

“It is transformative to offer high-quality care with availability and flexibility, even for those without insurance or the ability to pay,” said King. “Barriers, like finances, transportation, difficult work schedules, shared caregiver responsibilities, and more, can keep families from receiving the medical care they need. Meeting a patient, only to discover they have never seen a doctor, is a humbling experience.” King also described how special it is to be a

part of Christ Health’s whole-person approach to care at the heart of their mission. While treating illness is, of course, important, she said the opportunity to speak hope and spiritual truth into the lives of families has made her work especially meaningful. She looks forward to walking with patients and their families for the long haul, helping them heal, grow, and thrive along the way.

One example of this holistic model comes from a few recent conversations with families whose children were newly diagnosed with autism: “These moments were opportunities to affirm parents navigating the reality that they have neurodivergent children. I remind them that each one of their children is wonderfully made. We want families to know that, while their parenting journey may look different, they’re

not alone. We’re here to help and celebrate the unique child God has entrusted to them. Overall, my goal is to offer every child the same high-quality care I would want for my own children.”

Growth isn’t just happening inside the building either. Out the clinic windows, there is a lovely community of Habitat for Humanity homes going up, and the excitement about partnerships with nearby schools and the YMCA is palpable. There are glimpses of God at work all around. With every little face that arrives at the clinic and every family supported, renewal is taking root in Roebuck. And this is just the beginning. ■

Restoring the Legacy of Care at Slossfield

Just off I-65, in the ACIPCO-Finley neighborhood, stands the strong, concrete skeleton of buildings that were once a beacon of care in North Birmingham. Built in the 1930s, the Slossfield Community Center housed medical facilities, including the renowned Slossfield Maternity Center.



The center was constructed to train black physicians and nurses and to improve prenatal care and delivery in one of the most underserved areas of Birmingham at that time. According to the Birmingham Historical Society, Slossfield became the most successful of four demonstration centers built by the U.S. Public Health Service in its day. In 2018, the Salvation Army purchased the now-empty building, and they identified Christ Health as an organization

capable of breathing life into the medical legacy established by generations of impactful caregivers and prayer warriors. Considering the opportunity, Demetri Carpenter and Dr. Robert Record visited the surrounding neighborhoods together. Entering the North Birmingham Homes area, also called Vice Hill, Carpenter shared memories of growing up there. Listening intently, Dr. Record began

to reimagine a Slossfield clinic as a heartfelt tribute to the community's legacy, a kind of love letter to North Birmingham, honoring its history while investing in its future.

Referencing historical injustices in Alabama medical practice, Dr. Record said, "When you feel like much of what is around you is second-rate, it is hard to believe the services available can be trusted. We pray that the beauty and excellence of this space will bring faith, both in God and the care we can offer. That faith will plant seeds of hope, and we know hope brings health."

Together, the Salvation Army, Brassfield & Gorrie, and Christ Health have secured more than half of the clinic's funding, and construction is underway. ACIPCO, whose employees will have easy access to services, has also pledged support towards the start-up budget for the first five years, helping the clinic gain its footing as it moves toward Christ Health's model of near self-sufficiency. As the year comes to a close, Christ Health celebrates not only the tangible progress but also the partners who have invested deeply in this work. *(continued)*



“Whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.”

PROVERBS 11:25



Envisioning the future interior of Slossfield

Proverbs 11:25, typically translated, “Whoever refreshes others will be refreshed,” paints a richer picture in the original Hebrew. More literally, it reads, “The one who waters will himself be watered.”

We invite you to join us in watering parched ground in our community and see the promise of Proverbs 11:25 fulfilled daily through this work. Your investment will help complete the Slossfield clinic, extend compassionate care, and transform lives.

The following page outlines ways you can contribute, but we also encourage you to pray for us and come see these spaces in person. Together, we are bringing the kingdom of heaven closer to earth — one brick, one small group, and one doctor’s appointment at a time. ➔

How can you help?

Below is a list of projects you can support.

THE NEED	➔	THE PURPOSE
\$25	➔	Sponsor prescriptions for an uninsured patient
\$100	➔	Sponsor an uninsured patient’s visit
\$400	➔	Provide outreach meals for teens
\$1,000	➔	Provide emergency financial assistance for patients & neighbors
\$1,200	➔	Sponsor an uninsured OB mom
\$5,000	➔	Sponsor an EKG machine for our new Slossfield Clinic
\$25,000	➔	Sponsor an exam room in our coming Slossfield Clinic
\$30,000	➔	Purchase a van to be used in our outreach work and among our clinical trainees
\$1,950,000	➔	Our new Slossfield Clinic will cost us \$3,300,000. We have already raised \$1,350,000. Please consider helping us make this great clinic a reality.



See our website for ways to give.
christhealthcenter.org/donate-now-healthcare-ministry
We accept donations via cash/check, credit card, PayPal, and stock.

2025 NUMBERS



72,589
MEDICAL VISITS



121,287
UNIQUE PATIENTS



15,211
INPATIENT VISITS



12,054
MENTAL HEALTH VISITS



53,638
PRESCRIPTIONS FILLED



\$4,520,458
SAVED IN RX COST BY PATIENTS



Christ Health

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