

**OXFORD CIRCLE CHRISTIAN
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
ASSOCIATION**

900 E. Howell Street
Philadelphia, PA 19149
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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

Oxford Circle Children's Choir, directed by Anne Hess & Janelle Tinsley

Oxford Circle Children's Choir began in the Fall of 2012 as the vision of a few singing parents to get our kids singing and to be another place of intersection and sharing for our congregation and our local community. Drawing singers from both Oxford Circle Mennonite Church and the OCCDA After-School Program, we hope that our children are energized by joyful singing and that the words of scripture through song sink deep into their hearts.



The children's choir has ministered through song at several churches and events. Their voices help tell the stories of how God is moving in the Oxford Circle community.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers:

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

Members:

- Ken Rush
- Mary Dallasta
- Zahir Guess
- Pete Prunes
- Petra Opett
- Raquel Estevez-Joyce



Volume 9, Issue 2

**NOTES FROM THE
BELOVED COMMUNITY**

MAY 2015



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- World Food Fair Invitation
- New Staff member Oxford Circle Children's Choir

Upcoming Dates

- World Food Fair and Flea Market, May 30th:**
Flea Market: 8am-2pm,
World Food Fair: 11-1pm
- 21st CCLC Summer Camp Program registration, June 2-3, 2015:** 10am – 6pm
- 21st CCLC Summer Camp Program, June 29 – August 9, 2015:** 9am – 3pm
- 21st CCLC Out of School Program, September 29, 2014:** 3pm-6pm
- Adult Education Classes, Spring Semester ends June 12, 2015:** 6pm-8:30pm, Tuesday and Thursday
- Community Advisory meeting, May 28, 2015:** 5:30 – 6:15pm
- Board Meeting, June 2, 2015:** 7:00 – 9:00pm

A WORD FROM A STAFF MEMBER

“Do Something” by Matthew West

*I woke up this morning
Saw a world full of trouble now
Thought, how'd we ever get so far down
How's it ever gonna turn around
So I turned my eyes to Heaven
I thought, "God, why don't You do something?"
...
He said, "I did, I created you"*

I remember the first time I heard this song, “Do Something,” by Matthew West, and I felt convicted and empowered at the same time. You can't dodge that one. There are no benchwarmers here. In a “world full of trouble” we are called to seek the peace of our cities.

God has always been in the business of creating, and promises to continue. In Isaiah 65 the phrase “I will create” is used three times in two verses. I believe God intends to create and restore our world through communities, families, and individuals of faith.

One thing that has come up as I reflect on being a part of the restoration of my community is my own need for transformation. It is easy to see when *other* people need Jesus. I often forget how desperately I need Jesus to continue to transform my own heart. All it takes for me is for a neighbor to set off their car alarm during nap time, and it's clear that I may have a problem with anger. It doesn't surface often, but when it does, it certainly doesn't look like Jesus.

I am thankful that God doesn't turn us aside because we aren't completely transformed. God continues to welcome me into the fold, asking me to be accountable to my community. I encourage you to think of parts of yourself and your community that need transformation. In a world full of brokenness, God wants to create in and through us.

Lauren Moyer

Advancement Coordinator
OCCDA

“Be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy.” Isaiah 65:18

SEEK THE PEACE—WITH CARNELL ELEMENTARY

“Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.” Jer. 29:7

It’s no secret that the school system in Philadelphia is struggling, and there are many reasons why. But at the broadest level, schools in our city—and in other cities—struggle for lack of investment. Our schools languish for lack of efficient local administrative systems, lack of a fair state-wide funding formula, lack of parental and community involvement, and failure of stakeholders and employees to consistently place educational outcomes ahead of personal agendas. Lack of investment—on every front. And we all share some level of ownership.

At our church and community center, we believe that the true shalom or wholeness that Jesus intended includes quality educational opportunities for all children, regardless of their zip code. Therefore God calls us to invest in these broken systems. So, for years, our church’s prayer walks have included time praying on the grounds of our neighborhood schools. We have worked to invest and partner wherever we can to bless the local schools. For some OCMC families, this has meant registering our children in our local public schools and investing our time and energy there. If the schools prosper, by God’s grace, our children and the children of our neighborhood will too.

Carnell Elementary School is only 4 blocks away from OCCCDA. Many children served in our Out of School program attend there. OCCCDA has had a partnership with the school for a few years, providing conflict-mediation classes. Three years ago, the school received a new principal, Mr. Pelzer, whom we have experienced as an answer to prayer. Under his leadership, many doors have opened, including invitations for parents to volunteer in meaningful ways in the school. The partnership with OCCCDA has also grown. Last summer, the Philadelphia School District put out a call for community groups to submit proposals to redesign their local school. Mr. Pelzer took the bold step of assembling a team of teachers, parents, and a community partner (OCCCDA) to envision a redesign proposal. In November, Carnell was selected as one of four schools city-wide (from thirty initial applicants) to participate in the Redesign Collaborative. Since November, the team has been working to plan a new instructional model (project-based learning), select a curriculum partner, solicit external funding, and put systems in place to make this huge change. In March, we presented our plan to the District Superintendent and were just notified of final approval to move forward!

As I have participated in this process as a parent of children in the school, and as a member of the redesign team, I am continually amazed by God’s hand in it all. On our own, we could have never orchestrated an innovative principal willing to partner with the community who arrived at just the time the district was looking for creative and collaborative plans to redesign schools. Part of our redesign plan includes a Family Resource Center in which OCCCDA has been invited to play a partnering role. God’s timing and ways are not our own, but they are so good!

