



The Cornerstone Times

FALL 2019

# AMAZING

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



**“The stone the builders rejected is now the cornerstone. This is the Lord’s doing; it is amazing in our eyes.”**

PSALM 118: 22-23

Dear Cornerstone Families and Friends,

“The proof is in the pudding,” we say. Actually, the original proverb is: “The proof of the pudding is in the eating.” What it meant was that you had to try out food to know whether it was good or not. Through the years the saying was shortened and now it means that the end result of our efforts is the mark of either success or failure.

Our vision at Cornerstone is that the end result of our efforts will be the development of students who are grounded in faith, shaped with Christ-like character, and equipped with knowledge and skills to excel in high school, college, and throughout life. The best proof to verify success of this vision is our alumni, and there is an abundance of evidence available from which we continually draw.

Alumni come back to visit us frequently. That in itself speaks volumes of the impact this school has on children’s lives. I never returned to the elementary or middle school I attended, and I don’t think many people do. Cornerstone, though, has a special place in the hearts of our alums because they know their young lives were shaped, and in many instances transformed, by being a student here.

Two alums recently returned to speak to this year’s 8th graders who are anxiously completing high school admission applications and prepping for interviews. India attends Central High School and Marlia is at Science Leadership Academy. India and Marlia shared how well prepared they were for high school because of the high academic and behavioral expectations imposed upon them at Cornerstone. “What the teachers are doing for you and expecting from you at Cornerstone pays off,” they said, “because when you get to high school, you’re going to see that you’re a lot better prepared than many of your classmates.” Then they offered this advice. “Maintain the friendships you have at Cornerstone because the closeness you have here is special. Keep your Cornerstone friends close and they will help you keep your faith strong.”

Amazing, isn’t it, what the impact is of this little school? Through the years I have heard countless graduates say that being a student at Cornerstone is what made all the difference in their life. Here, they say, is where they learned to take their education seriously, where their character was developed, their closest friendships made and where their faith was inspired. Students come back regularly to express their appreciation for how teachers held them to high standards that helped shape them into who they are today. Our alumni affirm that our vision is being fulfilled and our work is not in vain.

At our “High School Information Day” held in early October, admission directors from area high schools spoke to our middle school students. Afterwards, as I thanked them individually, I heard this, “We love having Cornerstone students at our high school. Keep them coming to us please.” Now that’s proof in the pudding!

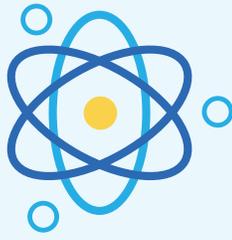
Thank you for the many generous ways you are helping to support the amazing things happening at Cornerstone Christian Academy.

Gratefully,

**Dick Ollinger, President/CEO**

rollinger@CornerstonePhiladelphia.com | (215) 724-6858 x232





## Technology Integration

Tech instruction and integration, as well as STEAM programming for all grades.



## Pathway to High School

Individualized guidance from teachers & School Counselor puts students on a path to acceptance to special admission high schools.



## Christian Education

In addition to a strong academic foundation, Cornerstone holds faith formation as an equally important value.

# The Value of a Cornerstone Education



## Our Small Community

Small class sizes ensure that students receive more individualized attention.



## Health & Wellness Programs

Social emotional instruction, Mindfulness classes, nutritional options for breakfast and lunch for all students.



**Bright and early:** *Every day starts with an all-school pledge*

## STORIES FROM OUR SCHOOL

# Mornings at Cornerstone

We understand that starting our school days off with energy and positivity is the best way to ensure a productive, engaged, and focused day—both in and outside of the classroom.

Each morning begins with an all-school lineup where our teachers and faculty lead students in setting their intention, and preparing for the day. The focus here is to instill in each student the desire to make today the best it can be, by doing the best job they can.

Our morning continues with breakfast for all students—picked up in the cafeteria and brought to class—where their instruction can begin promptly with classrooms of students who are focused and energized.

Extracurricular activities kick off bright and early as well, with choir practice taking place before regular lessons. Voices of Praise ringing out to start the day are the signal of yet another great day at Cornerstone Christian Academy.



**“As CCA students, we pledge to do our best today, in every way, with God’s help. Glory!”**

CORNERSTONE STUDENT MORNING PLEDGE





## Support our school, get a new shirt!

Maybe you have seen our new **I AM AMAZING** shirts our students and staff are now wearing. That's how we feel about this school and all the people in it. Every single person who contributes a part of their life to our mission is AMAZING in their own way and should be proud to recognize that as a fact.

