

**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.



NOTES FROM THE BELOVED COMMUNITY

CARNELL MURAL PHOTOS CONTINUED...



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Volume 9, Issue 4

**NOTES FROM THE
BELOVED COMMUNITY**

NOVEMBER 2015



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A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

Standing tall and shouting our praise!

"5¹⁻² By entering through faith into what God has always wanted to do for us—set us right with him, make us fit for him—we have it all together with God because of our Master Jesus. And that's not all: We throw open our doors to God and discover at the same moment that he has already thrown open his door to us. We find ourselves standing where we always hoped we might stand—out in the wide open spaces of God's grace and glory, standing tall and shouting our praise.

Upcoming Dates

An Evening of Thanksgiving with Ruth Naomi Floyd at OCCDA, November 20: Meet and greet artist, 6:30-7pm, Program, 7pm

Christmas Toy Store, December 14-19th: by referral only

21st CCLC After School Program, September 28-June 2015 : 3pm- 6pm

Adult Education Classes September 15-June 2016: 6pm-8pm, Tuesday and Thursday

I've reflected here before on the need to be faithful, to stand here where God has called us in Oxford Circle. God calls us to faithfulness but he brings the increase. The verses and translation above fit with my reflections lately, the way God is bringing an increase above and beyond what we could imagine for Oxford Circle, opening doors to new and amazing opportunities.

This fall, we are in the midst of implementing plans approved by the Philadelphia School District with Carnell Elementary School's Redesign Team. The team is led by the School Principal and includes School Teachers, Leaders, Parent Representatives, and Oxford Circle CCDA. The school is transitioning to project-based learning and our part is the development of a Family Resource Center that will be housed on-site at the school. If we are able to implement the plan outlined by the Redesign Team, we will impact the education and lives of 1000 elementary students and their families annually! The school currently is in the bottom 25% of schools in Philadelphia but the bold vision of the Redesign Team calls for it to become the premier project-based learning school in Philadelphia.

As one of our board members said, "How does a faith-based organization with a mission statement like ours get an invitation from the School District to provide services on site?!" While I think it is in part due to the level of need in the School District, it is also due to the miraculous and amazing ways that God has and continues to open doors for us. This includes a School Principal and Leadership Team that seeks out and has an open door to the community and has spent countless hours going above and beyond to do a "new thing". Please join us in "standing tall and shouting our praise" at the way God has and continues to work. Also please pray with us that this plan would bear fruit, that the School Leaders and Teachers would be strengthened and encouraged and that the children of Oxford Circle would receive the high quality education they deserve.

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER AT CARNELL ELEMENTARY

As a supporter of OCCCDA, you may have heard us mention our local public elementary school, Carnell, as a prayer request, and our recent partnership with them in planning a successful redesign proposal. Starting this year, Carnell is implementing an exciting and innovative educational approach called Project-Based Learning. As we were planning and dreaming about redesign last year, we started to realize that any educational approach alone, albeit an innovative one, would have limited success if the social and spiritual challenges holding families back were not also addressed.

As a result of God's answers to many prayers, Carnell has been incredibly open to partnering with OCCCDA and has invited OCCCDA to take the lead in developing a Family Resource Center in the school!

Many children and families at Carnell face non-academic barriers that become distractions to learning for the students and sometimes their entire class. The Carnell Family Resource Center (CFRC) will partner with children, their families, teachers and community partners to identify these barriers and reduce their impact on the family and the classroom. In addition, as a church community, we can be specifically praying for the families that walk through the doors of the CFRC. This is a unique opportunity!

We believe that true restoration of neighborhoods includes quality educational opportunities for all children regardless of their zip code or life circumstances. In an era of decreased educational spending, schools need to be increasingly creative in how they service their students. OCCCDA sees this partnership to be a true community response to the needs that have arisen in our school.

To date, there is a designated space within Carnell Elementary School, although the room needs some repairs to function as a resource center. The School District began renovations on Oct. 19, the same day we received a grant from the *Clemens Family Foundation* to cover space enhancements, the furniture and technology to make this space a fabulous resource for families!

We plan for the Family Resource Center to be operational in November. In the meantime, OCCCDA is working with coordinator, Jen Leaman, and Temple MSW intern, Bianca Morales, to establish relationships with families and develop organizational structure for the CFRC.

Welcome to our new staff members!



Jen Leaman

My family and I attend OCMC and my children all have attended Carnell Elementary so I have been involved with OCCCDA's partnership with Carnell for some time. It is a blessing to see our prayers being answered through the Family Resource Center. With a Master's degree in Social Work, my background has been in community development and program management. More recently, I've spent time volunteering at Carnell. I have lived in Philadelphia for 18 years and am passionate about seeing quality educational options for every child in our city.



Bianca Morales

Psalm 34:18 says, "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit". I am currently a graduate student at Temple University, and excited to intern with OCCCDA. I believe that God has put me in this program and at OCCCDA as a way to live out what is stated in the above verse. Reconciliation, renewal, and healing are needed within the Oxford Circle community, and I am excited to be an agent of change for the community and to demonstrate the love of God.



Fiona Baynard

Fiona was raised in her mother's hometown in Germany, and received a B.A. in Asian Studies with a focus on Arabic linguistics and translation at the University of Bonn, Germany in 2014. She then enrolled in the M.A. International Studies program, focused on human rights and conflict resolution at the University of San Francisco. She is now writing her thesis in Philadelphia, while teaching cross-cultural awareness and conflict resolution in OCCCDA's After School program. Upon graduation, she plans to work with refugees who have made their way to Germany.



Tonya Delatorre

Hello my name is Tonya, I'm from a small town called Baker City, Oregon. A year after graduating high school in 2013, I joined Mission Year, an organization where people come to be in solidarity with a specific community. Philadelphia is very different from my little town but I love it. I love the youth at Oxford Circle and being a kid myself. I cannot wait to see what OCCCDA has in store for me on my journey.

Summer Campers Paint Mural at Carnell Elementary

This summer Carnell Elementary partnered with OCCCDA in painting a mural for the school. The mural is meant to depict Project based learning and the opportunities for growth it gives students. All the students who participated in painting the mural were excited to be able to put a permanent mark on the school, and finishing it was joyous for everyone. I'm so thankful for the personal opportunity to be a part of designing the mural and instructing the students and cannot wait to see how it continues to affect the community even after this summer.

~Matia Jones, Temple University Art Student



Photos continued on back...