



The History of CCA

"I will tell of the kindnesses of the LORD, the deeds for which He is to be praised, according to all the LORD has done for us – yes, the many good things He has done . . ."

Isaiah 63:7a

We have often said here at Cornerstone Christian Academy that we exist because God has moved in our midst through the prayers of many, many people. Each day we are reminded how God has worked through prayer in the past. Remember with us just some of our favorite "God Stories" . . .

- **July 1, 1997** – We begin our first year as 'Cornerstone Christian Academy' after taking over the Eastview Christian Preschool program. We begin our search for a new location, having promised to move the summer of 1998.

This seemed at first to be a fairly simple thing. We were in contact with realtors, builders, as well as people who owned commercial property. But over the months of our search, we found nothing that would be of a suitable size for us to begin an elementary school. By October of 1997 we had looked for seven months. Our plan was to open through 3rd grade the fall of 1998, but who would dare register a child in a new school that had no building? We needed to get serious with God.

And so we prayed.

- **October 9, 1997** – We decided today to spend time in prayer for this fledgling school.

We made lists of all our students, all our teachers, all our parents, as well as everyone we had talked to about a potential building for Cornerstone. We asked God to reveal any areas of unconfessed sin that the school (or pre-school) needed to repent of, and we asked for that repentance. We asked God to move on our behalf to show us the building He had for us, recognizing our total dependence upon Him. We asked for a school building and lots of 'green space' for our children to play.

- **October 12, 1997** – A man from East White Oak Bible Church tells our Board President, about the Grace United Methodist Church.

At first we were not interested in even looking at the property. After all, we were an independent school, not affiliated with any one church. But we were told to go and have a look at the property on Bell Street in Bloomington.

- **October 15, 1997** – We look up in the phone book exactly where Grace United Methodist is located.

When we drove by, we were amazed to see attached to this wonderful old church, a three-story school building! And across the street was a new city park with beautiful playground equipment.

God had specifically answered our prayer!

- **November 24, 1997** – We are informed by the City of Bloomington that we will need five variances and a special use permit to occupy space at Grace United Methodist.

We were also told that to apply for the variances would entail submitting a site plan of the building. After speaking with an architectural firm, we discovered the cost of that site plan would be \$3600.00. We had no money!

And so we prayed.

- **December 22, 1997** – We are informed by the City of Bloomington that they have changed their mind about the needed site plan. They will waive that need because they see us as a hardship case.

God had specifically answered our prayer!

- **February 5, 1998** – We go to the Safety/Engineering office at the city to meet with a representative who will walk us through the variance process. This is so important, because if the variance papers are not filed properly the first time, a year must go by before re-application can take place.

We waited a long time that day to see a specific person who had been recommended to us. We wondered if we were wasting our time waiting, when there were others with whom we could have spoken.

And so we prayed.

When we finally sat in front of the man we had waited for, we read his screen saver on the computer on his desk. Scrolling across the screen were the words, "This is the day the Lord has made – Rejoice in it!"

God had specifically answered our prayer!

- **March 18, 1998** – We go before the Zoning Board of Appeals. We need 4 out of 6 votes for our variances to pass. We have been told in advance of this meeting that the Safety/Engineering Office of Bloomington that they will be recommending the Zoning Board deny our request due to traffic problems, etc. it may cause in the neighborhood.

We were really nervous that day! We spent much of the day in prayer for the afternoon meeting. Finally – the meeting! One board member was late and we needed 4 out of 6 votes to pass. There was a lot of discussion, both from neighbors on Clinton Street as well as Zoning Board members. Then, surprise! The City Planner recommended on behalf of the Safety/Engineering Department that the Zoning Board grant us all five needed variances! The vote was taken. 4 to 2 in our favor. We will be included in the April 13th Bloomington City Council Meeting for a final vote and discussion on our special use permit.

God had specifically answered our prayer!

- **April 13, 1998** – We attend the Bloomington City Council Meeting where again we expect much discussion before the vote is taken to finally grant us a special use permit.

We had been told by the Zoning Board to expect a lot of discussion on our issue before the City Council. They could vote against the Zoning Board's recommendation. By this time, we had already registered our first two elementary students for Fall, 1998! What would we do if the City Council denied our request?

