



PROVIDENCE CENTER

A Ministry of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus

Fall 2013

A Love Full of Action

Children in our after school program grow up in poverty, exposed to drugs and violence that threaten their innocence. Our local school's staff has been slashed while the class sizes have grown. Adults face the challenging task of learning a new language while trying to support their struggling families. While there is much in the daily work at Providence Center that would conspire to make us feel powerless, we enter this new school year believing as much as ever in the power of our work.

Power is a theme of this newsletter, from our new youth program, to new



worlds opening for our adults, to the stunning photography of our summer campers. Power can be used to oppress and foment fear, but we are blessed to see how our students discover their power to lift their lives and communities up to futures of potential and grace. Providence Cen-

ter's power to make a difference in people's lives grows because you are with us, supporting our work with gifts and prayers. We lock arms with you all, filled with defiant joy, believing in a higher power that conquers suffering, inspired to live a love full of action. ♦

Power! Our New Youth Program

Providence Center's new youth program, Power, helps children and teens develop reverence for the dignity of their lives, the lives of their peers, and the life of their community. Drawing from our Holy Child roots and incorporating research-based practices

from Christa Tinari of Peace Praxis, our new curriculum strengthens the whole child. We'll get involved in the arts, making and appreciating music, art, and drama. The kids will serve their community, participating in projects

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Our Mission

Providence Center engages children, youth and adults in educational opportunities within the Fairhill/West Kensington community of North Philadelphia.

The Center values respect for the dignity of each person and creates a safe, hospitable place for learning.

Our Programs

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

- "Power" After School
- Teen and Grad Leaders
- Summer Camp

ADULT EDUCATION

- English Language Classes
- Individual ESL Tutoring

FAITH AND FAMILY

- Prayer Group
- Women's Retreats

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that beautify their neighborhood and bring joy to others. And, of course, we'll continue to provide the kind of academic support that sparks the children's curiosity and love of learning.

Power gives our children and teens a safe place where they find role models and support. Together they grow as caring, imaginative, and bright young people, discovering the best of who they are, their sincere selves, while helping their peers to do the same. ♦



Grad Leaders



Providence Center has a long history of working with high school students as Teen Leaders in our after school program. Now that we have five of our previous Teen Leaders enrolled in college, we're starting a Graduate Leader program! These college students will continue to work in our after school program, helping to mentor the children and Teen Leaders while receiving support as they pursue their educational dreams. ♦



Sporty Summer

Thanks to Beneficial Bank, kids in our Summer Camp attended a Philadelphia Freedoms World Team Tennis match. Not only did they see the pros play, but the kids also received free racquets and a lesson! Later in the summer, our membership in the Federation of Neighborhood Centers connected us to the Eagle's Book Mobile. Tennis, Eagles chants and free books—what a great summer! ♦

Building on our Success: Expanding Adult ESL

Last year, almost 300 adults attended Providence Center's ESL classes. They came looking for better jobs, the chance to help their kids with their homework, and the hope of finding new friends. With experienced instructors led by one of our founders, Sr. Peggy Doherty, we were blessed to help our students succeed.

Our students on average improved their English abilities over 22% when tested on their reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Those gains came after just 36 hours of instruction over 12 weeks, prompting us to wonder *what if we provided even more class time?*

We are now increasing our classes from 1.5 to 2 hours, giving our students 50 hours of instruction each

semester. We will also offer them the chance to work with volunteer tutors, *people just like you* who offer one-on-one support.



In addition to English classes, our students can enroll in one of our many computer workshops. Imagine not being able to search online for a new job, or see the video of your grandchild that was posted to Facebook, or email your friends who have moved away. Many of

Providence Center's adult students have never used a computer, and their inability to open a browser closes down worlds of opportunity. One of Providence Center's faithful volunteers, Ruthie Villafaña, realized she had the power to make a difference. Ruthie began providing computer workshops this summer, helping small groups of students learn the basics. This Fall, with the help of volunteers from ITT Tech and Ignatian Volunteer Corps, we'll continue Ruthie's work, adding workshops with topics like Microsoft Office and job hunting online! ♦

Old Neighborhood Reunion!
Oct. 20, 2013, 1:00 to 5:00 at Cannstatler's. Contact Rusty Olimpo for info:
215-380-8359

Through Their Eyes

Providence Center is committed to unlocking the imaginations of our students, helping them to express themselves creatively and to see the beauty in their lives. The photographs on this page were all taken by children in our summer camp, of children in our summer camp. These are the kids in our neighborhood, through their eyes.

We recognize so many qualities in these faces. Joy and thoughtfulness. Carefree moments and introspection. Most of all, we see potential. Who would think that children this young could create such moving portraits of their peers? Just imagine, with a little support, what else they can do! ♦



WAYS YOU CAN HELP

“Generosity, generosity, generosity must be the beginning and ending of our life.” -Cornelia Connelly

*We serve needy families, and so our programs are either free or charge only a nominal fee. **Please help us sustain this mission with a gift!****

- * Become a monthly donor
- * Ask your employer to match your gift
- * Consider a bequest to Providence Center
- * Donate online with PayPal:
www.providencecentershcj.org

*Volunteer on your own or bring your family, co-workers, or congregation! **There are many ways you can become involved in our work!***

- * Tutor adults learning English
- * Spend time with our kids and teens
- * Help in the office
- * Volunteer your trade or skill

**Gifts to Providence Center are tax-deductible*

For information, contact David Chiles at dchiles@providencecentershcj.org.

Help us Spread the Word!

Invite us to speak at your parish or community group! If you would like to arrange a presentation, contact David Chiles: dchiles@providencecentershcj.org



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