

Build Each Other Up.....by Lauren Rahe

“Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.” 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Recently my younger stepson, Jarret, was asked to join a select basketball team. He was so excited about this, even though we were a little nervous. He had only played about 2 years of Little Dribblers basketball and a season of 7th grade school ball, so experience-wise, he would be behind most of the team. Also, this was a team made up of players that were not from his school and had played together for a few years.

On his school team, he was one of the better players, but he is in 7th grade and is 6 feet 4 inches tall. This really isn't the norm for his age, and it isn't very hard to get the ball in the basket when most players come up to only his chest. We explained this all to him but told him we would support him if he wanted to play. This select team needed a tall center, and he wanted to play, so we dove in head first. I don't believe any of us were prepared for the level of play witnessed at the first tournament. For the first time, Jarret was not the tallest kid in a room. There were a few kids that were just as tall as him, and the ones that were shorter were so good, they could shoot 3 pointers right over his head. As the first game began, I saw the confidence go right out of him and nervousness move right in. At the end of the game, all we could do was encourage, and build him back up. We let him know that with practice and hard work, he would get better and better and be unstoppable.

At Ubi Caritas, our ministry is designed to build our participants up to make healthy changes for their lives. In our *Becoming a Mom* prenatal classes, we build up the confidence of expecting mothers while teaching them about healthy pregnancies and motherhood. In our *Diabetic Education* classes, we offer support to our clients that have to make drastic changes in life styles so they can have a long, healthy, fulfilling life. In our *Health is Hip* programs, we give children the tools and confidence to go against peer pressure and make healthy nutrition and lifestyle choices for themselves. We also encourage them to help their families make those changes.

In all of our programs, we don't just give the tools needed to make those changes; we give the ongoing case management support after. This makes the difference in lasting changes because our clients have us as ongoing cheerleaders to help them celebrate their successes and also build them back up if they stumble. We have watched my stepson get better and better with every practice and game... just like we watch our patients succeed with each positive step.