And so we prayed.

When we attended the council meeting that evening, we saw from the agenda that we had made the 'Consent Agenda,' a virtual 'rubber stamp' process. There were no presentations to make, no discussion, and we left there that evening without having spoken a word. In hand was our special use permit

God had specifically answered our prayer!

- **May 13, 1998** – We begin to search for a school sign.

This is certainly one of our favorite stories to tell! It all began when we were stopped at a stoplight at Towanda and Empire, and a white van with a colorful logo pulled up next to us. It was a 'Prairie Signs' van, and we commented that we needed to get a sign for the front of the school.

Upon looking through the yellow pages, we didn't have any sense of who to call.

And so we prayed.

Since we had no money, we contacted a low budget sign shop. After describing the kind of wooden sign that we wanted, we were told that a school sign was usually 2' x 6', and it would cost about \$1,000. That was out of the question, so the owner began to describe other kinds of signs he could make for us that would be less expensive.

But we didn't know 'sign language,' so we couldn't picture what he was describing. After hanging up, we wondered why they didn't have such things as 'sign showrooms' where you could go and pick out the sign you wanted. At that moment, we saw a yellow page ad which said, 'Come visit our sign showroom!' We knew this must be the place that had our sign. And wouldn't you know, it was 'Prairie Signs.'

When we arrived there, we were met by a nice young man who asked us how he could help. "I think we need a sign for our school," we said. "What's your budget?" was his reply. "We have no money, we have no budget, we're asking God for a sign," was our answer. "He sometimes does that," said the man. "Oh, He does it for us all the time," we said.

In retrospect, this may have sounded rather foolish. But we had seen everything God had done for us in such miraculous ways; certainly a sign would not be too hard for Him.

To make a long story short, the Prairie Sign man asked if we wanted a one or two-sided sign. We hadn't even considered that option! We decided a one-sided sign was sufficient, and he mentioned that he had a spoiled sign in the back of his warehouse; spoiled on one side, but perfect on the other. It was wooden and he would make it to our specifications. If we wanted it, he would give it to us. We walked back to the back of the warehouse and there it was – the sign that has stood in front of Cornerstone Christian Academy for the past 5 years. It measured 2'x6' – the perfect size for a school sign.

God had specifically answered our prayer!

After obtaining our special use permit, we began to ready our building for the start of school. Certainly one of the very first things we needed was desks and chairs and everything else that makes a school a school! It seemed impossible; after all, we had no money to speak of, as tuition would begin to come in during August. Looking through school catalogues seemed discouraging. A desk and chair for a first grader would cost about \$100. But we knew that God had a plan.

And so we prayed.

- **June 13, 1998** – We attend a school auction at District 87 where we hope to buy desks and chairs.

There were about 15 people who attended this large auction held at Bloomington High School. The cafeteria was literally stacked to the ceiling with 'school stuff.' Wonder of wonders, they have desks and chairs of all sizes! When we left later that morning, we had purchased 120 desks, 90 chairs, 35 phones, 23 computer monitors, 9 keyboards, 2 overhead projectors, a laminator (later seen to be worth \$1800), office furniture, study carrels, and many other miscellaneous items. We looked like the Beverly Hillbillies going down the street with all of it tied into trucks!

Our final bill? \$52.00.

God had specifically answered our prayer!

- **July 30, 1998** – With only four weeks remaining until school begins, the time has come to order curriculum.

We waited as long as possible before ordering because students were still registering and we didn't have a final count. And even more serious was our cash flow situation. We prayed about ordering something we didn't have the cash to pay for at the time. But we couldn't wait any longer if we wanted delivery by the start of school, so trusting God to provide, we placed our order.

- **August 3, 1998** – Today in the mail we receive a check for \$25,000 from a donor!

Needless to say, we were overwhelmed! Immediately we thanked God for His provision for us! His timing is always impeccable, so when the call came the very next day from the curriculum company who asked that we pre-pay our order because we were so new, we could easily answer, 'No problem!'

God had specifically answered our prayer!

- **August 26, 1998** – Our first day of school

We opened school that day with 37 elementary students!

