

Victory Village Christian Academy

Fifty-five Years of Showing God's Unconditional, Healing Love to Teen Age Girls
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Tish Horton, Director; Bob Friesen, Chairman of the Board
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VVCA - A Place of Love, Peace, Safety and Hope

By Bill & Carole

Victory Village Christian Academy has been, and continues to be an island of love, peace, safety and hope for many young girls and their families. Early in this ministry we started saying that our message is **CHRIST**, and our method is **LOVE**. That has not changed! The world continues to be a turbulent place, and the need for Christ and His love is more needed than ever. Young people, with great hopes for the future, can still become world-changers, and we are here to introduce them to Christ, and teach them God's Word, along with the academics they need to be a success in the world.

Former VVCA students and graduates are also doing great things--establishing homes, some going abroad in mission service, and others working in several different vocations. Many over the years have gone on mission trips here in America, and in a number of other countries of the world. We also want the Newsletters to inspire hope in the hearts of those of you who support VVCA.. Our students are being taught and are learning to reflect the Light and Love of Jesus. Through the teaching, guidance and examples of our Staff, girls are being prepared to go out into today's cold, hate-filled society, and make the difference that the world so desperately needs. Your support with prayers and gifts makes you a vital part of this mission. Thank you so much, and may we all learn to reject the world's darkness and reflect the incomparable **LOVE** and **LIGHT** of Jesus, that we hope everyone will experience.



Tish Horton, Director, does great work, and appreciates prayers for the weight of responsibility that she carries. Here she is, hard at work in her office. Tish is a great team worker, keeping good communication with our Board of Directors, staff, students, their parents, and officials of the State of Kansas.

LOVE is always building up. It puts some line of beauty on every life it touches. It gives new hope to discouraged ones, new strength to those who are weak. It helps the despairing rise and start again. --from Please Love Them

Ashley and Ernie Penner, and their Daughter **Serenity** all have important roles at VVCA.

Ashley is Director of the Dorm, and Ernie helps with our Athletic program. **Serenity** is a good friend to all of the girls, and we are reminded of the days of long ago when our own five children interacted with the girls at that time by being their friends.



Wrapped in Love and Stitched With Care...by Ashley

For several years, **Teddy & Diana Cook** have faithfully delivered beautiful quilts from **First Baptist Church of Paola**, covering our new girls in warmth, welcome, and grace. Each quilt is more than fabric—it's a hug, a prayer, and a reminder: you are seen, you are loved, you belong. We're so grateful for this ongoing gift of comfort and connection. Thank you, Teddy & Diana, for being part of our story.



Samantha



McKayla

(continued on page two)

Wrapped in Love....continued from page one



Love



Katelynn

Pancakes, Parades & Purpose.....by Ashley

Most days, it's our girls who are in the spotlight—racing...competing...and hearing cheers from the sidelines. Our community shows up for them, loud and proud!

But one day the roles reversed! **Serenity Penner**, pictured here with **Kaitlynn**, and daughter of **Coach Ernie** and **Dorm Director Ashley**, ran the **Buhler Frolic 5k**. And this time, our girls were the ones cheering, supporting, and running beside her.



They rode to Buhler, waited with excitement and when Serenity hit that final stretch, they jumped in—matching her stride, lifting her spirit, and showing what love-in-action really looks like.

After the race? Pancakes, parade floats, and a whole lot of laughter. It was early, but it was unforgettable.

This morning brought Hebrews 12:1 to life: “Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”

Because here at Victory Village, we don't just stand on the sidelines, we lace up, step in, and run together!

A Delightful Evening.....by Ashley



Tonight started with a sweet surprise back at the dorm. One of our girls received a care package from her parents, celebrating her adoption day. She was beaming as she showed us each item—sharing the stories behind them and why they mattered so much to her. It was one of those quiet, sacred moments that reminded us how deeply love roots itself in the details.

Then, youth group took a turn for the unexpected—in the best way. Instead of gathering at church, we headed to Hutch High's football field for Fields of Faith, a local event that brought together believers from all over Hutchinson. Worship rang out under the lights, testimonies from young women and men stirred hearts, and our girls leaned in with wide eyes and open spirits.



It was awesome to worship with Hutchinson—young, old, and everyone in between. Church looked different tonight and we loved it!

LOVE helps the despairing to rise and start again. It makes life seem more worthwhile to everyone into whose eyes it looks. It's words are benedictions. It's every breath is full of inspiration.
-from **Please Love Them**

The two quotes on the previous pages were taken from a book called, Please Love Them, compiled by Sterling Schoen, and published by Dorrance & Company of Ardmore, Pennsylvania. We found this book while on one of our choir tours many years ago. Interestingly, it was for sale in a Truck Stop near Effingham, Illinois--the home of one of our present students.

My Spiritual Pilgrimage.....by Carole

As a young girl, I floated along with my dreary life, not knowing what I was missing. I didn't know much about spiritual things—Jesus, Calvary, Heaven, etc. My Church didn't lean too much towards salvation and the Gospel, so I didn't hear that preached too often. Thank God, when I was a young teen, a Bible club was started in my High School in Lincoln, Kansas by Salina Youth for Christ Director, **Rev. Dale Kurtz**. They talked about Jesus, Heaven, and the Gospel--Wow! I had never really heard about them before! Do you really mean Jesus loves even me? He died for me on the cross? He wants to take me to Heaven some day? I was so excited! I could hardly wait to give my heart to a wonderful Saviour like Him! I was only 15 when I was saved—now it has been 67 years of grace and mercy and love—what wonderful peace and joy! God also gave me a wonderful husband--Bill, who has taken care of me and loved me. God gave us 5 beautiful children, 21 grandchildren, and 15 great grandchildren (and counting!) God has also allowed us to minister to nearly 2,000 girls, and a few boys through Heart Ministries. As we grow older--both in our 80's now, we are grateful for all to whom God has allowed us to minister and care for through the years. We do have competent Staff and leaders to carry on after our lifetimes, but we want to keep doing all we can to help as long as God gives us strength and breath. Like former President Jimmy Carter, who died at the age of 100, we also want to ***do whatever we can, wherever we can, whenever we can, for as long as we can!***



