



OT EDUCATION PROPOSAL FOR CHURCH COMMUNITY IN PHASD

Education is an issue that affects the whole community. The level of education affects many areas: ability to find employment, poverty levels, home ownership, creation of business and new jobs, government assistance levels, taxes, discretionary finances (charitable giving), etc.

The graduation requirements for the PHASD have become more stringent beginning this year of 2008. The current graduation rate is significantly less than 100%, with many dropping out of school. While some do end up going back to complete their GED, many do not have the minimum level of education to work at more than minimum wage jobs. This creates a vicious cycle of poverty.

OT is proposing that the church community take a lead role in addressing this issue and supporting the education process. By taking the initiative to get actively involved in promoting education, this creates a win-win situation as the student is helped, the community benefits, and the church gains more visibility and finds a creative way to “do outreach” within neighborhoods and the local community.

PROPOSALS to CONSIDER

1. TUTORING PROGRAM

Each church opens their doors for a 2-hour block once (or more) a week to neighborhood and/or congregational youth for tutoring. Tutors can be obtained from the congregation, retirees, neighborhood volunteers or students from the Honor Societies at the local high schools. The church can announce this through flyers distributed in the neighborhood, bulletins, mailings, word-of-mouth, etc. Other church programs, classes, services, ministries could also be promoted.

2. EDUCATION SUNDAY

One Sunday (or more) a year, each church would focus on education as the sermon subject. It could also be a time to honor and recognize those in the congregation who graduate (kindergarten, elementary, middle school, high school, trade school, college, graduate school), make the “honor roll”, have perfect attendance, etc. A possible choice would be the first or second Sunday of June, to coincide with graduations from the local high schools.

3. OFFER COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS

Offer college scholarship(s) to students in your congregation. The money could be raised by taking an offering, doing a special fund-raiser or getting someone to donate the money. There is some interest in local colleges matching funds or splitting the cost of the scholarship – up to a specific amount.

4. BACCALAUREATE SERVICE (usually 2nd Sunday of June)

Help make this religious graduation service one of excellence, and encourage attendance for students, parents/family members and members of the congregation. (This service is student-led, with organizing support from Youth for Christ). Gifts for each graduate could be purchased, special music or speaker could be brought in, the location could be appropriately decorated, etc. to make it an event worthy of sending our Christian young people out into the world.