And if you're reading this, you are amazing too! Why not say it loud and proud and support Cornerstone Christian Academy at the same time! For the 2019-20 school year we are proud to offer a full line of I AM AMAZING shirts, sweatshirts, and hoodies for all children's and adult sizes.

To purchase your shirt, go to [CornerstonePhiladelphia.com/Amazing](http://CornerstonePhiladelphia.com/Amazing) or come to the main office and fill out an order form. Currently only cash or CashApp are accepted.



I Am Amazing, Cornerstone  
Students at gym class

### THOUGHT LEADERS

## Professional development happens here



Earlier this fall, Cornerstone's Human Resources Manager **Rhonda Roberts** was a featured presenter at the Association of Delaware Valley Independent Schools (ADVIS) Administrative Assistants retreat at Valley Forge Military Academy & College in Wayne, PA.

Opening the session with her presentation, *Self-Care & Resiliency: Giving Out Without Giving In*, Rhonda led a group of roughly 100 Southeast Pennsylvania-area school administrative staff in a workshop on identifying and controlling stress in the workplace. Tactics include developing a personal action plan, and understanding the role that self-care has in protecting, strengthening, and preserving mental, physical, and emotional health.

Relying on her 20+ years of management and administrative experience, Rhonda then facilitated a Q & A and panel discussion with several other area educational professionals.

# CORNERSTONE REPORTS

## Hoop Dreams: Basketball returns to Cornerstone

If you hear the sounds of cheering coming from the Myers Recreation Center gym this winter, don't be surprised, because we're proud to announce that Cornerstone basketball is back!

After a five-year hiatus, our boys and girls in blue and gold will take the courts once again as the **Cornerstone Warriors** have joined the PCAC League and are looking to pick right back up where they left off.

Coached by Mr. Ford, the Warriors will consist of boys and girls from 5th through 8th grade and will travel around the region competing against other Christian schools. Let's go Warriors!



Hardwood heroes: Basketball team hopefuls at tryouts



## Moving up! Fifth grade joins Middle School

After planning a structural reorganization for many years, the 2019-20 school year finally saw the integration of our 5th grade class into Cornerstone's Middle School. Maintaining the same 5th grade curriculum—but integrating classroom switching, lockers, and other aspects previously reserved for 6th-8th grades—this change has allowed our teachers to refocus their energies on teaching to their respective strengths.

Mr. Loperbey has moved up from 4th grade and now handles Middle School Social Studies and Language Arts. He joins Ms. Grant (Middle School Science), Mr. Cammisa (Middle School Reading), and Mrs. Harris (Middle School Math) under this new structure.

In addition to the more concentrated focus across all disciplines, this new format allows our Middle Schoolers to have a full-year of science and social studies. A renewed focus on Language Arts is also a benefit as those skills are now implemented across multiple classes. Social Studies allows for ELA (English Language Arts) skills including phonics and sentence structure, reading comprehension, and critical thinking, to be implemented along with the core curriculum.

Helping to ease the transition for our fifth graders is the new SOAR Program. Designed to help students adapt to their new Middle School environment, SOAR teaches them time management and other useful organizational tactics. Additionally, with this reorganization our social emotional learning strategies have been added to all Middle School classes for the first time.



## What? Cornerstone has a Health & Wellness Task Force?

Yes, since 2016, there has been a dedicated group of individuals quietly but energetically at work to help improve the health, wellness, safety, and security of students and staff at Cornerstone Christian Academy. Under the leadership of **Dr. Kathryn Limmer**—a member of Cornerstone's Board of Trustees—the Task Force has been the impetus behind numerous initiatives, including:

- ☀ Free breakfast and lunch programs for students
- ☀ Improved health services for students, securing a School Nurse on campus one day per week, not 1-2 days a month
- ☀ Improved student medical record keeping and the distribution of student health information to teachers and staff
- ☀ Implementation of a plan for student medications to travel with them from class to class and on school outings and field trips
- ☀ Preparedness response and ongoing training for health emergencies like food allergies and asthma
- ☀ Developmentally appropriate Physical Education curriculum and funding for equipment
- ☀ Purchased Automated Electronic Defibrillators around campus and annual Cardiac Emergency Response training
- ☀ Newly created Emergency Management Team for response to campus emergencies

Thank you Dr. Limmer and the members of the Health and Wellness Task Force for your continuing work to keep the students, staff, and visitors at Cornerstone healthy and safe.



