

*"I love First Priority because it gives every student an opportunity to interact with the gospel. No matter what background they have or how much they know or don't know about the Bible, First Priority allows them to know and understand the gospel at their own level."*

~ Kyle Lassen, from Boca Community Church

*"What an incredible ministry. I owe where I am today in large part to First Priority."*

~ Former Student, current businessman

*"I am really excited to be a part of this generation's mission to spread the Love and Grace of Jesus Christ. I have felt so welcomed with every interaction and know The Lord is utilizing us (First Priority) for a reason and I know he wants me to take part in this."*

~ Pastor Daniel Lopez, New Life Church, Cocoa

WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING ABOUT FIRST PRIORITY

”

Now **THAT'S**

# Good News!

25 YEARS OF



JUNE 2023 EDITION | FIRST PRIORITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

25 YEARS OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

## A Word from Chris Lane, Executive Director and Founder of First Priority for the last 25 years

Time sure does fly... I can't believe it has been 25 years since First Priority was born here in South Florida.

The vision came out of a burden to see the Gospel penetrate our public school campuses by uniting Churches. I was a part of a group of Youth Leaders that had formed great relationships through prayer and fellowship and the Lord gave us a common heart to reach lost teens in our schools. After much prayer and a leap of faith, God called me to start First Priority of Broward. At that time, I really thought it would take a lifetime to have a First Priority Club on the 40 middle and high schools currently existing in Broward. Funding was secured and a friend from church donated a van (our mobile office, carrying Bibles and pizza to campuses). First Priority was launched and clubs were started. The vision was not to have a safe space on campus to protect Christian kids but rather to share the Light of Christ in the darkness.

**Research shows that 95% of students on public school campuses do not know Christ.**

Church relationships were strengthened with the unified focus to equip, empower and encourage students to go on a **9 month mission trip on their public school campuses**. It came with great excitement when students were trained, clubs were going and lost students were getting saved and starting to go to church ... how cool is God! For the next 25 years we continued to stay true to the call and remain focused on connecting the church to reach the campus for Christ. After about 5 years in, we expanded into Palm Beach, then Miami-Dade and Martin and now look what the Lord has done we are all the way up into the Space Coast (Brevard County).

God has given us great favor and has kept us from getting off track with the many distractions the enemy throws our way. I am grateful to be a part of this movement and humbled that God would allow me this opportunity.

I don't know exactly how many schools I've been to, and FP Clubs I have shared the Gospel at, but in the last 25 years I have been able to experience something very special. I've seen students hear a clear presentation of the Gospel and respond to an invitation right on campus and begin a new life in Christ - AMEN!



Currently there are **292** public schools in our community that have a First Priority Gospel Outreach Club. Recently we started Game Day which is a new concept of First Priority on elementary campuses... the future of Game Day is HUGE! God has given us favor to reach these younger children with the Hope of the Gospel. In those early days, I never imagined that God would grow us to this size and impact and that only goes to show that it is all about HIM. What the future holds is totally up to the Lord but I am super excited about the direction He is leading us and I can't wait to see what happens in the next 25 years!

*To God be the Glory!*

## A Word From Fred Revell, Associate Director for the last 22 years

The requests that we make of God in prayer, which align with his purpose and plan, never expire!"

When I was invited to reminisce a bit about the early days of First Priority and to offer a current highlight in this special edition of our newsletter, this understanding about prayer came to heart and mind.

So please allow me to take you back in time before there was a First Priority ministry in South Florida. For several years youth pastors had been



coming together to plan and participate in an annual weekend student discipleship conference. The lead in the effort was Chris Lane who served at one of the larger churches in our community. Chris, among his many gifts, has the ability to recruit others to participate in awesome experiences. An element of a particular collaboration was to start praying that God would call youth pastors to set aside their brands and to unite as a band of brothers and sisters who lead youth ministries to equip, empower, and encourage their students to come together in an effort to bring the gospel to their middle and high school campuses through student-led clubs. Out of this prayer initiative, God called Chris from his church to begin First Priority in Broward County. In 1998 not only were the first few campus clubs started but the commitment to calling youth pastors to prayer continued. We would meet regionally one Sunday evening a month to pray for each other, to pray that students would reach their campuses and that God would unite the church to bring spiritual awakening to our community.

As for me, I, having served for a couple of years as a campus coach, was blessed to be the first additional team member in 2000. And God continued to grow the ministry year after year.

Early in the 2000s, First Priority partnered with a ministry in upper New York called Joshua Revolution. They had created a multi-day equipping and empowerment experience for students and had years of successful regional ministry impact. God used two of these conferences in Broward County to set the course of First Priority for the next two decades as core to the initiative was strategic prayer and uniting the church. We learned how to pray

*Continued on page 2*

PRSR STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
JACKSONVILLE, FL  
PERMIT NO. 2840

**First Priority of South Florida**  
5120 N. Federal Hwy  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33308



HISTORY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

more effectively and we grew in our ability to raise up volunteers in the community, across church and denominational lines, to fulfill the mission. This was demonstrated in that while there were only three team members on the First Priority staff, a conference that served thousands of students and adult leaders was engaged with excellence and impact.