Mrs. Marla Johnson, our Social Studies Teacher, is always planning something special for her classes. One of the latest was to invite **Lisa Teachman**, Chief Meteorologist, for **KSN-TV** in **Wichita**. Our students and Staff enjoyed her presentation, and especially the Storm-Tracker vehicle she drove to Victory Village. This is the second year Lisa has visited VVCA..

Desiree Perea came to VVCA from Paso Robles, California in 2011. We visited her once while in California, after she had returned home. Now **Desiree Perea Willis**, just announced that she has finished Nursing school and is one step closer to her goal. We are proud of Desiree for her hard work and her determination. She will make a great nurse.



Andrew Epp from Buhler has joined our Staff as Head Basketball Coach. He is pictured here with his wife, **Taisha**, daughter **Izabella**, son **Lincoln**, and stepson **Isaiah Heredia**. The Epps are members of the Buhler Mennonite Church.

Our ministry is inter-denominational, but for over 55 years, we have been identified with North American, and American Baptist Churches. This gives us accountability. The Victory Village Chapel is recognized as an American Baptist Church, but those who worship there come from many different Christian backgrounds. Carole and I have done short term mission work with American Baptist missionaries in Thailand, India and Mexico, and several ABC Churches support VVCA.



During our trips and mission work in Thailand, we became acquainted with missionaries **Matt** and **Lori Mann**. It was a blessing to reunite with them at the recent American Baptist Central Region Gathering in Salina. They have done great mission work in Thailand for many years.

Victory Village Christian Academy

OCTOBER - 2025



Our 56th Year of Changing Young Lives for Jesus Christ and His Kingdom; Jesus said, I have come that they may have life and have it more abundantly. (John 10:10)

Our Mission is to serve as the hands and feet of Jesus. Inspired by His Gospel, we seek to make God's amazing love and compassion real to teenage girls, serving them without charge to their families by providing a clean and safe home, a good Christian and State approved education, nutritious meals, training in life skills, outdoor and indoor activities and sports, opportunities to be involved in the ministry of helping others, and an introduction to Jesus, who will love them forever. We affirm the worth of all, without prejudice, partiality or intimidation. **Victory Village Christian Academy** is located at 201 S Victory Road, Burrton, KS 67020, and is licensed by the State of Kansas, with qualified teachers and curriculum. Credits are transferable, high school diplomas are earned and recognized for entrance to colleges.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Bob Friesen, Chairman; Rev. Bill & Carole Cowell, Becky Goering, Patricia Macke-Dick, Dr. Jessica Kerzner, Gordon Goering, Rev. John Williams, Larry Chapman; **FOUNDERS & ADMINISTRATORS:** Bill & Carole Cowell; **DIRECTOR:** Tish Horton; **SCHOOL PRINCIPAL:** Arianna Valdois; **ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL:** Ahneka Valdois; **DORMITORY SUPERVISOR:** Ashley Penner; **SECRETARY:** Barb Hedges; **MAINTENANCE DIRECTOR:** Scott Hilburn; **ACCOUNTANT:** Wilma Engle **THERAPIST:** Dr. Jessica Kersner; **ATHLETIC DIRECTOR & CASE MANAGER:** Kristi Colvin; **TEACHERS:** Irl Gilliland, Marla Johnson, Jerry Nininger, **COACHES:** Ernie Penner, Andrew Epp; **PART AND FULL TIME DORM STAFF:** Hadessah Eaton, Candi Wilson; Karey Weaver, Charis Valdois, Becky Valdois, Emily Moore, Felicity Reed, Melissa King, Emma Foster, Shannon Fitzgerald, Leigha Ensz, Jennifer Smith, Ashlyn Lahman; Amy Hayen, Crystal Tolbert, Amanda Martin, Barb Helms.

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We appreciate our Cook, Barb Helms, who does a great job in the kitchen with her culinary arts!

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Phica and Takkiah are showing some of their beautiful artwork. Art can help the girls express themselves, cope with challenges in their lives, and improve their emotional and mental well-being.



Mona Curtis from Idaho (left), came to visit VVCA Staff member **Ahneka Valdois**, and other members of the Valdois family who are on our Staff, including Ahneka's sister **Ariana** (VVCA Principal), and sister-in-law **Becky**. Ahneka spent over 20 years teaching English in a University in China, while other family members also taught and served there. Mona also spent several years with them in China. We are so blessed to have VVCA Staff members who have had international experiences in teaching and missionary service.

THANKS TO ALL WHO HAVE PRAYED AND GIVEN, AND THEREBY HELPED SUSTAIN THE MINISTRY HERE AT VVCA FOR ANOTHER MONTH. WE DO APPRECIATE YOUR MONETARY GIFTS, YOUR GIFTS IN KIND, AND YOUR PRAYERS. FOOD ITEMS, CLEANING SUPPLIES, OFFICE AND SCHOOL SUPPLIES ARE ALWAYS NEEDED, AND OF COURSE, CASH GIFTS TO HELP US PAY THE BILLS. MAY GOD BLESS YOU ALL!