



common ground montgomery

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2017

newsletter

pre-k update

The Common Ground Montgomery Pre-K will begin its second school year on August 10, 2017. Our Pre-K was approved for First Class Pre-K grant funds for 2017-2018 and was fully licensed in May through the Child Care Services Division of the Alabama Department of Human Resources.

The Pre-K will serve 16 four-year-old children. Most of the children come from our community, but it is open to anyone in Montgomery. Stella McCall, our lead classroom teacher, and Veronica Poole, our auxiliary teacher, will both return for the 2017-2018 school year.

With our grant funds this year, we plan to finish our playground by adding outdoor carpet, additional playground equipment for the children, as well as an outdoor art area. We are looking forward to a very successful school year!





summer camp update

kevin king

Summer Camp at Common Ground Montgomery is a season that children in our community look forward to all year long. Our campers arrived on June 5th ready for a summer filled with fun and excitement. The question, though, is it all just fun and games? We have always made an intentional effort to insure that our children have the best experience possible while continuing to keep their minds sharp throughout the summer as well as providing opportunities to expose them to new things!

At 9 a.m. every day they gather in the gym for a loosely structured play time greeted by camp academic teachers and 13 college interns serving as their group leaders for the summer. Every day for eight weeks, they spend an hour being developed educationally and an hour in Bible study. After their morning learning time, they've worked up a bit of an appetite

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girls' group study at Tre'ss Bien salon

so they all share a lunchtime meal together. After lunch is when the fun and games begin.

This year our children have had the opportunity to do the normal fun activities that children love to engage in such as swimming, bowling, skating, adventure camp, relays with volunteer groups, and going to the movies. They are also being exposed to fun but developmental activities, such as a photography class lead by photographers from Kim Box Photography, Kouture Kidz modeling twice a week that focuses on fashion and life skill development, music production lead by staffer Deandre Burns, and art classes.

This has already been a successful summer filled with exciting activities and development as well as a heavy emphasis on Jesus and His love for us. My prayer is that our children would experience the love and grace of our savior through us sharing life together in all of the ways mentioned above. I also pray that it would be life giving and have a life altering experience for God's glory.

To those of you that have donated, volunteered, or made a meal for our interns, we thank you! We couldn't have done any of this without your support.

hanging out in the gym



summer fun!



going on trips



visiting Camp Butter and Egg Adventures in Troy





take them a meal

Our summer interns come from all across the U.S. to assist with our Summer Camp for nine weeks. In an effort to keep down costs, we look to individuals and groups to provide meals to these hardworking, young people.

Our take-them-a-meal sign up sheet still has slots available where you can sign up.

The shortcut URL is: www.cgmlife/meals



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bryan kelly

we're making some changes



We believe God is shaping our organization towards expanded and deeper impact where we are in the Washington Park community, but also towards growth into other Montgomery areas and beyond.

It is with great excitement to announce that our board of directors and leadership staff have decided to hire Justin Hampton as the new Executive Director of Common Ground Montgomery. We are excited about Justin and all that he brings to our staff and neighborhood. Justin is a very gifted leader and was on staff with CGM for five years before leaving to attend Harvard University where he earned a Masters Degree in Public Administration. He has great vision for our neighborhood and for various areas of development of CGM.

Justin has a passion for community development, youth mentoring, economic development of under-resourced communities, and is committed to see all this happen as an expression of the gospel. Justin, who grew up in Montgomery, has moved back from Washington, D.C., where he has been in a consulting role to the government.

I will continue in a Founder role and get to focus on the expansion of CGM initiatives in the city and beyond. I'll still be teaching CGM's theological principles and philosophy of work to visiting groups as well as continuing to focus on connecting people from Montgomery to our mission. By expanding our leadership team, we will be able to pivot our organization and grow our impact towards replication and training other leaders to do transformative works in other areas of poverty.

expanding our team

For the past 11 years the staff of Common Ground Montgomery have taken on a daily challenge that is personal and sacrificial. They endure long nights, heartbreaking losses, and occasional triumphs all because they believe that they will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. They believe that seeking the Kingdom of God's expression in the lives of their families and in the people they serve is a vastly more rewarding pursuit than anything else. For years they plant and water in hopes that God will bring the increase. And, increase has come over that time.

This passion for change, a dedication to something more than themselves, drew me to CGM seven years ago when I first joined the staff, because it matched something I sensed in my own heart. It was the idea that I could join in to what God was and is doing and see a tangible manifestation of His love in the lives of others. During the ensuing five years I grew, learned, and wanted to do more.

After five years, I left CGM to attend Harvard Kennedy School in hopes of increasing my personal impact potential. I believed that the education and network I'd acquire would allow me to help more people, to break down contextual obstacles for others, and to make change on an even greater scale.

I thought the investment in myself would lead to bigger and better things. The fact of the matter is, it did. It's led me to a bigger vision that brought me back to CGM and the Washington Park neighborhood. It's added a new professional network, a fresh perspective, new skills, and a rekindled fire to see this community harness the realized potential of every resident.



justin hampton

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After two years away, initially with no intention of returning, I can think of no greater pursuit than leading the Washington Park focused efforts of CGM. It's where I played my youth football. It's where I graduated from high school (St. Jude). It's where I attended church services as a child. It's where my mother and her eight siblings were raised. Its love is deeply rooted in my heart and its success in this season is my calling.

Professionally, my role is to bring form and function to the currently existing passion and purpose at CGM. To ensure that accountability, best practices, and excellence accompany our impactful relationship-based programming.

It is both exciting and humbling to know that without God, I am doomed to fail. The Executive Director position is one that I am both well-prepared for and yet totally ill-equipped to perform. Ironically, the latter is where my surest confidence resides. Knowing that in my extreme weaknesses He shows Himself strong, every single time. Knowing that if God is for us, who can be against us.

It is truly a daunting task and blessing of opportunity and weighty responsibility to be the new Executive Director of Common Ground Montgomery. It carries a responsibility to our partners, the families we serve, the community that houses us, the staff that labors toward our mission, and the God that brought us all together.

Join me in praying for the organization as we transition. Pray God grants us the wisdom undoubtedly required to carry out His will in our lives and work. We appreciate your partnership and look forward to celebrating answers to your prayers that are sure to be "exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask or think."

