

NOTES FROM THE BELOVED COMMUNITY

SEPTEMBER–DECEMBER 2007

WELCOME TO OCCDA

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **Community Festival:** September 8, 2007, 12:00-4:00 pm
- **Mentoring United Way Training:** September 23, 2007, 10:00 am–12:00pm
- **Upcoming Board meetings:** September 23, 2007, October 28, 2007, November 25, 2007

This has been a busy and exciting summer. It started with our Summer Education Program in July which averaged 25 children each day! Our summer intern from Goshen, Peter Koontz, did a great job teaching the participants what it meant to “walk a path of peace” in challenging times. The program culminated with the kick-off for our new mentoring ministry.

September 8th was our seventh Community Festival. This year we

had a board committee who did a fabulous job of both organizing and planning the day, as well as making sure we stayed on budget!

Our goal for this year was to be able to hire an executive director. Through funding from Compassion Capital Fund, we now have the capacity building funding to hire a director! Our next goal is to find funding to



Three on Three Basketball Champions—Festival 07.

begin an after school program this next fiscal year.

Thank you for your prayers and financial support that have made it possible to have such an exciting year!

~Anita Lyndaker-Studer, Editor

A WORD FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?

These are the words on a banner hanging in OCMC that was created by our own Anita Lyndaker-Studer (OCCDA Vice-Chair) over 7 years ago. According to the prophet Isaiah, a day is coming soon in which what occurred in their past where intersection of God story and human story at the Exodus will pale in comparison to what is yet to come in Jesus Christ. In fact, according to the text of the prophet Isaiah the day of which is spoken will be seen or recognized by only those who "Forget the former things; (and) do not dwell on the past." God wanted them to know that their immediate circumstance though grave, could not lead them to merely dwell on the good old days of the Exodus.

I shared this reflection recently as we celebrated our new congregational mission statement and vision for mission. The sermon was as much a reminder to me as the congregation that God in instructing the children of Israel was also warning us today to not simply live in the past but rather learn from our history, while boldly living in the present. Though OCCDA is a relatively new entity, the reality is that the vision for many of the programs that we now administer began well over 10 years ago in the minds and hearts of the congregation. It is in this historical context that today we can celebrate our past yet be ever present in discerning, listening to whom and what God is up to today.

“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not

perceive it.” Our answer to the ancient question proposed by Isaiah as it relates to OCCDA is a resounding YES!

~Pastor Leonard Dow



Pastor Leonard Dow, Board President, meets and greets at Festival.

OXFORD CIRCLE COMMUNITY FESTIVAL 2007

How do you describe the festival in 3 paragraphs? It lasted for only 4 hours so it shouldn't be difficult, right? Wrong. The festival itself is like the tip of an iceberg, the visible part of months of work by many people. Let me give you a glimpse of that day.

A big part of the festival is the children's activities. Blooming Glen Mennonite church rented and staffed several children's games. We gave out prizes to everyone who played. The battery operated toothbrushes and school supplies were a big hit. The Franklin Institute and Philadelphia Zoo made science and nature fun for both children and adults. Face painting, a clown with balloons, pony rides and a basketball tournament were also part of the children's activities.

The resource tent had a won-

derful variety of local social service and church agencies. We handed out close to 100 bags of food and school kits from MCC. People had access to information about health, the environment, local congregations and child and family services. Our prayer tent was a place of quiet where people could share their needs and pray. One young woman accepted Christ.

The music groups were great including Four Twenty-Four who continues to inspire us each year, not only with their music but also their love for Jesus. We had enough food to send some home with people. A major water crisis was resolved. We had plenty of volunteers. At the end of the day, we marveled, again, at God's work. While there were many people and many hours of work behind the festival, it was God who brought us all to that place,



Drumming for Peace from Mennonite Central Committee teaches the children to work together for peace .

at that time and who gave us the gifts that made it happen.

Funders and in-kind donations for the festival included: Cardone Industries, Blooming Glen Damascus Road Team, the Frankford-Oxford Circle Ministerium, Hatfield Meats, Mennonite Central Committee, and Friends of Senator Tagliione. In addition, many individual donors helped support the event. Please know that you are appreciated!

~ Karen Jantzi

Prayer Wall

Festival 07:

"Pray for peace in our city.

Make us part of the peace, Lord.

Keep our neighborhoods safe."

