

**Park Place Child Life Center
Annual Report to Second Presbyterian Church Congregation**

Dear Members of Second Pres.,

As your liaison to the Park Place Child Life Center (PPCLC), I last reported to the congregation in November 2018 on various issues and activities concerning the Child Life Center's mission. I would like to bring you up to date on where we are today and where we are looking to be tomorrow.

As you know, we continue to base our office, supplies and Saturday Art Camp in Second Pres. As previously reported, being able to work in a welcoming environment with supportive people has sustained our hopes and ability to continue our outreach to the children of Park Place. Unfortunately, because SPC is about 3.5 miles from the center of Park Place, we have experienced about a 50% drop in attendance on Saturdays due to the children having to depend on transportation. Jennifer McDuffie, our Program Coordinator, has pursued a vigorous social media campaign to encourage the parents / guardians to bring their children, but it has met with only partial success. In light of this, we are evaluating what a reasonable expectation for attendance should be.

One of our strongest commitments in the past was providing after school programming in James Monroe Elementary (JME) School. As happened once before, this past summer our request to resume the Tuesday and Thursday after school program was denied due to the new principal (in her first year at JME) wanting to assess the current needs of her school, which continues to fail accreditation requirements. While understandable from her perspective, her decision removed us from our primary venue, which was a convenient location for Park Place children to attend our program.

Consequently, in the past six months we've expanded the locale in which we serve underprivileged youth by instituting twice a month art programming at the Norfolk Public Library (Park Place Branch) and after school programming at Tidewater Park Elementary on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Additionally, we have participated in events sponsored by other organizations such as the Christian Broadcasting Network, which promotes services and youth oriented initiatives in Park Place under the banner of LAUNCH (Learning, Access, Unity, Nutrition, Careers, Health); Teens With a Purpose on Olney Road; Kairos Freedom Schools at

Freemason Baptist; and SAYFest on 35th Street. The combination of these organizations serve children in Park Place as well as in adjacent neighborhoods. Of note, one of the benefits of participating in the LAUNCH project was an unexpected \$5,000 donation from the Christian Broadcasting Network. Our church's support of LAUNCH through PPCLC was a determining factor in receiving this gift. Recently we partnered with SPC Youth and Faith Inclusion Network (FIN), an SPC mission partner, to host a Community Art Event in Second's Fellowship Hall for creation of an intergenerational self-portrait collage. Over 50 participants attended this event.

Because we consider SPC as a temporary home, Joe Morgan and I continue to search for a facility closer to both Park Place and its surrounding neighborhoods, particularly for children's classes. We've been in serious discussion with Larry Hull regarding organizational merger opportunities with YOURS, another SPC mission partner, since we share some common interests and concerns for the underprivileged youth in Norfolk. This would also avail us more opportunities to expand our outreach.

Lastly, we are pleased that two mothers of participating children residing in Park Place have joined our Board of Directors, achieving more stakeholder input than in past years.

Despite the challenges we've experienced the past few years, we believe we are moving forward in making a difference in the children we serve and that we have the Lord's blessing on our work of "arts touching hearts." SPC has been a stalwart presence in the life of PPCLC for which we are sincerely thankful. Your commitment to its ministry truly has been a blessing.

Thank you,

Bill Armstrong