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Visit us on the web!

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Summer 2008

Potential

Common Ground - The Cindy Nord Center for Renewal

Developing human potential—
Building human capital

Volume 1, Issue 1

Earth Camp 2008!

Here at Common Ground, the grounds are alive...with the sounds of children! Earth Camp, our 7-week summer day camp for youth



A moment of quiet thought—just the camper and the river

ages 6-11, has begun! Now in its 13th year, Earth Camp provides fun and learning for nearly 300 children every summer.

Earth Camp is a summer day camp that offers so much more than simple recreation to a child. Environmental education, an appreciation for diversity, and character development – these themes are the basis of our 7-week summer program. And we explore these themes in an environment where children are free of bullying, all forms of violence, and negative influences. An Earth Camp experience builds children up, strengthening their personal assets. Diversity, peacemaking, human worth,

dignity, respect for self, others and the world at large – these are the threads that form the fabric of our program.

At Earth Camp, our objectives are to help children explore, learn and grow. To assess how well we accomplish these objectives, we are implementing a new post-camp survey process that will be used to evaluate program outcomes and improve processes. Survey questions focus on seven critical skill areas:

- Friendship skills
- Family citizenship
- Camper competence
- Independence
- Interest in exploration
- Teamwork
- Responsibility

Focus On....Mission

Common Ground's mission can be summed up in these words: **Developing human potential, building human capital.** But what does that mean? We work with people from all walks and stages of life. Our work with youth revolves around

helping them realize their potential. We strive to help youth build the developmental tools that will allow them to become productive and happy adults. Our work with adults often revolves around workplace roles and responsibilities. In this context, we help people to find and use a balance between

their professional and personal lives. We encourage people to remember to care for themselves, which enhances their sense of self and gives them greater personal resources to draw on. Helping people reconnect with values leads to increased satisfaction in all facets of life and work.

Lose your rhythm? Find it at Common Ground's 3rd Annual Day of Drumming Retreat and Concert!

Drumming is an ancient musical tradition that many cultures around the world use to energize, build unity, focus attention, relax, and heighten creativity. Join us for two exciting drumming programs in July:

Day of Drumming Retreat

featuring Jim Donovan
(founding member of the multiplatinum band, *Rusted Root*)
Saturday, July 19 ~ 10:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.
Common Ground ~ 14240 Baird Road ~ Oberlin, OH
\$49 per person ~ Suitable for ages 13 and above
Register at www.commongroundcenter.org

Drum the Ecstatic International

A captivating live concert experience!
Stocker Arts Center—Lorain County Community College
1005 N. Abbe Road ~ Elyria, OH
Saturday, July 19, 2008
Doors open at 7:30 p.m. ~ Concert begins at 8 p.m.
\$22.50 Adults ~ \$6.00 Children 12 and under
Day of Drumming Retreat participants receive 50% discount!
Seating is limited—Purchase through Stocker Arts Center Box Office



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Special points of interest:

- Call to see if any openings for Earth Camp remain available!
- Ropes Course provides challenges, develops leaders
- We believe no child should be left inside! Our Pathfinders program takes children outside to look inside themselves
- Save the Date! 2008 Gregg Gilder Memorial Firewalk has been scheduled—see inside

Mural Arts Project to Beautify Lorain City School

Over the summer, Lorain Admiral King High School in Lorain will be getting some artistic enhancement—a customized wall mural designed, painted and installed by students in the “Closing the Gap” program. Funding available in this program, as well as additional support from the Boys and Girls Clubs of Lorain County, will underwrite this Mural Arts Project.

The Mural Arts Project was created in 2006 and was originally designed to teach critical pre-employment skills to Lorain County youth preparing to enter the workforce. A partnership with the Workforce Development Agency facilitated the completion of 9 murals in lo-

cations throughout Lorain County. Common Ground has now made this program available to any organization interested in engaging Lorain County youth in a challenging project with multiple benefits.

Several aspects of mural making (such as reading, writing, applied mathematics, drawing, painting) concurrently enhance multiple skill sets and achievement. The embedded curriculum allows for skill building in numerous areas and promotes improvement in social and cultural capital. The California Health Foundation, in its 2007 report *The Power of Art: Pathways to Healthy Youth Development*, finds that youth

arts programs help kids to improve academic performance, strengthen cultural and personal identity, and avoid risky behaviors.

Each mural takes 4-6 weeks to complete; costs can vary. Contact Common Ground to schedule YOUR project!



