

CENTER ADVOCATE

An irregular publication of the Indian Creek Valley Christian Family & Children's Center



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2019-2020
VOLUME 37, NUMBER 1



HIT THE TRAILS WITH
THE CENTER'S TRAIL LIFE TROOP #1076

FROM THE DIRECTOR

BY DR. D. MERLE SKINNER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

When we send the newsletter each year, I hope to be able to give you a little insight and a feel for what's happening at the Center. This year has been special in so many ways. As a year of significant activity on a variety of programmatic levels, God has moved us around some potential obstacles. We have seen an increase in overall financial stability. It has been a year in which God has opened doors to help fulfill some of our core ministry values in ways that haven't happened before. I might even go as far as to say that I am more excited about the future than at any other time in the ministry's history! To God be the glory!

THE EXPANSION AND CLARITY OF THE MISSION OF THE CENTER- THE CENTER IS MUCH MORE THAN A SCHOOL!

The Center is more than the school program and has expanded its ministry reach deeper into our community and beyond. In that, people have realized the true nature of our core mission of providing Christian programs to strengthen the family. Although this has been the vision since day one, some have not been able to look beyond the work of Champion Christian Schools and Preschools. This year, we've partnered with other community leaders and organizations, and expanded our Christian Counseling Services, professional development opportunities, and work with seniors. It is clear that the Center is impacting our three-county area in more ways than just our school program. Having a stable long-term ministry allows us to be able to offer a variety of multi-generational programs. We continue with our public policy work in PA, Washington, D.C., and eight other states, and are helping to mobilize Christian schools and ministries to stand up for religious freedom, school choice for families, and biblical values.

THE SERVANT HEARTS OF OUR HIGH-QUALITY STAFF

You would think that a low unemployment rate and a strong economy would not make working for a non-profit ministry a viable option, as it requires staff to make significant financial sacrifices. And yet, we continue to see the Lord bring us highly gifted and qualified staff. We are confident that the people who are here at the Center are here by God's design, and they are great at getting the job done! But they are even greater at serving those around them! We have been able to make some significant improvements in our salaries and benefits over the last couple of years. There is a long way to go in this effort, but we are making good headway. As founders and the longest term staff of the organization, Barb and I are extremely thankful for the privilege of working with the amazing team that God has brought together here! This collective energy, commitment, and skillsets are the engine that drives this ministry every day.

FINANCIAL STABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

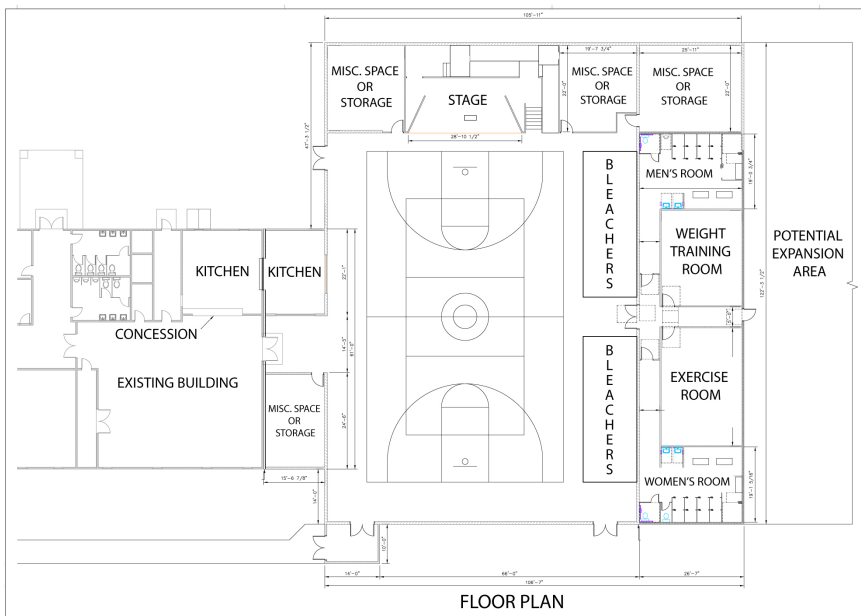
With the addition of new individual and business supporters to the EITC tax program, the Center has been able to offer financial aid to over 75% of our Champion Christian School and preschool student population. This, along with School Safety Grants through the PA Department of Education, special needs funding, and funding from individuals and foundations, we have been able to provide a high quality Christian school education to those that want it. Your financial support is making a difference in lives every single day!