- **August 28, 1998** – Our first Chapel

Jeff VanGoethem, who is our Board President, spoke at our very first Chapel. His text was Joshua 4, where the people of Israel cross the Jordan into the Promised Land. The Israelites took stones and made a monument to the Lord. He read the verses,

"In the future when your descendants ask their fathers, 'What do these stones mean?' Tell them, 'Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.' He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful and so that you might always fear the Lord your God."

Joshua 4:21, 22, 24

We then went outside and placed stones from a river bed in a pile around the base of our sign, as a memorial to this very same God – who had brought us to this place. And He did it in such a way that we might know that He is powerful.

- November 20, 1998

Today was another Cornerstone "first" as God allowed us to witness a student give his life to Christ. Mike Fanning, the Associate Pastor at East White Oak came to speak at Chapel. He presented the gospel clearly as God's free gift to us and invited students to pray. Following the service, a fourth grade boy in the back of the room began to cry, and another student asked him if he had asked Jesus to be his Savior. He nodded, and Pastor Mike was able to pray with him. It was such an exciting time! The amazing thing about this young man was that he had prompted us to even consider going up through the 4th grade when originally, we had intended only to open up through 3rd. Now we understand why God wanted 4th grade!

- February 20, 1999 – Unit 5 gives us enough computers that we can upgrade our current computer lab and add an additional 11 stations.

We begin to pray for 11 monitors to go with them.

- March 1, 1999 – Grandparents donate money for two of the needed monitors.

9 more to go!

- March 23, 1999 – God provides more monitors!

One of our Dads who happened to be a Normal policeman pulled up in his truck that morning and unloaded – you guessed it – nine computer monitors. They had been confiscated by the Normal police at 2:00 AM that morning from a curbside under the suspicion that they were stolen property. When it was found out that they weren't, our Dad was able to acquire them for us. We took them all into the lab and tested them, and they all worked!

God had specifically answered our prayer!

At 10:00 AM, another CCA Dad came into the building carrying a computer monitor, and asked if we still needed it. We had just enough, but we said, 'sure.' At 11:00 AM, when we turned the lab on, one of our current monitors quit, and so the 'extra' one that was provided only one hour earlier was not really an 'extra' one at all. God gave it to us just in time!

- July 1999 – Work begins on upstairs bathrooms. With 5 classrooms on the top floor, we've gone long enough without facilities. The church that houses us offers to give us \$6,000 to help defray the cost of the bathrooms, but we have prayed that we would be a blessing to this small church, so we refuse their money and instead do what we have learned to do so many times . . . we PRAY.

A CCA Dad who is an electrician began working on new lights. Parents took down mirrors from their own bathrooms at home and donated them. We were able to buy floor tile at cost. Plumbers offered

their services. We called a local store and inquire about two 6' vanities with double sinks. Did they have any "scratch and dent"? They didn't, but the kind woman on the other end of the phone offered to pay for half of the cost herself. We wrote a letter to State Farm asking for enough ceiling tile for the bathrooms as well as the new classrooms we were building out. They responded that they normally don't give away ceiling tile, but this once, they would. We were given over 2000 square feet. We called a door company to come and measure for classroom doors as well as our bathroom doors. The estimate was \$650. We placed the order. After leaving CCA, the door man went by the home of one of our donors where he measured for a door. He happened to mention that he had just left Cornerstone. The donor called and said it couldn't be a coincidence. God must want them to pay for our doors. When the check arrived, it had \$650 for our doors and \$10,000 for the scholarship fund!

- **August 25, 1999** – School begins – with our new bathrooms!

Only one thing is yet to be finished. We do not have bathroom stalls. We quickly find that no one wants to use bathrooms that don't have stalls . . .

- **November 19, 1999** – Help! We need bathroom stalls!

It seems as if we should go ahead and purchase the stalls. After measuring the bathrooms, we submitted a drawing for bathroom stall blueprints to be drawn up. We also gave the company \$1,000 as a deposit on what will be a very expensive part of our bathrooms!

- **November 24, 1999** – The blueprints are ready.