Ropes Course Offers Challenges, Skilled Facilitators & Healthy Risks

A high and low ropes course has been constructed at Common Ground and is ready for your class, group, organization or workplace! The installation is complete and, working in partnership with renowned local instructor Dale Jones, we are ready to help you challenge yourself and really step outside the box!

Ropes courses are designed to provide participants an opportunity to acquire and to practice essential life skills and to enhance self-esteem. Participants in the program learn to solve problems, make decisions, set goals and develop communication

skills in an atmosphere that is challenging, supportive and fun. Appropriate safety equipment and precautions are featured throughout.

A ropes course is the perfect setting for leadership development, team building, and individual growth. You can come to Common Ground specifically for the ropes course or incorporate a ropes course program into your organizational retreat. It's an investment in human capital that will yield big dividends for your organization or group. Contact Common Ground today to schedule your ropes challenge!

“Participants learn to solve problems, make decisions, set goals and develop communication skills.”



Pathfinders—Experiential Learning Aids Youth Development

their classroom, their family, and the larger community. Through experiential outdoor adventure challenge initiatives, cooperative games, and group processing, participants develop and utilize skills such as group cohesion, teamwork, trust, effective communication, problem-solving, and creativity.

Pathfinders is well suited for all types of youth groups—middle and high school students, youth service organizations, youth leadership initiatives, church youth groups, sports teams—programs can be customized to address specific goals and objectives such as classroom cohesion, goal-setting and achievement. Programs can be con-



Common Ground's Pathfinders program strengthens developmental assets, leadership skills and self-esteem in its participants and challenges young people to see how their actions and attitudes affect themselves, their peer group,

ducted in half-day, full-day, and multi-day sessions, depending on a group's budget and time constraints.

For school groups, the ideal time to schedule a Pathfinders program is in early fall, just as classes are getting started. Teachers report improved classroom cohesion following a Pathfinders session. Students are often surprised by the new things they learn about themselves and their peers at Common Ground.

To learn more about the Pathfinders program, contact David Jessop, Youth Program Coordinator. Tours of our facilities are also available.

“Transformational Leadership” Current Focus in Organizational Development

Transformational leadership encourages leaders to find and use a balance between their intellectual and spiritual sides. One of the underlying beliefs of the approach is that the more you know yourself, the better leader you can be. It requires that people be open to exploring themselves internally, to figuring out what they were put here on earth to do. Only then can you become more aware of what you can contribute as a leader.

This trend towards achieving balance between the intellectual and spiritual is completely in line with the mission of



Labyrinth walk provides peaceful interlude

Common Ground. We promote the importance of taking time to reflect and renew, particularly in today's hectic business environment. Slowing down

restores balance, nourishes self-awareness, and creates space for the inner voice and wisdom to be heard.

Common Ground can design staff and leadership team retreats that will energize participants, renew their passion for your mission, and teach them the importance of achieving balance and self-awareness. This investment in human capital yields remarkable dividends in the business environment.

Contact our Adult Program Coordinator, Harry Pepper, Ph.D., to discuss your organizational development needs at (440) 965-5551.

Nonprofit Renewal Retreats Beneficial, Productive



Last fall, Common Ground was fortunate to receive funding from both the Stocker Foundation and the Nord Family Foundation in support of nonprofit renewal retreats. Nonprofit staff are often the front line of service to the community. Due to budgetary constraints, the dream of holding a staff retreat, however attractive, is often not acted upon. These generous grants allow Lorain County nonprofit

organizations to schedule half- or full-day staff retreats at Common Ground at a fraction of their usual cost. Staff get an opportunity to recharge, renew, and rejuvenate themselves and their passion for mission. Eleven organizations have taken advantage of this opportunity since January. Funding is still available. Contact Common Ground to schedule your organization's retreat today!

Save The Date!

Mark your calendar now for The Gregg Gilder Memorial **Fire Walk 2008** at Common Ground!

Last year's event was so popular, Common Ground will offer the program on two nights this year, **September 26 and September 27**. Registration will start at 6 p.m. each evening and the program will be held rain or shine from 6:30—9:30.

Registration is \$25 per person and includes the program and a commemorative t-shirt proclaiming “I Walked Through the Fire at Common Ground!” For more information, check us out on the web at:

www.commongroundcenter.org.

Save the date—you don't want to miss it!



Amherst resident Deb Gilder walks on fire!