

CITY HOUSE BEAVER FALLS, PENNSYLVANIA

May 2010

819 Lincoln Place
Beaver Falls, PA 15010
www.cityhousebeaverfalls.com

Issue 1



City House Reflection: Sam Dickerman

Having lived at the City House for the last two years, four semesters, I have seen a number of students come and go at the house. Many have left with quite different conclusions and experiences regarding their time at the house. For some (probably the majority), the house added a nice addition to their life and work as a student at Geneva, giving them a unique living situation that taught them life lessons and skills that they would have otherwise never been exposed to. It also gave them another friend group of people whom most likely they would have never engaged with had they lived on campus.

And perhaps most importantly, living at the house provided them with a sort of home base from which to branch out and engage with residents of their neighborhood and with the city of Beaver Falls generally. For others, the social atmosphere provided by the house seemed to be what they thrived off of and gleaned the most enjoyment from; and for a small few, their time at the house was most marked by their seeming absence from the house, as they never quite acclimated either to living at the house or to connecting with the city of Beaver Falls.

reflected the first category. I developed friendships at the house, from which I have been truly blessed, with individuals that I cannot honestly suspect I would have met otherwise (even going so far as to form a bond with a fellow housemate who was a Cleveland Browns fan!). These relationships both challenged and nurtured me in unique ways that I would never have gotten from my on-campus friends whom I naturally gravitated towards. This helped me to see things about other people and about myself personally which have been very important for me.

For me personally, my own time at the house most

Living at the house also

2010-11 Sustainability Goal

\$60,000	
\$55,000	
\$50,000	
\$45,000	\$43,120
\$40,000	
\$35,000	
\$30,000	
\$25,000	
\$15,000	
\$10,000	
\$5,000	
\$0	

Student payments are applied to mortgage, utilities, director salary, food & program expenses. As of May, 7 of our 9 student spaces are confirmed for the new year and 5 are living in the house for the summer.

Renewing the Vision

It was four years ago that Brad and I purchased the City House and began the initial renovations. In the Fall of 2006, the City House program began and we welcomed our first group of students as they set out to live in Christian community and engage the life of our neighborhood. As I reflect upon the past four year, there is much to celebrate that comes to mind: 4 block parties, 48 students, 3 new bathrooms, over 800 volunteer hours in Beaver Falls, and countless neighbors and community members that have shaped our experience.

However, Brad and I have also come to realize that the City House remains to become financially stable. Recruiting students seems to be our greatest challenge.

This summer we will be re-considering the model for the City House and bringing together a group of partners that will guide and support our effort. We will be thinking critically about students' needs and how to best meet these through the City House while maintaining our vision for program. Until we can make necessary adjustments, we continue to fall short financially.

Please consider supporting the City House as we navigate new territory. It would be a real help to us as we recruit students and continue our vision to have partners who would be willing to support us financially.

We will be excited to keep you posted with updates as the year progresses. Tax-deductible contributions can be written to "First Presbyterian Church" and sent to the City House address noted above. Thank you for your consideration.

“BEING AT THE HOUSE ALLOWED ME TO FORM A PERSONAL CONNECTION WITH THE CITY OF BEAVER FALLS THAT CONTINUES TO ENDURE.”

allowed me to meet neighborhoods and residents of Beaver Falls whom I thoroughly enjoyed getting to know and would certainly consider a benefit to have met for my own life. Some time last spring, our neighborhood catty-corner across from us, Mr. Greene, brought me a dinner from his church as I sat upon the house porch. Besides providing me with the delicious contents of fried fish, Mac and Cheese, and Collards that I found within the Styrofoam container, Mr. Greene also gave me a great conversation upon the porch, which I would continue to mull over and digest for the next few days. Would

such encounters and conversations between college students and Beaver Falls residents happen on a fairly frequent basis for a student living upon campus? Perhaps now and then for the very intentional student, but in general, I think not.

Lastly, being at the house allowed me to form a personal connection with the city of Beaver Falls that continues to endure. Whether by walking, biking, or, to a lesser extent, driving through the city of Beaver Falls, these experiences impressed upon me realizations, observations, memories, and personal senses of affection that were quite formative for me dur-

ing my time in the house. Seeing the same architectural landscape, highlighted by such buildings and sights as the Carnegie library of Beaver Falls, established a sense of order and structure to my Geneva and City House experience that was very comforting and assuring in the face of a period of life that was otherwise marked by a very temporary and transitional sort of character. All of these things, and more, made my two years, four semesters, of living at the house important and powerful in my own life, and shaped and molded me in ways that I myself have yet to realize, indeed may never quite fully realize.



URBAN GARDEN (2009)



2009-10 CITY HOUSE
LOOKING THEIR BEST

Three years ago, the City House was given an empty lot near the house to be used for our urban garden. Over the past two summers, we have built raised beds, grown vegetables and generated interest among neighbors

and community members.

Last Monday, a few neighbors and students helped plant the garden once again. Strawberries, cucumbers, tomatoes, green beans, lettuce, peppers, onions, and

squash are some of the vegetables that we are eager to watch grow and eventually eat. At harvest time, vegetables are distributed to neighbors and other participants.

liv'ing lērn-ing com·mu'ni·ty n.

The City House is a co-ed living-learning community located on Lincoln Place in downtown Beaver Falls. It houses nine Geneva College students and Wendy, the house director as they attempt to understand how to live as a Christian community and love their neighbors in a distressed city.

Alexander Astin defines living-learning communities as small subgroups of stu-

dents characterized by a common sense of purpose that can be used to build group identity, cohesiveness, and uniqueness that encourage continuity and the integration of diverse curricular and co-curricular experiences.

Our hope for the City House is that it would emulate this rich learning experience for college students as they engage the neighborhood, serve alongside local

ministries, and encourage one another in Christian community. This experience, we believe, can be the groundwork for transformation and empowerment towards further life patterns, decisions, and the ways students encounter the world in which they live. While student learning remains our primary objective, we further seek to bring hope and renewal to our neighborhood and city.