We picked up the blueprints to be checked by our installer (a volunteer, of course!) But it was the day before Thanksgiving and everyone was very busy, so the prints sat on a desk until the following week. We continued to forget to have our volunteer check them on Monday and Tuesday. But then on Wednesday afternoon, a truck pulled into our parking lot and unloaded – you guessed it – bathroom stalls! Where did they come from? Well, Eastview Christian Church had recently moved from their Towanda Avenue location to their new building, and they had allowed another church to come in and take what they wanted from the old building. The men from this church had taken (among other things) bathroom stalls from two bathrooms. After the truck was loaded and headed back to their church, someone asked, "Why did we take those bathroom stalls?" To which someone else stated, "I think Cornerstone Christian Academy needs bathroom stalls." They turned the truck around and brought them right to our door! They were cut and bolted together and fit just fine in our new bathrooms. What's even better – we were able to get our \$1,000 back!

God had done it again.

- **July 5, 2000** – We find we need warehouse space to store extra desks and chairs.

We began to pray through the Yellow Pages for warehouse space. We asked God to lead us to just the right warehouse at just the right price because the cost was not included in our budget. We called what seemed a convenient place, and God provided again! We are able to have 2000 square feet of space right around the corner from us, and because we are a Christian school, the owner just asked for a \$100 gift certificate to Jim's Steakhouse.

Only God could do that!

- **August 4, 2000** – Oh, for a white board!

Our music teacher, Mr. Mitchell was in need of a white board to use in his class. We knew we had a donated one in a crate which we had been storing for about two years. We opened it. It was very dirty, but cleaned up all right. Since it needed to be moveable, we would not be able to mount it on a wall. Unfortunately, it had no frame or legs. We began to think that we might have to buy one on wheels. The empty crate was taken down to the dumpster and thrown away where it was left standing next to the dumpster. When the wind blew it over, the crate broke open to reveal beautiful oak legs and a stand. Even the markers were included! God wasn't going to let us throw it away, and He used the wind to show us exactly what He had provided!

- **September 25–27, 2000** – Could this be the property God has for us?

We receive information about a piece of property located 7 miles east of Towanda Barnes Road which the owner would be willing to make available to Cornerstone. Seven miles away from Bloomington's east side is a little farther away than we would like to be, but then who would have ever picked Bell Street in Bloomington for a location?

We begin to pray. A member of our board and the school administration fast and pray for 3 days about this new property. In the middle of our fast, on September 26th, the friend of the school enters into an agreement with a farmer who owns property 4 miles closer to Bloomington on the same road. He will purchase 78 acres, 3 miles east of Towanda Barnes Road on Ireland Grove Road. He intends to make it available to CCA. God is amazing!

- **October 5, 2000** – The entire CCA staff attends the ACSI convention in South Bend, Indiana. The first night we are there, we surprise them with the news that we will have a new location!

God is on the move!

- **January 4, 2001** – We begin the search for a design/build firm to build our new school. The school administration and a Board member take a trip to Remington, Indiana to meet with the Aspen Group, a design-build company who was recommended to Cornerstone. We immediately feel at home with the men there and they pray with us about our project. We had already identified a school building we liked in Adrian, Michigan, and much to our surprise, Aspen had visited the school the day after Christmas. They had found a janitor to let them in and had taken pictures of important features. They have what is necessary to begin drawings. Our only problem . . . we have no money.

We soon are reminded that our God is bigger than any of our problems!

- **Spring 2001** – It has become evident that we will have to move part(s) of the school to other locations. We will expand to 7th grade in the fall, and we just don't have the room at Bell Street any longer.

During a Prayer Circle meeting, a Mom who had never attended before shared that Heartland Headstart would be moving from their location at Evangelical United Methodist Church (later to be known as Faith United Methodist). We met with the Pastor and decided that CCA will lease 3 classrooms for the coming school year. It is a perfect location for our preschool!

But we still needed 14 classrooms for our elementary and 7th grades. The building on Bell Street only has 13 rooms. But again, God has gone before us. While visiting 2nd Presbyterian Church on an unrelated matter, we commented to ourselves how perfect that church would be for our Middle School students. They have a small gym, and the church is only minutes away from Bell Street. We

wrote the board of the church a letter – they had nothing to gain by housing us, but when God ordains it to be, then nothing can stand in the way.

2nd Pres responded favorably, and allowed us two classrooms for our exclusive use as well as their gym for the fall of 2001.

