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From the Administrator's Desk . . .

Where There is No Vision, the People Perish

One of the best things about working at Cornerstone is the way God continues to enlarge our vision. We have always had a sense that the school would one day be large. We could not foresee, however, that it would happen so soon. Nor did we imagine that before the school reached its tenth birthday we would be getting ready to build for the second time in addition to expanding our ministry to another part of town. But as I write this article, that is exactly where we find ourselves. God has brought us beyond the farthest reaches of our imaginations, and we are filled with awe at His goodness to us. Since it's been a while since I've written about the direction we believe God is taking us, I hope you will take some time to envision along with me what we believe will one day be reality.

First, believing that God always finishes what He begins, we are getting ever nearer to taking the

step *leap* of faith required to begin building again. We have had the plans for over a year, and we are very excited about what they represent. Though no dirt is being moved, it doesn't mean that nothing is happening. We have been praying diligently, wait-

"We have always had the sense that the school would one day be large. We could not foresee, however, that it would happen so soon."

ing for God's perfect timing. As it stands right now, we are ready to begin the official fundraising phase of our next building campaign. We will build in accordance with God's provision. We are uncomfortable borrowing for Phase II, so the Aspen Group

(our builder) has broken down the project into steps that make sense from a construction perspective. We will build as much as we can as fast as we can, as God brings in the money.

Second, we know that the high school pod will be the first to go up. The reasons for that are many. First of all, the upper school is now the fastest growing segment of the school. We knew that would happen. The elementary school is fairly well established, and the larger numbers in the lower school are now making their way into the junior high and high school. Secondly, we desire to have state-of-the-art science labs for our upper school. We have already received grants designated for that purpose; we only lack a building to put them in. Thirdly, we need our own athletic fields. God has been bringing us coaches, now we need the facilities so that we can expand the athletic program.

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Cornerstone Earns "Excellence In Teaching" Award

Cornerstone Christian Academy was recently chosen to receive the Henry Salvatori "Excellence in Teaching" Award. This award, given by Hillsdale College, Hillsdale, Michigan, recognizes standards for academic excellence and student performance based on the *Hillsdale Academy Refer-*

ence Guide.

After applying for the \$25,000 award in January, CCA received notification in March that it was one of the top two schools being considered. A visit from the panel of judges from Hillsdale took place in April, and the final decision was received in May.

Beth Sondgeroth, our Academic Dean, will be accepting the award on behalf of the school during Hillsdale's National Leadership Conference to be held in Chicago, October 2-3.

The \$25,000 award will go towards Cornerstone's tuition assistance fund.

"We have the vision and even the faculty and staff who are willing to work to bring it about; now we wait as God supplies the details and the financing."

Becky Shames

Administrator's Desk-continued from front

Finally, for many programming reasons we need larger and more open spaces. Those would allow us to increase our Fine Arts offerings as well as the kinds of productions we can have on site. A permanent high school pod would also give us the capability to bring in more technology. For all these reasons and several others, the high school pod will be first. The others will go up in God's timing as He provides. We'd love to build more than one at a time. We'll see.

Third, even while we are planning to expand our current building, we continue to pursue our vision of establishing a satellite campus on the west side of Bloomington. We are currently looking for a building, and I am researching a couple of different sites. We are calling this campus the EEC, or Early Education Center. Our plan is to serve three-year-olds through third grade, offering these children from impoverished homes the same high quality of education that our currently enrolled students are receiving.

Our target date for opening the EEC is August 2008. It seems like a long-way off but will be upon us in what seems like the blink of an eye.

Next, we are in the planning stages of becoming a "missional" school. This springs from our desire to graduate true disciples of Jesus Christ, young people who will "impact culture for the glory of God." Our culture tells them to get a good education in order to make a lot of money. We want them to know that they have been blessed to be a blessing. We hope they do make a lot of money, but also that they know how to live and serve in such a way to use their money, their time and their giftedness for God's glory and for the good of others. This will take some time as we figure out a way to get them out of building more while maintaining high academic standards. Our vision is to have elementary students serve locally, junior high students nationally, and senior high students internationally. We have the vision and

even the faculty and staff who are willing to work to bring it about; now we wait as God supplies the details and the financing.

Finally, we have already begun the planning for our very first graduation celebration. The class of 2007 will graduate on June 2nd. We want it to be a memorable occasion for the entire Cornerstone community so that one day, when we are old and gray (I have a jump on that one!), we will be able to say, "I remember when . . ."

So there you have it, our vision - albeit incomplete. Oh, yes, God continues to enlarge our vision. Because that is so, we work, we wait, and we watch. . .

