

# Imago Dei Ministries, Inc.



On **March 9, 2001**, at the age of 23, Victor Junious experienced a wondrous vision given by God. This young talented musician, who had faithfully served his church, Mt. Eagle Baptist Church, as an organist, called a meeting with approximately 50 youth and young adults to express the calling God had for his life.

Having first-hand knowledge of juvenile delinquency from working at a juvenile detention center, Victor man spoke passionately about the impact the church could have on the lives of the youth if pro-social activities were created within our communities. His vision was for the church to create such programs that would give the youth rational alternatives to delinquent behaviors. The youth and young adults in attendance were excited about the movement and formed a community choir called *United Voices of Inspiration (UVOI)*.

On **Saturday May 19, 2001**, *UVOI* celebrated their inception by having their very first concert at Mt. Eagle Missionary Baptist Church. The ministry was established and incorporated with the State of Illinois as a non-profit charitable organization on **April 12, 2002**.

Three years later in **April 2005** *UVOI* hosted its first violence prevention workshop at Evangelical Christian School. More than 100 youth were in attendance. The ministry decided to make the violence prevention effort an annual event using the name, *Heal The Land Conference*.

In the fall of 2007, *UVOI* grew in numbers and in purpose and the name of the ministry was change to *Imago Dei Ministries Inc. (IDM)*, which is Latin for Image of God.

*IDM* celebrated in its first worship service under its new name on **Friday, November 23, 2007**. In **February 2009**, *IDM* was recognized by the Department of Internal Revenue Services as a 501c3 being classified as a charitable organization.

In **June 2009**, *IDM* launched a new effort, the *Panthers Basketball Program*. The program was designed to use the sport of basketball to promote positive pro-social ties, physical exercise, strength training, an opportunity to play basketball on a competitive level, and more importantly, increase our youth's level of self-worth. To date, the *Panthers* have coached and mentored hundreds of inner-city youth and have exposed many of them to tournaments across the states.

In **April 2012** *IDM* received a proposal to expand its services. Through the successes of effectively mentoring through our preexisting entities (community choir, Heal The Land, Panthers Basketball) *IDM* was asked by the Cook County Juvenile Probation Department if it would consider creating a mentoring program for males who were involved in the Juvenile Justice System. *IDM* accepted the challenge and piloted a three-month effort in the form of a male mentoring program for youth that were on juvenile probation in the 5<sup>th</sup> Police District of the City of Chicago. The 5<sup>th</sup> District covers the far Southside Communities of Roseland, West Pullman, and Altgeld Gardens. All of these have been determined to have high rates of violence, gangs, and drugs and also having one of the highest intakes of juvenile offenders in Cook County.

The pilot was to gauge if such efforts would reduce juvenile incarceration within the 5<sup>th</sup> Police District. *IDM* was given the opportunity to work closely with youth offenders during the summer of 2012. *IDM* was able

to expose court involved youth to positive resources outside of their communities including but not limited to: taking minors on an overnight trip to Bloomington, IL to visit Illinois State University, Heartland Community College, and Illinois Wesleyan University, taking several minors to their first Chicago White Sox baseball game, hosting weekly life skills sessions that addressed home life, education, peer groups, drug use, career choices, and much more.

Not even waiting for a determination from the Cook County Juvenile Probation Department on if the pilot was successful and would continue, *IDM* decided to make this an official entity of the ministry. On **August 31, 2012** *IDM* officially announced the birth of *P.E.N. (Positive Exposure Network) Pals Male Mentoring Program*. *P.E.N. Pals* has serviced more than 200 male youth probationers from the Southside of Chicago.

In **October 2014**, *D.O.V. (Daughters Of Virtue) Female Mentoring Program* was introduced. The program was designed to mirror its counterpart *P.E.N. Pals*, but focused on addressing the gender specific needs that pertain to young ladies. Just as effective, *DOV* has mentored and coached young ladies that are court involved. They have been exposed to women's retreats, etiquette classes, praise dance workshops, tent crusades and so much more.

Both mentoring programs have been used by the Probation Department as a Detention Reduction Program (DRP) and used by the community as an Alternative To Incarceration (ATI) partner.

In **October 2015** *IDM* had its name (*Imago Dei Ministries*) and its logo trademarked with the State of Illinois.





2009 Jaguars Summer League Champions (17U)



Anthony Davis  
1<sup>st</sup> Round NBA Pick





# DOV & PEN Pals Mentoring Programs

