

Meditations Available

In an effort to become more personally involved with one of their missions, leaders from the Lane Church visited our campus. They are planning to emphasize the Children's Home in their worship for a month prior to a visit the Home's administrator. They also asked our staff to prepare 3 or 4 communion meditations and 3 or 4 offertory meditations that they could use in their worship service. We applaud the leadership of the Lane Church for desiring to get involved with their missions.

The communion and offertory meditations are available to any Church that would want to use them. They are available in two formats. They are available on a CD which can be used either with a TV or a video projector. They are also available in written form. If possible we would recommend the video format as young people from the Home participate by reading the scripture for the video meditations

We're on the Web
www.oblongchristianhome.org

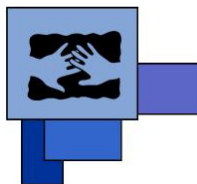
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Oblong Children's
Christian Home

THE BUILDER



What a Child
will be tomorrow
is being built today.

Publication of the Oblong Children's Christian Home
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Winter 2010

VBS Season Approaches

Summer will be here soon and with it comes VBS at so many churches. We are asking you to consider using us as your VBS mission in 2010. We will have a brand new DVD and curriculum.



Call Cherish at 618-592-3633 to request a copy of the DVD and a visit from a representative during your VBS week!

2009 in Review

Mission

The purpose of the Oblong Children's Home remains the same and is summarized in our mission statement: **Oblong Children's Christian Home's mission is to glorify God by discipling neglected and troubled children and their families. The Home provides a Christian family model that:**

- Demonstrates God's unconditional love.
- Teaches God's truth.
- Encourages each child's unique abilities.

We believe that if a ministry does not continue to focus on it's mission it becomes self focused instead of mission focused. During 2009, we went though each phrase of our mission statement and asked ourselves how we were doing at caring out each aspect of the mission and how we could improve. While God did not lead us to make any huge changes in ministry, we were able to do fine tuning.

Victories

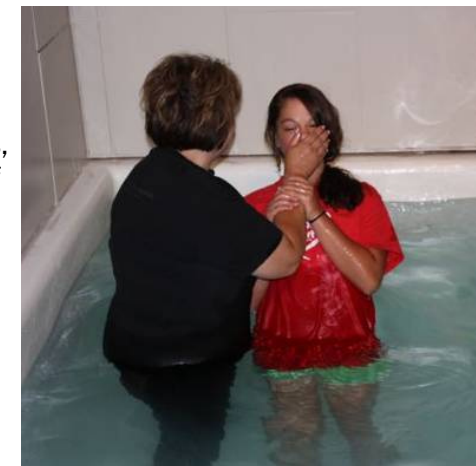
During 2009 the Oblong Children's Christian Home served more children than ever before. We ended the year with 27 total children on campus. While most of the children on campus have accepted Christ during previous years, 3 more accepted Christ and were baptized this year. One of the graduates of our program entered Bible College and two more dedicated their lives to full-time Christian service during 2009. We continued a discipling role with each child in our care.

Kids have not only grown spiritually, but also academically and socially. We utilized two public schools and two Christian schools to connect our kids with the best academic programs available. Many of our kids have been on the honor roll. The young people have also grown socially. One of the girls in our care was selected as homecoming queen by her peers.

Challenges

We began the year with hopes of building either a grandparents house or a riding arena. We put out a fleece and the answer we feel we received was "not at this time." Looking back on the year we can see that with the continued deterioration of the economy, this would not have been a good year to build.

The economic recession had a major impact on the Children's Home beginning in October when income was \$37,000 below budget. We tightened our belts in all areas and suspended the Home's contribution to the Interest Groups which previously gave the kids opportunity to participate in scrapbooking, sports events, cultural events and wilderness events. While expenses have been held several thousand dollars below budget each month, most of our expenses are fixed expenses and cannot be cut without reducing the number of kids served. We are praying for an extra large Christmas income to help catch us up.



State of the Children's Home: A Goals Update

The Board and Staff have investigated four possible areas of expansion—grandparent apartment(s), indoor riding arena, more homes, and our own school. The grandparent apartment(s) would house one or more couples who could meet an important need in many of our kids' lives for a grandparent influence. Grandparents could play an important role with our kids as well as volunteering some of their time in their areas of experience to the ministry.

The Board has also examined the possibility of building an indoor riding arena so that the kids could get the benefit of the horsemanship program year-round. Currently, the corral is too muddy for riding much of the year.