- **August 22, 2001** – Our 4th year with elementary grades begins with 295 students at 3 locations!
- **August 24, 2001** – We meet again with the Aspen Group who tells us that the building we desire will cost 8.5 million dollars. It might as well be 8.5 billion dollars, because we don't have any of it!

But our God is able!

- **October 1, 2001** – We visit a friend of the school and show preliminary building plans. At the end of our meeting, this friend hands us a check for \$400,000 to "kick-off" our building fund.

We are astonished – God is so good!

- **November 1, 2001** – We close on 78 acres of the most beautiful ground God has ever created!

We will begin meeting with donors and potential donors in an effort to raise money for our new building. We pray continually that God will go before us!

- **November 27, 2001** – We talk with a donor today – they commit to \$20,000 for the building.
- **November 28, 2001** – We meet with another donor today at Dunkin' Donuts. They love the school and commit to \$100,000 for our new building.
- **December 5, 2001** – We lunch with a wonderful couple who are grandparents to some CCA students. They will send CCA \$3,000 a month.
- **January 21, 2002** – We lunch with a couple who have the grace of giving who pledge \$30,000 for the new building.
- **February 16, 2002** – We tour grandparents through the building on Bell Street and share the vision for our new building. They pledge \$30,000.
- **April 30, 2002** – We meet in the home of a Christian couple who have no affiliation with Cornerstone. They pledge \$25,000 to our new building.
- **May, 2002** – By the middle of this month, we have over \$1,000,000 in cash and pledges for our new building! The Aspen Group assures us that the amount is sufficient to break ground. We set a date for groundbreaking.
- **May 28, 2002** – Groundbreaking!

We held our official groundbreaking ceremony on the new property. Buses were hired to shuttle our families from Resurrection Lutheran Church to the new building site. Over 300 people were in attendance and excerpts from our service there aired on WJBC radio as well as WMBD 31.

The air is filled with anticipation to see what God will do next!

- **June 7, 2002** – God continues to provide for us in amazing and delightful ways. From the very first day we became Cornerstone Christian Academy, we have been operating with two donated copiers. One of them has over 2 million copies on it, the other over 1 million! We are convinced that just as Israel's shoes and clothing did not wear out during their 40 years in the desert, so God has kept those machines running. Surely there have never been two copiers that have been the object of so much prayer. But even as we prayed that God would keep them working, we began to pray that He would provide a new one in His time.

And He did. On the last day the teachers were here before summer break, a big, beautiful, almost new digital copier appeared from a donor. It makes 65 copies per minute and collates, staples, and sorts. We were so excited that we literally surrounded the machine to watch it.

We are so struck by God's goodness to us!

But the day got even better. Since it is the last day the staff would be together until the fall, we all went to Famous Dave's for lunch. While we were eating, our server came to the table and got our attention. He told us to be sure to save room for dessert because an anonymous donor had already paid for our lunches (there were more than 20 of us!). The entire staff broke out in song right there in the restaurant, and all the people lunching there got to hear us sing Great is Thy Faithfulness.

An amazing end to an amazing year!

- **August 26, 2002** – We begin another year! 335 students in grades preschool through 8th.
- **November 19, 2002** – Construction officially begins on our new facility. We still do not have all the funds needed, but we walk by faith as we have done so many times before.
- **December 5, 2002** – The teachers are meeting together for their regular monthly meeting, when the mail arrives. Mrs. Kinzinger opens an envelope which contains \$500,000 for our new building from a donor. She manages to say – "Oh my goodness, we've just received a half million dollars for the new building!" The teachers go crazy and it isn't long before they begin singing Great is Thy Faithfulness again!
- **December 11, 2002** – Mrs. Shamess and Mrs. Kinzinger travel to Chicago where they meet with the Illinois Development Finance Authority to discuss a tax-exempt bond issue which would allow CCA to finance the remainder of the building project.

This would allow a lower interest rate if we can find a buyer for the bonds which are not "bank-qualified."

- **December 12, 2002** – Against all odds, a local bank agrees to buy the bonds so we may finish our project!

God is certainly answering our prayers again!

