

What's Happening at Cornerstone?

October

- 18- "Come and See" library dedication and press conference, 10:30am-12pm
- 23- 3rd-5th, 8th grade field trip to Sight and Sound in Lancaster, PA
- 24- Chapel- 3rd grade, 1:15pm

November

- 3- Chapel-2nd Grade, 1:15pm
- 7- C101 Tour, 9am
- End of first quarter
- 11- Parent Association Meeting
- Chapel- 1st Grade, 1:15pm
- 19- Chapel- 1st Grade, 1:15pm
- 24-25- Report Card Conferences
- 26-28- No School, Thanksgiving Holiday

December

- 4- Chapel-Kindergarten, 1:15
- 5- C101 Tour, 9am
- 9- Parent Association Meeting
- 12- Chapel-5th grade, 1:15pm
- 19- Christmas Show, Mitchell Elementary School, 7pm
- 22-Jan 5, 2009- Christmas Break

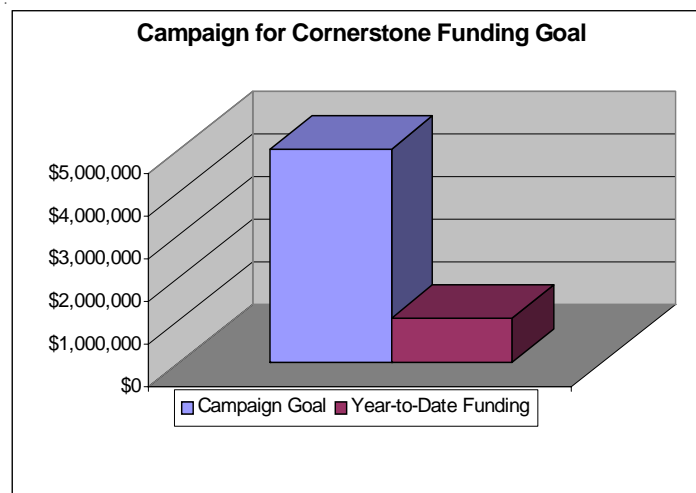
Phase One Capital Projects Near Completion

45 volunteers from Wayne Presbyterian Church, Harrisonburg (VA) Mennonite Church, and Cornerstone contributed 2,547 hours to complete a beautiful expansion to the James E. Rush, Jr. Library. Funded entirely by contributions from Wayne Presbyterian Church members, the library addition provides valuable new learning space for students, faculty, and volunteer tutors.

Also completed during the summer was the replacement of 51 windows in the Santana and CCA Buildings. Although this is only about half of the total number of windows that will be replaced during our capital improvements, it is nice to have this number of operable and energy efficient windows.

In progress is the restoration and cleaning of the exterior stone on the two main school buildings. Begun in early September this masonry work is projected to be completed by the end of October. This is the most extensive and expensive capital improvement undertaken in Phase One of our improvement plan. When completed, the buildings which are over 100 years old, will be restored to their original beauty and condition.

For additional information contact Dick Ollinger, President/CEO at 215-724-6858, ext. 232 or rrollinger@cornerstonephiladelphia.com



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CORNERSTONE CHALLENGE

Fall 2008



Dear Friends,

As I write this, our nation's economy is in a tailspin. From Wall Street to Main Street feelings of anxiety, fear, and even despair are prevalent. The financial crisis has become very personal to most of us, impacting our daily habits and decisions. This is clearly evident to those of us who serve organizations that are dependent upon donor contributions. At Cornerstone, we have seen a dramatic decline in giving to our ministry. Some of our most faithful friends have told us they simply are not in a position right now to contribute as generously as they did previously.



We are concerned. What began as a very exciting 20th anniversary school year with increased student enrollment, additional faculty, the introduction of a foreign language, expanded library space, an upgraded computer lab, and exterior repairs to our buildings, has suddenly become a worrisome time. Like the vast majority of the families we serve who live paycheck to paycheck, so too do we at Cornerstone live by the daily, weekly, and monthly donations we receive. We have no savings to speak of that we can depend upon in a lean time like we are experiencing now. Yes, we do receive monthly tuition payments from our families, but because of the tuition subsidy we provide our students, this amount only covers about one-third of the actual funds we need to operate.



Here's the other problem. The ones who are suffering the most in this economic recession are the poor, like the majority of families we serve at Cornerstone. One month into the school year, and already there are families saying they don't know if they can keep their child here because they simply do not have the resources. In the first week of school alone, four students withdrew. In the past I could always say with confidence that we would raise the necessary funds to cover the cost of these kids' education. I cannot say that with any confidence right now.



Difficult times demand a determined and diligent faith. I am asking you to join me in daily prayer for our country, our leaders, our churches, *and* our faculty, students, and families at Cornerstone. For 20 years this school has been a beacon of light and hope for children living in a community engulfed in poverty, violence, drugs, and academic failure. We rejoice that over 95% of our students graduate from high school on time and go on to pursue degrees of higher education.

Please help us keep Cornerstone's light shining brightly for Christ the Lord. More than ever we need your prayers *and* we need your financial support. Give as you are able knowing that your gift is making a difference for a child as well as for God and His Kingdom.



