

**OXFORD CIRCLE CHRISTIAN  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
ASSOCIATION**

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*To extend healing and hope in the Oxford Circle community, believing that God's purpose of reconciling all people to Jesus leads us to minister on spiritual, physical, social & economic levels.*



VOLUME 7, ISSUE 4

**NOTES FROM THE  
BELOVED COMMUNITY**

NOVEMBER 2013



**A WORD FROM THE PROPERTY/FINANCE MANAGER**

*We are excited to welcome Rich Rohrer formally as our new Property/Finance Manager. He will also be working on exploring opportunities for economic and job development in our community. He is long-time committed member of Oxford Circle Mennonite Church and most recently has been working as the Director of Operations & Human Resources at Esperanza Health Center.*

**Inside this issue**

- Rich Rohrer
- Exciting Update
- Festival photos
- Visit us on facebook!

I grew up on a dairy farm in Lancaster. In my family, farming was not only a tradition but a way of life for generations. When I was 14 years old, a neighboring farm came up for sale. My dad, thinking about the future, asked if I planned to farm. I answered yes; he and my uncle moved forward with purchasing the farm. This was a powerful model for me to understand the importance of investing in the next generation. Investing in the next generation is even more important in ministry. Jesus uses this farming analogy in Luke 10:2: "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into the harvest field."

About a decade ago, Oxford Circle Mennonite Church began asking the question: how do we intentionally invest in the future generations in this community. Out of this question the Oxford Circle Christian Community Development Association(OCCDDA) was birthed as a more specific conduit to reach our community with the gospel. By God's help and through partners across the Mennonite community, we were able to purchase a neighboring property and more than double the square footage of our meeting space. As the ministry has grown, God has regularly provided more workers for the harvest field.

Recently, God has been asking me personally what it means to invest in this community. Two years ago my wife and I moved to the block directly across from the church. More recently I have sensed a direction from the Lord to more directly invest professionally in Oxford Circle. Over the past 3 months, I have been transitioning out of my current role as Director of Operations at Esperanza Health Center and into a role at the OCCDDA.

Particularly, God has laid on my heart a desire for economic development or creating sustainable jobs in this part of the city. Like my father was willing to take a risk for the next generation to flourish, part of the vision of the OCCDDA is that God would raise up models of economic sustainability in this community. We hope and dream that through job creation, this generation and the next may learn new skills, walk in dignity as individuals created in God's image, and experience wholeness in Christ. Please pray that God would release His creativity, resources and energy for this endeavor. Isaiah 65: 22 "No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the work of their hands."

**UPCOMING DATES**

*Events - located at 900 E. Howell Street, 19149 unless otherwise indicated:*

- 21st CCLC After School Program, September 30, 2013 – June 20, 2014: 3-6pm,
- Monday-Friday GED and ESL Classes, September 16 – December 13, 2013: 6-8pm, Tuesday and Thursday
- Appreciation Dinner, November 15, 2013: 6:30 - 8pm
- Toy Store, December 15-21, 2013 (by appointment only)
- Board Meeting, December 3, 2013: 7:00-9:00pm

**NOTES FROM THE BELOVED COMMUNITY**

**Board of Directors**

**Officers:**

- Leonard Dow, President
- Hong Tran, Vice President
- Paul McCormick, Secretary
- Randy Kratz, Treasurer

**Members:**

- Jennifer Leaman
- Ken Rush
- Krista Yoder-Latortue
- Mary Dallasta
- Zahir Guess
- Pete Prunes



**"May my prayer come before you; turn your ear to my cry."  
Psalm 88:2**

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**REAL CHANGE**

We have an exciting update to share with you as our partners. We are just completing the **Real Change: Transforming People for a Lifetime ... and for Eternity** campaign for Oxford Circle Christian Community Development Association.

In 2009, we purchased a 40,000 square foot facility for \$3.55 million, which houses both Oxford Circle Mennonite Church and OCCCDA. We also rent 75 percent of the space to other groups with rental income covering our mortgage and maintenance costs, all organizations which complement the mission of OCCCDA in their service to our shared community.

The board of OCCCDA launched the **Real Change** campaign in 2012. In preparation, 100% of the OCCCDA board made a financial commitment to the campaign, including a sacrificial gift made by our youngest board member, a teenager from our community!

