

Nelson Chapel hosts weekly toddler classes

Among the youngest people to utilize the Covenant Children's Home and Family Services campus are the two-year-olds who attend toddler classes offered by the Illinois Valley Easter Seals.

The children attend classes twice weekly in Nelson Chapel's multi-purpose room. Although Easter Seals primarily serves children with special needs, all children are eligible to attend the group, according to Paula Williamson, Director of Program Services for Easter Seals of LaSalle and Bureau Counties.

"Unlike parent-child play groups, the parents traditionally do not stay while the children attend the two-hour class," Paula explained. "The class is taught by a developmental therapist and a support teacher with extensive knowledge in child development and disabilities." The structured classes provide children with the opportunity to engage in activities that will further their development and teach them how to appropriately interact with others.

The children enjoy activities including free play, snack time, group time and art projects. A recent activity included a visit from a Princeton Fire Department fire truck and two uniformed firemen.

Each class size is limited to six children to insure that every child's individual needs are being met. More information is available by contacting Paula Williamson at (815) 434-0856 or at www.illinoisvalley.easterseals.com.



MEETING COMMUNITY FRIENDS

A youngster from the Easter Seals toddler program visits with John Petrakis and Matt Boughton from the Princeton Fire Department. The program participants enjoyed a close-up look at the shiny red fire truck. The toddler class meets twice a week in the Nelson Chapel and is one of several programs which regularly utilize the CCHFS campus.

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In Touch

News about the ministries of Covenant Children's Home and Family Services • Princeton, Illinois

Sculpture garden project is underway!

By Barbara Prendergast

"Garden Sprite" sits on a bench near Nelson Chapel on the Covenant Children's Home campus, quietly reading a book. She is a symbol of more than 80 years of Christ-led service to children, youths, adults and families.

"Garden Sprite" is one of five bronze sculptures purchased for the Memorial Sculpture Garden Project. The other four sculptures will grace the new garden, which is being built in front of the site of the original Covenant Children's Home building and dormitory. Work is well underway on the project.

The garden commemorates Covenant Children's Home's history as a haven of hope and caring to children and young people, as well as to celebrate current and future ministries.

"The garden will provide a permanent, meaningful place for former residents, past employees and friends to visit, revive memories and be proud of their association with Covenant Children's Home," board member Ron Gustafson of Rockford, IL, commented. "It is meant to be a place for people and families to enjoy." A former CCHFS resident, Ron serves as chairman of the garden project committee.

The CCHFS board members in August approved the construction of the garden and purchase of five bronze sculptures, with a total of approximately \$110,000. Elite Landscaping of Princeton is in charge of construction, which began in October. Plans include paved walkways, a riverbed with a waterfall, and an arched entrance. Benches, bridges and a water fountain will welcome guests. The garden construction and planting of trees, including crab apple, sugar maple, elm and Japanese weeping maple, is expected to be completed this fall. The arched entryway will be built and perennials will be added in the spring.

"Garden Sprite" will remain in the Faith Builders' Walkway area. Sculptures recently placed in the garden include "Mary, Mary," a little girl holding a watering can; "Early Birds," a boy digging in a garden; "Sassy," standing with her hands on her hips; and "Johnny's Wagon," a boy pulling the beloved toy behind him. All five sculptures are the work of artist L'Deane Trueblood of St. George, Utah. Each is cast in bronze with beautiful details. Ms. Trueblood's bronze sculptures and vivid watercolor portraits grace homes, gardens, and private collections across the United States and abroad.

Be a part of the excitement!

We invite you to be a part of this testament to a history of hope and caring with a gift to the construction, care and maintenance of the memorial sculpture garden. The Covenant Children's Home and Family Services Board of Directors will match the first \$20,000 in contributions to the Memorial Sculpture Garden Project Fund.



"GARDEN SPRITE"

"Garden Sprite," the first of five sculptures to be placed on the Covenant Children's Home and Family Services campus, greets visitors to the Faith Builders' Walkway near the Nelson Chapel. Four additional sculptures have joined her in the new Memorial Sculpture Garden at 502 Elm Place, Princeton IL.

The design of the garden, as well as its location toward the front of the Elm Place property, will accommodate future expansion of the sculpture garden as contributions allow.

Contributions should be marked "Memorial Sculpture Garden Project Fund." They may be sent to Memorial Sculpture Garden; Covenant Children's Home and Family Services, P.O. Box 518, Princeton, IL 61356. (A convenient form is located on Page 3.)

Please join us in building this lovely tribute to the ministry to children and families that has been, and remains today, at the heart of Covenant Children's Home and Family Services!

Additional garden photos are located on Page 3!

Chris Pickett retires after 11 years on CCHFS Board

The CCHFS Board of Directors, at their August 18 meeting, said goodbye to longtime board member Rev. Chris Pickett of Rockford, IL. Chris retired from the board after 11 years of service, most recently as board vice-chairman.

