

Cornerstone Academy digs in to build new high school

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BLOOMINGTON — Cornerstone Christian Academy's first nine graduates shoveled the first dirt to be moved for a new high school.

The nine, who leave for college next week, joined about 150 people on the academy grounds Saturday for prayers and words of encouragement from administrators.



Members of the first graduating class of 2007 break ground for the new classroom wing at Cornerstone

"It's just neat. We were part of the first ground-breaking," said Alison Clark, the 2007 valedictorian who starts at Wheaton College next week.

"I never thought we'd be part of this one, too," she said.

Clark and her family were among those in 2002 who witnessed the beginning of the current academy on Ireland Grove Road.

The school has reached capacity, and older students eventually will move into a \$3.5 million high school on the same 78-acre site.

Building in stages

Construction will take about nine months, but the school will be built in stages as money is raised. No completion date has been announced.

"We want to pay cash as we go," development director April Kinzinger said. To date, the Hear from Heaven campaign has raised \$1.5 million, she said. "The Lord is going to have to provide us the rest of the funds to finish," she said.

Ron Brown, president of the board of trustees, said Noah took 120 years to build the ark. "Our completion date will be a little shorter," he joked.



A construction truck begins the break ground for the new classroom wing at the groundbreaking ceremony

"From humble beginnings on Bell Street, (we made it) to this field of dreams on Ireland Grove Road."

The school started 10 years ago this month with 45 preschoolers, administrator Becky Shames said. Today, there are 10 times as many students.



Beth Sondgeroth, Academic Dean, hugs YaeRa Oh, at the groundbreaking ceremony. YaeRa was part of the school's first graduating class last year.

Plans for 17 classrooms

The new school will have 17 classrooms; a large, central multipurpose room (capacity about 300); science labs; offices; and more parking.

The nine graduates each were given a clear paperweight containing a tiny gold shovel and soil from the school's property.

"It's going up on my shelf at home," said Aaron Gregory, who leaves for Indiana Wesleyan University next week.

Cornerstone Christian Academy also plans to open a school in Bloomington in fall 2009 for children who otherwise couldn't have a private school education.

It will be in the building donated by the YMCA at 602 S. Main St., after the Y moves to its new location in east Bloomington.

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School Board President Ron Brown speaks during the groundbreaking ceremony for the new wing at CCA.