As I remember the themes of those two conferences, ‘Prepare the Way’ and ‘The River of God’, I see a correlation of God’s faithfulness as he continues to answer the prayers and missional focus embedded within them. God has graciously prepared the way on hundreds of campuses to receive the Good News of Jesus Christ. And the river of this ministry’s mission and passion has flooded beyond geographical borders and is now impacting eight counties!

As I wrap this up please allow me to share with you how the prayers of old continue to be answered today. A year ago a teacher at a middle school more than an hour west of our ministry field reached out to First Priority asking how we might help him get a club on his campus. We were able to come up with a plan that would resource him in reaching those kids in a community engulfed in spiritual darkness

and despair. Last year that club grew from 6 students to an average of over 20. We reengaged with the faculty sponsor again this year but with an enhanced ministry model that God provided for us. Not only were we working on connecting churches to reach the campus but, over the course of this year, we teamed up with two other campus oriented ministries to make a greater impact at the school. As a result First Priority, in partnership with Young Life and Fellowship of Christian Athletes, saw the club double in size. The last club meeting in May witnessed 50+ students in attendance and God poured out his blessings in that 24 of them made life changing faith decisions in response to the gospel! God is so good and faithful.

We thank God for the prayers of old, of our early partners, and the prayers offered in the decades that have followed.. for God continues to answer them. And for those of you who may have joined us more recently, please recognize that your current prayers are a bridge to God’s power, protection and provision in reaching generations with the gospel and uniting churches and ministries in this mission for the next 25 plus years.

To read more about our history please visit [www.FirstPriority.cc/history](http://www.FirstPriority.cc/history)



MISSION AND VISION

THE **MISSION** OF FIRST PRIORITY IS TO TAKE THE HOPE OF CHRIST TO EVERY STUDENT.

THE **VISION** OF FIRST PRIORITY IN SOUTHEAST FLORIDA IS TO CONNECT THE CHURCH TO REACH EVERY STUDENT ON EVERY PUBLIC SCHOOL CAMPUS WITH THE HOPE OF CHRIST THROUGH A FIRST PRIORITY AFFILIATED CAMPUS CLUB.

BY THE NUMBERS

Past:

- Over the last 25 years, it is estimated that over **80,000** kids have responded to the gospel through their involvement with First Priority of South Florida.
- Over the last 25 years, it is estimated that over **50,000** Bibles have been given out.
- In the last 25 years, over **100,000** pizzas have been brought on campus.
- In the last 25 years, over **120,000** donuts have been handed out at First Priority Clubs.

Present:

- We are on **294** public school campuses across the state!
- In this school year alone, over **3,340** students have given their lives to Christ!
- In this school year, over **481** students were connected to a local Church!

FIRST PRIORITY MILESTONES

Dawson McAllister Student Conference at First Baptist Church Fort Lauderdale brings youth ministers together. (Chris Lane is chairman of the conference and youth minister at First Baptist Church Fort Lauderdale).



Broward County youth groups begin to meet together for quarterly youth events.



There are 40 campus clubs in Broward with expansion into Palm Beach County.

First Priority expands into Martin County Schools.



EARLY 1990s



First Baptist Church Fort Lauderdale

Dawson Conference

1996/97

1998

The first four First Priority campus clubs start during the school year.

2003

2006

First Priority expands into Miami Dade County Schools.



2007

2009



There are 110 First Priority campus clubs in South Florida.



THIS YEAR! 2022-2023

# How First Priority has changed my life

A full circle moment By Danny Somers



“When I was 16 years old I went to Coral Springs Charter School. I was a bum kid on the streets. I wasn’t a Christian, my parents weren’t Christians, I didn’t grow up in a Christian household and I couldn’t have cared less.

But there was this club that met every Wednesday after school, and once a month they had free pizza. And listen, I couldn’t care less about what they were talking about, but free pizza? If it’s free it’s me, I’ll show up. So I came, faithfully, for free pizza. I showed up every month, and I came and I listened. Someone preached and they probably did a good job, but I just came for free pizza. I came, month after month. One month, three months, and then on the fifth month I came in, and as I was leaving with my free pizza; when someone stopped me, someone from the club, and they said “Hey! We see you here... every time! What’s your name?” I was absolutely shocked! I was like, “You actually care about me? You actually want to know about me and who I am?” And they said, “Yes!” That was the first inclination to me that Christians were kind, they were loving, and they were caring, and First Priority really cared about people. This student got to know me and built a relationship with me, and soon I started coming for the weeks that there wasn’t pizza, just because someone cared about me and got to know my name.