MENTORING PROGRAM KICKOFF

OCCDA is starting an exciting new program this Fall. For the past 4 years, we have run a Summer Education Program where we have connected with approximately 20-25 children annually. As a way of continuing these relationships, we are implementing a mentoring program. The mentoring program will be a one-on-one program, utilizing mentors from Oxford Circle Mennonite Church as well as interested persons involved in other local congregations. The program will kick-off this fall with 10-15 pairs of mentors/mentees. Funding for this project has been generously donated by the Latino

Coalition and Mustard Seed Foundation.

On September 22, OCCDA hosted a training session for interested mentors. A presenter from the United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania came and gave a thorough and informative overview of mentoring, developing relationships and child development. Seven mentors attended the morning training. The mentoring training served to provide a good foundation for mentors as well as to instill vision and excitement for the program.

Through the mentoring program, we hope to provide positive role

models for children, as many of us have benefited from mentoring relationships in our youth. It is our vision that many of the mentors and mentees will choose to continue these relationships for years to come, through high school and hopefully college and in a relationship with Jesus Christ. We are excited and privileged to be able to speak into the lives of our community's children. We also anticipate learning from them and growing together. We still have slots available for mentors. If you are interested, please contact us for an application.

~ Jennifer Leaman



Four Twenty-Four pumps up the crowd with their energetic praise and worship.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SUMMER EDUCATION PROGRAM

This summer I had the opportunity to direct the Oxford Circle Summer Education Program (SEP). The SEP programming took place from 1:30-4:00 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from July 10th until August 16th. Each day began with a recreational time at the field area of over at Oxford Village and then the group came over to the church for snack time, followed by prayer time, and finally an hour of programmed activity that differed each day of the week (art, reading, and music). After planning for and directing the program this summer I realized that I had as much to learn from the children as they did from me. I was inspired by the way the kids interacted with our theme for the program: “walking in the path of peace.”

Although there were definitely times throughout the program that were not ‘peaceful’ in any meaningful sense of the word, overall I was moved by how

the kids jumped in with many creative ideas of how to spread peace in the community (just a couple of the ideas: cooking for the poor, singing and dancing for sick people). Each day during the program the children worked with a different medium as they explored what it means to walk the path of peace.

On Tuesdays, Mrs. Vivian Dow helped the kids do various art projects that helped to express peacemaking. It was wonderful for me to see the kids work on various projects and get excited about making art projects or decorating visors that highlighted the importance of peace. Another favorite day was when Pastor Leonard, with the help of several volunteers, reenacted an incident in which he had to decide how to respond to a man getting beat up on the El in Chicago. After enacting the first part of the scene, the actors paused, and we asked

the kids to think of different ways that they would respond in a similar situation. It was fun to hear the creative, if not always peaceful, suggestions for responding to the situation.

Furthermore, I loved singing along with the kids as Peter Sensenig and Anne Hess led us in singing and motions in the song “Celebrate Jesus.” Or seeing the kids nod their heads to the beat as Cruz Cordero, a local Christian rapper, performed raps that promoted the gospel message of peace and reconciliation. Through all of these experiences working with the children and volunteers during the SEP I was blessed by seeing God’s face in new and exciting ways.

Peter Koontz ~ Intern

The summer program was made possible through funding from Oxford Circle Mennonite Church and Franconia Conference.



Young rider at Festival 07.

Prayer Wall Festival 07:

“Please pray for all the kids in our life.”

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

We invite you to partner with us by:

- **Committing to prayer** as we step into new and exciting ventures through OCCCDA
- **Volunteering** for the after school and/or mentoring
- **Committing to an annual/monthly investment** in OCCCDA and our work with community youth
- **Committing to match the \$50,000** raised by our con-

gregation and Philadelphia Urban Ministry Partnership for our property fund (or any amount you feel called to contribute)

- **Partnering to provide low or no interest loans** anywhere up to \$2,900,000 for the property fund
- **Recruiting Kingdom-Minded investors** with a desire to purchase property and sell back it back after several years.



Oxford Circle Mennonite Church information and outreach table at Festival 07. Food bags and school kits were provided by MCC.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers:

President, Leonard Dow

Vice Pres., Anita Lyndaker-Studer

Treasurer, Ed Dobeck

Secretary, Jennifer Leaman

Members:

Timothy Gierschick (Assistant Secretary)

Karen Jantzi George Young

Ron Sider Peter Sensenig



Toni Baloney with young fans at Festival 07.

NOTES FROM THE BELOVED COMMUNITY

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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.**

**We are coming soon to a website
near you!**