

**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

WORLD FOOD FAIR AND FLEA MARKET 2015

The 2015 World Food Fair and Flea Market was a huge success. With a large tent filled with foods made by our community neighbors from around the world, a place to sit and eat with family and new friends, and a bustling flea market, the day truly had a celebratory feel. Through the generous sponsorships of Pharmacy of America, Levick MULTISERVICES, and Shoprite, the costs of the day were more than covered! What a blessing. With those sponsorships in addition to the fees from the flea market tables, and the funds raised from the food sold we were able to raise a total of \$3,353.82! These funds will be shared between the OCCDA adult education programs, (ESL classes and GED preparatory classes), and our partner elementary school, Carnell Elementary school, for the Family Resource Center that the OCCDA will be operating within the school building during the upcoming school year. This day that celebrated our community is also reinvesting resources into our neighborhood!



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers:

- Leonard Dow, President
- Paul McCormick, Secretary
- Carlos Rodriguez, Treasurer

Members:

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



Volume 9, Issue 3

**NOTES FROM THE
BELOVED COMMUNITY**

AUGUST 2015



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A WORD FROM THE PROGRAM MANAGER

Come and come as you are

"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

Upcoming Dates

Back to School Community Festival, September 12: 2pm-4pm

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

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

Carnell Cares Day: September 26, times TBD

When we consider serving the brokenhearted as called to in Isaiah 61:1, we have the tendency to put on our super hero capes and sound our theme music. However, while God is looking for people to extend healing and reconciliation in our communities, He is also interested in drawing us closer to Him. You see as Christians, the help we extend to others can't be from us because we are all confused and in need of God. It requires a complete reliance on God allowing Him to do His work.

Isaiah 6:8 describes Isaiah's encounter with God. Isaiah considers himself inadequate and unclean but still volunteers to be used by God. God addresses this situation by touching his lips with coals of fire. God wants to send us as we are, He wants us to depend on His strength and power and not on our self-righteousness or education. God is powerful and can heal us instantly, however, He often heals us and meets our needs through the process of serving others. We are into microwaving but God is into marinating. Ironically, we receive fulfillment and joy serving others as Christ did. Even though we may have unresolved issues ourselves, we end up feeling content and fulfilled. Maturity comes in serving God while trusting Him with our cares and worries.

When Jesus began His ministry He went to the wilderness to fast and pray. Even though He was God in human form, He still relied on prayer and always made time in His schedule to pray. So yes!, God wants to send you but "let this mind be in you, just as it was in Christ Jesus." What mind? Well, He "stripped Himself of any reputation and took the form of a servant" and identified with our suffering and pain. God is still looking for people to send. Whether in the form of giving financially or serving those in need of healing and reconciliation, He wants us to share His' servant heart and rely on Him. He wants us to know that serving leads to joy and fulfillment. He wants us to come as we are.

SETTING AN EXAMPLE FOR THE BELIEVERS

Reflections from returning young adult summer camp staff

Alexandre Petiote

Coming to Philadelphia was one of the best decisions I have ever made. I moved to this neighborhood in the fall of 2010. Originally, I was supposed to go to Northeast High School, but luckily I ended up at Samuel Fels High School. God definitely had a plan for me. From the beginning of my freshman year I already knew that although this school had a bad reputation, it wasn't so bad after all. Around the second quarter I met a couple of friends and we decided to volunteer at the local after-school program at Oxford Circle Christian Community Development Association, located right next to our school. Volunteering there was one of the best things I have ever done. Having the responsibility of teaching and assisting children and having children look up to you is incredible. After graduating from Samuel Fels High School in June of 2014 and attending to Lock Haven University, I felt that coming back to Oxford Circle to help out as much as I can during the summer would be a great idea. You can change someone's life by just putting some hard work, a little bit of stress and a whole lot of love, that is the ultimate game-changer. Having positive role models in my life helped shaped who I am today. **At the end of the day it's up to us to give back to the community that we grew up in and help those who need help.** Every day I always thank God that everything worked out the way it did- volunteering at Oxford Circle is one of the best decisions that I've made. Oxford Circle is like the light of the community when everything is not always A-Okay, and I'm glad to have made an impact there.