The goal was to raise \$500,000 to erase a short-term property loan and apply additional funds towards our mortgage debt. Our goal isn't simply to be debt-free. Our goal is to use the revenue generated from lease income and directly reinvest it back into ministry.

We have already seen tremendous progress. The original short-term loan was \$355,000. As of November 1, 2013, we have completely eliminated our short-term debt! Any additional funds raised can now directly reduce our long-term debt. More important, this campaign is freeing up important resources to invest directly in *bringing the gospel in word and deed* to the Oxford Circle community.

To help complete the **Real Change** campaign with strength, a close friend of OCCCDA offered a Matching Gift Challenge! This generous challenge matched every new and increased individual gift dollar-for-dollar up to \$25,000.00 for pledges made prior to November 15, 2013 and paid in full no later than December 15, 2013.

By God's grace and the generosity of many, we have raised more than \$319,000 already. With this challenge, combined with our other fundraising efforts, we believe we can reach the \$400,000 mark by the close of this calendar year.

We have tried to meet in person with those whom we thought would be interested in participating in the campaign. If this is something you would like to hear more about and we have not had a chance to meet with you yet, please contact us. We would love to share more about the **Real Change** Campaign with you. (contd on next page)

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**We want to thank those who selflessly volunteered their time as part of the steering committee and helped make this campaign possible.**

*Campaign Chair - James L. Rittenhouse, Shareholder at Detweiler, Hershey and Assoc.*

Jim is active in many community organizations including serving on the Board of Directors for Living Branches and Harleysville Savings Bank, and past Board Chairman for Indian Creek Foundation. Jim is excited to be working with Oxford Circle since he feels it makes a positive difference in people's lives. "We are each uniquely gifted and if in some small way I can help Oxford Circle minister to the surrounding community, then we put the redemptive work of Jesus on 'wheels.' Taking a risk for Jesus is what a Christian must do. The OCCCDA staff and volunteers do that every day."

*Prayer Team - Pastor Jim Leaman, Pastor of Oxford Circle Mennonite Church and resident of Oxford Circle from 1977 - 1997.*

Jim's son and daughter-in-law and their family live in the Oxford Circle neighborhood and are deeply involved with Oxford Circle Church. His daughter-in-law also serves on the OCCCDA board and his grandchildren attend school in the neighborhood. "I affirm the integrating of the "social" and "evangelical" aspects of the gospel which OCCCDA is putting into practice in its wholistic ministry to the Oxford Circle community, and I wanted to support the foundation of prayer which was being laid for the Real Change campaign."

*Congregational Partnerships - Duval Denlinger - Owner & President of Heacock Lumber*

Duval is married and has four children. He attends Blooming Glen Mennonite Church and currently serves as a Jr. MYF sponsor. "My original connection to Oxford Circle was through Leonard & Rosalie and attending OCMC from time to time. After having served for 2 years in Voluntary Service in Birmingham, AL, I am aware of the needs that exist in inner cities. To me, OCCCDA does an outstanding job of connecting with the local community by seeking to address and serve the needs of the community. It is a great example of how to be the hands and feet of Jesus to those around us."

*Board Solicitation - Dr. Hong Tran Montgomery - Physician at Fox Chase Hospital*

Hong is Vice President of the OCCCDA board and a member of Neshaminy-Warwick Presbyterian Church. She has two teenage daughters and volunteers with the NWPC youth. Hong believes in missions both overseas and locally and her involvement with OCCCDA grows out of that commitment.

*Communication - Anna Groff, Director of Grants, White Mountain S.A.F.E. House and Associate Editor of "The Mennonite"*

Anna and her husband currently live and work in Arizona. Anna recently completed a Master of Public Administration with focus in nonprofit management. She also has nonprofit board experience and volunteer work involving fundraising, development and event planning. In her work with "The Mennonite", the official publication of Mennonite Church USA, she has the privilege of interacting with a variety of congregations and ministries throughout North America.

*Major Gifts - Bishop Leonard Dow*

A former banker, Bishop Dow is the senior pastor of Oxford Circle Mennonite Church and chair of the OCCCDA board. In addition, Bishop Dow is a Bishop in the Lancaster Mennonite Conference, Mennonite Church USA and Vice Chair of the Board of Mennonite Central Committee USA.