"Look at the nations and watch - and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told."
Habakkuk 1:5

Becky Shames, Administrator

Dan Egeler to Speak at Founder's Banquet



Dan Egeler is often described as a "story teller". He grew up on an isolated island in Lake Victoria, Tanzania as his father was an "island evangelist" who worked with

the tribes on the 40 or more islands that existed within Lake Victoria. Dan grew up as a Third Culture Kid (TCK) who learned the art of relating oral history from his African elders. It is that form of communication and passion that he brings to bear when sharing with his audiences today.

Dan attended Victoria Primary School in Tanzania for his primary years and Rift Valley Academy in Kenya through the 10th grade. His parents left Africa in 1974, and Dan graduated from a public high school in Ridgewood, NJ. He went on to receive a Bachelor's

degree from The King's College (NY), a Master's Degree from Washington State University, and a Doctorate in Administration and Instructional Leadership from the University of Alabama .

Dan served for thirteen years as a teacher, soccer coach, high school principal, and Director of the Alliance Academy in Quito, Ecuador. He returned to the United States in July 1999 and is working with the Association of Christian Schools International in Colorado Springs, CO as the Director for International School Services - Europe and Africa.

Dan and his wife Kathy have four second generation missionary kids (MKs) named Andrew, Danielle, Matthew, and Bethany and they live in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Cornerstone's annual Founder's Banquet celebrates God's continuing

work in building CCA, His ongoing provision for us, and His goodness and grace. No money will be asked for and no pledges taken. CCA's Founder's Banquet has never been a fundraiser!

*There is no cost to attend the banquet, which will be held at the Doubletree Hotel & Conference Center (previously the Radisson Hotel) from 6:30-8:30 PM. Reservations are required, however, and can be made by calling 662-9900. **

The evening will feature special remarks from CCA Administrator, Becky Shames, and will end with a slide show of all the Cornerstone kids. So line up the babysitter because you won't want to miss this event—make your reservations today!

**Please note that this banquet is not for students, but for parents, grandparents, and friends of the school.*

Founder's Banquet
Thursday, Oct. 19th
6:30-8:30 PM
Doubletree
Conference Center,
Bloomington

**Cost? Free! Reserve
your spot today by
calling the Academy
office at 662-9900**

Space is Limited!

Cornerstone Receives State Recognition

It's official! CCA is now a fully recognized school in the eyes of the state of Illinois. Last April, a representative from the Illinois State Board of Education along with other school administrators visited Cornerstone with the intent of determining whether or not we met state guidelines. Because our goal has always been to exceed, rather than meet, state requirements, we passed their test easily. This came even earlier than we had hoped because we did not yet have a full program (no senior class). Even so, the ISBE looked at what we had planned,

visited every classroom, and inspected our systems and methods, and gave us their stamp of approval a year early. As a result of the state's recognition, we were able to join the Illinois High School Association (I.H.S.A.) which means our students will now have the opportunity to compete in state-level contests. Though our prayer is always that we will find favor with God first and foremost, we are gratified that He has allowed us to find favor with our governing authorities as well.

All glory to God!

CCA Cheerleaders Earn High Honors

CCA's junior and senior high cheerleading squads attended a National Cheerleaders Association summer camp at Illinois Wesleyan this past month.

They received the Herkie TEAM award for leadership, values and teamwork; National Championship Bid Winner for best technical

skill and cheerleading technique; Champion Chant for technical skill and ability to lead the crowd with a chant; and Spirit Stick Winner for the most sincere spirit and enthusiasm.

Congratulations to our both our squads!

“Why Doesn't CCA Have a ‘Scrip’ Program?”

This was a question recently raised by a Cornerstone parent, but it wasn't the first time I'd heard it asked.

For those of you who are not acquainted with a scrip program, let me enlighten you. This program (which is also referred to as “shopping cart fundraising”), is a fundraising tool that many public and private schools use. The general way it works is that the school purchases the scrip, which is usually in the form of gift certificates or gift cards which can be used at designated stores. Each store's scrip has a payback percentage which is given back to the school.

For example, if you shopped at ABC Grocery, you would purchase from the school an ABC Grocery scrip card. This would be different than the XYZ Department store scrip, or the QRS Gas card which you would also have to purchase from the school.

The premise behind the program is that an organization of 150 families might spend between 1 million and 2 million dollars per year on food, clothing, and other essentials. If the families used scrip for these purchases the organization could

raise between \$20,000 and \$60,000 per year.

