



The Good News from "The John 3:16 Center"

A Note From the Director

As the New Year is upon us we have an opportunity to look back and reflect upon the awesome and powerful things that God has allowed for us at the center in 2004. One year ago we had 7.25 acres of wooded land and over the course of one year we have a fully functional resource center with programs in place along with some outdoor recreation. I am so excited to share with you how God is working at the center and the many projects, events and programs we currently have in place. At this point I must thank every individual and donor for all that they have done because without your support desire to serve God we would be incapable of providing Littleton and the surrounding communities a safe and structured environment for the many children and families we serve. Dreams do become reality! May God bless you throughout the coming year, our prayer is that you will find Peace, Serenity and Joy in the reality that we serve a living God.

In Him, Jeff

"Our Choir makes their Debut"

On November 21st, 2004, 21 children from the center made their singing debut at the Community Thanksgiving service held at the Littleton United Methodist Church. This ecumenical event has taken place for many years in the community and we are very grateful for the invitation for our children to share their talents with community.

"A Christmas Carol"

20 children and 11 adults had an opportunity to go to Lakeland Cultural Art Center in Littleton to see "A Christmas Carol". The Littleton recreation League purchased the tickets for the adults and Gavin Gutterson from Schoollink provided the children's tickets. A fun and enjoyable evening allowed for new and exciting experiences for our children.

"A Live Nativity"

The week of December 19th "The John 3:16 Center" presented the community with a live nativity for everyone to see. Area churches, families and center children brought forth the true meaning of Christmas. This is what our children said, "It was a new experience for us and the most important thing is learning and celebrating Jesus' birthday and letting others learn more about Jesus."

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Quarterly Newsletter

Since our opening on September 25th we have

- ☺ 50+ children have been registered at the center
- ☺ 20+ children enrolled in after-school program ranging from 1st-9th grade
- ☺ Enrichment programs including illustrated storytelling, NASA presentations, and numerous craft days.
- ☺ In 12 weeks 812 snacks were enjoyed by our children and families!

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Why John 3:16?

When selecting a name for the center, this story was shared with us and after hearing it we thought "Why not The John 3:16 Center".

A little boy was selling newspapers on the corner; the people were in out of the cold. The little boy was so cold that he wasn't trying to sell many papers. He walked up to a policeman and said, "Mister, you wouldn't happen to know where a poor boy could find a warm place to sleep tonight would you? You see, I sleep in a box up around the corner there and down the alley and it's awful cold in there for tonight. Sure would be nice to have a warm place to stay."

The policeman looked down at the little boy and said, "You go down the street to that big white house and you knock on the door. When they come out the door you just say John 3:16, and they will let you in." So he did. He walked up the steps and knocked on the door, and a lady answered. He looked up and said, "John 3:16." The lady said, "Come on in, Son." She took him in and she sat him down in a split bottom rocker in front of a great big old fireplace, and she went off. The boy sat there for a while and thought to himself: John 3:16...I don't understand it, but it sure makes a cold boy warm.

Later she came back and asked him "Are you hungry?" He said, "Well, just a little. I haven't eaten in a couple of days, and I guess I could stand a little bit of food," The lady took him in the kitchen and sat him down to a table full of wonderful food. He ate and ate until he couldn't eat any more. Then he thought to himself: John 3:16...Boy, I sure don't understand it but it sure makes a hungry boy full.

She took him upstairs to a bathroom to a huge bathtub filled with warm water, and he sat there and soaked for a while. As he soaked, he thought to himself: John 3:16...I sure don't understand it, but it sure makes a dirty boy clean. You know, I've not had a bath, a real bath, in my whole life. The only bath I ever had was when I stood in front of that big old fire hydrant as they flushed it out. The lady came in and got him. She took him to a room, tucked him into a big old feather bed, pulled the covers up around his neck, kissed him goodnight and turned out the lights. As he lay in the darkness and looked out the window at the snow coming down on that cold night, he thought to himself: John 3:16...I don't understand it but it sure makes a tired boy rested.

The next morning the lady came back up and took him down again to that same big table full of food. After he ate, she took him back to that same big old split bottom rocker in front of the fireplace and picked up the big old Bible. She sat down in front of him and looked into his young face. "Do you understand John 3:16?" she asked gently. He replied, "No Ma'am, I don't. The first time I ever heard it was last night when the policeman told me to use it," She opened the Bible to John 3:16 and began to explain to him about Jesus. Right there, in front of that big old fireplace, he gave his heart and life to Jesus. He sat there and thought: John 3:16...don't understand it, but it sure makes a lost boy feel safe.

You know, I have to confess I don't understand it either, how God was willing to send his Son to die for me, and how Jesus would agree to do such a thing. I don't understand the agony of the Father and every angel in heaven as they watched Jesus suffer and die. I don't understand the intense love for ME that kept Jesus on the cross till the end. I don't understand it, but it sure does make life worth living.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Since the opening of the center 12 weeks ago we have witnessed many wonderful things. God has been very busy working through us to provide a safe place for children and adults to "see God". This center is merely a tool that is used to share with the world His special Gift, the gift of His Son Jesus Christ and the many blessings He has for us. Along with providing snacks and meals to the hungry, hygiene items, warm clothing and coats to the less fortunate; two local individuals have been brought to drug treatment and have made decisions to live their lives for Christ and are drug free today. One of "Our" children has accepted Christ as her personal Lord and savior and has been baptized. We look forward to watching her grow in her walk with God!

