

CORNERSTONE Youth Center Fall 2024

Thoughts From The Director's Chair...

I recently was having a conversation with one of our staff members about the growth of our ministry over the past year. Each day we see between 15-25 middle and high school students during regular programming. Our middle school student attendance has grown 76% over the past 18 months. Our "Treasure Hunters" group, which is an optional time after our Scripture lesson, has grown from 1-2 students to more than 6-7 students. We talked about how our high school boy's discipleship group has grown from 4-5 students to over 10 in the past few months, and how our middle school discipleship group has also seen 4-6 students faithfully attending. Our high school girl's discipleship began in the spring, and recently had 5 girls participate.

Although it is easy to compare numbers and see the growth in attendance, it is more challenging to articulate the growth in maturity and the spiritual growth of our students.

Recently we have seen students regularly praying with and for each other. We see students bringing prayer requests through our prayer box. We see students asking questions about Jesus and about the TWiG (Time With God) lesson each day. We see students participating in deeper Bible study after regular program hours and getting involved in going to church or participating in other church youth activities, and we are thankful for what God is doing through the ministry of Cornerstone! We are very thankful to our staff, volunteers, donors, and prayer partners who make this all possible.

As we begin the last quarter of 2024, many of you may be considering how to best allocate your year-end charitable donations. We ask that you consider making Cornerstone one of the ministries you support. Cornerstone is fully funded by the generous donations of individuals, churches, and businesses in our community, and we are incredibly thankful for each of you!

The job of connecting with our supporters and our community is a big and important part of what we do to provide all the services we offer to our young people. In September, we hired Sammi Simmons as our new Development Coordinator. Over the next few weeks, Sammi will begin connecting with many of our donors and supporters in order to introduce herself, hear from you about why you choose to support Cornerstone and how we can best keep you informed of all the wonderful things God is doing in the lives of our students and in our ministry. See the graphic below to learn some fun facts about Sammi.

Jim Bush
Executive Director



SAMMI SIMMONS

- Fav. Latte: Pumpkin Spice or Peppermint Mocha
- Fav. Book: Love Does by Bob Goff
- Hobbies: Reading, Walks, Hiking and Exploring!

Making an Impression

"If I made God the center hold of my life, I knew that is what was going to help guide me the rest of my life." - Michael (Cornerstone Alumni)

A safe place. A welcoming environment. A place to learn more about God. This is the consistent soundtrack we hear from students and beyond in regards to the impressions Cornerstone has left on their lives. After hearing the stories, it is hard to deny the positive impact that a youth center has on a student's life, and the lasting effects thereafter. In sifting through the evidence, there seems to be a positive trend in youth that attend an after-school program. Research shows programs that included active learning opportunities, teamwork through sports or games, and promoting conflict resolution skills were most effective. Every student that comes through the doors of Cornerstone has an opportunity to take part in our creative arts club where they learn a new skill set, sports/games, TWiG (Time With God) and more. Not only do we see the evidence of an engaged youth community, we see a shift in students' spiritual journey, their courage, and their ability to tackle life's hardships with confidence and know they are not alone.

"I was able to feel God in my life, and know that I wasn't alone. As I got older, I was able to share with my kids, to not be afraid to be themselves. Cornerstone helped me to be strong and never made me feel like I could not do it."
- Nicole (Cornerstone Alumni)

It is because of your generosity and support that Cornerstone does what it does best, serving our youth and providing a safe place to face life challenges now and into the future. Building a strong foundation of support and care that impacts them beyond the grade school years.

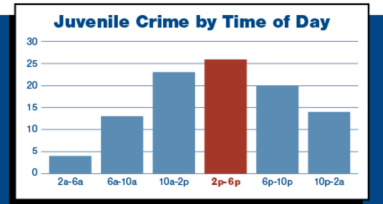
Sammi Simmons

Development Coordinator

2 to 6 p.m.: The Prime Time for Juvenile Crime in the U.S.

Quality Afterschool Programs:

- 🔍 Reduce Crime
- 📚 Boost Academics
- 👍 Improve Behavior
- ❤️ Lead to Healthier Habits
- 💰 Save Money



#AfterschoolFightsCrime

FightCrime

FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS



Prime time for Juvenile Crime is between 2:00pm-6:00pm. A survey of teens and parents found that bored teens reported making poorer choices. Communities with after-school youth centers report:

Reduced Crime:

- 28–35% reduction of total arrests.
- 45–50% reduction in violent crime.

Higher Academic Achievement:

- 68 after-school programs across the United States found that participants did better,
 - On reading and math achievement tests
 - Achieved higher GPAs
 - Had higher school attendance

Improved Behavior:

- Youth got along better with others and were less likely... to engage in socially risky choices.