EXPANSION OF EXISTING AND STARTING NEW PROGRAMS

You will find an update in this newsletter about some exciting things going on at Champion Christian Schools and Preschools. This year has seen an increase in enrollment, especially in the younger grades. We have also been able to provide an additional preschool campus in Ligonier and have grown our extended care to include infants and toddlers as well. A Trail Life Boy's Club started this fall for boys in the community, who are looking for outdoor experiences from a Christian worldview. We hope that we will be able to add a club for older boys and the American Heritage Girls Club soon. Programming for seniors continues to offer new services to the 55+ crowd in the community. We have new senior 'Lunch and Learns' scheduled along with our co-sponsor, the Mountain Laurel Chamber of Commerce, and there are many more coach bus trips planned for the new year. Our personal and professional offerings to the community continue to grow and we are building additional partnerships to expand these even further. Everything from first aid trainings, personal defense workshops, active shooter trainings, Christian coffee houses, and fun movie nights are being added to our very full calendar. You can find out more about what is happening at the Center at www.champion.org/fun and www.champion.org/events.

GYMNASIUM AND WELLNESS COMPLEX

We are making plans to construct a high-quality gym and wellness complex for use by the Center and the local community. The initial gym will be followed by additional phases of a stage expansion for community events, and the addition of a health and wellness center with equipment. This is a big project for us, but one we think will benefit the whole area. We are in the quiet campaign stage of this significant addition to our facilities. If this would be a place you would like to invest in with the Center, please let us know.



FUTURE GYM & WELLNESS COMPLEX

We have been in ministry for 38 years and counting! Praise the Lord for all He has done! Thank you for your prayers and for partnering with us here at the Center!

“OH, GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD! CALL UPON HIS NAME; MAKE KNOWN HIS DEEDS AMONG THE PEOPLES! PSALM 105:1

CHAMPION CHRISTIAN SCHOOL UPDATE

As we watch the trends across the country, we recognize how fortunate we are to have a strong Christian school as part of our ministry. God has gifted us all differently, and we celebrate our uniqueness through our identity in Christ by using those gifts when walking the path of our God-given purpose. Giving our Champion Christian School students opportunities to discover those gifts and talents to develop a sense of their purpose is central to the education at CCS. This year, our directed study students have experienced first-hand the trades of computer technology, auto mechanics, child-care, teaching, and welding. Our health



MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS LEARNING ABOUT PENN STATE FAYETTE'S SYNTHETIC CADAVER.

and life skills class toured a local grocery store, purchased their own ingredients, and cooked a meal for our entire North Campus. With grant funding, CCS has expanded its special needs programming, which has impacted the academic, social, emotional, physical and spiritual needs of all of our students. Our arts and music lesson program has expanded with a full schedule of piano and voice lessons. Our robust field trip program has taken students beyond the classroom to learn about local history in attending a play about the Johnstown Flood. Students also spent time at local Whoa Nellie Farm learning about harvest and life on the farm. Over 300 students from CCS, Armbrust Christian Academy, Westmoreland Christian Academy, Donegal Elementary School and homeschooled families, enjoyed learning about area safety workers in eight different stations on the soccer field at the Donegal Campus. Those participating were Chestnut Ridge and Saltlick Township Volunteer Fire Departments, EMS ambulance crew, Smokey the Bear and a forest ranger, Kilo the police dog and Officer Friscarella from Ligonier Borough, Trooper Steve Limani from the PA State Police, Champion Christian School bus for school bus safety, and the helicopter from Med-Star landed on the field during the time. Several students were able to attend leadership conferences and have developed group service projects to benefit our local community. This spring we are pleased to take our high school on an overnight historical immersion trip to Philadelphia. In April our middle school will visit the Creation Museum. They also will be able to imagine the life of Noah and his family when they sleep a night on the Ark at the Ark Encounter in Williamstown, KY! The elementary school students won't miss out and will travel in May to see Queen Esther at Sight & Sound in Lancaster, PA. While our schedule is busy, our students are always grounded in their academic growth. We congratulate our students that have been a part of leadership conferences, competitions, sports, and various academic opportunities. Both the Middle States Accreditation Commission on Elementary and Secondary Schools and the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) reaccredited CCS for the next seven years. Our work on blended learning helps to propel our school and students into the next generation of learning with not only sound research principles but also a strong focus on a Christian worldview and an integrated learning model. We are especially humbled by the 20 new students attending CCS this year and are inspired by the dedication of their families to obtain a high-quality Christian education. We thank God for them and find it exciting to pray and partner with parents for the children in our charge, who are growing into their purpose and identity in Christ.