Sounds good so far? Not really. Here's the catch: the non-profit organization purchases the scrip upfront with cash, and then must re-sell it to parents, who make out orders each month. These orders are collected and filled with the correct scrip from each retailer requested, then are distributed back to the parents.

Volunteers from within the school are needed to copy flyers and order forms, collect and fill orders, do the purchasing of scrip from retailers, handle all the monies involved, and keep meticulous records. The man hours alone to accomplish these tasks are more than I can imagine!

“But wouldn't Cornerstone benefit financially, even with the added man hours?” It would seem at first glance that we would. But consider this: In Bloomington/Normal, 2 grocery stores participate in scrip. One gives a 2% payout to the school, and the other a 4%. A family who spends \$250 earns either \$5 or \$10 for the school. Two gas companies participate; they each pay 1.5% back to the school. Again, not a large return. Two department stores participate,

April Kinzinger, Director of Development

both with a 4% return. Many of the retailers have a time limit with which you must have spent the scrip, otherwise the value decreases monthly. That would be a problem if a school over-purchased scrip from a retailer and couldn't resell it.

So what's the answer? We've always known it's not in fundraisers! Fundraising by product sales, or even scrip, demeans the very idea of mission. Large donations never come from candy sales, scrip, product sales or even car washes, but from committed families who know and support an organization's mission. That's why CCA has a non-fundraising policy. We believe that our mission is worthy of support: “CCA exists to provide students an exemplary Christ-centered education, preparing them for higher education, while promoting service to others in the name of Christ.”

We love our donors—our parents, grandparents, and friends of the school—because they show confidence in our mission and vision each time they choose to give.

So thank-you, donors! We wouldn't and couldn't be here without you.

“Large donations never come from candy sales . . .”

April Kinzinger

A Thank-You Note . . .

CCA has a very active Tuition Assistance program. This year alone, over \$200,000 has been awarded in assistance to families who otherwise would not be able to afford tuition.

Those award monies are not part of the CCA annual budget, but have to be raised each year through voluntary gift donations.

As we look at the amount awarded this year, we take a huge gulp, and wonder just how God will provide. But when we receive notes like this one, we know that He will:

Dear Mrs. Shames:

Thank you, thank you for the tremendous gift of financial assistance the committee granted to our family for the 2006-2007 school year. Words just cannot express our appreciation for such a gift and the utter relief that accompanies it.

I know others have worked very hard for that money and yet have freely given so that we may have a chance of continuing to educate the minds and cultivate the hearts of our children at such a wonderful school.

[Our children] love it at Cornerstone and so do we. We are so hopeful that all of our children may someday be in attendance there, despite the looks we get from family and friends in considering such an undertaking for primary education.

I thank God for the tuition assistance program because it offers more than just money, it offers very real and practical affirmation that [our children] do indeed belong there and that they do indeed matter to God, to you, and to the many generous donors who make it possible to attend.

Please extend our thanks to the review committee and to the donors for their kindness and incredible generosity. Their gift won't be taken lightly...it will be taken to heart!

Sincerely and abundantly blessed,

[A Cornerstone Family]

Upcoming Dates

Open House—Tuesday, September 26th—6-8 PM

No School-Fall Break—Thursday & Friday, Oct. 5 & 6

School Pictures Taken—Thursday & Friday, October 12 & 13

Founder's Banquet—Oct. 19th—6:30-8:30 PM

1/2 Day—Teacher Institute—October 27th

Public School Student Visit Day (morning only)—Oct. 27th

Homecoming-Oct. 28th

No School-Parent/Teacher Conferences—Monday, Nov. 13th

Grandparents' Day (Lower School) - Friday, Nov. 17th

Giving to Cornerstone

If you're new to the CCA family, you may not know that you'll never be asked to help with an auction or to go sell candy bars at work. Instead, we depend on the voluntary giving of God's people to His work. We have three funds to which you may donate:

Annual Fund—This fund represents monies that are expended annually. This is an important fund because it covers operational costs which "fill the gap" between tuition costs and the actual cost to operate.

Tuition Assistance Fund—This year, over 100 students are receiving some form of assistance! We must raise over \$200,000 to meet this need.

Building Fund—You'll be hearing more about future building plans at Cornerstone. You don't have to be in the building very long before it becomes obvious that we're out of space. So if your passion is bricks and mortar, this fund may be for you!

Does CCA take gifts of stock? Yes! You may find it more convenient and financially advantageous to make a gift of appreciated securities, which will eliminate capital gains taxes to you. For more information, contact April Kinzinger at 662-9900.