



SOAR

SUMMER 2017

From the President



CONTACT:

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Dear Cornerstone Families and Friends,

For as long as I have known, the primary way student and school success gets measured is by traditional metrics such as grades, standardized test scores, class rankings, graduation rates and college acceptance rates. Annually there are rankings identifying the so-called “best” high schools and colleges in the country and in each state. The rankings are based on “measurable academic outcomes,” including student test scores, graduation rates, college admission data, retention rates, and faculty credentials. Admission to these “top” high schools and colleges is selective and largely dependent upon high grades and high test scores.

I have always been a little suspect of these traditional measurements of student and school success. Maybe it’s because throughout my academic career my grades were only average, my test scores were basic and my class ranking, well let’s just say I never graduated with honors. I have always believed that ranking a student or a school primarily on the basis of grades and test scores leaves out other non-cognitive attributes that should also be considered. So, I am greatly encouraged as I hear and read about leading educators who are now asking if the traditional metrics for measuring student and school success are really the best.

Top educators are saying that as important as the classic measures are for evaluating student success, perhaps even more important in today’s world are student behavioral and emotional measurements. They point out that more and more colleges, universities, and places of employment are looking not only for well-educated people but also for “good” people – people who are honest, respectful, kind, hard-working, and who get along well with others. In other words, high character is now beginning to matter as much as, if not more than, high grades and high test scores for college admission and employment. Furthermore, the best schools are being identified as those that help students develop quality character attributes, such as patience, perseverance, generosity, grit, integrity, cooperativeness, and optimism.

This is what we have been doing at Cornerstone Christian Academy for 28 years. We educate children’s hearts, minds, and spirits. Character formation – Christian character formation – is a primary focus of our instruction, so students learn to value honesty, humility, kindness, service, goodness, self-control and respect for others. We inspire hope in children by helping them learn to value themselves and to honor God by working hard, being good, and doing their best.

As this school year comes to a close, please know how grateful I am for your prayers, your volunteer service, and your generous financial contributions that provide the needed support for Cornerstone’s students to soar to great heights for the glory of God.

Gratefully,

Dick Ollinger, President/CEO



Congratulations 8th Grade Graduates!



Talib Branch
Milton Hershey School
Pending
8 Years at CCA



Aniya Brooks
High School for
Engineering and Science
9 Years at CCA



Miyquan Campbell
The City School
9 Years at CCA



Eric Chamberlain
Cardinal O'Hara
High School
9 Years at CCA



Keenan Chapman
High School Pending
7 Years at CCA



Sanaa Clay
KIPP DuBois
Collegiate Academy
9 Years at CCA



Zaire Foushee
Cristo Rey High School
7 Years at CCA



Amir Hamilton
MOT Charter
9 Years at CCA



Mulani Johnson
Mercy Vocational
High School
2 Years at CCA



Johnathan Jones
High School Pending
9 Years at CCA



Mylan Jones
Creative and Performing
Arts High School
9 Years at CCA



Rahmir Jones
The City School
9 Years at CCA



Jennifer Miowa-Klah
Creative and Performing
Arts High School
8 Years at CCA



Ciani Montgomery
West Catholic
High School
5 Years at CCA



Jaala Samuels
W. B. Saul High School
9 Years at CCA



Jaden Samuels
W. B. Saul High School
9 Years at CCA



Rebecca Stubbs
High School Pending
9 Years at CCA

Cornerstone Reports

There's so much going on at Cornerstone Christian Academy. Here, in bite-size pieces, are some of the most exciting.



Year-Long Learning at Cornerstone

Student enrichment isn't limited to the academic year. Our robust summer schedule offers programs for fun, learning, and social bonding long after school's out for summer!

J-Rock

Each year, approximately 150 students from all around the southwest Philadelphia community gather at Cornerstone Christian Academy in anticipation of a summer full of fun and learning. This year is no different as J-Rock Summer Camp invites Kindergarten through 8th grade students to participate in the annual arts-based day camp.

This year, students have the opportunity to major in dance, vocal, drama, visual art, and technology classes. Monday through Thursday mornings they receive specialized instructions in their choice of one of these major classes. In the afternoon, they come together to participate in sports, crafts, swimming, and a weekly field trip.

Cornerstone has the unique opportunity to serve students year-round through summer programming. Programs such as J-Rock help to alleviate issues facing students such as "summer slump" by actively engaging students creative and fun learning.



