



Peculiar Mission



Childrens Bible Fellowship of New York
Winter Newsletter 2022

Welcome

Be sure to check out the photographs on each page of our beautiful campus this Winter!

Peculiar Mission

Find out what we mean by “Peculiar Mission” with a message from our CEO, Sean Stewart, on pages 3-4.

Introductions

We have welcomed some new people to our team! Meet these new faces here at CBF on pages 5-8.

Donor Corner

Read a message from our friend, partner, and volunteer:
Andrew Parkhurst, on
The Dignity of Being Heard
pages 11-13.

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CEO Perspective



For a long time, I thought the unique work of mission at CBF was outreach to NYC youth and the Special Needs Community. We set out to create a safe place where the gospel could be heard and lived out. Our focus was to heal the warped understanding of God with His Word and help everyone to get their identity and value through relationship with Christ. We knew that as this happened, individuals who found this deep identity would discover their God-given purpose and develop significant relationships in the body of Christ. With all that said, what makes this a peculiar mission only became clear to me in the last few years.

I came to CBF with a lot of pride in my intellectual understanding of the Word combined with hard work, successes in business, and a passion for changing the world for Jesus. How could I fail? Fail I did, and as that failure grew in my marriage relationship, finances, and ability to execute the mission, I fell into a deep depression. I was at the “Dark Night of the Soul.” In God’s grace and timing, I found one of the most important and peculiar aspects of Christian mission: God’s way is upside down from the world’s way.

As I strived for success, God led me to deep brokenness and poverty of spirit. I came to love Matt. 5:3, “Blessed are the



poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of God.” Mission did not come from striving; it came from deep poverty that requires all of me to rely on God’s power. God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble, and in finding humility, I began to learn how to love others the way Christ loves me. The peculiarity of our Christian journey in its most authentic and transformational form begins at deep brokenness.

As we enter 2022, I believe God is doing his work of renewal through “Dark Night of the Soul” encounters in the lives of our youth and special needs community. The team at CBF has embraced our need for brokenness and reliance on Christ, and through this, we can give hope to a dark world. I hope you will also be encouraged to read and connect with the following pages as we partner in the mission together.

~ Sean Stewart



Board Perspective



I became aware of CBF through my relationship with Sean, which began in January 2019 during Celebrate Recovery at Walnut Hill in Bethel, CT. At that time, I hadn't accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior. My life, due to reckless, irresponsible, and hurtful behaviors, caused my marriage to sink under the weight of my brokenness and betrayals. The men and women, including Sean, I met at Celebrate Recovery helped me find my way as well as find forgiveness and renewal in Jesus Christ. I have been committed to my inner journey ever since.

During our conversations, Sean and I talked about my childhood in the Bronx, my Puerto Rican/Cuban heritage, my inner-city school experience, and my continuing connection to the Bronx via my business and friendships. When I learned about CBF's mission and its history of service to at-risk children in the Bronx, I knew that I had found an outlet for my desire to serve God's Kingdom.

My personal relationship with Jesus grows each and every day as I seek to surrender more completely to His will for me. That process brought me a renewal of relationships with family, increased my confidence and comfort in the path before me, and answered the question I had asked myself in the past. What is my purpose in this life?



CBF's mission is completely aligned with mine. I seek to serve the community I grew up in and have known so well for so many years. Of course, that community has changed drastically over the life of CBF, but there has never been a greater need for CBF's unique capabilities to help young people seek their own purpose and path in life.

~ Charles Gonzales



Charles and His
beloved Grandson
Jack

Staff Perspective



Hey CBF partners! My name is Jared Cavanaugh. I am a new full-time member of the Operations, Worship, and Program Teams. I grew up in Ansonia, Connecticut, then moved to Naugatuck, CT, where I worked for an excavation contractor for about three years. I connected to CBF through Taber Stewart, the current Operations Director. After speaking with Sean, our CEO, I immediately felt connected with the mission of CBF. I had reached a point in my life where I thought that I needed change, and it seemed that CBF would be able to provide that. CBF has provided me with a chance to get in line with God's plan for my life. As it allows me to both use the gifts God has given me in a way that is honoring to Him, as well as a place to do what I'm passionate about. I look forward to seeing what God has in store for us here at CBF this year, and seeing how he can use a community of broken people to further his kingdom. I pray that we can find renewal this year as individuals and as an organization as we seek the Lord's plan for CBF.

~ Jared Cavanaugh





Hi CBF family! My name is Laura MacKay. I am a new full-time member of the Program, Financial, and Hospitality Team. I grew up in Kenosha, Wisconsin, and have a background in Special Education but moved out to the Northeast with my husband Jack (the new Youth Director) in June. We connected with CBF through our good friend Taber Stewart, Operations Director. It had always been a joyful retreat coming to visit campus. We spent a lot of time in fellowship & getting to know about the peculiar mission. I immediately gravitated toward the relational aspect of programming & the unique space created for many giftings. In 2022, I hope to see God's grace abound, and His spirit fall fresh in the work we have been given. I pray we find the opportunity to share renewal as individuals and an organization authentically. I pray our growth in spiritual development has a ripple that goes beyond our reach, and Christ remains at the center.

