

**GOSHEN COLLEGE BACCALAUREATE ADDRESS  
JUNE 26, 2009**

The summer after my sophomore year of college, I participated in Goshen's Ministry Inquiry Program. This is, well, precisely what it sounds like. Students have the opportunity to spend a few months working at a church and getting a taste for ministry. I had the privilege of serving at Oxford Circle Mennonite Church in north Philadelphia with pastors Leonard Dow and Lynn Parks. Oxford Circle is an absolutely amazing congregation. Instead of viewing racial and cultural diversity as a barrier to be overcome, they use it to their benefit in a way few churches are able to do. Though they are a small congregation, they have big aspirations. God is doing a great work at Oxford Circle, and I am blessed to have had the opportunity to give God a hand.

*"Instead of viewing racial and cultural diversity as a barrier to be overcome, they use it to their benefit in a way few churches are able to do."*

my time making phone calls and sending faxes and e-mails and, to my surprise, discovered that this was ministry. I did other types of ministry, as well. On Wednesday nights, I taught the Elementary Bible Study and on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday afternoons, I worked with our Elementary Summer Camp. I have never had that kind of responsibility in my entire life and I was terrified. But, for the first time, I felt as though I was being treated like a real adult. That was the greatest blessing they could have granted to me.

Much of what I did at Oxford Circle was getting their annual community festival up and running and helping them to start a nonprofit organization called Oxford Circle Christian Community Development Association. I spent much of

I stayed in touch with some of the people at Oxford Circle after I left and decided to visit them during the summer of '08. When I went to the church that Sunday, I was

so clearly reminded of how much I loved the people there and what they were trying to do together. As I sat in the service, I felt God's presence very strong, but I did not know what it meant. I felt that God was telling me that there was a plan for me, but I was uncertain as to what that plan was. It was not until later that day when I was riding the train back to Lancaster that my eyes were opened. I suddenly understood what God had been trying to show me: That Oxford Circle is where I am meant to be. As soon I had formed the thought in my head, I felt in my very soul that it was right. I know, without doubt, that Oxford Circle is where God wants me to be. I called my mom the next day to tell her of my newfound purpose in life and she, as good moms do, began to ask me questions. She asked me what I would be doing there and where I would be living and how they would pay me and how would I get around and all those really good, reasonable questions. I had answers to none of them. In fact, I hadn't even really



thought of any of them. It was then that I realized that I had no reason to be so certain of my place at Oxford Circle, but I was. It was then that I remembered Hebrews 11:1, "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see."

I still am not exactly sure what I'll be doing there. I'm uncertain as to where I'm living and I don't know if they will be able to pay me. I do know that I'll be using public transportation, though. I have placed myself securely in God's hands and I know that I will be taken care of. I have complete faith in the call that I have felt. I know that God would not lead me and leave me. I am sure of what I hope for and I am certain of what I do not see.

**--Brooke Blough**



# Conflict *Re* Solution



*"...we will not always agree on some things and that we should talk things out instead of arguing."  
--PMHS sophomore Savone*

Oxford Circle Christian Community Development Association collaborated with Philadelphia Mennonite High School and Carnell Elementary School to develop a Conflict Resolution curriculum. Ten PMHS students along with Paul Green, Jung Joo Park and Peggy Dufresne would meet on Fridays at Carnell to conduct exercises and games meant to help Carnell students work through conflicts.

PMHS sophomore Savone participated and was interviewed about his experience.

**What was your first impression when you heard about what you would be doing at Carnell?**

My first impression was nervousness because I had never been inside a public school. I had certain stereotypes about

the behavior of the kids, teachers, etc.

**What were Carnell students' first impressions?**

They thought we would be mean to them because they were younger. Maybe this was their experience with older kids or siblings.

**How were you trained?**

PMHS makes sure all new students receive Conflict Resolution training in Freshman Seminar. We meet weekly with Dr. Moses and discuss different types of conflicts and how the Bible addresses them. We learned better ways to settle arguments.

**What kind of activities did you use at Carnell?**

First, we did icebreaker games to get to know the kids. One

of our games was trying to get everyone to agree on something we all liked. The point was for the students to learn that we will not always agree on some things and that we should talk things out instead of arguing.

