

notes from

# the edge @ UC

a campus ministry gathering place



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*the edge*  
campus ministry  
gathering place

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the edge house at  
the University of  
Cincinnati is a  
ministry of and to  
the church universal  
and sponsored by  
Good Shepherd  
Lutheran Church,  
Cincinnati, Ohio

[www.  
goodshepherd.com](http://www.goodshepherd.com)

It's going on five years since a friend and mentor of mine introduced me to the campus ministries that operate out of The Edge House. In the time since that experience, my life has been through twists and turns, wondrous peaks and terrible valleys, that I could never have foreseen when I started my career as a Freshman. In the chaos of college life, it is startlingly easy to lose the sense of purpose and place; the new reality that incoming students face can scatter them emotionally, physically, mentally, and last, but not least, spiritually. It is there, where young people look for newness of life and renewal of spirit, where I think The Edge House really shines.

I should back up a little bit and tell you more about myself. My name is Billy Spies, and I have roughly three weeks until I am no longer counted among college undergraduates. I am an electrical engineer by talent and by choice. I love building things. I love exploring the world and the universe. Friday cookouts with friends are how I know there is a God. My favorite comic is *Calvin and Hobbes*. I love Graeters' ice cream. I am fiercely independent. I enjoy reading articles by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. And I do not think of God in the way that most people do.

This last fact is something I'm reminded of constantly when in the presence of other people. One of my best friends is a Catholic-turned-Atheist-turned-Buddhist. My former fiancé is a non-denominational Evangelical Christian. My minister is Episcopalian. My coffee mentor is a Nazarene, and the person who introduced me to all this is one part of a house church! In only spiritual matters, you can see how confusing it all is for a young person to come to a comfortable position and build from there. And, to pick back up from the start, that's where I think the Edge House really shines.

As I look back on my fondest experiences these past few years, I am not surprised that many of them exist because of the people (students and ministers) at



left: Jim Messner  
(Good Shepherd) and  
Sam Albert pack  
meals at the  
Freestore/Foodbank



right: Katie Brown  
cutting *Star Wars*  
cookies for NOSH  
Christmas

the Edge. Alice, Chris, and Jamie truly are the Lord's people; the discipleship groups, the espresso-making lessons, the games, the food, the mission trips, even the days on which we decide to clean the house, have all been invigorating and challenging and formative (yes, even some of the food) as a young Christian male. One of the big sayings among Edge House faithful is: "All may, some should, none must." If I had to break the Edge into two words, "acceptance" and "challenge" are the clear themes. An accepting attitude and lack of assumptions is a wonderful welcome mat on which young people can clear off their feet and stay a while. The spiritual challenge necessary to bring confidence, security, and spiritual growth to young people (regardless of spiritual status) then drives us to greater breadth and impressive height.

Even on my darkest of days, knowing Alice and other young people will be at the Edge on Sunday nights (or whenever you want to go over) to sing with, play games with, and hear God's word with is enough to get through nearly everything. I do not know what I would have done if I had never been to the Edge House, but I do know that I would not be as complete a person as I am today without the presence of the Edge at UC.

## Billy Spies - Cincinnati, Ohio

If you are interested in supporting the Edge campus ministry, you have three options:

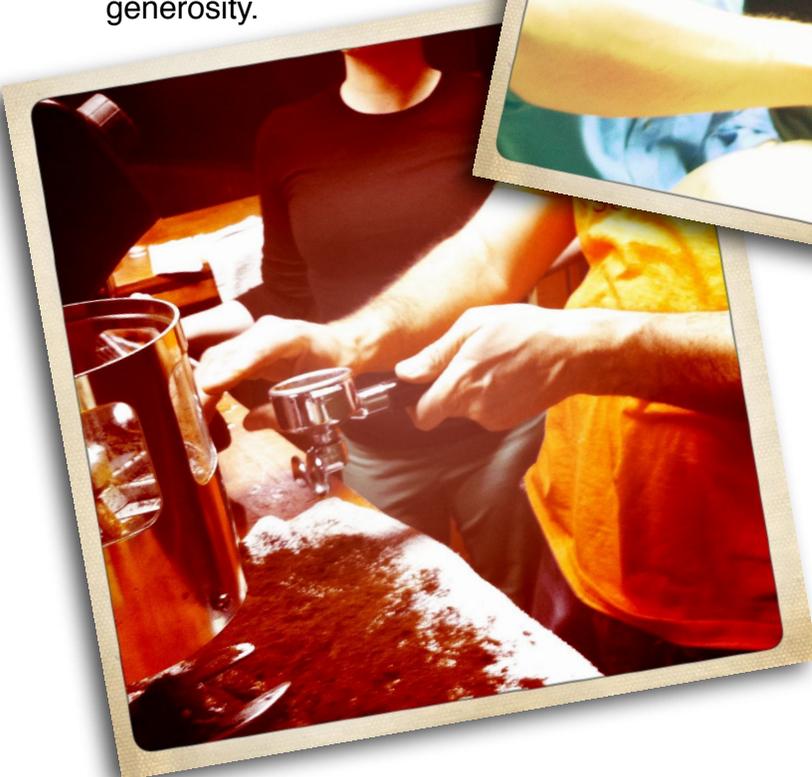
- regular prayer for our missions, for our students, for the UC campus
- a check made out to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church with "campus ministry" on the memo line
- an in-kind donation-- suggestions can be found on our website at [www.edge-uc.org](http://www.edge-uc.org) Many thanks for your generosity.



*above:* Edward Hyde and Billy Spies communing with caffeine

*left:* Olivia Beam and Chris Bean pulling shots

Both from the late-night espresso study break at Stratford Heights Dorm, March 2012



## Community

Writer (and prophet?) Kurt Vonnegut speaks of the granfalloon and the karass. The former is "a proud and meaningless association of human beings," a false community created around owning the same car or similar. The latter is true community, a group formed around a deeply powerful experience from which folks cannot separate themselves.

We've been talking about community in our discipleship groups this quarter-- how to define it, what makes it good versus bad, what we get out of it, what we *ought* to get out of it.

It seems that Edge House students want to be challenged, want to be changed by their community. They don't want to just consume but to give back, to be involved and needed. They want to hear truth in love, not niceness. They want karass, not granfalloon.

What does your faith community look like? How committed are you and they to speaking the truth in love? How do you invite connection?