~ Laura MacKay



Hope

It is hard to believe that we are in the year 2022. The Fall, early Winter, and the Holiday season went by in a blur. Yet, even in the face of uncertain times, Hope events continue to grow, and relationships deepen. Hope events are structured to help our special needs participants and their families experience the love and truth of the Gospel in a variety of ways – each to cultivate and support personal renewal in their lives. Hope Celebrations, Overnights, Retreats, and Hope Days enable our staff and volunteers to share our faith journeys and lives. Hope monthly programs are a bridge for the special needs community and their families, not just to hear words of hope and renewal but to experience God's love and purpose for their lives in tangible ways.

I believe it's only in loving, transparent, and safe communities that the seeds of personal renewal can grow and flourish. Many Hope community members struggle with cognitive delays; others struggle with emotional and physical issues that keep them isolated. They are exposed to overwhelming bombardment from internal and external narratives that create fear and anxiety. CBF Hope programs invite our special needs family into real belonging in the body of Christ, to a place of acceptance, love, and hope. These are unique opportunities to cultivate seeds of hope that lead to personal renewal.

~Anne Chavarro



Youth

CBF is a Peculiar Mission indeed! Throughout this season, we spent time with our friends at Elevate, and boy did we walk with them through some “peculiar” activities. We took these students through a series of challenges to help them explore their understanding of themselves, their community, and how they interact with the world. All of this, while we shared our stories of the life-changing inner Journey we are on with Jesus. Many of these students were unsure about this at first. Walking uphill, in the woods, and in dim light is not always the most comfortable thing. However, by the end, their demeanor changed to smiles, laughter and the beginning of an excellent discussion of who they are.

One of the most impactful moments I experienced this season was a note we received from Elevate. A portion of it read, “I learned from them that everyone experiences a setback in their life, but you should use that setback as fuel to keep pushing forward. This moment impacted me because I haven’t experienced any life-changing setbacks yet, but I now know that if I share out these setbacks, it will push me forward.” These students are listening, and they are hungry for connection and growth. We are all working towards our personal renewal, and when that spills over, at times you get to see just a glimpse of corporate renewal at work. As our friends at Elevate say, “no one gets there alone.”

~Jack MacKay





Donor Corner

Children's Bible Fellowship of New York has taught me an unexpected lesson. To be heard is a gift. To be heard is healing. To be heard is loving. Growing up I followed a faith tradition that focused on Biblical knowledge. The person up front teaching for an hour would give you as many bible references as you could handle, and you feverishly tried to keep up with notes and flipping to the next chapter and verse. It was like growing up in seminary (except I don't have any theological degrees and I'm not even sure how much of the teaching was accurate). But the example was clear: the man up front has all the answers. I grew up wanting to be that man.

As a young adult, I tried my best to help others. It seemed like no one knew how to live without my "clear understanding" of the bible. So, I helped, and I helped, and I helped. Now looking back, I can see that I was just posturing and trying to find my value in what others thought of me. Some of my greatest regrets are not from obvious "sins" but how I treated people. I discounted them, and I tried to control them by giving them "answers."

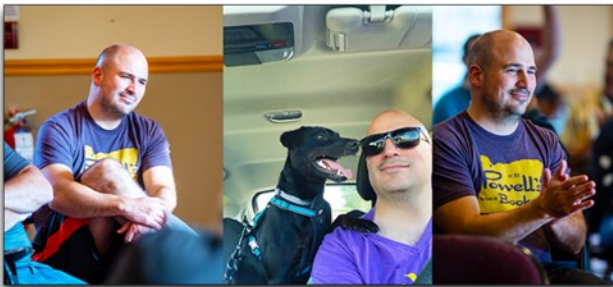
At Children's Bible Fellowship I found examples of people who knew a lot of the bible and yet continued to focus more and more on sharing with everyone, instead of fixing everyone with what they knew. I still remember the first day I arrived at camp, and I saw the example of leaders who



embraced their humility. They shared their testimonies filled with tragedy and shame boldly and when they prayed, they concluded with a simple yet profound “I love you God.” They went first and shared of their hearts and lives and their example welcomed you to feel comfortable sharing yours.

When I visit a Hope Celebration Day, I still see that same unique mission at work. The mission to share of their own story first and to give others the dignity of being heard. To not just teach at them but share truth and ask them to participate. I see God at work healing the Hope campers and myself when I just listen. Then God gets all the glory, and I learn to look for the beauty that he continues to reveal in the lives of others who don't need more “answers” they just need to be heard.

~Andrew Parkhurst



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Pray, Give, and Volunteer.

To give to CBF, you can either head to our website at www.cbfny.org/donate
or make checks payable to:
Children's' Bible Fellowship
250 Nimham Road, Carmel NY, 10512.

Memories

Who remembers moments like this at CBF?

We are blessed to have a beautiful history and we want to learn more about it! We would love to hear your stories from the past of CBFNY.

To submit your memories, you can head to our website at www.cbfny.org/Memories or email us at info@cbfny.org.

