



# Camp Linden Summer Views

June 2016

## Our New Partners

**A report from Sharon Wallis and Leonard Weeks**

Most of the children attending Camp Linden for the last ten years or longer have come from summer day camps operated by EducationWorks (EW). In March we learned that EW would not be sending children to Camp Linden this summer because it was no longer including weekly field trips in its summer programs. This left us with little time to recruit new partners for Camp Linden.

We prepared a brochure and identified agencies that operate summer day camps serving low income inner-city families in Philadelphia, Chester, and West Chester Pennsylvania, and Wilmington, Delaware. After researching these organizations on the internet to identify those that seemed to be the best fits, we prioritized our prospects and tried to make personal contact with the decision makers, generally by drop-in visits, presenting our brochure and the video produced last summer.

Everybody we contacted was enthusiastic about our program, although some could not participate for one reason or another. Eventually, we received firm commitments from four organizations in Philadelphia, as well as two organizations located in Wilmington, Delaware. Between these programs and an existing partner which will be returning, we will be operating close to capacity, and we will be serving an even more diverse population of deserving children. This issue of Summer Views introduces our new partners and shares some of our experiences in recruiting them.

### United Communities of Southeast Philadelphia

In serving children from United Communities, we return to our roots. Over a century ago, the Philadelphia Ethical Society founded Southwark Neighborhood House to meet the needs of the immigrant population living in the area of South Philadelphia known as Southwark. Starting in 1903 Dr. S. Burns Weston, Leader of the Ethical Society, led efforts to fund and operate a rural summer camp for the children of Southwark at a variety of sites. In 1915 the Society purchased a small farm near Arcola which it named "Camp Linden". In 1926 the Arcola property was sold and Samuel S. Fels purchased the current Camp Linden property and donated it to the Ethical Society. Several cabins, a dining hall, and a pool were added. Southwark Neighborhood House was responsible for running the program

and maintaining the facilities. An overnight camp for children was conducted throughout the summer and a Family Camp was held at the end of the summer.

In 1946 Southwark House merged with other settlement houses to become United Neighbors Association, which, through further consolidation, became United Communities of Southeast Philadelphia in 1969. United Neighbors and United Communities in turn took over management of Camp Linden.

In 1981 United Communities gave up operation of Camp Linden because it was unable to find funding to make necessary repairs and improvements. Responsibility returned to the Ethical Society. Ethical Society volunteers sold a piece of the land and used the proceeds to build our current facilities. They began operating Camp Linden as a venue for day visits by children enrolled in urban day camps. At that time United Communities did not operate a summer school-age program and it no longer maintained a connection to Camp Linden or the Ethical Society.

United Communities currently operates Southwark House, which continues to serve the community in its original building at Front and Ellsworth, as well as Houston Center at 8th Street and Snyder Avenue, a service center which also houses its administrative offices. Its mission is to improve the quality of life for every generation and member of the multi-cultural community it serves by providing educational, advocacy, and social programs. Its agenda includes programs for children, youth, adults, families, and community building.

United Communities operates after-school programs at both its centers and at four local public elementary schools, as well as a summer program for school age children. Nicole Morgan, its Director of After School and Adult Educational Programs, was thrilled to re-



*United Communities Program at Southwark School*

ceive our invitation to participate in the Camp Linden Summer Program. After a hiatus of thirty-five years, children from United Communities will be attending Camp Linden once again this summer.

## Community Concern 13

Ann Nicholas has been Administrator of Community Concern 13 (CC13) for fifteen years, and she was a member of the organization's Board of Directors for ten years before that. She recalls the CC13 school age summer program visiting Camp Linden on Thursdays throughout those twenty-five years. Her recollection identifies CC13 as one of the first inner-city summer children's programs to visit Camp Linden after Ethical Society volunteers reopened the camp.

CC13 is a neighborhood based day care and after-school care program located at on Cecil B. Moore Avenue in North Central Philadelphia. Cecil B. Moore Avenue, formerly Columbia Avenue, was the business center of the most concentrated African-American community in Philadelphia, before it was devastated by a riot in 1964. CC13 was established in 1969 by activists as part of an effort to respond to the unmet community needs which contributed to motivating the riot. It was the first and only child care center in North Central Philadelphia to receive a direct service grant from the Department of Public Welfare in the early 1970s for child care services. It continues to serve low income families. All of the children currently enrolled in its program receive subsidized care.

CC13 serves children age six weeks to five years in its day care program. The school age program enrolls children age five through thirteen. Its mission is to prepare children to succeed in school and to be lifelong learners. Ms. Nicholas feels that the Camp Linden experience is especially valuable for the CC13 school age children because it affords them a unique opportunity to experience nature and learn to swim, and, she says, the children love it.