CCHFS Board Chairman Bonnie Pihl of Wheaton, IL, commented, "Chris has been a valued member of the Covenant Children's Home & Family Services Board since 1996, and will be greatly missed by all of us. His tenure encompassed the closing of the residential and counseling programs, the transition of ownership from the Central Conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church to the Covenant Ministries of Benevolence, and the planning process for new programs and ministries. We appreciate his unwavering commitment and many contributions to our mission of helping children and other individuals in need, especially as we transitioned from residential treatment services to other ministries and services on our campus."

During his final board meeting, Chris shared his thoughts with fellow board members:

"Reflecting on the eleven years that I have served on the board of Covenant Children's Home and Family Services, I am in awe of the changes that we have had to make.

"Due to the changes the State of Illinois made in serving troubled children and youth, we found that we could not make the ministry we were doing financially viable. We had to close the residential treatment program and then the counseling program. Then we went through a painful process of redefining our ministry to make it viable and use the resources that God has CCHFS. We discovered several organizations which, while having an important positive effect on people, did not have appropriate facilities to provide those services. Prayerfully we decided to partner with these organizations since we had property and facilities that with some adaptation would allow them to serve others more effectively.

"The two core organizations are Freedom House, which provides services to victims of domestic abuse, and Bureau County Health and Wellness Clinic, a free clinic for those with low incomes or no health insurance in the tri-county area. There are a few other organizations who have also benefited from regular use of our facilities.

"Having refocused our services and the way CCHFS has been operating, some people have suggested that we should consider a change of name for the facility, since we appear to be providing services for adults more than for children. I have had this thought myself, but two important thoughts have occurred to me in my reflections on this. The first is that while the shelter and the clinic



HONORING 11 YEARS OF SERVICE

Chris Pickett of Rockford, IL, recently retired after 11 years on the CCHFS Board of Directors. He was honored with a plaque of appreciation at the board's August 18 meeting.

both primarily serve adults, there is a significant impact on the children of those adults, sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly. The other thought was much more theological in nature.

"I have not been in regular congregational ministry for almost 20 years; however, the part I miss most about ministry is conducting the sacrament of baptism, and particularly the baptism of a child. In the Covenant book of order after the baptism of a child the minister is directed to lift the child up and say, 'See what manner of love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are!' (I John 3:1).

"We tend to forget that all of us, whatever our age are children of God. And those we minister to at CCHFS are children of God as well, whether they know it or not. If we believe that God is present, if we believe that all are called and God is a God of open arms, then we need to reach out in love to all people regardless of country of origin, the number of years with which they have been blessed, the belief system they have, their state of physical or mental health, or even their sexual orientation and moral habits. God calls us to love one another as he has loved us!

"My prayer for Covenant Children's Home and Family Services is that it continues to be a beacon of God's love in the world, a place where God's love is demonstrated and experienced by all who are in need for years to come. God's blessing on you all."

On behalf of the board, staff and clients of Covenant Children's Home and Family Services, we thank Chris for his dedication and leadership to our ministry of serving God's children!

Petersons celebrate anniversary

Friendship Calling Coordinator Shirley Peterson and her husband, Glenn, recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

Glenn and Shirley were married October 5, 1957 in Chicago, IL. Both retired from Covenant Children's Home and Family Services. They have two children and four grandchildren. Please join us in congratulating them upon reaching this milestone!



InTouch

InTouch is a newsletter for friends of Covenant Children's Home and Family Services. Published by the Board of Directors of Covenant Children's Home and Family Services.

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GARDEN PROJECT UNDERWAY
Work is progressing this fall on the Memorial Sculpture Garden. TOP LEFT: Pebbled walkways have been laid around the perimeter and through the center of the garden, with footbridges spanning a dry rock creek bed. BOTTOM LEFT: Board members Ron Gustafson (standing) and Gil Williamson set "Johnny's Wagon" on its base. TOP RIGHT: A young friend visits with "Sassy." BOTTOM RIGHT: A waterfall gracefully tumbles over rocks into a river bed. Trees have been planted this fall. Grasses, perennials and an arched entrance will be added in the spring.



Visit our website!

For more information on Covenant Children's Home and Family Services, visit our newly renovated website at <http://www.cchfs.info>
 Here you will find stories and photos about the history of Covenant Children's Home and Family Services, information about ministries currently located on the CCHFS campus, and news about upcoming events.
 (Please note that an existing website with the address covenantchildrenshome.org is not affiliated with Covenant Children's Home and Family Services in any way.)

JOIN THE MEMORIAL SCULPTURE PROJECT NOW!

Yes, I wish to make a gift to help with the creation of a children's memorial sculpture area on the Covenant Children's Home and Family Services campus.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ Phone number (_____) _____

Amount of gift enclosed: _____
 (Please designate "Memorial Sculpture" with your gift)

Please call me about sponsoring the total cost of a sculpture as an honor or memorial.

PLEASE RETURN TO:
 Memorial Sculpture Garden
 Covenant Children's Home and Family Services
 P.O. Box 518, Princeton, IL 61356

Thank you for helping to commemorate CCHFS and its ministry to children and families through the Memorial Sculpture Project!