**How has this impacted you personally?**

It helped me to understand that younger kids can also have a stressful life. Some come from homes where they are not being cared for properly and that is hard on them. It also helped me to understand that not all public schools are bad.

**What was it like working with the adults and your peers?**

Over time, we learned to communicate and cooperate a lot more. Now, we have an easier time working together. Ms.

Peggy helped us a great deal in this area. Ms. Jung Joo also helped us plan activities and encouraged us not to quit on the kids. Mr. Paul was a great speaker and connected well with us and the kids giving good life lessons.

**What was your biggest challenge?**

We had a second grader who always stormed out of our classes. As we worked with him, he started calming down. We listened to him describe his life and talked to him. He still has his moments but he has gotten better. There were also times when the kids would not cooperate with us. Some of us have younger siblings so we know what that is like. But as we practiced self control and let them know we cared about them, over time we saw better responses.

## Snapshots



*Food Distribution*



*Jared Hess Memorial Blood Drive*



*Christmas Toy Distribution*

**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 4, ISSUE 1

**NOTES FROM THE  
BELOVED COMMUNITY**

MARCH 2010



**A WORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Reflecting on the coming year, I continue to be excited to see all the new doors that God is opening in terms of programming and partnerships!

our conflict resolution classes at Carnell Elementary (our neighborhood school) as well as beginning to develop a structure and resources for case management. We also have 13 sophomore students from Philadelphia Mennonite High School joining us at Carnell as peer mentors and mediators.

students and families at Fels High School, our next door neighbor in our new facility. The principal, Dr. Coutts, has been excited and open to partnerships with us in a variety of ways. Please be praying with us that God would continue to open doors and provide needed funds for programming and staff as we move forward in these areas.

• Lora Fahnestock is a student at Eastern University and is completing her internship in the International Development program with us by assisting with some of our development and grant writing work.

And last but certainly not least, our offices and additional classroom space on the 2nd floor are on schedule to be completed by the end of February. We don't know where to begin in thanking the many and faithful volunteers that have allowed us to move forward on our renovations.

We are also taking the next step in our program timeline and looking forward to beginning family and adult programs this summer and into the fall with the assistance of a summer intern. In addition, we are blessed to have the opportunity to partner with

With so many changes in a year, I can find myself overwhelmed at times but as I was reminded recently by my husband, if you only do what is safe there is no space for God to work. We have and continue to see God work and because of his past faithfulness, we can move forward confident that he will continue to work.

**--Anita Lyndaker-Studer**

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- Conflict Re-Solution
- 2009 Goshen College Baccalaureate Address
- Snapshots
- Ministry Opportunities

**UPCOMING  
DATES**

- 3/2 - OCCDA Board Meeting
- 3/12-14 - K-Team from Kinzers Mennonite
- 3/15-19 - Mediation Skills Training Institute for Church Leaders
- 4/4-6 - Franconia Mennonite Church Youth Group
- 4/18 - Visit to Covenant Fellowship
- 5/4 - OCCDA Board Meeting
- 6/28-7/4 - James Street Mission Team
- 7/5 - Summer Art and Enrichment Program Begins



**NOTES FROM THE BELOVED COMMUNITY**

**MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES**

We have the following ministry and resource opportunity opportunities and welcome your participation!

**Human resources:**

- Summer Camp volunteers—Beginning June 2010, contact Jungjoo Park @ jooya29@gmail.net or (267) 265-6070
- Professional grant writer to assist in writing grants for community programming
- Property Manager to assist one day to a half day per week @ 900 E. Howell Street. For more information, contact Richard Rohrer @ rdr@esperanzahealth.com

**Financial/material resources:** Contact Anita Lyndaker-Studer @ occcda@verizon.net or (267) 265-1709

- Sponsors for children in after school and summer camp program. Cost for OCCDA is approximately \$25/week per student of which families provide \$5/week per student.
- Funding for Moveable Partitions for Sunday and After School Classrooms (total = \$21,000)
  - a. 2 moveable partition @ \$6600 each
  - b. 2 moveable partition @ \$4000 each

Please note our address change. We are no longer using our PO Box number. All correspondence should be sent to:  
900 E. Howell Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19149

For additional information, please check our website at [www.occcda.org](http://www.occcda.org) and join us as a fan on Facebook at "Oxford Circle Christian Community Development Association".

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