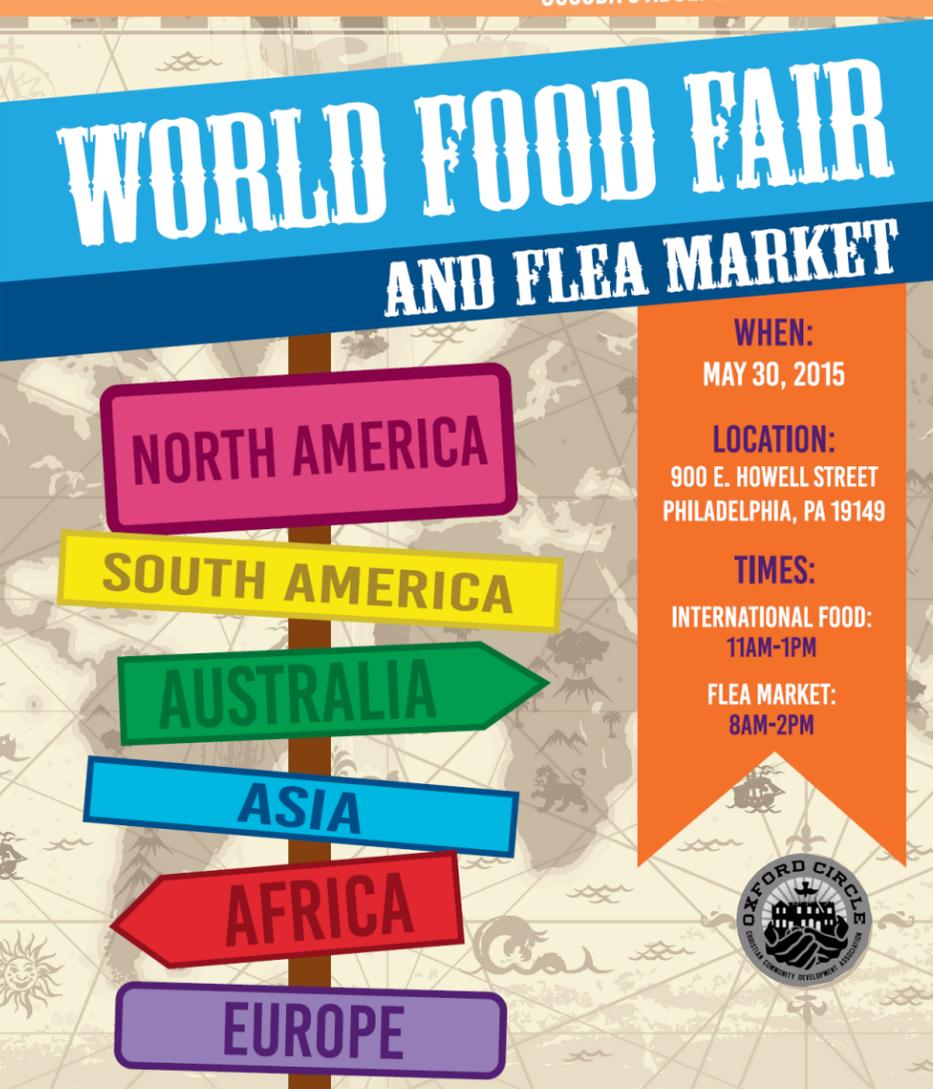
So I look forward to my children prospering—and my neighbors’ children prospering—in this redesigned school. I look forward to seeing my neighbors invest in new and greater ways in our children’s education. I look forward to Philadelphia residents seeking to buy homes in Oxford Circle because of the stellar elementary school there. We will continue to cry out to God for the peace and prosperity of this community in which God has so graciously placed us.

- Jennifer Leaman

BENEFITTING:
CARNELL ELEMENTARY TO CREATE A FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

OCCCDA'S ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS

WORLD FOOD FAIR AND FLEA MARKET



WHEN:
MAY 30, 2015

LOCATION:
900 E. HOWELL STREET
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19149

TIMES:
INTERNATIONAL FOOD:
11AM-1PM
FLEA MARKET:
8AM-2PM



FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT [HTTP://WWW.OCCCDA.ORG/OPPORTUNITIES/#EVENTS](http://www.occcda.org/opportunities/#events) OR CALL 215.288.8506

Join us on May 30th!

OCCCDA and Carnell Elementary school are partnering to bring our neighborhood together to enjoy a meal from around the world amid a bustling flea market! In one afternoon we hope to come together and support two important educational initiatives which support families and individuals in our community.

For more information about the Family Resource Center and OCCCDA’s adult education programs, please visit our website at occcda.org/opportunities/#events

We invite you to come and enjoy a meal from around the world, from our Oxford Circle Community!



Daniella Pierret

Daniella is the Lead Instructor for the 21st Century pre-school program which started in March or this year. This pre-school focus is engaging children who will be attending kindergarten in the fall of 2015. Daniella grew up in Philadelphia, currently attends Calvary Church and has worked directly with children in several capacities. She was a pre-school teacher and worked as a summer counselor at Black Rock Camp. Daniella has a passion for early childhood development and plans to do long-term work overseas in this field. She enjoys hiking, reading and making healthy meals.