- **December 27, 2002** – A local man who is interested in sending his young children to CCA when they are older calls the school and asks how he can make a small donation. We tell him to drop the check by or mail it to us. His wife drops off a check for \$10,000!

God is abundant in His goodness to us!

- **December 31, 2002** – God has blessed us with a band program this year, but we don't have music stands for them to use. Our band students begin to pray for stands. A parent donates enough money for two music stands. We are excited and awed by God's quick response to our prayers! The music stands are ordered. When they arrive, we find that the company has made a mistake. Instead of sending two individual stands, they have sent us two cases of music stands – 12 in all! When we call the company, they tell us that it is too expensive to send a truck to the school to pick up 10 stands and re-inventory them. They tell us just to keep them!

God is amazing and works in mysterious ways!

- **Spring 2003**

We are very busy with choosing things for the new building. A lot of time is spent on the color of block, windows, roofing as well as interior choices of carpet and gymnasium flooring. The decision is made to install a geo-thermal system instead of the usual HVAC system. This will add almost \$130,000 to the overall price – something we can't afford – but will pay for itself in less than 7 years.

We apply for a grant through the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation to partially fund our geo-thermal system. It seems like a long shot, but we will pray that God will go before us.

The building is taking shape!

- **August 4, 2003** – We receive word that we have been awarded \$100,000 from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation to be used for our geo-thermal system! Praise the Lord!

- **August 19, 2003** – The Scoreboard story . . .

Among the many things we are praying for that we don't have the money to purchase are scoreboards for our gymnasium. Mrs. Kinzinger calls over to Central Catholic and inquires about their scoreboards left at their old school. She is told by the principal's secretary that they have been promised to another Catholic school. She tells the secretary to put her name down in case that other school was not interested in them.

- **September 3, 2003** – We begin school with 347 students in preschool through 9th grade!

- **October 7, 2003** – Mrs. Kinzinger has a quote for a very small scoreboard from Nevco Scoreboard Company in St. Louis sitting on her desk. It is over \$2,600 and we pray about whether to buy one or somehow do without.

- **October 8, 2003** – A man from Central Catholic calls the school today and tells us that he is in charge of disposing of equipment from their old building.

Among the items he had to sell at a greatly reduced price were shelving units, old desks, commercial refrigerators and . . . SCOREBOARDS! When we heard the scoreboards were still available, we acted quickly. The next night we went to Central Catholic and looked at the scoreboards. One was a small unit, while the other was a full sized one. Together new, they would cost almost \$10,000. We left that night having purchased them for \$900.

After some great work by our Cornerstone men, the scoreboards came down from Central Catholic and were brought to our new building. Our painters soon had the royal blue changed into dark green, and we think they are just beautiful!

The amazing part of this story: After we had agreed to purchase the scoreboards, we stood talking with the man from Central Catholic who had called us in the first place. We told him how nice it was that the principal's secretary had remembered that we might be interested in the scoreboards. The man got a puzzled look on his face and he said, "No, she didn't call me. I was sitting at my desk at work thinking about what other schools in the area might want some of our stuff. And it popped into my head that Cornerstone was just featured in the Pantagraph as getting ready to move into their new building. So I took a chance and called you."

God had done it again. We stand in awe.

- **November 13, 2003** – Since we're moving in a few weeks, we've been praying for a keyboard to use in our new building since we've been using the church's piano for our music classes. A parent has heard of our prayers, and has decided we can go to the music store and pick out any one we want.

God is so good to give us supportive families!

- **November 26, 2003** – To move or not to move – that is the question!

We receive our final inspection on "the biggest septic field in the county" and pass – our occupancy permit is issued. We can move!

- **November 28, 2003** – It's the day after Thanksgiving and we are moving! Over 150 people come to load 6 semi trailers and several box trucks and lots of vans and cars. We begin at 7:00 AM and we are completely moved in by 11:30 AM! After a lunch together on our new stage, the workers help unpack boxes and set rooms in order. We hope to be ready for school Monday morning.

- **November 29, 2003** – Moving is done, time to set up. Now that we're all moved in, a volunteer support team began setting up our new network, servers, racks, switches, and other (all donated!) equipment. We now have high-speed Internet access and in-house email.

