

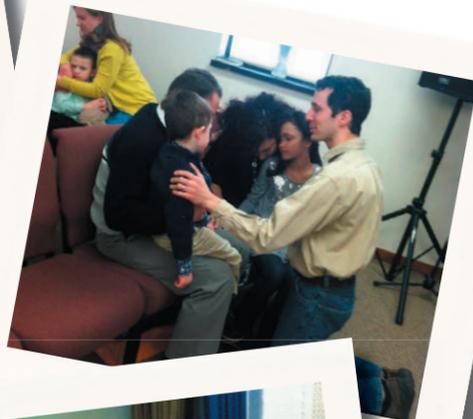
**OXFORD CIRCLE CHRISTIAN  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
ASSOCIATION**

900 E. Howell Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19149-3611  
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occcda@verizon.net  
www.occcda.org

*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.*



**NOTES FROM THE BELOVED COMMUNITY**



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VOLUME 7, ISSUE 4

**NOTES FROM THE  
BELOVED COMMUNITY**

MAY 2014



**A WORD FROM THE PROGRAM MANAGER**

**Inside this  
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Brittany's Story

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of Hope?

Meet our Staff!

Visit us on facebook!

**"The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners." Isaiah 61:1**

Isaiah 61:1 is a great way to sum up the Bridge of Hope ministry operated by OCCDA. Bridge of Hope is designed to provide single mothers who are homeless or about to become homeless with a holistic healing that will allow them to become all they were created to be in Christ. Through the BOH program OCCDA guides them with finding a place to live, financial literacy, assistance with credit repair, additional parenting skills and small group mentoring. The key to the success of BOH is the small group mentoring which provides discipleship like guidance. The small group provides the spiritual compass which will ultimately guide the BOH participants through the process of holistic healing.

It is through the spirit of the Lord that the passion and compassion of the small group flows as they share the good news with participants. It's not the words used in the group hosted by Tim and Jen Leaman but the actions of the group which model Isaiah 61:1 by providing an atmosphere where healing and freedom from spiritual bondage can take place. Many of us are held captive by our own "stinking thinking." Stinking thinking is those thought patterns that prohibit us from being all Christ created you and I to be. Stinking thinking is what keeps people in darkness and its ministry opportunities like BOH that liberates participants and those who are in the small groups. Through ministry, we invite Christ to work in us and through us so we can grow into being a reflection of Christ. Through our selfless helping of others we can be all we were created to be in our Lord.

Christopher A. Pender, Sr. MHS

Program Director

OCCDA

**UPCOMING  
DATES**

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

• 21st CCLC After School  
Program, September 30, 2013  
- June 19, 2014: Monday-Fri-  
day, 3-6pm

• 21st CCLC Summer Enrich-  
ment Camp, June 30, 2014  
- August 7, 2014, Monday-  
Thursday 8:30am-3pm

• GED and ESL Classes, Sep-  
tember 15, 2013 - June 12,  
2014, Tuesday and Thursday  
6-8pm, Summer schedule TBD

• Back to School Festival, Sep-  
tember 13, 2014 12-4pm



Arabella and me. The program director helped me realize I had to let go of that pride and be receptive to the people who wanted to help me.

**My name is Brittany.** I have an amazing, beautiful, talented, loving two-year-old daughter named Arabella Rose. I have been involved with the "Bridge of Hope" program since June 2013, and I can say that this program is a blessing. In the beginning I was skeptical about the program because I have always been independent. I thought asking for help made me seem weak and lazy, until I realized that having a child meant I no longer lived life for me, it was now about

Every person I have crossed paths with has left such a big impact in my life. My mentor group is absolutely amazing and I cannot thank them enough for being such an excellent support system. They are so eager in making sure I stay focused on my goals, and always giving me such positive feedback. I always look forward to our group meetings. They have invited us to family functions, lunch dates, play dates—I feel as if I am a part of their family and there is no better feeling than that! They accept my daughter with open arms, and my daughter loves them which make me feel so much better. I can count on my mentor group for literally, anything! It is such a good feeling to know I have a group of people who are willing to go the extra mile for us.

I highly suggest this program to all single mothers experiencing poverty, homelessness, domestic violence or anything that is holding you back from being the best you can be. I know as mothers we want to give our child/children a better life than we had. You can do it, you can overcome anything. Accept that helping hand that wants to help you and your family; it will change your life for the better if you truly utilize it the right way.

## Can You Be A Bridge of Hope?

A few months ago, our small growth group was at a transition point. As we discussed doing our next study on community development and transformation, the idea of partnering with Bridge

