

CITY HOUSE

BEAVER FALLS, PENNSYLVANIA

October 2010

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

Issue 2

5th Annual Block Party



BLOCK PARTY
SEPTEMBER 5TH



For those of you who were able to attend the annual block party, thanks for coming. Brad and I hope that it shows, in some small way, our appreciation for our neighbors and the incredible ways they (you) have embraced the City House.

When we bought the house back in 2006, we had no idea that we would be welcomed into the neighborhood and cared for by those around us like we have. Not only have neighbors fixed toilets, pipes and furnaces, built ceilings and walls, done yard work, gardening, and even helped with car trouble, they have provided the college students and me with a rich neighborhood

experience that very few in America still enjoy.

There aren't too many places where neighbors spend time talking with one another on their front porches, where it's okay to borrow someone's hose to water the garden, or even be invited to someone's family Christmas when you're snowed in. It's a real privilege to be a part of the Lincoln Place neighborhood.

If you weren't able to make it to the block party, you missed out. While we're not exactly sure how many neighbors and friends stopped by, the 65 lbs of burgers, hot dogs, and wings were gone at the end of the

night. We blocked off the street and the students set up tables, grills, games, a fire and music. They did a great job and were really the ones to make it happen.

September 5th, however, wasn't an easy day to throw a party. Many of you know that Charlotte Frey, Brad's granddaughter died just two days before. She was three years old and had been suffering from a brain injury since birth. While many of our hearts were with the Frey's in Boston, the party went on and was very good. We are grateful for our neighborhood and the many ways you support us.

Urban Garden 2010



ROMA TOMATOES

The urban garden which is facilitated by the City House students was productive again this summer. In fact, I am sure we had enough tomatoes for the entire city of Beaver Falls. In addition to tomatoes, we also grew squash, green beans, zucchini, potatoes, basil, peppers, strawberries and raspberries.

This summer we had three families contribute financially to the urban garden while 6 other individuals planted, weeded, watered, and picked vegetables.

Domingo, a student ministry major at Geneva, spearheaded the effort and spent countless hours in the sum-

mer's heat. Domingo was further challenged by the pesky groundhog that feasted at the garden most of the summer. In the end, I think the groundhog won

After three years, I believe we're getting the hang of it and hopefully the garden will continue to prosper in the year ahead.

Re-imagining City House



Old Main, Geneva College

2010-11 Sustainability Goal

\$60,000	
\$55,000	
\$50,000	
\$45,000	\$44,575
\$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. We continually work to make up the shortfall in our yearly budget.

Nearly five years ago we envisioned a project that would have Geneva students living in a vibrant neighborhood while they did their college work. The idea was originally developed by a student Adam Amhrein (now in graduate school at the University of Pennsylvania) and passed on to Wendy and Brad to develop. Now in its fifth year, the project we've called City House is at a turning point.

Originally the program was built around three components: making Christ central by having students learn to live in Christian community; having students experience the benefit of living in a traditional community that mixed incomes, races and faiths; and, serving the neighborhood through already existing ministries or agencies. This project has been grand with wonderful stories emerging each year. However, we had a sense that there was a significant piece still missing.

One of the most vibrant innovations over the last decade in American higher education has been the development of living/learning commu-

nities. These projects at a variety of institutions have used the foundational reality that formal learning is accelerated and enhanced when done in a community of learners who live together. So we're going to try and re-imagine City House in that frame.

To help us with this overhaul we've been incredibly fortunate to gather a group of folks who blend insight, passion and experience. In addition to Wendy and Brad, the group includes: Dave Guthrie (Geneva professor - sociology/higher education); Megan Edmister (residence hall director at Geneva-service learning specialist); Debbie James (art teacher and Bible study leader); Rodney Austin (Geneva professor-chemistry); Sue Frey (music teacher-musical director); and, Doug Bradbury (Geneva professor-student ministries). All these folks have a keen interest in City House and all have worked on the type of issues we wish to highlight in our living/learning community (for instance, Doug Bradbury worked on a similar project at Messiah College nearly 20 years ago that is still healthy and functioning.)

After some initial meeting we've begun to formulate a proposal that will be sent to Geneva's administration. The proposal will leave many of the parts of City House intact working on the same three core issues. However, we hope to formalize its functioning as a living/learning community by having students receive 6 credits each semester for working on an interdisciplinary/experiential program that would include units on: spiritual formation; economic development; racial reconciliation; the Beaver River and Beaver Falls history; urban gardens; leadership; and, community organizing. While our hope is to draw on a variety of Geneva staff and community people, the project is intended to be a joint venture of Geneva's sociology program, The Center for Faith and Practice and the Student Ministry program. There is much work to do and a lot of buy-in to be sought. We'll keep you up to date.

Reflection: Seth Noggle

“...MAY WE
CONSTANTLY THANK
GOD THAT WE ARE
WORTHY TO BE IN
FELLOWSHIP
WITH OTHER
BROTHERS AND
SISTERS IN CHRIST”
(BONHOEFFER).

As I sit in my room by a laptop in City House for my last semester, hundreds of memories flood my mind. I think back to the times spent sliding down the stairs in a sleeping bag or just late night conversations about everything from cats to theology. Yet I also think back to my contemporaries such as the disciples, Bonhoeffer, and Assisi as they would sit in their solitude writing by candlelight or while in prison. Their thoughts pondering the words of Jesus and what that looks like for a fellowship of believers.

Certainly community is important to the Christian faith and even essential but how does it look?

For far too long I have pondered that question instead of realizing there is not just one answer. What does community look like if you get annoyed with the people you live with? Or what if there seems to be such brokenness that the community seems to suffocate you? Is it a community at all?

Thankfully no sin can destroy a community. If anything, the community just becomes one of despair instead of great joy. Regardless it is still a community and for that we need to give thanks. I'm reading Bonhoeffer right now and it's been really giving me a lot of food for thought. In fact, Bonhoeffer writes, "If we do not

give thanks daily for the Christian fellowship in which we have been placed, even where there is no great experience, but much weakness and difficulty; if on the contrary, we only keep complaining to God that everything is so far from what we expected, then we hinder God from letting our fellowship grow according to the riches which are there for us all in Jesus."

May we remember to give thanks even in the mediocre and hardships. May we learn to be thankful for the "small" joys in our life, and may we constantly thank God that we are worthy to be in fellowship with other brothers and sisters in Christ.

A word from our neighbor, Beth



**ETHAN JOLLIFFE,
FUTURE PRO-ATHLETE AND
NEXT-DOOR NEIGHBOR**

Nearly five years ago our neighbor told us that she was selling her house to a college professor who was planning on renting it out to Geneva students. I was appalled!! After explaining my concerns (parties, kids coming and going, the additional cars parked on our already crammed front street) to Professor Brad Frey he assured me that the students would be managed by Wendy Van Wyhe. I called her "the house

mother." Months later, Wendy moved in. We immediately liked her and our 1-year-old son at the time, Ethan, took to her instantly.

The students that have come and gone from the City House have been a blessing to our family and neighborhood. The annual block party is the perfect opportunity for us and our other Lincoln Place neighbors to get to meet the new "Season" of students. Our family is

invited to have dinner at the City House with them throughout the school year and to share our stories.

Four years ago, I thought a frat house was moving in next door. Four years later I thank God daily for the City House, for the different students we get to meet and for our dear friend - "Miss Wendy."



Thanks for your Support

We greatly appreciate your partnership, prayers, and financial support. Tax-deductible contributions can be made to “First Presbyterian Church” and mailed to the City House:

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