## DONOR SPOTLIGHT

### Giving back is a family affair: Tom & Janet O'Reilly

Tom and Janet O'Reilly are celebrating 25 years of marriage this November, and in that span of time they have been Teammates to five different Cornerstone students.

They count these students they have supported alongside their own nine grandchildren—with whom Tom fondly recalls sharing a Teammates activity several years ago.

An educator herself—having taught 5th and 6th grades at Valley Forge

Elementary—Janet still has the school folders from each of the five children that they have partnered with. Their favorite aspect of the program is watching their students' growth, culminating in their graduation ceremony. "To see them grow, they really show Christ."

So how much do they enjoy the visits with their teammates? As Tom says, "We probably get more out of this than the student does."

We thank the O'Reilly's for touching the lives of so many students over the years, a task they continue to this day.

“My faith has grown as an adult. I enjoy sharing God's blessings.

JANET O'REILLY”

### Corporate Partner: Sage Technology Solutions

Sage Technology Solutions is a full-service technology and communications solutions provider serving the Healthcare, Education, Houses of Worship, Senior Living, Corporate, and Government markets. At the heart of Sage is their corporate philosophy that values building relationships with customers, developing career employees, and impacting community over the long haul. Their team of leaders works to extend this meaningful value in ways that make an amazing difference in the lives of Cornerstone students and their families.

Sage President **Daniel Rohrer**, combines his work in providing clients with innovative communication solutions

and technology, with his passion for doing good things in the community.

Sage is a prominent corporate partner of Cornerstone's through Pennsylvania's Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit program (OSTC.)

In his own words, Mr. Rohrer states, "There is no better way to impact the lives of a future generation in South Eastern Pennsylvania than by contributing to the ministry of Cornerstone Christian Academy. Cornerstone gives the love of Jesus combined with foundational learning to empower these kids for a lifetime."



## Wayne Presbyterian and Grace Presbyterian: Churches lend a hand

Cornerstone students, parents, teachers, and staff value the friendships and support of all our church partners. Most of our volunteers and donors are members of our partner churches and a sizable portion of our annual fund is supported by mission allocations from these congregations. We continually say that if it wasn't for the strong support and expressions of encouragement from our church partners there would not be a Cornerstone Christian Academy.

For many years the **Wayne Presbyterian Church** congregation has blessed our students at the start of each school year with book bags, Bibles, and classroom supplies. What a joy it is for teachers to greet their students on the first day of school with a book bag filled with needed supplies for the start of school.

These supplies get diminished quickly, but thanks to our friends from **Grace Presbyterian Church** in Jenkintown our students are never without supplies they need. Annually, the Grace Presbyterian congregation delivers a bulk of supplies, including cleaning and disinfecting wipes that help to keep our classrooms stocked.



**Packed with care:** Wayne Presbyterian volunteers John Larkin and Ian Robertson delivering book bags and supplies for the new school year.



## Alumni Spotlight: Roxanne Fulton

Roxanne was born and raised in Southwest Philadelphia and was a member of **Cornerstone's Class of 1996**, where her fondest memory is participating in the school Christmas play. That left an impression on her, because after graduating from Cornerstone she attended City Center Academy, later earning her Bachelor's degree in Communications—with a concentration in Broadcast Journalism—from Bowie State University.

After college she landed her first job at ESPN as a studio tech on programs like *SportsCenter*, *First Take*, and other popular ESPN shows. From there she worked at media companies such as CNN and NBC Universal, where she produced a story for Black History Month that was submitted for an Emmy nomination.

Roxanne is also a filmmaker: serving as director, writer, and producer of a few short films including her latest project, *Invisible Boundaries* which is centered around mental illness. She has also directed a web series based in Baltimore called *Torture*.

Roxanne has also been seen in front of the camera in *Tyler Perry's Meet the Browns*, HBO's *Veep*, and a *This is SportsCenter* commercial. She is passionate about helping the youth and becoming a motivational speaker, and her goal is to own a TV and film studio.

## Teacher Spotlight: Mr. Winborne

For many of our teachers, educating students is not the only way they serve the Cornersone community. Putting in extra time and effort on a day-to-day basis speaks to the calling that many teachers feel while working here. Perhaps no one personifies this Cornerstone Champion spirit more than Technology Teacher, Mr. Wilbur Winborne.

Mr. Winborne has been involved with Cornerstone for over 25 years: from his earliest memories providing home cooked meals to interns, to taking over as head of the tech department from his wife who was the previous Technology teacher, to his current role.

In addition to his usual computer and technology classes, Mr. Winborne runs the after-school club *Tech Titans*, for students interested in computer science. He has also fostered a relationship with Republic First Bank to bring a banking and money management course to Cornerstone for 4th and 5th graders.