Gratefully,

Dick Ollinger
Dick Ollinger



From the desk of

Deborah Lee

Principal



Dear Partners and Friends,
There is a lot to be excited for this school year, as Cornerstone is celebrating its 20th anniversary! We have so much to thank God for over these eventful years. We have seen Cornerstone students go on to high school, college, begin their careers, start their own families, and also return to this community to serve. That is the mission of Cornerstone, that we would see our students return to Southwest Philadelphia to share their gifts and skills with the neighborhoods they grew up in. I'd like to give you

a snapshot of a few 2004 Cornerstone graduates beginning their freshman year in college who have been a testimony to the type of education that Cornerstone provides.

Symphony Bussie is at Eastern University in the City studying Elementary Education. She has considered coming back and teaching at Cornerstone after she graduates. **Ebony Bannister**, also at Eastern University, will be serving as a volunteer this year at Cornerstone as part of a community service course. **Marteace Mosely, Derek Kelly, and Sudee Saidu**, all graduates of Philadelphia Mennonite High School, are going on to their freshman years at Rosemont College, Clark University, and Shaw University, respectively. We are very excited for these students and that we had a part to play in their success. 90% of the 2004 graduates have started college this fall. As our current 8th grade class prepares to begin the high school application process, we pray for their success as they are one step closer to college. Cornerstone prepares students to become leaders in their school and community and that is evident in many of the young people who have come back to visit us year after year.

IN FOCUS: The Cornerstone story is diverse and unfolding before our eyes: students, parents, staff and friends making a difference together.



Thank you to all of our parents who have jumped right in to volunteering at Cornerstone! We are thankful for their support and service to the school. Pictured at the left is **Vernette Johnson**, Front Office Receptionist (left) with parent volunteer **Karleh Weyhe**. Ms. Weyhe volunteers in the Main Office two mornings a week. Pictured center is 1st grade teacher **Mrs. Narda Cooper** with **Mrs. Lois Wiggins from Paoli Presbyterian Church**, and student **Laecia Crute**. Mrs. Wiggins is tutoring 3 of Mrs. Coopers students this year in reading. Many volunteers from area churches volunteer their time to work one-on-one with students and in teachers' classrooms. Mission Year volunteers **Rebekah Welch and Louise Horton** are pictured on the right with 3rd grader **Aba Aggrey**. Aba is a part of Cornerstone's after school program that offers homework help and enrichment activities from 3pm-6pm Monday through Friday. Cornerstone has a relationship with Mission Year, an inner-city ministry which allows young people to serve and minister in their neighborhoods. Rebekah and Louise volunteer in the after school program as a part of a team of six women who live together in the Kingsessing neighborhood.



Student Sightings



Above, 7th grade students **Eddie, Moussa, and Brandi**, take part in a dramatic presentation during chapel. The musical skit represented two young people choosing to live for Christ after being enticed by the worlds pleasures. Below, 5th graders **Cherisse, Kazmuir, Charnitta, and Dionna** stand in front of the recently installed french doors of the new library expansion.



Staff Snapshots

Get to know those that serve our students!

Zeny Martin



This is Mrs. Martin's first year at Cornerstone as one of the two kindergarten teachers. She graduated from Purdue University with a bachelors degree in Youth, Adult, and Family Services. Her experience also includes serving for two years as an elementary school case manager for students. "CCA students are special because they possess the knowledge that God has made them with a purpose and given them a heart of service as well as skills."

Claine Crew



Mr. Crew is joining Cornerstone for his first year in the position of Chaplain to Families. He is currently a Christian Studies major at Eastern University. Mr. Crew connects with families in the home to hear their concerns, accolades, hopes, and prayer needs. He says "to join myself with CCA in ministry to children and their families through academic, cultural, as well as spiritual means is an honor."

CONNECTING TO CORNERSTONE

Our aim is for you to be included in creating a quality educational environment. Here's how you can help during 2008-2009:

Volunteer Opportunities:

There are numerous projects always in progress. Be a reading mentor, classroom aide, or help out in the development office. Contact our Volunteer Coordinator Erica Cheslock, 215.724.6858 x233, echeslock@cornerstonephiladelphia.com.

Come visit us-Cornerstone 101: Come take a student-led tour of Cornerstone on the first Friday of the month at 9 a.m., or contact us to schedule a tour at any time.
Cornerstone 102: At a C102 we can visit your church for Sunday worship. *The Voices in Praise Choir* is available for 2008-2009.

Becoming a financial partner

Checks are accepted by enclosing your gift in the envelope provided.
Online gifts by credit card are accepted on our Web site: www.cornerstonephiladelphia.com
Stock transfers can be made in 48 hours or less to our *Charles Schwab* account.
Corporate Match ask your employer about a dollar-for-dollar match of your gift.
Educational Improvement Tax Credit corporate donors may qualify for 90% in tax credits from the *State of Pennsylvania*.
United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania Cornerstone can be written in during your employer's campaign - indicate agency # 026566.
In-kind Gifts see the 2008-2009 *Wish List* on our Web site for needed supplies.
IRA Rollovers can be made tax-free until December 31, 2009. You can roll your *Required Minimum Distribution* into a charitable gift to Cornerstone completely tax-free - call us to see if you qualify.

To know more, contact Chris Petersen: (215)724-6858 or chrispetersen66@yahoo.com