Music Notes

We are making music at John 3:16. Our students voices have been heard in local community events thanks to the leadership of Miss Sallie and Miss Dorothy, and now we are able to offer guitar and piano lessons, thanks to the donation of two full size guitars, one youth guitar and a piano. Miss Moira is our music teacher and her first guitar pupil is 10 year old Franklin. He has been taking lessons for nearly two months. Recently while singing and playing, "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands," Franklin drew an audience of his peers. Rebecca and Marinda have been anxiously waiting to be the first piano students and their lessons will start next week. Our goal is to offer music lessons to as many students as we can handle.



A Word from Our Children

"Dear Miss Julie,

I appreciate you helping me with my LITTLE problem. Thanks for opening up John 3:16 Recreation center. Thank you for encouraging me to be all that I can be. Thankfully, N.C."

"Dear Mrs. Juli,

Thank you for letting me start this program I like it here it is so fun. And I have a lot of friends here. Thank you for everything you did for me... Love, T. H."

"Dear Mrs. Juli and Staff:

Thank you for giving me my birthday party at the center and for the gifts. Love F.P."

" I think the John 3:16 Center is a cool place for kids to learn to respect good and to do what is right" J.A.

Santa Came to Town

On December 24th we entertained a special guest at the center, 40 children had a chance to sit with Santa during a party. Each child at the party received a gift from Santa and had their picture taken. The toys were donated by area churches and businesses along with the Lake Gaston Boat Parade Committee. Christmas gifts were also provided to 38 other children, monetary donations that we received were used to purchase coats, clothing and other needed items. We would like to share a special thank you to everyone who contributed toys and clothing, some of these children only had what we provided them on Christmas morning.



" I am very glad Santa came to the center" S.J.

January
2005

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" 'For God so loved the WORLD, that HE gave His only
begotten SON, that whosoever believeth in HIM should
not perish, but have everlasting LIFE.' " -JOHN 3:16



The center will provide opportunities for parental and community involvement in the lives of their children. We look forward to realizing this vision by providing the following services through the center:

- After-school check-in
- Programs and structured activities for children
- Free summer day camps
- Weekend and holiday enrichment programs
- Outdoor recreation including a walking trail, softball field, basketball court, and playground
- Counseling services provided by local agencies
- Parenting classes and workshops
- Conflict Resolution workshops (adult and youth)
- GED and Literacy classes
- 12 Step support meetings (AA, NA)
- Family outreach (free clothing, home furnishings, hygienic items)
- Food pantry

A Look Ahead

Our immediate plans are to begin the construction of our outdoor basketball court and softball field. This addition to our center is possible because of a very generous donation of \$10,000 made by the Littleton Recreation League. <>>

The remainder of the playground equipment will be assembled and more mulch will be delivered. The playground equipment has been donated by the Lake Gaston Kiwanis Club. <>>

Plans for our FREE Summer Day Camp are underway ! Our goal is to provide a day camp for 25 children per week for 8 weeks allowing 200 children to share in this experience. Below you will find a sponsor sheet which will enable you to respond to this opportunity. Each sponsor will receive an "after-camp" update from the child they sponsor so that you may see how God has worked in their life because of your generosity. A donation of \$75 will enable a child to go to camp for one week. <>>

Name _____

Address _____

Phone # _____ E mail _____

Number of children you wish to sponsor _____ Please mail Check to PO Box 1541 Littleton NC 27850

Volunteers are Still Needed

We still have many opportunities for everyone to feel a part of the community and the lives of our children.

We need volunteers to help with After-school tutorials, many of our children need extra help with their homework.

Music lessons, we only have 1 person teaching guitar and piano lessons to a number of children. Many of our children are interested in learning to play an instrument. We have a child very interested in taking a clarinet lesson. She has played for about a year and now needs someone to take her further. This would only require 1 hour a week.

The last Saturday of the month we have a birthday party for the children that have had a birthday at the center, we can always use extra hands on these days.

We also need volunteers to help with answering telephones during the day. Any time that you are willing to offer the center will be greatly appreciated .

Looking ahead to the Spring we will need individuals and groups to help with more landscaping and planting. We have considered a community garden that the children will help with; this will teach them valuable skills they will use in their lives

A Donation and Budget Update

We would like to thank a number of local churches that have generously planned "The John 3:16 Center" into their 2005 Mission Budget. We are aware of the following commitments:

Pleasant Hill Christian Church, Gasburg VA

Littleton United Methodist Church

Littleton Baptist Church

Lakeside Lutheran

If you are aware of other churches that have been omitted from this list please contact the center, we are still in the process of meeting our budget requirements for 2005. Although the center is debt-free in the construction phase we need to raise approximately \$20,000 of our \$80,000 dollar operational budget for the year.

Along with the churches we also have commitments from individuals and businesses.