Outside of the school, Wilbur preaches at 19th Street Baptist Church at the Chapel of the Four Chaplains, where he is never shy to brag about Cornerstone and how proud he is of his students, using his platform to preach the importance of education for young people.

Thank you Mr. Winborne for being a true Cornerstone Champion.



“If kids have education that’s the most important thing.”

MR. WINBORNE ”

## True to her faith: Meet Ms. Mildred

It’s hard to spend any length of time at Cornerstone and not meet **Ms. Mildred**. She joined the Cornerstone team as a math and reading tutor in 2010. She then was hired as a housekeeper and has been serving in that capacity ever since.

The number one experience she looks forward to every year is J-Rock summer camp, which according to her “allows the teachers and students to explore their God-given gifts through the arts.” Her gift is as a seamstress and each year she helps create the costumes for J-Rock’s summer finale stage production. At showtime every year you’ll be sure to find Ms. Mildred backstage, overseeing and making last-minute mends to her custom designed creations.

Ms. Mildred says her greatest joy is being able to pray for everybody at Cornerstone. She can oftentimes be found praying while working, ministering with a coworker, or somewhere in the school yard in prayerful thought. Through the nature of her work she gets to see all of the children, teachers, and staff members, so when someone is having a problem she makes it a point to stop and pray with—or for—them. True to her faith, sometimes she keeps others’ needs silently in her heart without them even knowing she is praying on their behalf.

Ms. Mildred is a true embodiment of the Christ-like character we strive to impart to our students.



“I have prayed for everybody here at some point in time.”

MS. MILDRED ”



# Ways to give to Cornerstone

## Volunteer Opportunities

Last year, over 110 individuals provided 1,389 hours of volunteer service at Cornerstone in the areas of student support, facilities improvements, classroom activities, and office support. Volunteers are vital to Cornerstone by the support they provide for school operations without financial cost.

Consider becoming a volunteer by serving in one or more of these ways:

**Mentor** - build a relationship with a middle school student by helping them set and achieve personal and academic goals, including preparing for high school.

**Classroom Assistant** - support teachers by assisting with classroom activities and lessons.

**Maintenance** - help keep our buildings and grounds safe, clean, and in good repair.

**Office Support** - assist with mailings, materials preparation, and other light office duties.

**Committees** - serve on a board committee (Advancement, Education, Facilities, or Finance)

**Tutoring** - provide reading and/or math support to students.

There are year-round volunteer opportunities at Cornerstone. For more information please contact Maria Arrington by email at [marrington@cornerstonephiladelphia.com](mailto:marrington@cornerstonephiladelphia.com) or by phone at **215-724-6858, ext.233**.

## Financial Donations

Your generous financial donations are essential to help maintain and advance the high-quality education and services Cornerstone provides to students. There are a number of ways gifts can be made to the school:

### Direct Gifts

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

#### Cornerstone Christian Academy

**PO Box 5520  
Philadelphia, PA 19143**

Contribute online:

**[CornerstonePhiladelphia.com/donate](https://CornerstonePhiladelphia.com/donate)**

### 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.

### United Way

Employee pledges can be made through the following two United Way agencies:

United Way of Southeastern PA, Donor Choice Agency #9616 (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.

# Why Give to Cornerstone?

As an independent private Christian school, Cornerstone depends upon the financial contributions of individuals, churches, corporations, and foundations to provide scholarship and program support for our students.

Every dollar donated ensures that our students receive a quality education that truly transforms their life.

Your generous gifts make a difference for the students and the families who choose our school for their child's education. Nearly 25% of our donor base has been contributing financial support to Cornerstone since 1990. Thank you to these faithful donors as well as all of our donors who help us inspire hope in the children we serve.

Investing in Cornerstone's students pays high dividends. In a city where approximately 67% of public high school students graduate from high school in four years, 98% of our alumni graduate high school on time. Our students are prepared to excel in high school and college because they are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed, as well as being grounded in faith and shaped with Christ-like character.

Our donors are the difference makers for the students we serve. We could not provide the quality education we do without the financial support of many friends. Your gifts help change the destinies of our children by making a Cornerstone Christian education accessible. Thank you!

## Our Mission

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

## Board of Trustees

The Rev. Dr. Anita Bell  
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William Harrison  
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James Sweet, Esq., **Co-Founder**

## 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 & skills to excel in high school, college, & throughout life.

Wayne Geisser, **Chairman**  
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