Then I was invited to a church! One of the students told me, “Hey I go to a student ministry on Wednesday nights.” And my first response was, “Is there free pizza there?” And they said, “Yes!” So, I showed up. I showed up to a Church service that I’d never been to before, and I was absolutely blown away. I thought it (Church) was old and weird, but it was relevant and real. The message spoke to me personally and the Gospel hit me. I went to a summer camp in 2010 and I gave my life to Christ. Everything changed. What’s beautiful is, when I was 16, I was the bum kid who showed up for free pizza, and the very next year I was the president of the First Priority club. Then the year after that I graduated and I became the campus coach of that First Priority club. And then, a few years after that, I went into ministry, I got hired at my church, and later First Priority hired me to oversee a region! I became a youth pastor all because someone cared enough about me to get to know my name, share the gospel with me and invite me to church. For me, it all started with First Priority. I don’t know where I’d be if it weren’t for First Priority.”

Currently, Danny works for us as one of our Broward County Area Advisors all while being the Youth Pastor of First Baptist Church of Fort Lauderdale. His passion and love for the youth in our community is inspirational and we are beyond thankful for how the Lord is using him through his heart for our community.

ON CAMPUS

# What they are saying about First Priority

*"Our students are proudly standing tall as "lighthouses," and the transformation we have seen within our student body is incredible. We can feel the presence of Jesus on our campus, more than ever! I have watched students make better choices, use kinder words, and get excited for this club every Wednesday afternoon. What a blessing!*

*Next year is going to be even better, and I am so thankful to be a part of this mission!"*

~ A note from one of our Faculty Sponsors



*"I just want to say I'm just really grateful for everyone that's here, all my friends and teachers and you guys who are involved with First Priority. Before I came here, I was super involved in ministry and would go to Church... and I used to be embarrassed of it. But now that I see my friends doing it and I see people who I know being involved... It makes me want to be more involved and to want to come here more!"*


~ Student from Hollywood Hills High School




*"To me, First Priority is a BLESSING. To me this is the most important thing that's happening on campus; not just education. Especially in this moment, we need it so much, and at this time, it is so needed."*

~ Teacher sponsor from Lawton Chiles Middle School







Campus clubs are meeting at 200 campuses in the Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach and Martin County area.



Campus clubs are meeting at 200 campuses in the Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach and Martin County area.




Campus clubs are meeting at 200 campuses in the Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach and Martin County area.




Game Day Clubs are launched with the goal to reach students in elementary schools.

Clubs are back on campus! The first club in Brevard County is launched, expanding First Priority into the Space Coast.

There are over 290 campus clubs from Miami-Dade to the Space Coast! Over 2,800 students have accepted Christ just in this school year!




2016




2019

First Priority hires a full-time director in the Treasure Coast. We are also active in Indian County.



2020

All schools shut down due to the global pandemic. Clubs shift to online and in the year of 2020, over 924 club meetings happen over zoom!



2022

First Priority begins their 25th year of campus ministry.

2023

...lives changed because of the Lord, made possible because of you. Here's to so many more...



AREA UPDATES:

# High School & Middle School.



**Miami Directors: Mike Gault and Dwayne Eslick**

We started the year out with an all new staff and a big goal of 75 EPIC clubs so there were a ton of challenges. However, we serve a huge God that helped us grow in new and exciting ways as we reached our goal! Not only have we expanded into new communities all across Miami-Dade, we have strengthened the foundational presence of First Priority as a resource to the local church reaching students in the nation's third largest school district. Thanks be to God, the entire team in Miami-Dade is committed to continue the work through the next school year.



**Broward Director: Luke Still**

SO WE DID IT, Actually God did it!!! Broward reached 90 EPIC clubs for the 2022-2023 school year. It has been such an amazing journey to see how faithful God has been this year. From our first club at Taravella High back in August to our final club that just launched at Somerset North Lauderdale just two weeks ago, God has done more than we could imagine! To give you a glimpse into what I am talking about, check out this story from Somerset North Lauderdale. For over two years we were trying to launch a club at Somerset North Lauderdale, but to no avail. We were unable to find a teacher or an administrator that would be willing to host the club, but God works in crazy ways. God connected us with the middle school basketball coach that was willing to host the club for the last month of school. Our first meeting launched with 65 students, that's right 65 students! Oh the faithfulness of God to provide the right person to stand in the gap to reach students for Christ. It is a perfect reminder that God's plan is perfect.



**Palm Beach Director: Josh Lane**

God has abundantly blessed First Priority in Palm Beach County this school year. We are celebrating the fact that we finished this year with 46 campus clubs--the most that we have ever had in Palm Beach County! At Western Pines Middle School, one of nine of our brand new clubs this year, we had student leaders from Seminole Ridge High School join this club on a weekly basis and help train and equip the middle school student leaders on that campus. God is so good and we praise Him for all that He has done on campus this year. We are excited and expectant to be on over 50 campuses in Palm Beach County next school year!