## Hilltop Lutheran Neighborhood Center

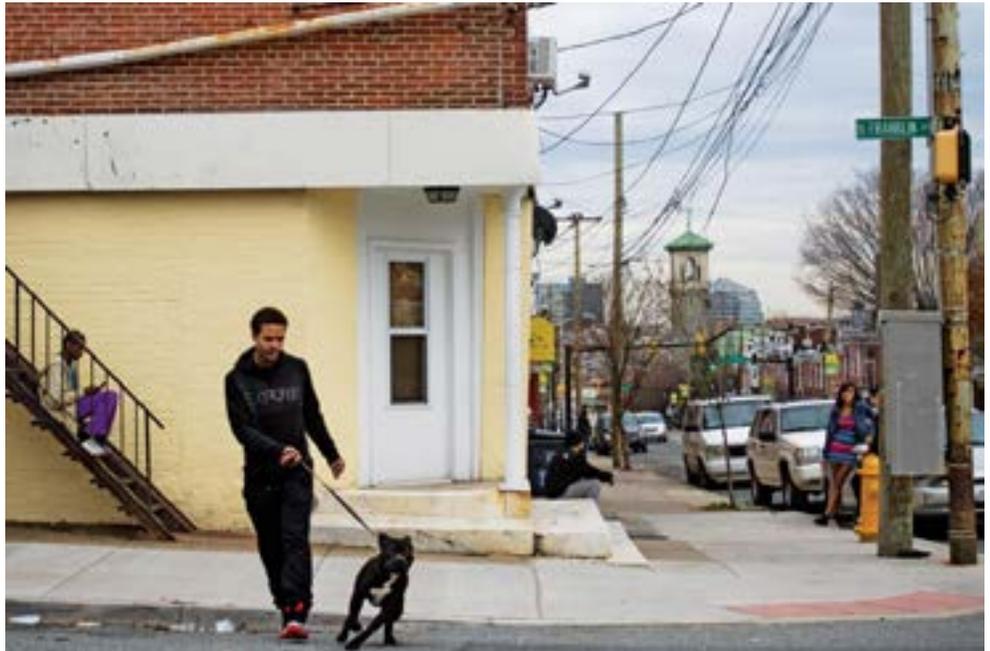
Wilmington, the largest city in Delaware, is a center of financial activity. It has upscale neighborhoods and trendy restaurants and businesses. It also has the fourth highest homicide rate in the nation, surpassed only by Flint, Michigan, Detroit and New Orleans. Abigail Jones, writing for Newsweek, December 19, 2014, referred to Wilmington as "Murder Town USA". She noted that the shootings that earn Wilmington its reputation for violence are generally confined to four or five

poor neighborhoods that circle downtown. The Hilltop neighborhood is one of the areas of Wilmington Jones characterized as "war zones."

On September 29, 2014 the Department of Justice named Wilmington as one of six cities—along with Chicago; Detroit; Oakland and Richmond, California; and Camden, New Jersey—selected for the Violence Reduction Network (VRN) which provides training and resources to assist communities in developing long-term solutions for addressing violence and crime.

On October 21, 2015, after a day care center decided to relocate because of safety concerns, New Castle County Councilman Jea P. Street addressed a letter

*Street scene, Hilltop neighborhood of Wilmington, DE*



to federal, state and local officials challenging the failure of government at all levels to address gun violence in Wilmington's minority neighborhoods. Councilman Street is a vigorous advocate for the underprivileged communities of Wilmington on issues including public safety, educational equity, police community relations and economic opportunity. He is also the Executive Director of Hilltop Lutheran Neighborhood Center, a position he has held since 1981, apart from 1993-95, when he served as Wilmington Director of Parks and Recreation.

Hilltop Lutheran Neighborhood Center is a not-for-profit United Way agency providing educational and social development programs for children and teens and support services for families in the Hilltop neighborhood. Its programs include day care and educational enrichment programs for children of all ages. Hilltop runs a school-age summer camp which offers fun-filled programs that keep children engaged while learning, and help improve and retain academic skills. The seven and eight year olds enrolled in this camp will be attending Camp Linden this summer.

When we visited Hilltop we met with Matthew Johnson, its Youth Service Coordinator. Sitting at his desk, he turned through our brochure and pulled up the video on his computer. Then he called in Tasia Wright, his school age program director and told her Hilltop summer camp would be sending children to Camp Linden this summer. It all happened so quickly we were quite surprised, but very happy. Hilltop was our first firm commitment.

## William “Hicks” Anderson Community Center

The William “Hicks” Anderson Community Center (WHACC), is the only community center operated by the City of Wilmington. The area surrounding the center is one of the most dangerous in the city. Twenty people were shot in the area last year, three of them fatally. Formerly known as the West Center City Community Center, the Center was renamed in honor of Wilmington youth and community advocate William “Hicks” Anderson. At the time of his passing in 1990, “Hicks” Anderson was a name well-known in the Wilmington community for his tireless efforts to help those in the city’s minority communities and his work with Wilmington’s young, poor, uneducated and disenfranchised. Anderson dedicated his life to causes such as relief from poverty and hunger, fair housing and, especially education.

