

Every child and youth growing into a healthy adult



Spot 31, Inc., has its roots in the congregation of St. Matthew's United Methodist Church in east side Tulsa.

One evening in the summer of 2011, a small group of St. Matthew's adults sat down for their Wednesday evening meal and worship service. As they served the meal, two elementary-aged children walked in the door. They smelled the food and the adults invited the children to join them. They all ate and talked for a while. The congregation found out they lived right next door, and told the children they were welcome to come by anytime.

The next week the two neighborhood children returned and brought along two friends. These friends then brought friends, and these friends brought more friends. In just a matter of months, the church went from serving twenty adults to feeding eventually eighty neighborhood children (and anyone else) who would show up on a Wednesday evening.

St. Matthew's had no children's program, no gym, no fancy playground. Yet, every Wednesday at 4:30 sharp, the crowd of elementary and middle school kids would begin to gather. They just wanted to hang out until dinner, eat, talk to each other and the adults, and then hang out some more.

St. Matthew's took a good look at their east side Tulsa neighborhood, and discovered it was one of the most diverse multi-cultural neighborhoods in the country. Located on 31st Street between 129th East Avenue and Garnett Road, the neighborhood was 41% Caucasian, 32% Hispanic/Latino, 13% Black, 4% Asian, and an additional 10% comprised of a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. As many as 15 languages were being spoken.

St. Matthew's also discovered that more than 20% of area children lived below the poverty line. At least 1/3 of the children were experiencing food insecurity, with some area schools were providing subsidized meals to 100% of their students. The neighborhood was poorer than 75% of the rest of the country. The church also discovered that public schools were overcrowded and underfunded, and that the crime rate was three times the US average.

The congregation finally understood. Their unexpected visitors simply wanted a hot meal and a place to feel safe for a few hours, among trusted adults. These children found in St. Matthew's persons to champion them, to step up to the plate for them, and to start tackling some of the social, educational, and physical needs of kids throughout east side Tulsa. Because of all of this, the small, aging St. Matthew's congregation had become "The Spot" for east side children and youth to gather.

In the fall of 2014, in order to do even more for east Tulsa families and children, St. Matthew's United Methodist Church birthed **Spot 31, Inc.** as an independent charitable organization.

Spot 31 bridges the developmental gaps of children and youth through partnerships with east Tulsa schools and selected organizations.

Spot 31, Inc. 12424 E 31st, Tulsa Oklahoma, 74146

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Spot 31 is a registered non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation which sees every child and youth growing into a healthy adult. We believe this can best be done by bridging the developmental gaps of children and youth through partnerships with east Tulsa schools and selected organizations. **Spot 31** is currently in partnerships with both Union and Tulsa public schools. With the help of grants, private donations, and partnerships with local businesses, we design, facilitate, and finance several asset-building programs, including after-school clubs and a robust educational tutoring program--both growing faster than imagined. We also offer a six-week summer STEM camp, and all of our programs are provided with little or no charge to families or schools (and, we continue the original Wednesday evening meal and drop-in program).

Spot 31, Inc. is a faith-based, United Methodist organization with an ecumenical and interfaith perspective. Our Christian motivation is to love our neighbor. Spot 31 is committed to helping children and youth secure an asset-based education which includes experiencing and appreciating the diversity of cultures, languages, and beliefs in east side Tulsa—including their own.

With the support of individuals, businesses, organizations, and the community, **Spot 31** is thriving and growing. Our intention is to continue to strengthen the schools, families, children and youth of east side Tulsa for years to come.

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