**Treasure Coast Director: John Harvey**

As the school year comes to a close, the Treasure Coast region has seen God work in some incredible ways. Two weeks ago, 60 students attended an EPIC club at Somerset College Preparatory Academy in Port St. Lucie. That day, 20 students made decisions for Christ. Our Game Day clubs have seen kids in 3-5 grade show up and hear about the gospel on their campus. It has been amazing to see how many have responded to the message of Jesus. We already have commitments from 6 schools to launch brand new clubs starting the next school year.



**Space Coast/Indian River Director: Joe Maldonado**

What an incredible year it has been here in Indian River County and on the Space Coast! As we kicked off the school year, we launched 8 campuses in our newest territory, the Space Coast. These 8 campuses were our groundbreaking campuses with Bayside High School being our first club. Now, as the year comes to a close, we have expanded to 21 campuses, with 4 more campuses set to join us in September. It is my projection that by the end of 2023, we will have a presence on 30 out of the 36 middle and high school campuses. We are experiencing a similar movement in Indian River County. We believe we will have a presence on all middle and high school campuses in the county by December 31st, 2023. Not only middle and high, but the Indian River District has expressed their desire for us to establish a Game Day Club on every Elementary Campus. This is so exciting! By the end of 2024, we could potentially have a presence on every elementary, middle, and high school campus in Indian River County.



I feel incredibly grateful to be a part of the First Priority team and witness the remarkable growth of our newest territories, going from zero to 21 campuses on the Space Coast in just 18 months. And potentially, being in every elementary, middle, and high here in Indian River County in just 3 years.

THE FUTURE: GAME DAY!



# Gospel focused elementary school clubs!

**Game Day Director: Lisette Telemaco**

We praise God for His faithfulness! FP Game Day is finishing up our 3rd year in the Treasure Coast and our 2nd year in Broward and Palm Beach. All glory to God for the fact that we have seen our numbers in clubs, volunteers, and students, more than double! By the grace of God, we have over 1,400 registered students that are being ministered to by over 400 volunteers each week at one of our 42 clubs on their public school campus! We have seen over 600 students give their hearts to the Lord!



As the 2022-2023 school year draws to a close, we have been hearing about how God has been moving in students' lives. They have been growing and reaching new milestones like being water baptized! Students have grown in their friendships and have truly appreciated being able to learn more about God each week. We've also heard from parents who have seen the direct benefit of Game Day on their child's lives. This month we recognized our 375 5th graders and gave them FP gift bags and encouraged them to join an EPIC club in middle school and continue their faith journey with FP!



**The vision, the reach and the possibilities!**

We are grateful for all He has done and so excited about what we trust He will do. There are so many more children that need to hear about the hope of Christ! There are over 300 more schools in just the counties we are currently in and 300 more in Miami and Brevard. These schools have nearly 200,000 3rd, 4th and 5th graders! The harvest is great, and we are excited to boldly step through whatever doors God opens knowing that the best is yet to come, and we are all in!

*"Every time I think about Game Day, I think about just how amazing God is!"*  
~Game Day Church Leader

*"Thank you all for a wonderful Game Day experience. My boys really enjoyed the combination of play and prayer. We appreciate everyone's time and energy into the program."*  
~Game Day Parent

*"The thing I most like about Game Day is that it's fun and you can learn about God more while you are having fun and I love the Game Day crew!"*  
~Game Day student

*"I love that the volunteers are living and showing the kids all the virtues that you are trying to teach them through the Bible. I just love being a part of it! We are able to, not only reach the children but their families as well."* ~Game Day Teacher Sponsor

**Broward Game Day: Brody Howell**

"May 28th Broward Gameday finished out the year and launched it's 25th Club at Pompano Beach Elementary School. "It has taken 9 months to get started but God was faithful with 31 kids attending and 25 children accepting Jesus."



**Palm Beach Game Day: Andrew Gottfried**

"It is so encouraging to witness 3rd-5th grade students leading their friends in faith. While they love the play time, the students' unanimous favorite aspect of Game Day is the lesson time. The students are praying during the club and learning weekly how to read the bible. It shows that the Game Day students are putting their learnings into practice when school faculty comment that they can tell which kids are involved in the club. Though they are young, these leaders are wanting to grow in their faith! To God be the Glory!"



For more information, please reach out to **Christy Keilen, Office Manager/Event Coordinator**

Visit our website: [www.firstpriority.cc](http://www.firstpriority.cc)  
Follow us on social media: @FirstPrioritySF  
Contact: 954.315.2222 or [info@firstpriority.cc](mailto:info@firstpriority.cc)



HOW TO GIVE