- **December 1, 2003**

The staff is tired, but very excited. Students arrive and each rush to a new locker waiting just for them. And all we can say is "Look at what our Mighty God has done!"

- **January 2004**

Donations keep coming in for the new building. We have an 8x8 screen donated by a screen company. Cornerstone parents donate a projector. A local church donates \$1,000 for new folding chairs. Another set of parents donate a new sound system. Yet another donate an additional refrigerator. Extra microwaves are given as well as coffee pots. We have all that we need.

- **February 2004**

Our mural in the front is designed and painted by Julie Johnson. We decide on the verse from Ps. 118 which perfectly describes Cornerstone's story – "The Lord has done this and it is marvelous in our eyes." The entire project of building the wall and painting the mural takes less than a week – just in time for our Building Dedication!

- **February 27, 2004** – Our Building Dedication Service – what a wonderful evening this was!

- **March–April 2004**

One of the ongoing prayers of Cornerstone students is that God will grow grass on our property so they will have a safe place to play. But we have no money for grass seed or fertilizer. And even if we did, we also have no mower!

But the prayers continue for grass.

A man who owns a fertilizer company hears about the students' prayers, and donates \$4000 worth of grass seed for the school! A local farmer just happens to have the kind of grass seeder we need to use, and another farmer donates all the gas we need to plant 25 acres of grass.

With God, nothing is impossible.

- **April 5, 2004** – And, if that wasn't enough for God to do, we also receive a call today telling us an International C tractor with underbelly mower will be given to the school to mow the grass once it's grown!

- **July 7, 2004** – Looking at the schedule for this fall, it is apparent that we will be using every room in the building every hour. Our choral music room will also double as a high school Bible class. Desks are better for a classroom situation, but stacking chairs are better for use in a music room. We begin to pray for folding chairs with tablet arm desks attached that can be folded down when not in use to make way for the stacking chairs normally used in the music room.

Little did we know that God had already answered that request some 8 years ago.

In 1996, before Cornerstone was even founded, a group of people in Bloomington/Normal were meeting to plan and pray about a new Christian school in the community. Cornerstone Christian Academy would be the outcome of that initial committee. A local church gave them some folding chairs with attached tablet arm desks and one of the committee members has stored 75 of them in her basement. After reading about the need in the school newsletter, she called to see if we knew about those long-forgotten chairs. They were exactly what we had been praying for!

- **July 23, 2004** – Another one of the students' prayers this past spring has been for a playground to be installed before school is to begin in the fall. The price tag for the one we want is over \$32,000. After one \$10,000 gift, many more smaller ones and bags of money from our students, a dad calls up and asks, "How much more do you need for the playground? We tell him: "\$13,115.95!" He replies, "Why don't my wife and I come over and take care of that?"

God had answered another prayer!

We wanted the students to be the first to know about God's answer, so postcards are mailed to each and every one.

- **August 30, 2004** – Our first start in our new school building – 411 students!

- **September 2004**

Our music program is growing right along with the rest of the school. As a result, our Music teacher, Mr. Niles, is traveling to some classrooms. It's not practical to carry our beautiful (and expensive) keyboard from place to place. So instead we look into purchasing a smaller one. It was then that we realized that we hadn't even prayed and asked God to give us one. We place the purchase on hold and

hit our knees. By 3:00 PM two days later, we had a story to tell. God didn't just give us a keyboard – He gave us THREE!

- **October 2004**

With basketball season upon us, Mr. Schwartz asks for a large basketball rack for our basketballs. We don't have extra money for that, but we do have Campbell's Soup Labels! Although we don't have enough labels for the large rack, a smaller one is ordered. When it arrives, our P.E. teachers and Mr. Schwartz put it together, only to find they have been shorted a support for the rack. We call the company who tells us that if we had the large rack it should be returned, but since it was the small one, the company wouldn't take a return, but instead would just send a new one to us. Within a week, another box arrives with the replacement ball rack. Our P.E. teachers and Mr. Schwartz are busy again. The second rack is completed and as they begin to tear apart the box to put it in the dumpster, they find an "extra" piece at the bottom. It was the missing support!

Coincidence? Never! God knows what we need and is able to provide in amazing ways!