The Board has considered building more homes as our present homes are at or near capacity most of the time.

We have also studied the possibility of having our own Christian high school to meet the needs of at least some of our kids who cannot succeed in public school. Instead of having our own school we have contracted with Westside Christian Academy allowing up to 8 of our students to attend the Academy. We have seen good results from the Christian Academy, but this may not be a permanent solution as each year the continuation of the Westside Academy is in question.

The grandparent apartment(s), riding arena, more homes, and our own school are all on hold pending further guidance from the Lord. Currently, we believe the Lord has answered that the timing is not right to proceed, but we are listening for His "go ahead." If you believe that the Lord is leading you to get involved in helping the Home develop the ministry, please contact us.

Even before the recession hit, we believed that God's answer to these projects that would require major financial outlay was "not now." But, this is not been a period of inactivity. We want to be prepared when the Lord guides us to take the next step. We are currently working on developing greater teamwork on campus. We recently had an in-service training on **Overcoming the Five Dysfunctions of a Team** and are developing the team that will prepare us for growth.

We are fine tuning our present program and constantly seeking God's guidance on how to serve children better. Our staff has recently completed on campus in-service training on **40 Developmental Assets** and several of our staff have attended the Youth Specialties Conference. They always come back with new ideas. We are currently studying developing a mentoring program. A mentoring program would not involve a financial outlay, but could get more positive Christian people involved with our kids.

We are continuing watching to see where God is moving, seeking to join with Him in expanding the ministry of changing kids lives and the lives of their families.

Christmas Fun

A group from Marshall Baptist Church came to Oblong Children's Christian home and gave Christmas gifts to the McCain family this year. They provided dinner from Monicals and gave each house on campus a new computer. In addition to bringing gifts, they organized and played games with us. Scott Sutton, a member of the church, presented a devotion. There was even a guy named Nick who dressed up as Santa.



Devin, one of our residents, played Silent Night on his guitar for the group too. The kids had a great time



In Loving Memory

♥ Jess Newton In memory of Roy E. Hill ♥ Elaine Waggoner, and Louise Waggoner In memory of Steve Woods ♥ Louise Waggoner In memory of Bill Culpepper ♥ Lyle and Linda Bailey In honor of Charles & Esco Cox's 82nd Wedding Anniversary and Chester & Effie Bailey's 80th Wedding Anniversary on Christmas Eve ♥ Lyle & Linda Bailey, and Tom & Brenda Booth In memory of Joan Hill ♥ Lyle and Linda Bailey In memory of Argo Shook, Steve Wall, Olen "Chaple" Chapman, and Max Hosler ♥ Grand Prairie Christian Church In memory of Barbara Fyffe ♥ Ellen Parrott, Leroy & Diana Sparks, The Wilson's (Wilmer, Rob & Jack), Robert & Virginia Davis, & P.D. & Sharon Highsmith In memory of Maylo Dalrymple ♥ Leon & Elaine Harris In memory of Arthur & Clara Marie Harris ♥ Paul & Judy McClure In memory of Dorothy Glosser ♥ Jerry & Sallie Courtney In memory of James & Paulene Courtney and Reif & Laurene Donaldson ♥ Carl & Barbara Heldebrandt In memory of James & Dorothy Sattley ♥ Ellen Parrott in memory of Betty Twigg ♥ James & Linda Stewart & Dorothy Stewart in memory of Helen Brown ♥ Mike & Cindy Cooper In memory of Stephen Cooper ♥ Betty Buchanan In memory of Maurice Buchanan ♥ Robert & Marlene Thacker In memory of William Black ♥ The Andrews Family, Jack & Linda Benskin, Kent & Jane Benskin, Paul & Judy Benskin, Roger & Karen Blair, Dean & Betty Dart, Gene & Jane Dart, Raphl & Marge Dart, Harold & Linda Elpers, Carl & Fern Pense, Cliff & Peggy Schiller, Alice Tomkins, All & Faye Tomkins, Garland & Shirley Tomkins, Roger & Cheryl Torrey, and the John Newlin Family In memory of Harold French ♥ Don & Sharon Venardi in memory of Marie Hartman ♥ Walt & Jan Townsend In memory of Grandma Marge Riggs

In Honor

♥ Trudy Brown In honor of Larry & Rita Meek ♥ Rhonda Musgrave in honor of Adrienne & Chris Foster ♥ Bruce & Tina Callaway In honor of Bernie & Carol Gray