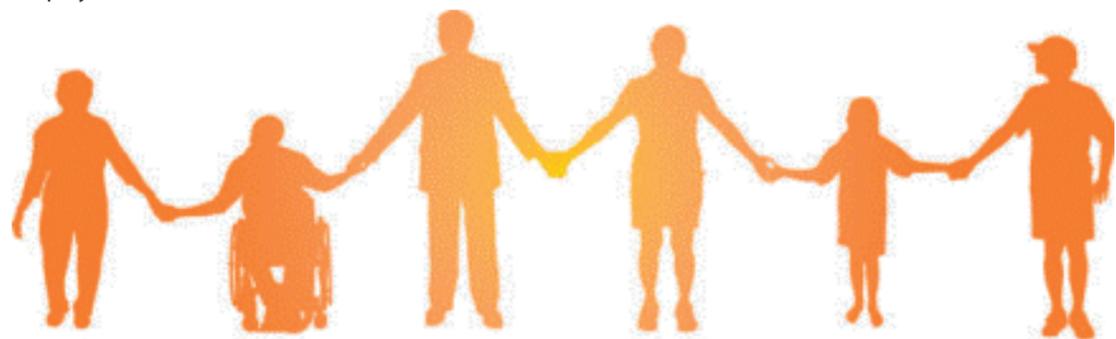
of Hope to live out some of those ideas resonated with our group. This involved intentionally befriending a woman and her family as they moved toward stable housing. We went through training on what to expect and what was expected of us. Then, we had our first meeting with Brittany and her daughter (top story).

It's only been a few months, so we are still new at this, still getting to know Brittany and Arabella, still figuring out how to be resources for her as she takes her next steps. But we can see God at work already. The monthly meetings with Brittany have been a chance for our group to get to know each other and Brittany better as we share meals and lives together apart from our regular study time. We alternate hosts for the meals, so we can now picture where others live. This also provides a variety of lifestyle models, housing options, neighborhoods, etc. Our group consists of many people at different life stages now moving naturally into roles as sources of parenting advice, regular encouragers, prayer warriors who lift up Brittany's job interviews, and play dates for Arabella.

Our small group has indeed moved into a study on community development, dealing with issues from commuter churches to how to respond to people who ask for money. These discussions help us to think through the mixed motives we have for helping others and the real possibility that sometimes our "help" may not sustainably change the other person's real needs.

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They challenge our commitment to our neighbor. Our involvement with Bridge of Hope keeps these discussions from becoming theoretical. It keeps us humble as we interact with Brittany and with one another, mindful of our own need for mutual help even as we seek to provide support for Brittany.



## Meet our Staff!



**Marjorie Augustin**  
Bridge of Hope Case Worker

Marjorie is a mother to five beautiful children between the ages of 10 and 19. Marjorie has a background in nursing and experience in talk radio. Marjorie attends Oxford Circle Mennonite Church, lives in the Oxford Circle community and has a passion for her community to experience the love of Christ. In her role at the OCCEDA as a Social Worker, Marjorie works directly with at risk single mothers and their children and connects them to the Bridge of Hope program. As a Bridge of Hope Social Worker, Marjorie enhances the strengths of the family, teaches budgeting and life skills, trains and supports mentors, and allocates rental assistance for rapid rehousing. The OCCEDA currently has two participants and mentor groups. The Bridge of Hope program is supported through the generosity of donors and foundations.



**Lauren Moyer**  
Advancement Coordinator

Lauren grew up attending Blooming Glen Mennonite Church and graduated from Goshen College with a B.A. in American Sign Language Interpreting. After getting married in 2011 Lauren and her husband moved to Philadelphia and started attending Oxford Circle Mennonite Church. She began volunteering with the Out of School program and was later hired to teach math in both the Out of School program and Summer Camp. Lauren took a break from teaching and interpreting after becoming the proud mother of a baby girl last year in April. Lauren rejoined the OCCEDA staff in January, and is responsible for coordinating donor appreciation and planning events to communicate the mission of the OCCEDA.



**Precious Washington**  
EDGE Instructor & Youth mentor

EDGE (Excellence Drives Growth Every day) – Precious grew up in North Philadelphia where she attends Deliverance Evangelistic Church. Precious recently graduated from Millersville University with a degree in Psychology. At the OCCEDA, Precious works in several different capacities including mentoring local high school students who volunteer at the Out of School program, and overseeing the EDGE program. The EDGE program takes place at Carnell Elementary (the elementary school servicing the Oxford Circle Community) and in partnership with Philadelphia Mennonite High School. The EDGE program includes team building exercises, reflection, and relationship building skills. In the EDGE program mentoring relationships are used to build a strong sense of self-worth, awareness of others as God's creation, and peacemaking skills.



**Katie Gard**  
Out of School & Summer Program Coordinator

Katie recently graduated from Azusa Pacific University with a Masters degree in Transformational Urban Leadership. While completing her degree she lived in Manila, Philippines in a poor, urban neighborhood studying ministry. Katie attends Oxford Circle Mennonite Church and joined the OCCEDA in March coordinating the Out of School and Summer Camp Programs. Every weekday after school, and for 6 weeks in the summer, OCCEDA's classroom space is bustling with K-8th grade students (30 students in the After School Program and 60 students in the Summer Camp). The Out of School Program and Summer Camp are specifically designed to supplement areas of learning and support the local public schools which have limited extra curricular activities due to lack of funds. We are excited to offer engaging educational enrichment programs in the areas of Literacy, Science, Technology, Engineering, Math, Arts & Activities, and Conflict Resolution.

### Volunteer Opportunities

Looking for a way to impact young lives? We're looking for volunteers to join us for our Out of School & summer programs, especially for special-interest activities (gardening, dance, astronomy, etc.), snack & homework time, and field trips!

Summer Camp 2014 will run Mondays-Thursdays from June 30th to August 7th. Contact Katie at 21stCCLC@occcda.org for more information.