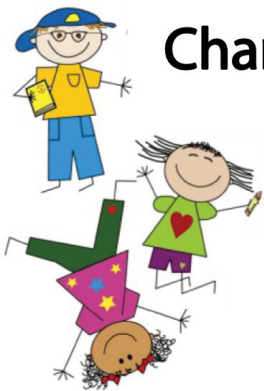
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LIGONIER CAMPUS
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EARLY EDUCATION/EXTENDED CARE SERVICES

Every day in our Early Education Center, a tower of blocks falls to the ground. While at first teachers may help the child to work through a few tears over their fallen structures, our youngest students eventually begin anew to build their towers. Through play, they learn to put the big blocks on the bottom and the smaller blocks on top. If they reverse it with the small block on the bottom, our preschoolers have learned that their tower is quicker to crash. They learn exciting foundational concepts about math, literacy, God, themselves and others. Having a stable foundation is critical to building block towers, and success later in life. More importantly, a biblical foundation is instrumental in the natural development and educational experience for children. In the last year, our early education program has expanded to provide an essential Christian foundation to children in our community. We've expanded our preschool program through increased enrollments, full day preschool options, and by adding a third campus: CCS Preschool - Ligonier Campus which is housed in the Calvary United Methodist Church in town. Our licensed STARS 3 extended care program continues to blossom through active summer care programming, before and after school care, as well as care and developmentally appropriate programming for infants and toddlers. Working parents know their children are safe in our nurturing and engaging quality Christian environment. Whether focusing on a field trip to the pumpkin patch or building block towers in the classroom, 2019 was an outstanding year. We thank Him for his blessings and for trusting us in the care of His little ones!



**Champion Christian Preschool
Ligonier Campus**

ENROLLING NOW!

Financial Aid Available

info@champion.org

724-593-9200

www.champion.org/ligonier



“BUT AS FOR YOU, CONTINUE IN WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED AND HAVE BECOME CONVINCED OF, BECAUSE YOU KNOW THOSE FROM WHOM YOU LEARNED IT, AND HOW FROM INFANCY YOU HAVE KNOWN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, WHICH ARE ABLE TO MAKE YOU WISE FOR SALVATION THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS” 2 TIMOTHY 3:14-15

**GIVE US A CALL
TO LEARN MORE,
SET UP A TOUR, &
FIND OUT IF CCS
IS A GOOD FIT FOR
YOUR CHILD!**



WWW.CHAMPION.ORG/CCS

CHRISTIAN COUNSELING SERVICES



The counseling program continues to grow in its mission of providing important help to individuals and families dealing with many aspects of life in this difficult culture. Some of the work we are doing involves dealing with family difficulties, anxiety, depression, addictions, autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, attachment disorder, trauma, sexual abuse, parenting issues, and much more. Phone and video counseling with a licensed professional counselor is available as well as face to face appointments at either the South Campus in Indian Head or the North Campus in Donegal. If you would like someone to talk to about the issues in your life, we are here for you! Both insurance payments, direct pay, and financial assistance are offered for this program.

WWW.CHAMPION.ORG/COUNSELING

724-455-2122 EXT. 301

COACH BUS TRIPS

The Center hosts community coach bus trips to a variety of Christian-focused destinations. We offer regular trips to musicals at the Sight & Sound Theatre in Lancaster, PA. We are now accepting reservations for the new show 'Queen Esther'. Our next Sight & Sound trip is scheduled for Wednesday, April 8. Other upcoming trips are to the PA Farm Show on Friday, January 10 and the March for Life in Washington, D.C. on Friday, January 24. We also hope to return to the Bible Museum in Washington, D.C. and visit the Ark Encounter and Creation Museum in 2020. Call the Center to reserve your spot.



UPCOMING EVENTS

The annual Charity Benefit Auction with auctioneer Mark Dixon III is set for Friday, May 1. Doors open at 4:30 pm for a preview of items and the silent auction. The live auction starts at 6pm. Concessions are available for purchase throughout the evening. We are taking donations of new and slightly used items valued at \$50 and up.

The Golf Benefit is set for Saturday, August 8th with a tee off at 9 am at The Club at Middlecreek in Rockwood, PA.

Check out all the Center events on the link below.



WWW.CHAMPION.ORG/EVENTS & WWW.CHAMPION.ORG/FUN

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GIVING TO THE CENTER

The great things that are happening at the Center are mainly due to your gifts, support, prayers, and commitment to the vision. As a 501©3 non-profit organization, there are multiple ways for you to invest in the work here. Find out more on our website at www.champion.org/development. In addition to financial donations other significant ways to contribute are listed below:

Through the EITC/OSTC Program, you can redirect your state tax dollars (both individuals and businesses) to get a 90% credit for giving to support students attending Champion Christian Schools.

You can take advantage of tax-deferred giving by donating funds from your IRA that you aren't using or by giving directly to reduce Capital Gains taxes.

Gifts of stock or property like vehicles for donation are welcome.

Other needs of the Center can be found at the website below. There are also volunteer opportunities that will help you invest in a purpose that is something bigger than yourself. We invite you to have a conversation with us at any point and would welcome the opportunity to partner with you on a one time or regular basis.

WWW.CHAMPION.ORG/GIVING & WWW.CHAMPION.ORG/NEEDS