WHACC provides individual and family services to Wilmington’s families and youth, including after-school academic enrichment and recreational programs. Its Adult Center provides services for the elderly, along with food and nutrition assistance, a clothes closet, crisis services and access to computers. The Center’s athletic facilities include a gym, workout room and swimming pool. Organized sporting leagues and events, as well as youth camps, field trips, and tutoring, are all core parts of the mission of the “Hicks” Anderson Center.

The city government came under scrutiny for its management of the center after a 2014 city audit found that

security was inadequate. The audit also found that the center did not have a mission statement or a vision to detail its role in the community and also lacked policies and procedures. The center director resigned last summer, after the audit was made public. WHACC operated under the supervision of the Director of Parks and Recreation until March 2016, when the mayor appointed U’Gundi Jacobs to serve as its director.

When we visited “Hicks” Anderson we met with Mr. Jacobs and his program director Alexis Clark. Mr. Jacobs personally conducted us on a tour of the facility and told us about the programs he planned to initiate. He responded with great enthusiasm to the opportunity to make Camp Linden a part of his school-age summer camp. Under Mr. Jacob’s leadership we are confident that WHACC will live up to the legacy of its namesake, and once again serve as a hub of positive community activity in the West Center City neighborhood.

## The Cambodian Association

The Cambodian Association of Greater Philadelphia, founded in 1979, is the only organization specializing in providing innovative and unique bilingual programs and services to meet the combined social, economic, health and educational needs of Cambodians in Philadelphia, many of whom are survivors of the Cambodian genocide or descendants of survivors. In addition to the programs and services which were created to meet the basic needs of the community, it provides Cambodian cultural programs to preserve, share and integrate this distinctive and noble heritage into Philadelphia’s rich cultural life.

The Association operates an “Out-of-School-Time” program at its South Philadelphia center which includes after-school and summer camp for up to 30 students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Most of the children enrolled in this program are Cambodian, but it also serves children of other ethnic groups.

The Cambodian Association Summer Camp was the 2011 First Place Winner of the Project Based Learning Summer Cup in a city-wide competition held by Public Health Management Corporation. Its prize winning en-



try used the Summer Olympics as a vehicle to study the cultures of countries around the world. The students prepared a tri-fold board with information they learned while completing the project, and also presented traditional dances from Cambodia.

In 2013 the Cambodian Association Summer Camp won the Nutritional Development Services Summer Meals Program Social Media Photo Contest in the category of the most creative recycling of summer meals boxes. The campers painted a mural in their classroom depicting an imaginative underwater scene and each child created their own underwater diorama using the summer meals boxes.

The Cambodian Association Day Camp will be bringing its entire enrollment of children, ages five through twelve, to Camp Linden this summer.

### Spring Garden Academy

Spring Garden Academy Summer Camp is a ministry of Next Generation Ministries (NGM). NGM provides educational, leadership, and discipleship opportunities for at-risk children and youth from birth through age twenty-five. It operates Spring Garden Academy, a private Christian elementary school, as well as a pre-school, after school and summer day camp, a scholarship organization, an endowment fund, summer internships for high school students, and young adult ministries. These programs are located at Highway Mission Tabernacle, 18th and Spring Garden Streets and Resurrection Life Church at 35th and 17th Streets in the Tioga section of North Philadelphia. NGM partners with Resurrection Life Church, Highway Mission Tabernacle and other Philadelphia churches to create reproducible models of ministry to urban children and youth to prepare the next generation of leaders for the urban family, church, and community.

Spring Garden Academy offers high-quality summer camp programs for children from pre-school through 8th grade. In addition to a variety of fun daily activities, school age children go on two to three trips each week. Camp Linden will be one of its trips this summer.



*TCRC Summer Program children with adult volunteers on field trip*

*Newsletter layout and editing by Ruth Dubb*

### The Center for Returning Citizens

The Center for Returning Citizens (TCRC) assists returning citizens in the transition from incarceration to society by providing job training, housing assistance, counseling services, legal aid, and referrals. It helps individuals, families and communities with the adverse impacts of incarceration.

TCRC was founded by a returning citizen, and it is staffed by returning citizens and people who are sensitive to the needs and requirements of this specific population. It embraces the following values: hard work; family responsibility; community involvement; ethical behavior; and social consciousness.

TCRC's mission includes responding to the special needs of families and children by providing mentoring and counseling for the children of incarcerated parents, and an after-school Drop-In program to assist parents in providing educational opportunities and social advancement for their at-risk children. A summer children's program provides a summer of enrichment and fun for school age children whose parents may not be available to supervise them during the day. Children in the summer program take trips to museums and other educational venues, and participate in the Youth AVP (anti-violence program) activities to promote community, cooperation and team building. They do arts and crafts, drama skits, charades, board games, puzzles, computer time, poetry writing, music/dancing, and reading and math. Many of these activities formed the basis of the community, cooperation and team building exercises mentioned above. This summer they will also be visiting Camp Linden one day a week for six weeks.