- **January 2005**

We continue to be the recipients of the gracious giving of many donors. This month alone, a new custom-made stage curtain arrives – fully paid for. New weight equipment is delivered for our weight room – more than it can hold!

- **April 2005 – More computers, more lockers!**

Gibson Area Hospital of Gibson City, Illinois donates more than 20 computers and monitors, two printers, a tape backup drive, keyboards, mice, cords, cables, and speakers!

Aurora Christian School calls us and asks if we would like some new lockers that had not been needed for their school renovation project. We do! We take a truck up to Aurora and load 75 boxes of lockers which we bring back to CCA and place on the stage.

That same week, Aurora Christian calls again. They have found even more lockers at another site. These lockers are worth \$64,000! Do we want them? There's a catch. We would have to go and pick them up in several trucks and they want an answer by noon of the same day. But we have a problem – we have no place to store them! After making many calls and inquiries, it seems we will have to pass on their generous offer. It is 10:30 AM. What should have been our first response became our last resort. We prayed! And God began to move.

On the way to an appointment at 11:30 AM, April Kinzinger drives by a piece of property owned by a CCA family. On that property is a shed. Suddenly the idea came – would that family allow us to store lockers in their shed? A call back to the school was made, and the family contacted. Within a few days, two trucks unloaded hundreds of lockers at the shed. God had known all along just what to do, and just in time has provided the perfect answer to our problem!

- **August 2005**

Another year begins – 445 students in preschool through 11th grade!

• December 2005

The week of December 12th has brought a gift of \$150,000 to the school. The donor's desire is that the monies be matched with new monies. We hope to accomplish this by March 1. When the gift is announced at our lower school Christmas Program on Dec. 15th, the money begins to come in – everything from small sacks of change from the students to large checks and even gifts of stock.

• February 2006

At the beginning of this month, we are still \$30,000 short of completing our match. We are praying, and it is obvious that God is not through providing! Day after day the money comes in until the 28th of the month. That morning, as the staff prayed together, we still needed \$2,300! We asked God to finish the match for us that very day.

A mom handed April Kinzinger a check in the parking lot. More checks come in the mail. Staff begin to write checks of their own, and when all was said and done, the announcement to the entire school was made at 2:00 PM. God had indeed provided the money to match our gift. The entire school erupted in cheers, which could be heard in any hallway!

• June 1, 2006

It is the last full day of school and pouring down rain. That means that our annual Field Day has had to be cancelled. Plan B will have to be implemented.

Though Field Day has been cancelled, another scheduled activity goes off as planned. "Prayer Circle," as we call this special group of moms, has been going on every other Thursday since the school began. These faithful parents have prayed earnestly for us, some of them for years. And, as you might expect if you have been in the Cornerstone community for very long, we have stories we could tell about what has come about as God has responded to the prayers of His people. Today has been a day to remember. Here's what happened:

When the year began, we had no idea how we were going to meet our budget. This is not a new scenario for us. In the early years of the school (remember, the school is not yet 10 years old), it was not unusual to operate with a deficit budget. We have never had any money! But because of that, God has taught us to pray and to trust Him for all of our needs. Like babies learning to walk, we, too, have had to learn to walk . . . by faith. Not once has God let us down. This year was particularly interesting. Because of the timing of tuition payments, we knew that April, May and June were going to require supernatural intervention. We have literally prayed from payroll to payroll asking God to meet our needs. Though we can't even tell you how He did it, there was always enough money in April and May to pay our teachers and meet our obligations. Nevertheless, we reached what felt like a crisis on June 1st – a rainy Thursday that should have been Field Day. We were way short on funds but we had an abundance of prayer coverage. That tipped the scales in our favor and God took care of the rest.

As the moms prayed, they were aware that things were tough here because we had stopped ordering just about everything – even paper. They interceded on our behalf and God heard. As I said earlier, the prayers of these faithful parents have "availed much" through the years. Their prayers went up, the word of our need went out, and God started moving. Later on in the day, April Kinzinger, our Director of Development, got a phone call. The caller said something like this: "I have been putting some money aside for a rainy day. It sounds like it's a rainy day at Cornerstone." Less than 24 hours later, it had stopped raining and we had a check for \$50,000.

We will never feel the same about rainy days. Praise God for His showers of blessings on CCA!