

Backyard Blessings

by Laurel Larson

BBC? SICM? Radio stations? Singing groups?

With apologies to our senior pastor, in this case BBC stands for Backyard Bible Clubs, and SICM? Well, SICM is the Summer Institute for Children's Ministry.

Each summer, five college interns oversee the Kids' Harbor summer programs and events. These students have a heart for children and a passion for outreach. They also are creative, energetic and, above all, they desire to make connections with kids over the summer and point them to Jesus.

One of the most exciting SICM activities of the summer is Backyard Bible Clubs. This year, SICM is running a Vacation Bible School called "Galactic Starveyors" at five different locations throughout the community. Last year more than 330 children participated in a College Church Backyard Bible Club throughout the summer.

That translates into one solid week, two hours a day, when SICM leads the children in music, lessons, drama, crafts, games and small group time to drive home the key verse and Bible teaching for the day. Each day has a gospel focus. Some of the sweetest things to watch at a BBC are the way the children interact with each other and the SICM leaders.

Last year a few of our neighbor girls came with us to a BBC. In the car to and from BBC each day, they would sing the songs they were learning. These girls don't attend a church regularly, so I am thankful they heard the good news of Jesus in a fun, powerful, engaging way—and they will be back again this year. To quote one of the little ones, "I love SICM! I wish there was a Backyard Bible Club every day!!"

Here's what Elise Roberts, this year's director of SICM, has to say about why she has returned to SICM this year:

"I am back with SICM because everyday I have the opportunity to love kids and share Jesus. There is nothing I would rather do than these two things. It's such a privilege! Last year I loved leading SICM because I saw how the Lord used the unique gifts and talents of my team members to serve him. I'm excited to see how he does that again this year."



Elise also expressed appreciation for those who open their homes (and backyards) to host these children. "Something special to me about Backyard Bible Clubs are the host families. These families give up their home to reach out in their community and proclaim the name of Jesus. We are so thankful for their willingness to serve in this way!"

Why do parents send their children to Backyard Bible Clubs? To many parents, it's a free, wholesome activity their children love. From my perspective, there's the extra bonus of their children making connections with the SICM team and with each other. And throughout the two hours, they hear the gospel every single day! Between the crafts, games and small group time, children walk away singing about Jesus and looking forward to the next day.

Do join us in prayer for the kids in our community. Please pray that College Church families will be bold and invite neighbors to a BBC near them. Please pray for the BBC host families as they reach out to their neighbors and invite children into their yards. Please pray for families who see a Backyard Bible Club sign to respond and encourage their children to attend.

2017 Backyard Bible Clubs locations

Backyard Bible Clubs are for children entering Kindergarten through sixth grade. There is no fee and no registration is required. Each Backyard Bible Club is the same. Please attend only one.

June 19-23

1:30-3:30 p.m. The Jones home 1No66
Ellis, Carol Stream

July 24-28

9:30-11:30 a.m. The Van Cleave home
1519 Gamon Rd, Wheaton

1:30-3:30 p.m. Partnering with Evangel
Baptist, 1900 Manchester Rd, Wheaton

July 31-Aug 4

9:30-11:30 a.m.: The Dennis home, 505
W. Prairie, Wheaton

1:30-3:30 p.m.: The Schroeder home
912 Cherry St., Wheaton