Camp Tockwogh

Camp Tockwogh is an overnight summer camp located on the shoreline of the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland. Each summer 10 CCA students are selected to attend, with all costs shared by the school and the camp.

Campers learn to sail, water ski, ride horseback, etc. Most importantly, Cornerstone students have the opportunity to explore and build community outside of the city limits.

Summer Enrichment Program

Each year there are students whose academic struggles prevent them from advancing to the next grade. Summer Enrichment is a five week remedial program designed to provide students with information and motivation to advance with their peers.

Because it is a half-day program, many of the students in Summer Enrichment also participate in J-Rock Summer Camp, so it proves to be a great blend of academic support and fun.



Young Readers

Developing life-long learners is Cornerstone's goal for all students. Kindergarten and first grade students are especially important in this process because they are just learning to read. In the summer of 2015 we began the Young Readers program for the youngest of our students to support them in reading skills and comprehension for five summer weeks. Teachers in the following academic year report that the Young Readers students are well prepared and reading at grade level.

Research has shown that children who do not read at grade level by third grade significantly decrease their chances of graduating from high school. Cornerstone aims to eliminate that possibility with each student through Young Readers.



Love Covers

Love Covers, founded by Patti Humphry of Missouri, is a ministry that supplies fabric and quilt tops to a local church in Hungary. Calvary Church uses quilting classes as a ministry tool to teach women a new craft and share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This spring Cornerstone students have the opportunity to help support Love Covers and learn basic quilting skills by creating quilt tops in our new STEAM lab.

Fabric in many eastern European countries is not readily available thus the church relies on contributions from ministries like Love Covers from around the world to help support their work. Students worked with Paula Frey and Caitlin Coppick to cut, measure, and stitch quilt tops to be shipped to Hungary to support the quilting clubs.

Once the quilts are created they are distributed to safe houses in Berlin, Budapest, and other European cities for women coming out of human trafficking. While the Cornerstone STEAM lab does not officially open until the fall of 2017, already its impact reaches beyond our walls. We hope that the learning and experiences created in this space continue to cross borders, outside of the classroom, and around the world.

Cornerstone Kids Challenge:

What was the first year 8th grade students graduated from Cornerstone?

Answer: 1995. There were six graduates.

Alumni Spotlight

We love keeping track of how our graduates are realizing their dreams. Their success is an inspiration to our current students and a reassuring return-on-investment to our many donors and supporters. Here is one:



Destini Stanton
CLASS OF 2013

Destini Stanton

Destini Stanton is a graduate of the Cornerstone 8th Grade Class of 2014. This spring she will graduate from Cristo Rey High School in Philadelphia with plans to attend Villanova University. Destiny plans to major in biochemistry, marine biology, sociology, and minor in performing arts. As a part of the Academic Advancement Program, Destiny has received a partial academic merit scholarship. She will also be enrolled in honors courses starting in the fall of her freshman year.

One of the things that Destiny says that she's carried with her from Cornerstone is the ability to pray and express her faith in any situation. She remembers Mr. Camissa warning her class that one day they would be in a situation or a school that doesn't remind them to pray or do devotions, they'd have to build a relationship with God on their own. Since then Destiny has made a conscious effort to build a relationship with God through prayer and participating in a Christian Youth group with her friends.



Sabria Comer
CLASS OF 2009

Sabria Comer

Sabria Comer graduated from Cornerstone Christian Academy as the valedictorian of her 2009 8th Grade class. In 2013 she graduated salutatorian from Philadelphia Mennonite High School. Sabria attended Pennsylvania State University majoring in Psychology. This spring she graduated with her Bachelor's in Arts and plans to attend West Chester University in the fall for her Master's in Social Work.

Sabria hopes to become a licensed clinical social worker. She wants to help her clients find solutions to their social issues and help construct stronger families. She believes Cornerstone has helped to instill her desire to help people and make a difference in the world.



Thank You for Your Support!