Healthier Habits:

- There was also evidence that these positive changes persist over time when they reached aged 20, young adults... were more likely:
 - to be in the education field
 - to be a volunteer in their free time

Because of Cornerstone's commitment to after-school programming, combined with your help and support, we are witnessing these positive outcomes. A reminder of the valuable outcome that makes the investment worthwhile.

White, Margaret. "After School: The Prime Time for Juvenile Crime - Police Chief Magazine." *Police Chief Magazine*, 5 Aug. 2020, www.policechiefmagazine.org/after-school-the-prime-time-for-juvenile-crime/. Accessed 17 Oct. 2024.



You Who Are Youth

God has been doing some remarkable things at Cornerstone. Since re-opening in September, students have been engaged during our daily devotional time, choosing also to participate in treasure hunters, an optional “deeper dive” into whatever the lesson covered. One day, 10 high school students joined two leaders in the café and discussed the template of spiritual development given in First John chapter 2. All but one claimed to have trusted in Jesus and now see themselves between being a child in the faith, and being a spiritual youth.

Two students from unchurched homes have been taking steps in their faith inside and outside of Cornerstone. One has been consistently attending two youth groups with his friends. The other started attending a local youth group weekly on Sundays and is meeting with the youth pastor for one-on-one discipleship. These are in addition to our weekly High School Guys Discipleship Group. We are witnessing the spiritual awakening we’ve been praying for. Praise God!

Jonathan Weatherholtz
Coordinator of Family Ministires

**I have written to you who are young in the faith because you are strong.
God's word lives in your hearts, and you have won your battle with the evil one.
- 1 John 2:14b**

The Right People at the Right Time

Over the years one statement and thought that has been used and repeated quite often is that Cornerstone does not belong to any one person or group of people. It is not owned by any director that has sat in the director’s office nor is it owned by any of the board of directors. The simple fact is that at its inception, the “founding fathers” who served as the planning committee for what would some day become the Cornerstone Youth Center committed to each other, and to God, that this organization would belong to God and God alone. Those who are given the opportunity and responsibility to serve as hands and feet would commit to seeking a firm reliance on God almighty and mutually pledge to each other our gifts, our talents, our time and our prayers, to follow divine direction in the efforts to provide a safe place for youth to meet together, play together and be exposed to the Word and Love of God in life changing ways. God has always been faithful to provide the right people at the right place at the right time, and we have every reason to believe that He will continue to do so.

Norm Smith
Board President

At the present time, the Cornerstone Board of Directors has three vacant board member positions which we would like to fill. As we discuss board opportunities, we feel it is very important for the candidate to be a well-grounded Christian who understands and agrees with our mission and core-values. We try to have a variety of professions represented on our board. At the moment, we would like to add someone from the legal profession, the medical profession or someone with a construction background. However, anyone who would like to be a part of Cornerstone’s team is very welcome. If you, or someone you know would like to be a part of the Cornerstone team, also, please call the office and get additional information. We would love to discuss this with you.



Save **THE** Date

LOCK-IN & BAIL-OUT

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8TH

OUR FUNDRAISING VOLUNTEERS NEED YOUR HELP TO BE BAILED OUT OF OUR YOUTH'S LOCK-IN! WILL YOU PARTNER WITH US AND SUPPORT OUR LOCAL YOUTH CENTER ON THIS DAY BY MAKING A DONATING HERE!



Our annual year-end appeal will be November 8-10. Our goal is to raise \$50,000 during this weekend. The kickoff to this weekend will be our annual "Lock In & Bail Out" on November 8. Our students will be locked in for an overnight event, and our board members, staff, and other volunteers will also be locked in until they raise enough "Bail Money" in donations to be released! On November 8, you can call in your donation to (717) 367-0000, between the hours of 10am-8pm, or you can also make contributions through our website, QR code to the left. You can also send in your donations to Cornerstone Youth Center, 95 S. Wilson Ave., Elizabethtown, PA 17022. Please consider giving and supporting all God is doing at Cornerstone, and THANK YOU for your support!

Contact us at:

- 717-367-0000
- Office@CornerstoneEtown.org
- www.CornerstoneEtown.org
- 95 South Wilson Avenue
Elizabethtown, PA 17022

Hours:

Office Hours
Monday - Thursday 10am - 3pm
Friday & Saturday by appointment

Thank you for partnering with Cornerstone and helping us to be good stewards of our finances by signing up to receive this newsletter electronically!

thank you
for making a  huge
difference