(Left- Alex with summer campers on field trip, Right- Lacey tutoring during After School)



Lacey Malone

I came to Philadelphia about 6 years after my mom got married. I went to a charter school for one year, and attended Samuel Fels for high school. My sophomore year I decided to volunteer with my friend at OCCCDA and I've been there ever since! Over the years I've taught math and science and assisted in Spanish and EDGE, a conflict resolution program. I met Pastor Leonard while working with the after school program and I started attending the church with my friend, Loukysha. My mom found a church that she liked, but my brother and I didn't feel comfortable with, so one day she asked to come with me to OCMC, and she fell in love with the faith community.

After finishing my first year of college, I became an MCC Summer Intern for OCCCDA's summer camp. Through that opportunity (and a few scholarships), I was able to travel to Indiana, Chicago, and Boston. It felt great coming back and the kids screaming "Hi Ms. Lacey! Why did you leave? Do you like college?" Being at the University of Pittsburgh in Bradford, I see a completely different culture than in Philadelphia. I think that's really important for the kids because most of them don't get to see outside of Philadelphia.

Now that the summer program is finished, my MCC Internship is complete, and I'm heading back to school, I'm sad to say goodbye but I am extra excited to get things on the move!

Loukysha Stanley

If there is one thing that working and volunteering at OCCCDA taught me it was Confidence. Growing up I was always known as the awkward girl, never really comfortable in my skin and really shy. Packing up and moving to a different state did not help my awkward ways nor did it boost my confidence. I always feared being in the limelight and standing out. During my sophomore year Joe Beech, who attends the church and was also a teacher at my high school, had recommended that I volunteer at the afterschool program. After the first week of volunteering I absolutely loved it and once I heard that they were hiring staff for the summer camp I immediately sent in my application. Working with kids definitely pushed me out of my comfort zone even more than public speaking or any other frightening task that involves you being in the limelight. It was so much more challenging because when working with children you have to believe in your words in order to be taken seriously. It wasn't until I actually began going to the church services that I really learned what it means to be Confident. I was surrounded by great people who genuinely cared about me and shared God's true merciful love with me and taught me not to fear anything. Through the countless hours spent volunteering I learned to not only have faith in myself but to also have faith in the campers. There were times where I'd go home feeling very sad for the kids and all I could do was pray that things worked out The feelings of sadness soon transformed into a vision that wherever I go I would be used as a vessel of light to show God's eternal love.



Loukysha, tutoring After School students

Meet our Program Director— Alfred Essandoh!



We are excited to welcome Alfred Essandoh as our new Program Director. He brings over 15 years of nonprofit management experience including program, finance, operations and strategic planning. Mr. Essandoh has a Master's degree in Economic Development from Eastern University and an Executive Education certification in Driving Organizational Performance and Performance Measurement for Effective Management of Non-profits from Harvard University. He is also certified by TCC Group as a Capacity Building Consultant. Mr. Essandoh is married and has a four year old daughter.

Upcoming events:

OCCCDA Back To School Festival

September 12, 12-4pm

Come for an afternoon of fun and games for children, free school bags filled with school supplies, a full grocery bag, free dental screenings for youth under 18, and connect with available resources and services needed in this community! Pick up a registration form for the 2015-2016 After School program, and learn about the adult education programs available this year!

Carnell Cares Day

September 26, times TBD

Looking for volunteers both from the Oxford Circle community and local folks to help with clean up and painting for our partner, Carnell Elementary School, particularly to get the Family Resource Center ready for operation this school year! For more information, please email us at Contact@OCCCDA.org or call us at 215-288-8504.