

Greetings, CBFSC from the Beloved Community of Koinonia! How delighted we are for this opportunity to share with you, our kindred spirit friends! Thank you for taking the time to read this update from our community that celebrated 8 years in March 2025! Our After School Program just started back up again on August 18 and our Mothers' Support Group re-starts on September 10. In late July, we concluded our *Justice Academy: Beyond the Walls* summer program. Summer 2024/ 2025 have been unique experiences of enriched learning "beyond the walls!" Our scholars had this 3-fold experience this summer:

- Our 14 After School Scholars attended a "City-wide Camp of Choice" either at USC Football Camp, Columbia Museum of Art Camp or Carolina Gymnastics Camp.
- Our larger Beloved Community, which includes about 18 middle schoolers and about 6 high schoolers, joined our 14 After School scholars for field education this summer. Our Younger and Older Group each had 3 field experiences ranging from a day trip to Charleston for a Gullah Geechee tour/beach experience to a tubing trip down the Saluda River to a slime lab visit, etc!
- Each scholar also served on 1 of 2 Neighborhood Mission Teams. Each team hosted 2 mission events in the neighborhoods where our scholars live. From elementary to high school, each scholar had the opportunity to be "salt & light" in fun and meaningful ways through prayer stations, face painting, sharing popsicles and water, decorating sidewalks with colorful and encouraging chalk messages, playing football and basketball, having raffles, etc.

We are beginning our 3rd academic year in which we've moved seamlessly from our summer program to our after school program with just a few weeks of downtime. This enduring presence in the neighborhood is enabled by God's grace and through our covenant partnership with you! Thank you, CBFSC... You were the first to believe in the vision God gave us! Because of this longevity and year-long programming, scholars' lives are being changed like one whom we will call N.S. N.S. attended our first summer enrichment program in 2017 when he was in 4th grade. He has been with us ever since, more recently serving as a junior counselor in our Freedom Schools & Justice Academies, as well as a service learning student in our After School Program. He graduated from high school this spring! This summer, he helped to staff a couple of our events! N.S.'s life is full of Adverse Childhood Experiences but because of his faithful grandmother and through inclusion in Beloved Community, God has repaired his heart.

A new initiative recently launched, in partnership with the Interdisciplinary Minority Health Fellowship, is our Telemental Health Program. We hosted a "Mental Health is Racial Wealth" workshop in May in which the community responded and was quite engaged. Upon parental partnership with therapists, scholars can receive virtual therapy at Koinonia. Four families are getting this set up for their scholars.

This year, it was so sad for us to lose our seminary neighbor with their move to NC. While we hope, when new neighbors arrive that we will be able to maintain our community garden there, we aren't sure so with the leadership of a Scout Troop, we have started a new community garden behind the parsonage. We're hiring a new gardener this fall whose passion is teaching marginalized communities to grow food!

Would you pray for us as we're discerning opportunities for contemplative prayer/worship experiences for our Beloved Community? Would you pray for our gifted Program Director, Ms. D'Asia Weston, our Board Chair, Mr. Richard Hammond, our partner church Eau Claire Baptist and our scholars and their families? These are challenging days for us all, especially those living on the margins. You are always welcome at Koinonia as a volunteer, donor, prayer warrior – Everyone belongs! Welcome, Child of God!