Volunteers: Thank you to all our Volunteers during the 2016-17 academic year. We had **over 110 individuals provide 1389 hours of service** in the areas of student support, facilities improvements, classroom activities and office support. Volunteers are invaluable to Cornerstone in that they support important school operations without financial cost. Consider this year volunteers assisted in the following ways:

- **Mentored** seventh and eighth grade students, providing academic and emotional support as they begin to consider high school and prepare to graduate.
- **Beautified** classrooms, hallways and grounds.
- **Prepared** thousands of newsletters for delivery.
- **Served** on the school's Board of Trustees, providing direction in the Mission, programming, finances and policies of the school.
- **Chaperoned** hundreds of students on field trips.
- **Tutored** students in need of attention in various academic subjects.

This summer there will be more volunteers who will work on our facilities and grounds, supervise and play with children during summer camp, and help faculty and staff prepare for the 2017-18 academic year. If you are interested in volunteering this summer or next school year, please contact Ashleigh Bynum by email at abynum@cornerstonephiladelphia.com or by phone at **(215) 724-6858 ext. 233**.

Annual Fund: The Cornerstone Christian Academy Annual Fund is designed to support each of the school's 230 students with scholarships and financial aid. Cornerstone operates on a blend of tuition (30% of total revenue) and outside contributions (70% of revenue). Each Cornerstone student, regardless of income level, receives a "Tuition Grant-in-Aid," and depending on income, additional financial aid. Fundraising efforts, overseen by the Board of Trustees Advancement Committee, are organized by the Development Department throughout the calendar year. More than 350 individuals, churches, foundations and corporations participate as donors, giving toward the **2016-17 Annual Fund goal of \$1,460,000**. As an independent school that receives little support from governmental sources, tuition and contributions are essential to the school's success. Thank you to our parents and partners who for 28 years have been responsible for the growth and success of Cornerstone students. As we look to the future, please contact Chris Petersen about how to contribute financially to Cornerstone. He can be reached by email at cpetersen@cornerstonephiladelphia.com or by phone at **(215) 724-6858 ext. 234**.

Uncommon Individual Foundation: Cornerstone's emphasis on mentoring for the past several years received a boost this year through partnership with the Uncommon Individual Foundation (UIF). Through CCA Board Chair Peter Grim, we became aware of UIF three years ago. As the relationship grew and as more staff from each organization met, common ground in mentoring youth was discovered, especially in the area of technology (another growth area for CCA). This year UIF has completed three major projects at CCA: First was life-skills mentoring with the seventh grade class. Taliah D' Ottavio a St. Joseph's University student, led the students through a project that helped them identify their learning style, five year goals, and career aspirations. This spring, Chris DiAntonio, Tech Specialist at UIF, helped launch the "CCA Tech Titans," an after school tech club that introduced students to robotics, virtual reality, 3D printing, and other technology advances. Finally, UIF has provided a \$25,000 seed grant over two years for the opening of the Richard E. Caruso STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math) Lab. This transformational gift will provide numerous exciting opportunities for students to create, innovate and explore using high and low tech tools. Thank you for your generous support, UIF!

As of July 1, 2017 all gift acknowledgements will be delivered via email notification. Please contact Ashleigh Bynum at abynum@cornerstonephiladelphia.com or 215-724-6858, ext. 233 with questions or concerns.

How to Support Cornerstone

Direct Gifts

Tax deductible gifts of cash, by written or electronic check, or by credit card. Send checks by mail to:

**CCA
PO Box 5520
Philadelphia, PA 19143**

Contribute online:
CornerstonePhiladelphia.com

Securities

Publicly traded stock, mutual funds, EFT: Deduction received on gift; capital gains passed on to Cornerstone.

Planned Gifts

Bequests, charitable gift annuities, cash and other planned gifts can be made to **Cornerstone's Endowment Fund**. If you are 70 1/2 or older and have an IRA, you can roll over your Required Minimum Distribution to Cornerstone completely tax free. To know more contact Chris Petersen in the Development Office.

United Way

Employee pledges can be made through two United Way agencies:

- **United Way of Southeastern PA, Donor Choice Agency #9616** (donations designated for CCA's Extended Care Programs)
- **United Way of Tri-State Donor Choice Agency #0265566**

Match

Ask if your employer has a matching gifts program.



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Our Mission

The mission of Cornerstone Christian Academy is to educate children, including those from at-risk neighborhoods, in an environment that provides the highest standards for academic achievement and spiritual development.

Our Vision

It is our vision to be a model urban Christian school where students are grounded in faith, shaped with Christ-like character, and equipped with knowledge and skills to excel in high school, college, and throughout life.

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