

Our Community Place

Promoting personal growth and community well-being in the North End of Harrisonburg.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

5th Annual Summer Lawn Jam at Our Community Place **Full day of music, food, crafts, volleyball, and much more**

Our Community Place hosts its 5th Annual Summer Lawn Jam Saturday, June 28th from noon 'til dark at 17 E. Johnson Street across from the Little Grill Collective. Everyone with a belly button is invited to come out for a full day of music, food, dancing, musical chairs, water balloons, tie-dying, volleyball, horse shoes, a giant yard sale, and more! The fun is for the whole family. As always, admission is free, and all donations benefit *Our Community Place* and the *Free Food for All Soup Kitchen*. Featured bands and performers include: Adrienne Young, Trent Wagler and the Steel Wheels, Bobby St. Ours and his band Holy Bear, Red River Rollercoaster, Spoke, Mild Winter, Greg Ward Project, The Lotus Eaters, Heart Gets Monkey, Hound Dog Hill Boys, Scott Christopher Murray, and others. For more information visit www.ourcommunityplace.net or call 540/442-7727.

The Lawn Jam has become a popular annual event on the North end. From the musicians to the clean-up crew, it is completely volunteer run. The Lawn Jam is a fun way for anyone in the community to come check out the newly-renovated building, which this year will be only days or weeks away from completion. The ¾-acre OCP grounds include beautiful vegetable and herb gardens, volleyball and horseshoe courts, our nearly renovated building, and the Black's Run Community Bicycle Project. On June 28th, the lawn will be filled with adults and children, fun activities, and great music. This is an event that should not be missed!

Our Community Place (OCP) is a non-profit organization that emerged from the Free Food For All Soup Kitchen, which has been serving a hot noon meal to "anyone in the world"

every Monday since October of 1992 at The Little Grill at 621 N. Main St. in Harrisonburg. From the beginning, founder and director Ron Copeland's vision for the Soup Kitchen was that it be a cooperative community meal where everyone's welcome, no strings attached. The Soup Kitchen vision since the beginning has been that it not exist only to serve the economically poor, but that it be of service to all. One of the magical aspects of the Soup Kitchen, as anyone can attest who has eaten there, is that all eat together, and the food is served family style: no one waits in a soup line.

OCP will be a community center that functions on the same principles as the Soup Kitchen: anyone in the world is welcome to help or participate. The vision for OCP is to build, around our free noon meal, an atmosphere of love, safety, education, spiritual awareness, healing, and fun. OCP is dedicated to breaking down barriers that tend to separate humans from the joys to be experienced in loving community. Copeland says that "OCP is particularly dedicated to including the very poor and disadvantaged in its activities, we have found over the years that incredible healing potential, for all parties, exists in the simple act of sitting down and eating or socializing together across social barriers."

Our Community Place is the intriguing story of a community-centered grass roots project and long time vision that is soon to become a reality. At the beginning, OCP seemed like an impossible task: the idea of a small group of people with full time jobs, no income besides donations, no skilled laborers in the group, and no paid staff renovating a building that had asbestos floor tiles, old cracked windows, a leaky roof, no plumbing, no electricity and a defunct heating system – basically a cinderblock shell – seemed absurd.

To some, the OCP project may seem to have taken a long time, but from the perspective of the OCP board, it has been an amazing process, which has grounded itself deeper and deeper into the community. And even more amazingly, with the building on verge of receiving its occupancy permit, the organization has no mortgage and no debt from a major renovation that would have cost well over \$200,000 at market value.

In a May of 2000 OCP newsletter article, seven months before OCP purchased its decrepit eye-sore of a building, founder Ron Copeland wrote, "I see a new concept of school and church . . . where the goal is not grades or awards or gold stars but the delicious fruit of community and relationships . . . I look across the street and I see people playing volleyball and working in the community garden in front of a beautifully painted building. I see circles of

people holding hands on the lawn . . . I see a group of mothers exchanging ideas and joys and sorrows.”

Below is a list of activities, organizations and services that will likely be found at OCP:

- Soup Kitchen
- Birth Matters
- The Early Church Project
- Community Garden
- Skyline Literacy Coalition
- The Black's Run Community Bicycle Project
- Home School Groups
- 12-Step Groups
- Craft Nights
- Coffee Houses
- Lecture Series
- OCP Newsletter
- Soup Kitchen Theater
- Free Speech Days/ Public Debates
- Yoga Classes
- Music and Food Festivals
- Conflict Mediation Training
- Horse Shoe Tournaments
- Black's Run Restoration Awareness
- Recycling Education
- Work Hub for the Unemployed
- Networking to Other Community Services

Our Community Place seeks . .

- To accommodate, foster and provide activities and programs related to personal growth and community well being.
- To be a resource in the community for individuals seeking information or services already provided by other organizations.
- To educate and empower individuals toward self-sufficiency, thus creating social capital for the community at large.
- To nurture a community that appreciates diversity and sees differences and conflict as opportunities for spiritual growth.

For more information call 540-442-7727 or visit www.ourcommunityplace.net.

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For more information about the musicians playing at the lawn jam, visit:

Adrienne Young:	http://www.adrienneyoung.com/
Trent Wagler and the Steel Wheels:	http://www.trentwagler.com/
Red River Roller Coaster:	http://www.redriverrollercoaster.tk/
Mild Winter:	www.myspace.com/mildwinter
The Shakes:	http://www.myspace.com/theshakesmusic
Meade Skelton:	http://www.meadeskelton.com/music.htm
Heart Gets Monkey:	http://heartgetsmonkey.com/
Hound Dog Hill Boys:	http://www.myspace.com/hounddoghill
Robert St. Ours	http://www.monkeyclaus.org/bobbystours